

7. A few Hymns might be selected and members asked to give the authorship of the Hymn and incidents connected with its use.

8. Papers on the great names among the Hymn writers.

9. Members of the Society might be asked beforehand for a list of their favorite Hymns and a selection from these sung at the meeting.

10. As the question, how to make the most of the Hymnal, is a practical one, to which the pastor, who is mainly responsible for the service of praise, the choir master and the organist, have all doubtless given much attention, an address from each of these upon some phase of the Topic is suggested.

THE BEST CHURCH HYMNS.

Dr. Benson, referred to in Dr. Somerville's excellent article below, writes in a recent number of the Sunday School Times:—

A former article handled the question, "What are the Best Church Hymns?" It was there shown that, while every one is at liberty to choose the hymns that are best to him, only the church decides which are the best church hymns. The church hymn is intended for congregational use, and the best hymns are those which best fulfil that use; those, in other words, which have won the widest approval and use by the church. A list of the thirty-one best hymns was given, and the article closed with the suggestion that it would be worth while to examine the characteristics of these hymns, so as to gain an answer to the question, What is to-day the standard of the best church hymns?

Of these thirty-one hymns, only two are of the seventeenth century,—Bishop Ken's "Awake, my soul, and with the sun," and his "All praise to thee, my God, this night."

Of the eighteenth century, Dr. Watts leads with five,—“When I survey the wondrous cross;” “O God, our help in ages past;” “Come, let us join our cheerful songs;” “Jesus shall reign where'er the sun is;” and “There is a land of pure delight.” Charles Wesley follows with four,—“Jesus, lover of my soul;” “Hark! the herald angels;” “Christ the Lord is risen to-day” and “Lo! he comes with

clouds descending.” John Newton, with two,—“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,” and “Glorious things of thee are spoken.” And these others with one each: Toplady, “Rock of Ages;” Doddridge, “Hark the glad sound! the Savior comes;” Perronet, “All hail, the power of Jesus' name;” Cowper, “God moves in a mysterious way;” Williams, “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah;” and Cennick, “Children of the heavenly King.”

Of the nineteenth century, Lyte leads with two: “Abide with me,” and “Jesus, I my cross have taken;” and these have one each: Keble, “Sun of my soul;” Adams, “Nearer, my God, to thee;” Heber, “From Greenland's icy mountains;” Montgomery, “Hail to the Lord's Anointed;” Grant, “O worship the King;” Marriott, “Thou whose almighty word;” Elliott, “Just as I am;” and the anonymous recast of an older hymn, “Jerusalem, my happy home.”

Of the nineteenth century also are two versions of Latin hymns: Neale's “Jerusalem the golden,” and Caswall's “Jesus, the very thought of thee.”

The first thing the reading of this list suggests is the catholicity of the church's judgment; for Roman, Anglican, Independent, Moravian, and Wesleyan, alike, are allowed to contribute to it. The church's unity, indeed, is foreshadowed in her hymnody.

One is impressed also with the absence from this list of all recent hymns. There is none less than forty-five years old. At first, this would seem to indicate the judgment of the church that in hymnody “the old is better.” But the fact is rather that a hymn makes its way slowly, and naturally it takes a great while for any hymn to attain a use so general and widespread, and among so many branches of the church.

THE BOOK OF PRAISE, ITS HYMNS.

BY REV. JOHN SOMERVILLE, D.D.,
OWEN SOUND.

The introduction of the Presbyterian Book of Praise will call forth from hundreds of our pastors and leaders in the meetings of young people references to the subject of praise in general, and to the particular features of Divine praise as represented in the new book. It will be of service to have the subject more fully and