

PREFACE.

yet here our difficulty begins. It is easier to discover what our hymns should not be, than to find such as are, in all respects, meet for congregational use; and the countless numbers of hymn-books prove, not only a difference of taste, but a real difficulty of selection. If it be desirable, as it appears to me to be, that a hymn-book, for the use of congregations in communion with the Church of England, should be composed of pieces of real poetry, not remote from common understandings, yet suggestive of holy thoughts; if such hymns should express the wants, hopes, and joys of a worshipping church, not of an individual mind; if they should not be long, nor, by reason of the irregularity of metre, incapable of being sung to known tunes; if they should be framed on the model of our Prayer-Book, and in harmony with its teaching; if all familiar, irreverent expressions, and needless repetitions, should be rejected; the difficulty of making such a selection is no light one. We may, perhaps, add to this the difference of mental training, which makes the very thing which to some eyes seems a blot, to others appear a beauty.

At my visitation, in 1853, a committee of the clergy of the Diocese was unanimously appointed to consider this matter, and, after careful consideration, we have agreed to a general recommendation of the present Hymn-Book. Its basis is the book published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; but it contains