

same in all ages. It is the same Spirit which converts sinners now, that converted them in ancient times, and we cannot see why a soul, which the same Spirit converts now, could not sing the same song of praise which was sung by one of those converted in the revival produced by the preaching of the apostle Peter. We cannot understand why, if one of the ancient converts would give expression to "the young, glad spirit of faith and religious liberty" within him, in an inspired Psalm, why a soul converted now, by the same Spirit, would feel necessitated to give expression to the same feelings in an uninspired hymn.

It is rather an extraordinary test by which he tries the Spiritual life and piety of a church, and I question if it would have occurred to any one except the most ardent hymnologist. He tells us, "It is a mark of Spiritual life whether a church creates a hymnology or only adopts it." Consequently it follows, that a church which neither creates nor adopts a hymnology is lacking in Spiritual life, though she clings with the utmost ardor to the inspired Psalms. The fact is, wherever the Creator bestows the poetic gift it will develop itself. If the recipient be a Christian, he will give expression to his feelings in religious poetry, or if he be an unconverted man he will give expression to his feelings in secular poetry.

In proof of the correctness of his views, he refers to the Reformation, the revivals under the Wesleys, and non-conformists in the time of Watts. Wherever there is a real revival of religion, there is a greater outpouring of the Spirit, and consequently there will be more Spiritual life. But that Spiritual life will always flow in the direction of divine teaching for its expression, unless where early training has perverted the taste, and the visible life will lack vigor in proportion to perversion. All the natural powers of the mind will, in such cases, be quickened into unusual activity. The conversation will take a religious turn, prayers will be more lively and spiritual, and so will be the preaching of the gospel; and where there is poetic talent it will manifest itself in the composition of hymns or religious songs or poems; and literary talent will develop itself in writing religious books and tracts. It is quite true that during these revivals many beautiful hymns were written, but is it not also true, that many excellent and valuable books and tracts, on religious subjects—doctrinal and practical—were also written. I cannot see any reason why the composing and singing of hymns should be taken as a test of spiritual life rather than the writing and reading of religious books, or any grace, which may be prominently exhibited during a

true revival. We must try the reality of revivals, and the Spiritual life of a church, by the test given in the Divine Word. The Scriptures furnish us with the true test of Spiritual life and real piety. It is obedience, the bringing forth of the fruits of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." "If ye love me keep my commandments." The Apostle does not specify the making and using hymns among the fruits of the Spirit, or as an evidence of Spiritual life. Christ does not say that love for hymns is evidence of love to Him, but He does say that obedience is.

Mr. Harvey gives us a short and interesting account of a number of "Hymnists." Some of them quite modern, if not still living, others, whose history dates a little farther back in the annals of time. Some of them belonging to the Presbyterian Church, some to other denominations, and some of them known to be men of eminent piety. The object evidently is to lead the church to look with favor upon the compositions of such men, and to prepare it for receiving their hymns into the worship of God. But all poetry must be judged by its own merit, independently of its author. It is not the character of the author that gives merit to his poem, but it is the merit of the poem that stamps the poetic character of the author. Hymns are not to be received in favor, merely because their authors have been men of great religious excellence. They must stand or fall upon their own merit; and the Scriptural merit of a song for God's house is, that he dictated it.

The history of the church, from the earliest ages, abundantly shows that devout and godly men, endowed with the poetic gift, have delighted to pour out their feelings in hymns or sacred songs. It does not, however, follow from this that their productions are to be placed upon an equality with the inspired Psalms, or introduced into the service of the sanctuary. Throughout the sacred volume we find pieces of the most sublime poetry; the production of eminently holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; yet the Great Head of the Church in making the collection of Sacred poetry for the use of his Church in the service of praise has seen fit to exclude a large portion of this poetry. It is evident, therefore, that though their poetry is designed for the use of the church, yet it was not designed for the service of praise in the house of the Lord. It must be apparent then, that all poetry, however excellent, and fitted to be useful in private, is not to be admitted in the service of praise in the worship of God. There may be many excellent hymns, tho