

PREFACE TO THE HYMN-BOOK.

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 the newly-formed Canadian Methodist Church. The subject was considered at the first General Conference, held in Toronto, in 1874. A Committee was appointed to prepare materials for a new Hymn-Book, and report to the next General Conference. The report of this Committee, submitted to the General Conference which met in Montreal, in 1878, dealt mainly with what hymns in the old Wesleyan Hymn-Book should be omitted, and what abbreviations and emendations should be made in those retained. The Committee recommended that all the hymns selected for the new Hymn-Book, whether from the original Collection, or from other sources, should be arranged under suitable heads, according to their subjects. After full consideration, the following resolution was adopted:—"That the Report of the Hymn-Book Committee be adopted, and that the Committee be re-appointed, and authorized to complete and publish the Hymn-Book within two years."

Having their authority renewed, and their work definitely specified, the Committee applied themselves to carry out to successful completion the important task assigned them by the General Conference. The main work still to be done was the selection of new hymns, and the proper classification of the whole. In numerous meetings as separate sections, and afterwards in a protracted session of the Committee, held at Cobourg, during September, 1879, a great deal of prayerful thought and earnest labour were devoted to the preparation of such a Hymn-Book as would fully meet the requirements of the