

Reviews.

The Revised Baptist Church Hymnal.

THE publication of the revised *Baptist Church Hymnal* by the Psalms and Hymns Trust is a reminder that Baptists have played an important part in the popularisation of congregational hymn singing. Two hundred and seventy years ago Hanserd Knollys recommended a hymn-book published for congregational use by Katherine Sutton, and in the following year Benjamin Keach incorporated hymns in his *Children's Primer*. Sixteen years later we find Hercules Collins urging, in an appendix to his *Orthodox Catechism*, the public duty of congregational singing. This innovation aroused great controversy, and for a century afterwards the General Baptists repudiated congregational singing. But among the Particular Baptists the idea was received with general favour. By 1700 Keach, who a decade earlier had printed 300 hymns for general use, could claim that congregational singing was adopted by many congregations; and this, it may be noted, was some years before Isaac Watts produced his first book.

Since those days a succession of Baptists have made important contributions. In England they were responsible for the innovation of hymns written by women; while Ash and Evans conceived the fine idea of assembling hymns by many authors in one collection. John Rippon's collection of hymns went through ten editions within thirteen years of its publication, and his selection of hymns remained in use at the Metropolitan Tabernacle until his successor, C. H. Spurgeon, produced *Our Own Hymn-book* in 1866.

A New Selection of Hymns appeared soon after the Union was founded, and in 1858, *Psalms and Hymns* made their appearance, gathered by a body of ministers representing the churches accustomed to work together with the B.M.S. A trust was created, and the Trustees catered for schools, special services, and the home. A music-book was bought, and another prepared. Later a supplement was added in order to include hymns of another generation. Add to such typical instances the contributions from the North of England, especially the Rossendale Valley, and we gain some idea of the place assigned by Baptists to good music in their worship.

The closer fellowship of Baptist Churches and the linking up

of the various denominational societies towards the end of the last century indicated the need for a new hymnal suitable for use in a wide constituency, and the *Baptist Church Hymnal* was therefore issued in 1900. It is pleasant to see that Mr. H. W. Pewtress, who was then the Secretary and Manager of the Psalms and Hymns Trust, still holds the same position and has carried through the very onerous work involved in the issue of the new book. The Trustees of the Psalms and Hymns Trust are responsible for the revised book. They have sought help and guidance in various directions, and two sub-Committees, the one dealing with hymns and the other with tunes, have devoted many days to their tasks, but the final responsibility has rested with the Trustees. They are twenty-four in number, comprising ministers and laymen, who, as will be seen from the following list, are representative both of London and the Provinces.

Rev. M. E. Aubrey, M.A.	Mr. C. T. Le Quesne, K.C.
Rev. W. E. Blomfield, B.A., D.D.	Mr. Herbert Marnham.
Rev. Carey Bonner.	Mr. Arthur Newton.
Rev. Charles Brown, D.D.	Mr. Sidney T. Peirson.
Rev. F. C. Bryan, M.A.	Mr. Seymour J. Price.
Rev. F. Buffard, B.A., B.D.	Rev. H. Wheeler Robinson, M.A.,
Mr. Herbert Chown.	D.D.
Rev. W. W. B. Emery.	Mr. Cecil B. Rooke, LL.B.
Rev. P. W. Evans, B.A., B.D.	Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., D.D.
Rev. B. Grey Griffith, B.D.	Rev. F. C. Spurr.
Rev. C. M. Hardy, B.A.	Rev. P. T. Thomson, M.A.
Mr. J. Stanley Holmes.	Rev. W. T. Whitley, M.A., LL.D.

(One vacancy).

No hymn-book can be expected to please everybody, and the original *Baptist Church Hymnal* has had many critics. The revisers, in the course of their enquiry, found that many tunes in the 1900 book were quite unknown to Baptist congregations and never used. It was obvious, therefore, that these tunes were occupying space which might well be given to tunes from other collections, and newer tunes produced by the musical genius of recent years. Further, the vogue of small collections such as the *Fellowship Hymnal* and youth collections such as the *School Hymnary* has popularised many modern hymns which clamour for admission. The revisers, when they set about their task in 1930, were confronted with a series of difficult decisions. In all matters of worship, taste plays an important part. Church organists have been known to differ as to the best blending of tune with hymn. The more "old-fashioned" among us like hymns reminiscent of the strong theology of last century; the more "progressive" clamour for hymns reflecting the social consciousness of our day. To meet the needs of both sections, to bear in mind the requirements both of village and city

congregations, to remember the young as well as the aged, and all in a period when so many things are in the melting pot—this is indeed a task of extreme difficulty. How have the revisers accomplished it?

