

definitely dealt with, by giving an evening to the consideration of it in the Young People's Society.

Inasmuch as the book has been prepared by the Church to provide a comprehensive collection of hymns suitable for the worship of God in congregations, in Sabbath schools and Bible classes, in prayer meetings, in families, in home and foreign missionary meetings, in young people's societies, and in special evangelistic services, it is expected that the book will be used in the young people's societies in all our congregations.

The contents of the book are arranged in two divisions, I. Psalms, II. Hymns.

We shall examine these sections separately.

### I. SELECTIONS FROM THE PSALTER.

Some years ago Mr. George Hood published a monograph on the "History of Music in New England." His investigations reveal some startling facts. He shows that some of the more rigorous Puritans questioned the lawfulness of singing psalms in "meter devised by man," and so a prose version was prepared divided mechanically into bars which could be sung to a psalm tune. "Some believed that Christians should not sing at all, but only praise God with the heart." "Others believed it right to sing, but deemed it wrong to sing the Psalms of David." "Some believed it wrong for any but Christians to sing; and others thought one only should sing, while the assembly should join in silence, and respond, 'Amen.'" In dealing with this part of the Book of Praise it may be well to answer briefly a few questions.

#### 1. Why were selections made?

Because that has ever been done by the individual minister or leader, and it was deemed wise to make a wide and judicious selection of the Psalms and portions, usually sung, and make them, or the whole psalter, an integral part of every edition of the Book of Praise put into the hands of our people. It was done to ensure the singing of psalms, if possible, in all the services.

Why were changes made in the portions selected?

Because the infelicities of the metre, the awkward double rhymes, and other

metrical blemishes, stood in the way of their being generally used. Besides in some cases, the old version did not express clearly or accurately the truth of God's word.

Let the reader compare the fourth stanza of the second Psalm with the old version, and also the first line of the sixth selection as examples. Compare also the use of the Divine names. The old metrical version uses the terms God and Lord almost indiscriminately. In Psalm 67 the old version uses "people" while the true reading is "peoples," thus giving a narrow meaning to the Psalm. In Psalm 61 also, "land" is used for "earth," giving the wrong conception.

Every candid observer who compares carefully the new version with the old metrical version, and with the revised translation of the Bible, will see a decided improvement, both in the form and matter, and will see that the new is much more closely in accord with Divine truth.

The new versions of Psalms, giving variety in metre, and thus permitting the church access to the treasury of sacred music, which is the heritage of God's people, will be welcomed as a decided gain to the Church. Although selections have been made from the metrical Psalter for use in the service of praise, the Psalter itself still stands untouched in the Word of God.

### II. THE HYMNAL.

This is the Hymnal which was formerly in use revised and enlarged. It contains the great majority of the hymns of the old Hymnal, as well as a large proportion of those in the Sabbath School Hymnal. The Table of Contents, and the Index of Topics will show how large also is the addition of new matter.

The Rev. Louis F. Benson, editor of the excellent Hymnal recently prepared for, and adopted by, the Presbyterian Church (North) of the United States, writing in the Sunday School Times in September, gives an analysis of thirty-one hymns over fifty years old, which have been all but universally adopted, and finds five elements which they have in common. These form a very fair canon by which any hymn or book of hymns can be tested. A hymn likely to endure will possess,—(1) Lyrical quality,—(2) Literary excellence,—(3)