

apparent in Charles Wesley's hymns.—Everywhere we find the natural outpourings of a heart warm with genuine piety and overflowing with poetry and music. One of the best testimonies to the excellence of Wesley's hymns is the fact that Handel, the prince of protestant musical composers, found in some of them poetry of his own grand genius, and set several of them to music. But then these hymns have far higher claims to admiration than those that rest on mere literary excellence. They embody, in noble verse, the very essence of the gospel—pure apostolic christianity—and thus commend it to heart, understanding, and imagination. The service they have rendered, to the cause of evangelical religion is beyond all computation. No great fundamental truth but is embodied in these hymns; not only so, but every phase of the spiritual life, every variety of christian experience and feeling, all the blessedness and rapture of faith, all the sorrows of a mourning spirit, all religious hopes, fears, and aspirations are expressed in these sacred songs. Thus Wesley's hymns supply the place of creeds, articles and confessions of faith. They are accepted as fitly embodying the creed of Methodism, and have undoubtedly given to it much of its power. Not only so, but they appeal to the universal christian heart. Many other denominations, besides Methodists, have adopted selections from them as media of praise, and found them the most expressive exponents of their devotional feelings. Think how widely they are sung in both hemispheres, by worshipping assemblies—how many death beds they have brightened with joy unspeakable—how many mourners they have comforted! From the dark depths of the coal and copper mine—from the lowly cottage, the crowded lane, the pioneer's log cabin, their heavenly music is heard, cheering, comforting, blessing, helping strong men in the stern battle of life, and making weak, suffering women christian heroines in the hour of pain and anguish. Isaac Taylor says of them—"there is no main article of belief, as professed by the Protestant churches—no moral or ethical sentiment peculiarly characteristic of the gospel—no height or depth of feeling proper to the spiritual life—that does not find itself emphatically, and pointedly, and clearly conveyed in some stanza. By the charm of sacred verse, Charles Wesley has, from Sunday to Sunday, been drawing thousands in his wake, and onward from earth to heaven." Dr. Hamilton says, "No hymn book has such a history. Could the instances be compiled in which it has been employed by the Spirit of God in arresting and awakening the careless, in enlightening the ignorant, in reclaiming the backslider, in comforting the dejected and sustaining the dy-

ing, a book larger than itself would need to be written."

Failing space warns me that I can make no lengthened quotations from Wesley's Hymns. To my taste, the finest of them all is, "Wrestling Jacob;" while after it, I should name, "Jesus, lover of my soul," "Love divine, all love excelling," "Come let us join our friends above," and "Stand the Omnipotent decree." One only I shall quote—

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide
Till the storm of life be past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.

"Other refuge I have none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee,—
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me—
All my trust in thee is stayed;
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing."

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want:
More than all in thee I find:
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind!
Just and holy is thy name;
I am all unrighteousness:
False and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace.

"Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within!
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart!
Rise to all eternity."

The name of Toplady is well known as a hymnist. He was a minister of the Church of England; and it is well known that he and John Wesley had a lengthened and embittered controversy on the points in dispute between Calvinists and Arminians, and unhappily in the heat of controversy, both were betrayed into the use of language which had now best be forgotten. Thus it is amid the damps and fogs of earth, good men at times mistake one another for enemies, though they are truly soldiers in the same army of the living God. It is beautiful to mark how in their hymns, these noble hearted Christians are one—neither Calvinism nor Arminianism mingling in these holy strains. Side by side in our hymn-books, Wesley's "Jesus lover of my soul," and Toplady's "Rock