The Revised Hymnal omits a large number of hymns which are in the 1900 edition, but there will be little mourning at their departure. Isaac Watts seems to have suffered most at the hands of the revisers, but a careful examination of these omissions fails to find among them any hymns that could be described as in popular use. The revisers have retained the hymns, such as "All hail the power," "Beneath the Cross of Jesus," "Come thou Fount of every blessing," "Head of the Church," "How firm a foundation," "Jesus Lover," "Nearer my God to Thee," "Our blest Redeemer," "Rock of Ages," "There is a green hill," "When I survey," which might be described as great hymns common to all sections of the Church. Indeed, the most conservative among us could not complain of the revisers' policy. The cuts have been made without in any way weakening strong and necessary evangelical expression. The new book bears out the claim in the Preface, that as many hymns as possible have been retained "dealing with the vital doctrines of the Christian Faith."

The additions are excellent. Doubtless many readers will miss this or that hymn which they would like to have seen included, but considering the additions as a whole we have to say that the new book greatly improves upon the old. Among the notable additions may be mentioned, "All creatures of our God and King," "Angel voices ever singing," "A safe stronghold our God is still," "City of God how broad and far," "Hills of the North rejoice," "God of our fathers known of old," Dr. Fullerton's, "I cannot tell why He whom angels worship," "I need Thee every hour," "Master speak, Thy servant heareth," "My song is love unknown," "There's a light upon the mountains," "O valiant hearts," "Mine eyes have seen the glory." The section "National and International" ought to please those who are familiar with Brotherhood and Fellowship meetings, for here are several notable additions. The "Youth" section includes G. E. Darlaston's "O'er the hills and by the valleys," set to *Hyfrydol*, and the familiar "Yield not to temptation." The children's section includes the beautiful "See amid the winter's snow," "Tell me the stories of Jesus," "Who is he in yonder stall," and Basil Matthews' "Far round the world Thy children sing their song." The section, Baptism, includes two additions, "Lord of the brave who call'st Thine own," and F. A. Jackson's "Master we Thy footsteps follow."

Much as the additions to the hymns will be valued, it will

probably be found that an even greater improvement has been effected in the matter of tunes. Sir Henry Coward commends the revisers for their wise discrimination. Tunes have been restored to hymns to which by tradition they are wedded. "The Committee," he declares, "have fulfilled the all-important object of providing an attractive, serviceable, stimulating, praiseworthy collection of tunes which can, and doubtless will, be sung with such heartiness that the concession of incorporating a few surplus—but effective—popular tunes can pass without adverse criticism." For less than 800 hymns the new Hymnal provides more than 1,000 tunes, and the variety should meet the tastes.

We congratulate the Hymns and Tunes Committees on an important piece of work splendidly accomplished, and on a valuable contribution to the Baptist worship of our generation.

F. TOWNLEY LORD.

Foundations (The History of Salendine Nook Baptist Church),
By Percy Stock.

In this careful and detailed study of a great and historic Baptist Church the author (whose father, Dr. Stock, produced a history of Salendine Nook in 1875) brings to his task many years of extensive research. He is very modest in his claims, and suggests that "one day some better man will set himself the task of re-writing the whole story." But if ever a better survey of this remarkable church be produced we should be glad to see it; Mr. Stock's familiarity with sources and documents stamps his work as a valuable contribution to Baptist history, while his distinctly original method of treatment relieves his book of any suggestion of "antiquarian dullness." No one can read this book without learning much of the social, political, and religious life of the last 250 years, and if its story fails to move us by its picture of sturdy and sacrificial Nonconformity, there is something wrong with our power of appreciation.

As far back as 1689 Salendine Nook was a preaching station within the range of the famous Rossendale Confederacy. William Mitchel and David Crosley, men of unusual capacity, played a great part in the Independency of their time, and in this isolated and sparsely populated district of Salendine Nook (as it is now called) they added their influence to that of the Mortons around whom the early dissenting meetings sprang into being. The Mortons were originally Scotch Presbyterians, but for half a century this connection with the Rossendale preachers was maintained. Mr. Stock shows us how, in 1731, Henry Clayton came to preach regularly to the community, and in 1743 a Baptist Church was founded, although for thirty years the community

had gathered for worship in a specially designed meeting-house. Mr. Stock gives us in full the "solemn covenant of communion," signed by "a small handful of the unworthy dust of Zion, usually assembling for the worship of God at Sallonden Nook." It is a great story, carrying us through the pastorates of Joshua Wood, William Brigg, Robert Hyde, and (among the more recent) Dr. Stock, John Thomas, D. Witton Jenkins, down to D. S. John, who is to-day maintaining the fine tradition of the church. Full justice is done to the remarkable laymen, of whom William Brigg and Thomas Stutterd stand out prominently. Here is a picture of a Baptist Church, its beliefs, services, experiments, and all described against the background of the time. It is the story of a church which, in 1820, identified itself with the Sunday School movement, which took its part in the life of the Association, which "mothered" other Baptist communities. Mr. Stock's "Pictures in the Fire," his excursions into the theology and controversies of the past, his frank declaration of his own views, and, not least, his description of his own parents, make this volume of great value to all who cherish the story of Baptist life and thought.

F. T. L.