

## The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto, Oct. 15, 1896.

### The Book of Praise.

IT is understood that the Hymnal Committee has accepted the tender of the Oxford Press for the printing and publishing of the new Book of Praise. From the particulars to hand we can heartily congratulate the Church on the advantageous terms secured and on the business like manner in which the transaction has been completed. To an unprejudiced mind the duty of the Committee would appear to be to obtain the best book possible at the most reasonable cost, so as to protect the pockets of the members of the Church who will be called upon to buy the book for use in public worship. In other words, after care had been taken to provide a well-printed, well-bound book, the difference in the selling price of say 60 cents and \$1.00 per copy for the same book ought to be a determining factor as to what tender should be accepted. Should the Church member be able to buy a better book at say 60 cents under one contract than he could at \$1.00 under another contract, it will be admitted that the Committee would be bound to be governed by the interests of the Church members and so accept of the cheaper and better contract.

To the unprejudiced mind this would appear to be the Committee's duty. "The unprejudiced mind" we say advisedly, for accompanying the announcement, in the press, of the settlement of the tenders is a selfish growl of discontent which, on account of the interested source whence it comes, must be suppressed by an exposure of its real meaning. Briefly, it is the wail of a disappointed tenderer. There may be times when a disappointed tenderer may be justified in criticising the judgment that goes against him. But he ought to find fault on reasonable grounds and in a manly, honorable manner. Anger or revenge should not animate his attack. Above all should any one using the Presbyterian name, as has been used in the case before us, use fair argument and face to face methods. But these fair qualities are absent from the paragraphs in which the attack has been conveyed. Because the contract was not awarded to a Presbyterian house in Toronto, the Church must needs be besmirched and reviled and held up to the indignation of the public. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been of considerable use in the past to Presbyterian publishers and is not devoid of some valuable experience in that business, but it seems that past favors do not ensure present thankfulness.

To come to the point. The plea has been raised that having accepted the tender of a British firm Toronto printers, needing employment, have been deprived of work. Here it is interesting to note that the journal whose columns have been used for the attack on the Presbyterian Church is the journal whose cry is loudest for Sunday street cars for the benefit of the workingman. The workingman of Toronto is verily a heavy

charge on the minds of these benevolent people! There is as much sincerity in the cry in the case of the Book of Praise as in the case of the Sunday cars, and no more, for what are the facts? There have been hymnal contracts in the past and in every case the work has been wholly or in part sent to Paisley and Edinburgh, Scotland, for execution, because it could not be performed by the contractors here. Among the tenderers for the present contract it is questionable whether more than one firm could have "set" the music and that firm is not a Presbyterian firm, but a firm who possessing a well-equipped bindery, find it necessary to send its best binding contracts to England to be filled by the very firm—the Oxford Press—which has secured the contract for the Book of Praise. Several of the tenderers informed the Committee as a guarantee of the excellence of the work, that the printing and binding should be sent to New York or to Philadelphia, in which case they would be actually little more than agents in the whole transaction. In short, the Toronto publisher would make a handsome commission and the Toronto workingman would not be considered at all, for in most cases all the work and in some cases nearly all the work would have been sent abroad. Past experience it seems has not been thrown away on the Hymnal Committee, and in following out their own unbiassed judgment they have rendered the Church a great service; aye, and a great service to the Canadian public, as the future shall reveal.

The successful tender, which it may be stated, was only considered after all the local tenders had been thrown out, secures among other things a superbly got up Book of Praise, the paper, ink, printing, binding, and general get up, being all of a high quality—exceptionally good indeed—and above comparison with any of the other tenders, either Canadian, American or Scottish; and in addition that Book of Praise in its various editions will be placed in the hands of the Canadian trade, for retail sale, at prices ranging from a little more than one half to one third less than would have been possible had any other tender been accepted. On the one hand there stands a Toronto firm very much in the position of an agent (for as has been stated very little if any of the work would have been performed in Toronto), on the other hand the large membership of the Church. Whose interests are to be considered? Surely and undoubtedly those of the large constituency the Committee represents. When the Book of Praise shall be in the hands of the people they will realize the obligation under which the Committee, now so vindictively abused, has placed the Church.

### Religion in Scotland.

From a singularly interesting article on the "condition of the United Kingdom in which Rev. Principal Grant gives his impressions of the Old Country, gleaned last year during a brief visit, the following extract has been taken. The learned Principal writes in *Queen's Quarterly*:—"It may be more disputable to say that there are few signs that religion has lost its ancient hold on the British people. Evolution is now accepted by the man on the street, and it is changing the point of view from which all doctrines are regarded. The forms of religion are indeed changing, but so it has been from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. A member of one of the Assemblies spoke feelingly last May of the change that was coming over the Highlands. In his early days, "if children saw the minister, it put the fear of death on them," and he sadly intimated that it was otherwise now; that a visit from the minister was rather welcome than otherwise to the lambs of the flock. Church attendance is not so obligatory, nor