

COMMUNICATED.

THE NEW HYMN BOOK.

Since my return for a time to the quiet shades of Grand Pre, I have had what I have long coveted—an opportunity to examine the Revised Hymn Book, which the learned Committee appointed by the General Conference of 1874, set forth in 1880. A much needed work has been done, and but a casual glance at the book is enough to show that the Church for the way that the hymn book has been done. Though late I venture to give a few thoughts as the result of a more or less careful examination of portions of the new book.

First, as to the omissions. These are none too many. The blindest admirer of the old book cannot complain here. In my opinion, these omissions are all too few. We see no reason why common place hymns, lacking both spirit and rhythmical force, should be retained, when finer hymns having both were at the disposal of the Committee. The 9th and 10th verses of the 1st hymn have been omitted, and the 6th, 7th and 8th might have been just as well. The rest of this fine hymn has earned its right to live. The 4th and 5th stanzas of the familiar Invitation Hymn, "Come, sinners, to the Gospel feast," have gone, and the 7th and 8th might have followed them. Hymn 3 (the numbers refer to the old Hymn Book) is gone; its meter is unusual, its poetry awkward, and there is no reason why it should be retained. The same objection applies to Hymns 5 and 10, which are untouched, taking the place of finer hymns which would be sung. We do not see how the critical sense which rightly rejected many stanzas, could let pass the 4th of Hymn 10. Hymn 7 well shares the fate of Hymn 3, as do the last five verses of hymn 9. This is also well; yet with regret some will miss that fine and high wrought description of the effects of penitence and forgiveness in the soul in the joys of its first love. This description, it will be remembered, closes with the familiar words,

"The speechless awe that dreads not love,  
And all the sweet heaven of love,"  
which have gone together with the first part of the stanza which is not so familiar. The Committee have done well in the omission even of these unusually fine stanzas—written in Charles Wesley's best vein,—which, although they cannot be used in the great congregation, can still be treasured as among the most beautiful—barring certain extravagant expressions—in the poetry of religious experience.

The lament of Charles Wesley over the fallen state of Christianity, and his challenge to the sects to prove their right to the Christian name by their lives, is omitted from hymn 16 on Primitive Christianity. However called for in the degenerate days of Wesley, the lament is not in order now. We need not "wander far" to find the successors they (the early Christians) left behind, nor are the faithful "minished from the sons of men." Think of a congregation of God's children met to praise His name in song, lifting up their voices and offering him the 6th and 7th verses of Hymn 16! Yet the test of a true Christianity which Charles Wesley himself gives, holds good now in our orthodox days, when pronunciation of theological dogmas according to our accent is the test of fellowship, rather than the true and earnest life: "show me where the Christians live." The hymns which describe so vividly the physical sufferings of our Lord are omitted. They cannot be well sung in our congregations today, although meditation on the sufferings of Christ has always been practised by the saints and devout in the Church. Public song is a different thing, however; and these hymns are often harrowing in their intense realism. There are hymns, however, on a suffering Saviour conceived in such fine taste and spirit that they are eminently fitted for singing in the public worship. In fact Charles Wesley is hardly anywhere more eloquent than here. Read such hymns as "God of unsearched grace," "O love Divine! what hast thou done?" "Would Jesus have the sinner die," and the finest of all, "O Lamb of God, once wounded," where the great hymnist triumphs as it is but seldom his privilege. "When I survey the wondrous cross" is one of the few of Watts' hymns which will live, as it is one of the very few fine hymns which that over-praised poet has produced. On this theme, how grand is the old Latin hymn of St. Bernard (if I remember rightly), "O Sacred Head, now wounded," which I fail to find in the revised Hymn-book, and of which Wesley's seems to be an echo. And among modern hymns, what more beautiful than William B. Tappan's "This midnight, and on Olive's brow," which has also by some strange oversight been passed over by the revisers. The omission therefore of hymns 23, 24 and 25, will not be felt. Some will look in vain for hymn 26; but those who have noticed how the committee have often substituted a fitter and more delicate word for a harsher and more expressive one in the original, which did not grate on the feelings of the colliers and peasantry who sang them in crowds in the open air in the last century, as they do on those of the cultured and refined Methodists of to-day, will surmise that this favorite hymn has not been sacrificed on account of the intense metaphors of the first verse. So they will turn to Hymn 130 of the new book, they will find their dear old friend, its feature

