

## THE PLAN OF STUDY.

FOR THE CHILDREN.

Conducted by Rev. R. D. Fraser,

**Topic for week beginning Feb. 12.**

THE MARKS OF A GOOD HYMN.

Rev. 5; 9-14.

Perhaps, children, you sing, as the birds sing, without ever thinking of how you do it, or of why the words you sing and the music fill your hearts with such joy; for it is mostly joyous hymns that are your favorites.

In the article that follows, Rev. Mr. Thomson points out what the marks of a good hymn are. You can remember these six marks which he gives by thinking that each one of the six begin with the letter P.

Very likely you may not be able to understand the reasons for all that he says just yet; you will come to understand by and by. But I am quite sure you will sing the hymns he mentions the more heartily because he has shown you what makes them so dear to Christian people.

Mr. Thomson, I may tell you, is a great lover of music, and would dearly enjoy singing the hymns with you. I hope that in many homes and in many junior Societies and Sabbath Schools as well, these hymns may be sung when this paper is read, and I feel certain that it will be with the better relish on account of his explanations.

I trust, too, that this talk about hymns, and another which is to follow later in the year, may encourage you to take your part heartily in the singing in the church.

It is sweet to hear your clear fresh voices mingling with those of the older people in the praises of God in His own House. How Jesus rejoiced in the Hosannas of the children in the Temple!

**Six Ps, Six Marks of a Good Hymn.**

BY REV. JOHN THOMSON, AYR, ONT.

*First Mark: Praise.*

As in the Psalms there should, first of all, be the mark of *Praise*. The praise must not be faint, but fitting and full as He whom we praise is "God over all blessed forever." Read Paul's

brief but very intense outburst in Romans 11: 33, and compare with it the fine echo which we have in hymn No. 7 in the Book of Praise:—

My God how wonderful Thou art,  
Thy majesty how bright!  
How beautiful Thy mercy seat,  
In depths of burning light.

*Second Mark: Prayer.*

The kind of praise we want is that which says first: "How beautiful the treasure!" and second: "O let it be mine."

Sing them over again to me  
Wonderful words of life;  
Let me more of their beauty see,  
Wonderful words of life.

Compare Song of Solomon 3: 4, and Psalm 63: 8, with hymn 418, vs. 4 and 5.

*Third Mark: Penitence.*

Our hymns are for men on earth, and not for angels in heaven; and it is therefore to be expected that we will prize that which we praise if we have not discovered our unworthiness to obtain it. Expressed or understood, there should be in every hymn the sentiment of the 51st Psalm; and is it not true that our Hymn book has richly responded to this requirement? See the closing verse of 197 and the last verse of 344.

*Fourth Mark: Personality.*

As in the Psalms, the first personal pronoun should always be understood, and sometimes, though not too often, expressed.

Following the Psalmist in these words,  
When Thou saidst, seek ye my face,  
My heart said unto Thee,  
Thy face Lord will I seek;

we have

"Just as I am "No. 151;—and—"Weary of wandering from my God" No. 172,—and every hymn that expresses consent to God's invitation.

*Fifth Mark: Plurality.*

As a rule the experiences we celebrate in song are not to be those of the individual man, but those of the whole body of worshippers. Our hymns are the hymns of an assembly, and they may well be the hymns of the whole creation when in such songs as the 148th Psalm all nature