

P R E F A C E.

THE influence of hymns of praise upon religious life has been felt and acknowledged in all ages, and in all branches of the Christian Church. From the beginning of the great religious awakening of the last century to the present time, the rich treasures of Gospel truth and Christian experience, embodied in our noble Wesleyan Hymns, have been among the most potent forces in the history of Methodism. These hymns have been a liturgy and a confession of faith ; promoting the spirit of devotion and soundness in doctrine, among "the people called Methodists."

The union, in 1874, of the Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist New Connexion of Canada in one body, under the name of "The Methodist Church of Canada," and the expiration of the copyright of the English Wesleyan Hymn-Book, the same year, rendered it necessary either to adopt the Hymn-Book of some other branch of Methodism, or to compile a new book of praise for the use of the congregations and families of our Church. The whole subject was fully considered at our first General Conference, in 1874. It was felt to be the imperative duty of the Church to supply our people with the best collection of hymns for public and social worship, that it was possible to obtain. The advantages of preparing a Hymn-Book, adapted to the wants of our Canadian people, and of which our Church would possess the copyright, were too obvious and weighty to warrant any other course. A Committee was appointed to prepare the materials for a New Hymn-Book, and report to the next General Conference. This Committee was composed of the Hon. L. A. WILMOT, Rev. ENOCH WOOD, D.D., Rev. G. DOUGLAS, LL.D., Rev. E. HARTLEY DEWART, Rev. JOHN LATHERN, Rev. JOHN A. WILLIAMS, Rev. G. S. MILLIGAN, Rev. JAMES CASWELL, Rev. ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND, Rev. JOHN McMURRAY, Rev. D. D. CURRIE, Rev. A. W. NICOLSON, Rev. E. B. HARPER, M.A., Rev. N. BURWASH, B.D., Rev. W. WILLIAMS, Rev. CHARLES STEWART, D.D., Mr. JOHN MACDONALD, and Hon. W. G. STRONG.