slightly changed indeed, but its identity still visible under its softer lineaments: "I come, thou wounded Lamb of God, To wash me in thy cleansing blood; To rest beneath thy cross; then pain Is sweet, and life or death is gain." To the hardened and wicked crowds which heard the early Methodist itinerant, and who wondered whether elevation was for such desperate characters as they, the direct and assuring words of Hymn 36 would come as a hope and solace. The free gospel they heard preached, was sung also. Such a hymn was the offspring of such preaching to such men. But are there no "lovers of pleasure" in our congregations now? No swearers, no "misers," no "drunkards"? Well, let us go where they are, as the itinerant did. I have heard that hymn repeatedly sung in large and cultured audiences. But I have looked for it in vain in the revised book, yet I have seen many hymns retained not half so worthy as this—hymns with less poetry, less force, and hardly ever sung.

As a general thing it must be confessed, the revisers have used the scissors to good advantage. They might well have used them more. Yet I cannot but regret one other omission. It is the 6th and 7th verses of Hymn 38: "O God, of good the unalloyed sea." I doubt if this hymn is surpassed in all modern hymnody. It is truly a magnificent poem, worthy of the greatest of hymn writers from whose inspired thoughts it came. Why mutilate it? And the verses cut out are fully as fine as any, and all are needed for the full effect of this extraordinary song. One might as well take away a stanza from Gray's elegy, or a line from Milton's sonnets, or erase an arch of cornice from a design of Sir Christopher Wren, or Michael Angelo, or a shading from a painting of Rembrandt. It would be the hand might paralyse that would be bold enough for such desecration. So we must still keep the old book among our treasures, were it only for the fact that there we can find in its original completeness that grand and majestic hymn.

There will be a difference of opinion as to Hymn 48: "Ah! lovely appearance of death!" The majority of critics will not, I think, find fault with the Committee in omitting it. I once heard one of the ablest ministers of this Conference strongly disclaim from the pulpit against the sentiment of this hymn. I imagine most people would agree with him. To many death is forbidding and ghastly. A dead body is not surveyed "with delight." Few people "long to lie in its stead." Some would think such longing pagan and wrong. Yet no doubt there are those to whom the repose of the body, after the spirit has fled from its cares and sufferings, has a beauty which the poet has discerned. And some look out into the hereafter with calmness, not with longing and rapture, as the traveller looks upon his home from afar. Some can say as Charles Wesley said:

"To mourn and to suffer is mine,  
While bodied in a prison I breathe,  
And still for deliverance pine,  
And press to the issues of death!"  
If with subdued and congenial feeling we read over and over again these lines, some of their beauty will certainly remind us of the genius of the first hymnist who wrote them. In fact no less a critic than Dr. Whedon, of the Methodist Quarterly Review, than whom there are few superior judges, has given this hymn high praise, and thinks it is only surpassed in beauty by Byron's celebrated description in "The Giaour," those exquisite lines, commencing:

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead  
"Ere the first day of death is fled."  
(I cannot recall this eulogy of Whedon's. I have quoted it, however, in the article on Charles Wesley in McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia.) Lord Byron adds in a note, "I trust that few of my readers ever had an opportunity of witnessing what is here attempted in description, but those who have will probably recall a painful remembrance of that singular beauty, which pervades, with few exceptions, the features of the dead, a few hours, and but a few hours, after 'the spirit is not there.'" I cannot but think, however, that the hymn in question (48) is unfit for public use, will have but few sympathetic readers, and has been well left out by the Committee of revision.

