

ment having already been prepared in England, and a still *newer* book being proposed not many years hence. Some of us have been looking with strong yearning toward this English collection of the future as that on which we could all unite. If the Montreal book is so excellent as to command all suffrages, it has the great advantage of being earlier in the field; if not, it will divide us once again.

One reason of the superannuation of former books is the great advance that has been made in hymnology during the last twenty years. Watts was an immense improvement on his predecessors; but the Wattsolatry with which the first and second hymn-books of the English Union had to contend is passing away. Keble's *Christian Year* set up a new standard of devotional poetry. The treasures hid in ancient breviaries have been brought to light and "done into English"; the Christian songs of other lands, especially of Germany, have been made our own; modern writers have furnished new and precious contributions to the store; and the result is, that a great deal of pious doggerel has been rejected by universal consent. Moreover, there is a wise demand for more hymns of praise, and fewer sermons in metre. A Roman Catholic writer has made the just criticism, that Protestant devotional poetry is too *subjective*, too much descriptive, that is to say, of our own feelings, often of a very special character, and does not occupy itself sufficiently with the *objects* of worship,—God and His Christ. There is a lack, too, of *happy* hymns; the minor key of darkness and doubt too much prevails, and tends to perpetuate weak believing. We miss also hymns for Christian living and working; the books seem to be made for the closet and the church, not enough for the field. There is appearing, moreover, a different style of metres. Instead of the monotonous ding-dong of long and common metre, shorter lines and more springing feet are coming into play. Our ideal, therefore, of "The Coming Hymn-Book" is very high.

Will the Montreal selection meet these requirements to such a reasonable degree as to be worthy of our general adoption, to the abandonment of the hope of the unborn volume which has been conceived in the mother-land? That is the question for us of other churches. Until we see the volume we cannot answer it. The work is in good hands. But we will not conceal our apprehensions that the local origin of the book, the restricted use at first contemplated for it, the limitation of the sources of selection, and the extemporaneousness of the choice, may lead to some disappointment. We shall be very glad to find it otherwise. Many have wished to see a "Canadian Congregational Hymn-book." Such a book, framed by united counsels, and adopted by the Union, might suit us better than any British or American collection. Five hundred hymns might be more than any single congregation would use, but no two ministers would choose the same five hundred. Hence the size of modern collections. Is it too late to have some co-operation or consultation in this matter? For our part, however, we shall judge the book "on the merits," and if it is good we shall not insist upon technicalities. We trust, however, that those who have the matter in charge will give the book