

singing, that is, how singing can be more truly worshipful.

Now worship is largely emotional. It is the attitude of the soul to God. It is stimulated by religious thoughts that appeal. To appeal, these thoughts must be understood. For children these must be simple religious thoughts that are within their comprehension and that arouse emotional response. We need hymns then of this type and they are by no means plentiful. It would be hard to gather together from our Canadian books even half a hundred really good hymns for children.

One essential of good singing, then, in the sense of true worship, is the use of good hymns. Personally, I consider that such hymns as, "My God I thank Thee Who hast made," "O Jesus I have promised," "Yield not to temptation," all contain portions at least that express thoughts that children can understand and appreciate. Unfortunately we have very few hymns of service, the most appealing of all thoughts to the growing boy and girl.

Wedded to good worship hymns we want good tunes. They should be strongly rhythmic with good tuneful melodies. They should above all contain that indescribable quality that distinguishes good music from poor. It requires a trained musical judgment to decide whether a tune possesses this quality. I am of the opinion that tunes such as St. Theresa, Thanksgiving and All things Bright, possess these qualities in a high degree. Good tunes are indeed more plentiful than good hymns. Personally, I consider that many make a great mistake in imagining that the only type of tune that will appeal to children is the type represented by those extensively published by Tullar-Merideth or Excell. These certainly appeal strongly but they do not wear. They make good-convention hymns where they may be quickly learnt and used for a short time. They bear a parallel relation to good tunes that the popular passing song of the day does to those standard songs that we never tire of.

With good hymns set to good tunes we have the material necessary to good singing in the sense of true worship singing.

A very important essential to good singing is that the children are familiar with both words and music. The majority of children like to sing if they know the piece they are being asked to sing.

To secure this familiarity I would make one or two suggestions:

1. Have a Sunday School practice of School and choir under a good leader every Sunday for ten or fifteen minutes before the session starts.

2. Introduce new hymns and tunes slowly. See that practices are bright and interesting.

Keep at same hymns and tunes for several Sundays till they become really familiar.

3. Build up in this way a series of good hymns and tunes that are well known and available for use by the superintendent.

Space will not permit me to discuss the relation of the choir and the orchestra and of loud hearty singing to good singing. Nor can I discuss details of methods by which interest in singing may be stimulated and singing improved without any sacrifice of that true worship spirit which it is the purpose of singing to develop. The one thing needful is to keep ever in mind the fundamental principle underlying the whole problem, that singing is an act of worship and good singing must be such as to develop the truest and purest spirit of worship.



Some Problems of the Small School

By Rev. John Mutch, B.D.

II. THE HOUR OF MEETING

In the small School there are certain well-known problems about the hour of meeting. Sometimes it is decided by the possibility of securing a teacher. I knew of one small School which used to meet on Fridays after the public school, in the schoolhouse, under the care of the public school teacher, because she was the only one who would undertake the work and on Sunday she was absent, as her home was some miles away.

Occasionally, the hour rests upon the fact that the minister cannot be present at any other time. When this is the case, whether another hour be more suitable or not, both minister and School should remain dissatisfied till some one is ready to take the work so that the School may be independent of the minister. A great deal of talk about the minister's being present is nonsense.

Another determinant of the hour of meeting is the time of the regular church service. The family comes to church, and the School is held immediately after or before the service. In many places, where the people drive some distances, this is the only sensible course. It has also the advantage sometimes of securing the presence of the adult.

Sometimes, however, there seems to be no need for such arrangement, because occasionally the scholars live near enough to come again during the day. When this is possible, there are the advantages of freshness, concentration and even of the possibility of a larger attendance, which are otherwise lost.

On the whole, the rule that is to be followed is to choose an hour which is likely to secure the larger attendance, not only of a few select church families, but also of the total number of boys and girls in the whole neighborhood.