ANNAPOLIS DISTRICT.  
The members of this District met according to announcement at Middleton, August 23rd, in the tasteful and commodious church which, as being entirely free from debt, is a monument to the untiring energy of the former pastor, Rev. Rob. Smith. All the circuits with two exceptions were represented. After devotional exercises in which prayer was offered by Revs. Jos. B. Bent and James Taylor the business was entered upon. The circumstances and probable income of the circuits and missions were investigated in due form—the prospective deficiencies of the missions were recommended to the grant, while superintendents of independent circuits rejoiced in the lean hour of prospective deficiency without grant. The time for holding Centennial services was agreed upon, and the meetings arranged for. There was the usual miscellaneous study in shorthand from the books of dictation speeches, honors which Superintendents this year in particular lavished with liberal hand upon their dear brethren.

The session was most harmonious throughout. The chairman, Rev. Thos. Rogers won the confidence of the brethren by the tact and ability with which he presided. In the evening a Centennial service was held which, in the numbers present, the ability of the addresses delivered, and in the financial result was most successful. As we took no notes of the speeches we can present but a very imperfect outline.

Rev. Joseph Bent was the first speaker. He referred to the inception of the great movement in England and to the individuality of the founders of Methodism, and the special work for which each was so fully adapted and to which they were divinely appointed. He traced to some extent the history of Methodism in these Provinces, and gave some reminiscences of his own labors and those of his cotemporaries during the past half century.

Rev. William Ryan was the next speaker. His subject—"The necessity for Methodism and the means of its perpetuation" was well presented. The necessity existed in the abounding immorality of the time in which the Wesleys appeared, as also in the prevalence of doctrinal error and a low moral tone in the Churches Galvanic fatalism was met by the preaching of peace salvation and the doctrine of Holiness in the Dominion. Voltaire was most effectively met then as always, by the revival of spirituality in the churches. To perpetuate Methodism there must be adherence to the old Doctrine, Experience, Practice and Discipline. These points were put with clearness and force, and illustrated by striking incidents and humorous anecdotes in such a manner as evidently to carry the audience with him.

The third address was given by Rev. James Taylor. He gave statistics of Methodism in the Dominion, and rate of increase during the last decade. These statistics were handled in a very interesting manner, especially those referring to the circuits within the bounds of the Annapolis and adjoining Districts. He then went on to speak of Methodism in its mission as one eminently spiritual, and its success as conditional upon the faithful preaching of a free and full salvation. The speeches were interspersed with music from a full and efficient choir. Collections and subscriptions amounted to thirty dollars. With so auspicious a commencement it is hoped the Centennial movement will be generally successful throughout the District. Bro. Rogers and his obliging and zealous colleague Bro. Dunkin, have received a warm welcome to their circuits and have entered upon their work most hopefully. R. A. D. August 28.

MEMORIAL NOTICES.

George Collins, of Berwick, Cornwallis, died May 18th aged 42 years. He was a son of Bro. Robert Collins, a long-trying and respected class-leader of the Methodist Church at Berwick, and whose name and interest in all that pertains to the prosperity of the Church are known and remembered by the several ministers who have labored on that Circuit. Brother Collins' children were trained in a godly manner, and all of them, we think, are steadfast members of the church of their parents. In 1860, George, then entering into manhood, avowed himself on the Lord's side. The profession then made he held steadfastly unto the end. Between that time and his removal from us he had sought and found the answer to the Apostolic prayer: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." In his life and deportment he seemed governed by the high purpose that his whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The general estimate of his character and judgment of his life, testify that he walked worthy of the vocation where-with he was called. In business he was scrupulously correct and had the confidence of those with whom he had dealings. As a husband and father he provided for his household, temporarily and spiritually. Desirous, as was his duty, to have his home and family as comfortable as his means allowed, he did not neglect the religious training of his children. Being blessed with a wife who entered into and aided his labors, his children were not only dedicated to God in infancy, but also, as they grew to years of understanding have been led to connect themselves with the Church. Early planted in the house of the Lord we have ground for the belief that they shall flourish in the courts of our God. For a longer time than was generally known an insidious disease was preying upon his life; yet he hoped he might be spared to his young family. But it was otherwise. The outbreak of life was suddenly attacked. Neither medical skill nor all that his family and friends could do was able to resist the assault. Hoping that God might spare his life yet somewhat longer, still in quietness and peace he waited to see what the will of the Lord was. The certain progress of disease and the consequent sinking of nature intimated what that will was. The disease was accepted without murmur or fear; rather it was taken as the call from a loving Father to his weak and weary child to come home to rest. So he passed away, in the full assurance of faith, "to be ever with the Lord."

