

leading hymn-writer of his generation, and that he is likely to remain for many years to come among the leading names in English hymnology. To-day he may be ranked *seventh*, possibly *sixth*.

The latter set calls attention to *the range of his thought*.

His hymns consist chiefly of warm expressions of Christian experience. Not infrequently he looks back and sings of the cross and redemption; and, again, he looks forward and delights in the coming of the Lord or in the joys of heaven. But he has scarcely any general hymns of praise. In that department Watts completely distances all others: about half of all such hymns in the books named above are from his pen. Bonar is rather like Wesley and Doddridge in this respect. The title which he gave to the volume from which most of these hymns are taken, "Hymns of Faith and Hope," is in full accord with this fact. He is well styled "The Poet of the Sanctuary."

Another fact is to be noticed, quite marked in the hymns we have been considering. They strike a good average excellence. He has written many good hymns, few, if any, that may be called great. Few men have written as many good hymns as he: many have written one hymn greater than any of his.

In loftiness of thought and grandeur of expression he cannot be compared with Watts. Nor has anything come from his pen at all comparable with Wesley's "Jesus Lover of my Soul." Here and there we find a stanza characterized by majesty of thought and worthy expression, but he never sustains that throughout a hymn. Duffield says "He has had the rare fortune to express the deepest of Christian feelings, and the loftiest of Christian praise." With the former part of the statement I can agree: to the latter, for reasons already indicated, I demur.

Let us thank God for his long and beautiful life, for his abounding labors with tongue and pen, and especially for the sweet songs in which he gives us words to tell out the passion of our souls in their most sacred hours. And let us be glad that he whose soul broke into music at the thought of the coming glory, now basks in the Lamb's everlasting light.

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