

represented in its noble hymns, the elevated compositions of Gerhardt and other eminent writers were translated by the Wesleys; and these, while blending with the full current of spiritual life, supplied a new and essential element of lyric song. Since the sacred lyre of Charles Wesley was swept with masterly hand other bards have arisen, to whom we accord high recognition; thousands of devotional poems, some of them of highest excellence, without which no hymn-book can be considered complete, have been composed; but, now that revision is under consideration, it is well for us to bear in mind, that for all demands of worship, quickening the spirit of devotion, affording appropriate utterance to faith and hope, there are none which can possibly take the place of our own most treasured, richly experimental and beautifully Scriptural hymns.

From the fact that our present collection of hymns contains many compositions below the Wesleyan standard, and that it does not include a number of prized and popular modern hymns, we are in some danger of undervaluing our unrivalled hymn-book. My object is to indicate some of the special and distinctive excellences of Wesleyan hymnody.

Regarded from a doctrinal standpoint, as the embodiment of fundamental truth, the exponent of our theology, "in effect, a little book of experimental and practical divinity," the hymn-book is of great and inestimable advantage to the Methodist community. A dignitary of the English Establishment recently complained that, in consequence of having no authorized collection, hymns of every class, from Popery to Arianism, were sung in the Church of England. The question was discussed in Convocation, but without decided result, for there was "no power whatever in the Church of England to enforce the use of any particular hymns."

Our hymn-book, in which doctrinal truth comes to us in undiluted form, has, more perhaps than erudite and elaborate theological and doctrinal standards, moulded our belief and determined our theological views; and while our formulas of worship and manuals of devotion are sound and clear, the doctrines accepted by our fathers and approved by our people will be retained in their purity and integrity.