

PREFACE

As expressed by formal resolution of the General Hymnal Committee during the session of Synod in 1905, the Compilation Committee's aim has been 'that in the selection of hymns and tunes the book be as representative as possible of all legitimate schools of thought and taste within the Church.' With this object in view it was directed that 'to each member of the Upper House and to every clergyman of the Church of England in Canada in active work a list be sent of the hymns contained in the hymnal in use in his parish, and he be requested to indicate thereon: (1) the hymns generally used by him; (2) the hymns never, or practically never, used; (3) the hymns considered indispensable; and that a similar list be sent to each branch of the Woman's Auxiliary.'

The Committee have not considered themselves bound in all cases to exclude a hymn in strict accordance with the opinions thus expressed, inasmuch as some hymns, though beautiful, have failed to win general acceptance owing to their being set to unattractive tunes. At the same time the Committee believe that no hymn has been omitted which has hitherto been found of general practical value. Moreover, by providing alternative tunes your Committee trust that they have made it possible for any congregation under ordinary circumstances to sing any hymn in the book.

Not only were the clergy asked to express their opinions, but professional and amateur organists in Canada were, as far as possible, consulted, and invited through the public press and otherwise, to communicate with the Committee. The publisher has spared no expense to enable the Committee by means of four printed drafts, issued from time to time in the past three years, to secure the utmost publicity for every detail of the work. Thousands of suggestions were received and considered, and it is difficult to give any adequate idea of the amount of detail involved in the labours of the Committee. In making the selection the Committee have carefully examined the hymnals of our own Church and also other collections.

The usual course in the compilation of hymnals is for the Literary Editor or Committee first to prepare and arrange the material, and then to hand it over to a musical editor for the preparation of an edition with tunes. In the compilation of this hymn-book the selection of the words and tunes was made by the same committee. The advantages of this latter course were many: e.g. hymns, especially those written in unusual metres, were passed upon from the point of view not only of their intrinsic merit, but also of the practicability of setting them to suitable music; for it was felt that however great may be the literary merit of a hymn, its value for congregational use depends largely upon the music to which it is set: or where two hymns were proposed of equal merit covering the same ground, or a hymn had been translated into English in different metres, the Committee by considering the music and the words at the same time were thus enabled to choose the hymn set to the better music.

Again, in the matter of order and arrangement a plan has been adopted which, while not in any degree impairing the literary excellence of the book, has permitted the Committee to adhere more closely to the system of grouping hymns of the same metre, in order that, as a rule, at one place more than one tune for the same hymn