

The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, January, 11, 1894

Our New Hymnal.

THE following communication from "One of the Committee" is worthy of prominence in our columns:—"No more important remit has been sent down from the Assembly to Presbyteries for a long time, than the one anent the revision of our Hymnal. Not that the present Hymnal is a poor one. It has been much appreciated, and has steadily grown in favour with our people during the twelve years of its duration. The proof of this is shown in the fact that in 1892 a surplus on the sale of the book of \$1,200, was placed to the credit of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. It contains many of the best hymns in the language, whose use in public and private worship has brought unspeakable comfort to the hearts of vast numbers of the people of God. It has also, unquestionably, improved the Service of Praise in very many, if not in all our churches, where it has been adopted. Hence it has been a means of blessing to our Church.

At the same time the Committee who prepared it have never contended that it was perfect, and some of its members have been among the most zealous advocates of revision. It is more or less widely felt, that, if we are to have a hymn-book at all, we should have as good a one as can be had. Also, that we should have one that will commend itself to all our people, both young and old. Especially do we need a hymn-book which will meet the needs of our Sabbath-schools, as well as of our Churches, one which will displace the trashy hymn-books, which are found in many of our Sabbath-schools throughout the country.

The Committee, appointed by the Assembly to consider this matter, met at Toronto in December, 1892, and sat for a whole week. They had before them the most recent editions of all the best hymn-books in the English language, from which they made the best selection they could. One thing that confronted them at the outset was the fact that we had no fewer than three or four books of hymns, each book having its own numbering. First there was Rouse's version of the Psalms, then the Paraphrases, the Hymns following them, and lastly the Hymnal. They decided that it was most desirable to have our Book of Praise numbered consecutively from beginning to end, the Psalms stand-

ing first, and the Paraphrases mingled with the Hymns, according to their subjects.

The question of retaining the whole Psalter was keenly discussed. There was a strong feeling manifested in favour of preserving the Psalms for singing. This was common to all. At the same time, it was pointed out, that but a portion of the Psalms is sung, even by such congregations as have not yet adopted the Hymnal, and that the best method of preserving the use of the Psalms, was to select such portions as are sung and place them first in the new Hymnal. Of course, such congregations as still desired to use the whole Psalter, would find it in their Bibles. The force of this plea was acknowledged by the large committee present, and, accordingly, a selection was made, which it was hoped would commend itself to our people generally.

The results of the Committee's labours have been considered by the Assembly, and approved, with the exception of the selections from the Psalms, which were so amended as to include the entire Psalter. The whole subject is now before Presbyteries, who are to report to the Assembly through the Hymnal-Committee by the first of March next.

It is to be hoped that Presbyteries will give this matter their most careful consideration, embodying such suggestions, as, in their judgment, will enhance the excellence of the new Hymnal, and render it the best in any Church.

Moreover, why should not Presbyteries invite the co-operation of our people who, after all, have the chief interest in this subject, since they must sing the hymns, in public worship. We should have the consensus of the whole Church, that so our forthcoming Book of Praise may satisfy our needs for many years to come, and prove acceptable to all.—ONE OF THE COMMITTEE.

Post Office Red-Tape.

The following communication from the Post Office Department, received by Rev. Dr. Moore, Ottawa, who is acting in the matter for the Committee, shows a curious interpretation of the rules of the service. Why M.S. for the printer, or circular letters, should be treated differently to statistical returns, which partake in no way of the character of private correspondence, it is only possible for men steeped in officialdom to understand. The letter brings to light a state of things that should be enquired into on the floor of the House of Commons:—

"With reference to your enquiry in the matter, I am directed to inform you that the Postmaster General is unable, much to his regret, to authorize the transmission of church statisticals returns, made on forms similar to the enclosed, at less than letter rate of postage. I am, Rev. Sir, your obedient servant, W. D. LeSueur, Secretary.

The Church and the Young.

There are several communications before us suggesting the continuance of the Symposium which has been running through our columns for the last two months on, How to interest young men in the work of the Church.

As an evidence that the articles, carefully prepared as they were by competent men who could draw from their experience, have done some good, these letters are very gratifying, but the various standpoints from which the