

only your ideal of perfection, but the power to realize it.

New Glasgow, N.S.

The Supplemental Hymn

By Rev. John Somerville, D.D.

One morning, some weeks ago, after having been brought back from the gates of death, with heart overflowing with gratitude, I lay watching from my bed the eastern window. The sun did not come into sight, but all the eastern sky became more and more aglow with his presence. What a comment it was on the opening words of Hymn 97* of the Book of Praise, which, to me, has meant much more ever since that morning:—

"When morning gilds the skies,

My heart awaking cries,

"May Jesus Christ be praised!"

It is a rendering of an anonymous German hymn by Edward Caswall, who has given the church many fine translations. Germany is the home of sacred song, having a collection of more than 100,000 hymns. Luther did much more than Calvin for hymnology. The latter almost put a ban upon poetry and music, as well as upon pictures in church service. Luther opened many channels for rivulets of praise, while the praise of the Calvinistic churches—the metrical version of the Psalms—was forced to flow in one narrow channel till quite recent times. All the Reformed English-speaking churches went through a conflict in the introduction of hymns. The revivals under Wesley and others burst the barriers, and glad hearts expressed their new experiences in new songs of praise.

To Germany we are indebted for thirty hymns in our Book of Praise. A reference to the index will show how rich and sweet are the hymns from the German.

Hymn 97 is a collection of verses from a larger hymn. It is a hymn of the type of Psalm 148, and others, which are pure praise. That Psalm calls upon all creation, animate and inanimate, in heaven, earth, air, and sea, to praise the Lord. It is the opposite of the litany hymns, although it has the litany

form. These are a cry for help out of the depths of sin, suffering, or temptation. The litany asks God to come down to help. The hymn under discussion, and kindred hymns, call upon the soul to climb the heights of praise and pour out its gratitude at the feet of God. An old writer, in giving counsel to one struggling against evil, recommended him, when prayer seemed to fail, to try praise. He found that the praise song often won the victory when the prayer cry failed.

Paul recommended Christians of his day to speak to themselves in "spiritual songs", and to make melody in their hearts to the Lord, and "in everything...with thanksgiving" to make request to God. Evidently he believed that in every phase and circumstance of life the Christian should be able to praise God. How true it is that the adverse things in the Christian's life often give him his tenderest and most enriching views of his Lord. Thus out of past experience he learns to sing praises in the midst of loss.

We need to cultivate the sense of the divine nearness, lest our scientific knowledge lead us to rest in second causes and put God far away. Cultivate friendship and harmony with Christ, and then in every circumstance of life, whether dark or bright, we shall be able, not only to say, but to sing,

"May Jesus Christ be praised!"

Toronto

All Christians

A minister writes recently to the British Weekly, that one of his Sunday School teachers asked him to take her class on a certain Sunday, as she was to be out of town. "I think", she said, "that all my scholars have become Christians during the past year,—all except P——, and she seems nearly ready to join them in profession of her faith in Christ." Later he learned the secret of her success. Besides being faithful in her Sunday School teaching, she had frequently invited the girls to her home for more direct and personal instruction and appeal than was possible in the Sunday School hour. It was not long, the minister adds, before the teacher's hope for P—— was fulfilled.

* The Supplemental Hymn for the Quarter.