

## The New Hymnal.

It is cause for rejoicing that the General Assembly has taken action to perfect our Book of Praise. Our hymnals for Church and Sabbath-school services are both good, but the time has fully come for consolidating the whole in one book. After consultation with a number of brethren it is found that the selections from the Psalms proposed by the committee cover nearly, if not quite, all the passages sung. It will be a very rare thing for a minister not to find his favourite verses in those selections. No one can question the fact that a goodly number of whole Psalms, and portions of others, are never sung in our churches. Why should those unsung Psalms be kept in the Church's Book of Praise? The committee very wisely suggests that Hymns found to be rarely or never sung should be dropped. The mystery is why some of the Psalms should ever have been put into the collection for the whole congregations to sing. They were never intended to be so used. The seventy-eighth for instance, was a religious historical poem not for purposes of praise by the congregation, but instruction to the congregation by its leader. The fiftieth is another not intended for congregational use as praise. Why any one should find fault with these being left out of the praise book is certainly mysterious. The committee might have gone a step further and suggested that certain tunes should be dropped as well as Hymns, for the same reason too, that they are rarely if ever sung.

It would have been well also had they suggested tunes for the Hymns proposed. There was difficulty in this by reason of the fact that tunes bear different names in different books, but that should not be an insuperable difficulty. Many a noble hymn is strangled by the tune attached to it.

Let us have dignified music in keeping with the praise of the thrice Holy One. The dignity of life and the dignity of death are very different things. It would pay the General Assembly to send down the music to Presbyteries, as well as the Hymns, for their consideration.

The committee would have done a real service to the whole Church, and would have received much more valuable assistance in their work, had they classified the new Hymns proposed. Every one who goes into the matter intelligently, to see whether the various sections and subjects are fully treated, has to make a classification for himself. This is a serious waste of time, when one man of the committee might have done it for the whole Church. The committee, however, deserves the hearty thanks of all their brethren for their labor of love, and it deserves also that every member of the Church should help it in recommending a book as nearly perfect as possible to the Assembly in June next. Some sections are not fully represented yet, while others would not suffer much if some of the less meritorious were dropped. We do require some good Home Mission Hymns. The following is believed to be worthy of a place.

## HOME MISSION HYMN.

Look from thy sphere of endless day  
O God of mercy and of might,  
In pity look on those who stray,  
Bewildered in this land of light.  
  
In peopled vale, in lonely glen,  
In crowded mart, by stream or sea,  
How many of the sons of men  
Hear not the message sent from thee!  
  
Send forth thy heralds Lord, to call  
The thoughtless young, the hardened old,  
A scattered, homeless flock, till all  
Be gathered to thy peaceful fold.  
  
Send them thy mighty word to speak,  
Till faith shall dawn, and doubt depart,  
To awe the bold, to stay the weak,  
And bind and heal the broken heart.  
  
Then all these wastes, a dreary scene,  
That makes us sadden as we gaze,  
Shall grow with living waters green,  
And lift to Heaven the voice of praise.

—BRYANT.

## Song in the Sanctuary.

In a recent sermon on this subject Rev. Dr. Cochrane said: "The spirit of praise was characteristic of the Jews. Lofty demonstrations of joy, with voice and trumpet and psaltory and cymbals marked the dedication of the Temple and their annual and occasional feasts. Their more common acts of worship also partook of the same character. The oriental feelings were more easily touched than ours—emotion prevailed over thought. All Christians recognize the propriety of serving God with gladness, but comparatively few enter into the spirit of the command and any form of service that is not voluntary and cheerful cannot be accepted. Religion in itself is a happy thing. It is folly and sin to be miserable, morose and gloomy, whether as regards ourselves or our fellow men.

What is praise? Praise is the legitimate exponent of gladness, implying a knowledge of God's character, and the overflowing of a grateful heart. It is not so much an act of the reason, as an overflow of the feeling. It is the utterance of the soul in rarer moments when the soul is kindled in admiration of God's government in grace and providence. It is not only a Christian attribute but a disposition of the mind and a continuous act. It springs from a soul that is more or less of God's goodness, and it always strengthens feelings of piety, to give them utterance, just as air gives blaze to fire. Many feelings of the devout soul languish or die because they are not vocalized with sacred song."

Proceeding he drew the following lessons from the text:

First—The spirit that should animate us in our secular employments. Second—The spirit that should animate us in religious worship. Third—The spirit that should animate us in Christian service.

Speaking on the subject of religious worship he said: "In certain churches praise occupies but a small part of the service. In the Roman Catholic and other churches that have liturgical forms of worship there is greater provision for this part of worship. In churches like this a great deal is left to the judgment and feelings of the pastor. In many churches also the singing is confined to comparatively few, and in some cases entirely to the choir. There is nothing wrong in having a select number of trained voices lead in praise, just as the minister leads in prayer. But whether it is better to have a choir do all the singing or to have no singing at all is questionable, for not unfrequently choirs are engaged simply for their artistic qualities or to attract congregations where the pulpit is weak, there is the spirit of music, but not that of devotion. Nor can it be denied that the music set to many of our hymns is not selected nor adapted to praise. It is aimed to show the capabilities of the human voice more than to produce heart feeling and is not fitted for the sanctuary. Tunes are hewn out of symphonies and oratorios and operas. They are good in the concert room, but out of place in the church, for in many cases 'the better a tune is the worse it is for the service of the sanctuary.' For these reasons our Psalmody is in many cases a mere form and a mockery and an insult to Almighty God, whereas it might be made profitable to our souls, and every note an act of sacrifice."

All these points were illustrated at great length and closing the discourse he said:—"It is pleasing to hear well-rendered solos when the singer has a personal experience of the thought expressed in song, but there is no praise comparable to that of the entire congregation. For those who prefer surplined choirs and intoning, and artistic renderings of classical and ancient melodies, because through these they are brought into nearer communion with the Divine Being I have the highest respect, but the memories of other days when the hundreds and thousands who worshipped on the hillsides and in the moors and glens, ascended to heaven, has brought me more in touch and sympathy with those simpler melodies that can be sung by trained and untrained, rich and poor alike.

"We cannot, however, be always in the temple, and engaged in worship, but in every vocation of life we can cultivate the spirit of praise."