BREVITIES.

Is it worse for the Chinese to admire a small deformed foot than for the French and English to admire a small deformed waist?

In a Western mine there is this notice: "Do not fall down this shaft, as there are men at work at the bottom of it."

A lawyer, explaining the meaning of "a contingent fee" to his client, said, "If a lawyer loses the case, he gets nothing; if he wins, you get nothing."

All who drink intoxicating drinks do not become drunkards, and it is equally true that all who go upon the battle-field are not killed; but all are in danger.

Let teachers beware of speaking to their pupils authoritatively on difficult subjects which they have not studied. If they do so, their pupils will be sure to find them out.—Mc-Cosh.

Gail Hamilton says: "A woman may have been originally one step in advance of man in evil-doing, but he very soon caught up with her and has never since suffered himself to labor under similar disadvantages."

Many a man has credit for a gift which he has not. Accident developed a sudden device, or prudent measure, probably, and the world has given him credit for great wisdom ever since.

A gentleman made a rockery in front of his house, in which he planted some beautiful ferns, and having put up the following notice found it more efficient and less expensive than spring-guns and man-traps. The four-inspiring inscription was: "Boggers, beware! Scorpions and Polydori are set here!"

"God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levelers; they give, to all who faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our race."—Hanning's Self Culture.

"Your honor and gentleman of the jury, I acknowledge the reference of counsel of the other side to my gray hair. My hair is gray, and it will continue to be gray as long as I live. The hair of that gentleman is black, and it will continue to be black as long as he dyes."

A fashionable Boston lady was unexpectedly without a servant. She undertook to make her husband a cup of coffee, but it took so long he asked what was the matter with the coffee. "I don't know," she said, "bursting into tears; 'I've boiled these beans for a full hour, and they are no softer now than when I put them into the pot.'"

A German wine merchant who was convicted and sent to prison for adulterating wine was forced to betray the secret of his operations. It was this: "Three thousand small casks of wine, by the addition of water, alcohol, potato sugar, wine dregs and salt, were made to yield the enormous quantity of 52,000 casks, which he sold at about fifteen times its value."

They err who tell us politeness has died, as witness the following postscript to a letter recently received by the Duke of X.—"From the steward of one of his estates: 'I beg that Your Grace will excuse for having taken the liberty of writing this letter in my shirt-sleeves; but the excessive heat has compelled me to be guilty of this apparent disrespect.'—From the French.

The enormous quantity of so-called kid gloves is greatly in excess of the amount of leather afforded by the skins of all the young goats annually killed to supply the demand. There has long been quite a trade carried on in Paris by the gamins in rat skins, who have much profitable sport in catching them at the mouths of the great drains of the city. Our real kid skins come from Switzerland and Tuscany dispatched from Leghorn.—The Queen.

Some years ago a young man, imbued with an iconoclastic spirit, as also with a high sense of his own abilities, wrote a critical essay on Plato, wherein he rather pecked at the old philosopher, and sent it to Ralph Waldo Emerson, asking him to read it and give him his candid opinion concerning its merits. Mr. Emerson, on returning the essay made only the remark: "When you strike a king you must kill him."

It is rumored that the historical bonnets of the Highland regiments in the British army are fated to disappear. Mr. Childers says that they are "heavy and costly." As a matter of fact, says the London other, a bonnet is merely composed of ostentatious feathers, mounted on thin wire, and is the best ventilated head-dress in the army. It is, perhaps, not generally known that a feather bonnet lasts an officer or soldier all his service, only requiring a little "setting up" every three or four years. Col. Lockhart of the 92nd used to boast that his bonnet had seen over thirty years' service.

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