CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

In looking at Cooke's Church from the corner of Queen and Mutual streets it is ufficult to realise that the edifice has the largest seating accommodation of any Protestant church in the Dominion. Standing as it does on the edge of the streets, with no spacious grounds such as surround the adjacent Metropolitan Church, its mag-nificent proportions are hidden from the casual observer. Only from the interior is it possible to form an adequate idea of its large proportions. When crowded with a multitude of earnest worshippers, as on the occasion of my visit, last Sabbath evening, the scene is deeply impressive. I was surprised to learn that the congregation was not quite as large as usual, the weather being somewhat inclement. The usher kindly escorted me to a scat in the body of the church which 1 noticed was the only one available in that section of the auditorium. Rows of benches are placed along the entire length of the outer aisles which, 1 was informed, are usually completely occupied at the evening service.

The organ is placed in an alcove behind the pulpit, while the choir gallery occupies the intervening space. This arrangement is not the best that might be devised for the use of those who lead the singing of a large congregation. The narrow, oblong form of the gallery causes the singers to be dispersed in a manner which must make it difficult to secure that concentration and unanimity of attack which is so desirable in public praise. The choir would be much more effective if seated in a compact square in front of the pulpit. The volume of sound would then reach the furthest corner of the building unimpeded by the conditions which at present interfere.

The opening psalm was the eighty-fourth and was sung to Samuel Wesley's tune "Phillipi." The third chapter of and Peter was then read, after which the xlv psalm was announced. This was sung to " Raleigh," a tunedeservedly popular with Presbyterian congregations. I wonder whether many readers of the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW are familiar with the origin of the tune. It was written by Mr. David Grant, an amateur musician and composer of many excellent church tunes, who was engaged in business as a tobacco merchant in Aberdeen, from which he retired in 1878. It was named "Raleigh" by Mr. Wm. Cairnie, editor of the Northern Psalter, in view of the occupation of the composer and in honor of the introducer of "the weed" into Britain. The announcements were then made by the pastor, Rev. Wm. Patterson. I was especially interested in two of them relating to the psalmody department. Mr. Patterson announced that "we are trying to make it hot for the choir "; " they require to be kept in hot water." was somewhat startled at this announcement, as the average church choir is usually supposed to be quite equal to the task of providing more het water than is necessary for the harmonious conduct of its mission. My fears proved to have been groundless by the cool announcement that the collection at a lecture to be given during the week would be expended in defraying the cost of heating the church in order that the members of the choir might be enabled to practice in comfort during the winter evenings. The second announcement was that "the singing-class would meet on Monday evening." This class is coeducted by Mr. Johnstone, the efficient and painstaking precentor of the church, who takes this means of training the young people of the congregation to take an intelligent and active part in the service of praise. I hope the effort is appreciated and that the young folks take advantage of the exceptional privilege which they enjoy. The congregational singing-class has been the most important factor in the development of congregational singing in the Old Country, but, unfortunately it is somewhat rate in Canada especially in cities. The prevalent idea seems to be that when an organ an choir have been provided, the congregation have done all that can reasonably be expected of them. That there is still room for improvement in congregational singing was clearly proven by the singing of the psalm and paraphrase which followed.

The xxv. psalm, tune "Silchester"; and liv. paraphrase to "Offingham" were marked by careful attention to expression and phrasing on the part of the choir, but, in the congregation these necessary elements of good singing were conspicuous by their absence. This was especially the case in the latter. The tune being in triple time and sung somewhat slowly was divided into musical phrases of three beats each, and the words treated accordingly. The result was a mutilation of the text which entirely obscured the meaning of the words. The relation of the words to the sense of the phrase was completely ignored by the greater part of the congregation in defiance of the excellent example set by the choir. I punctuated the fourth verse of the paraphrase mentioned, as it was sung by the congregation, as follows :

Then will-He own-His ser-vant's name Before-His Fa ther's face, And in-the new-Jeru-salem Appoint-my soul-a place.

During the collection one of Sankey,s hymns was sung by the choir. The verse was sung by Soprano and contralto only, the male voices being reserved for the refrain. This was sung in excellent time and with good expression, but the blending in the duet was somewhat marred by a soprano voice which insisted on being heard above all others. But few choirs are free from such a damaging drawback. The sermon was an excellent one. Mr. Patterson selected as his text Gen. xviv: 17 "Escape for thy life". He drew a strong parallel between the fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and that which recently caused such great destruction in the business part of part of Toronto. He commended the firemen who displayed the noblest heroism in the execution of their duty and deplored the lack of appreciation which was shown to the men who are ready, at a moments notice to sacrifice their lives. He said "People say of their ministers," "our man is an alarmist." Thank God for it if he is. Men were excited to save life and property; woe unto him who is not excited when men and women are about to perish in flames. When the watchman ran to give the alarm would anybody stop to criticise his manner of running, or say whether his steps were of the proper length? Would anyone criticise the tone of voice in which the firemen called on Mrs Caven to jump? still people indulge in such damnable bosh when criticising the style of their preacher when he gives the alarm, and warns men to flee from a destruction which threatens, not only their bodies, but their immortal souls.

bodies, but their immortal souls. The necessity for prompt action was urged on his hearers and all were entreated to decide for Christ. While part of the audience was dismissing the choir sang a hymn. An after meeting washeld to which many remained. All joined in singing "I love to tell the story" after which Mrs. Patterson sang as a solo "What shall the answer be?" The audience joining in the refrain. With respect to the music of Cooke's Church there is one fact which must be noticed. During the main part of the service paslms and paraphrases only are sung, no hymus being allowed by the seasion, which, in the Presbyterian Church has full authority in all matters pertaining to the service of praise. A concession is made in the case of the choir which is permitted to sing a hymn during the collection. No anthems or organ voluntaries are permitted in any part of the service. "Old prejudices die hard." I could not refrain from thinking of the narrowness of the line drawn which the collection. No anthems or organ voluntaries are permitted in any part of the service. "Old prejudices die hard." I could not refrain from thinking of the narrowness of the line drawn which permits only such selections as are contained within the covers of Mr. Sankey's book, while excluding an anthem printed on a separate sheet, even when composed by the most scholarly church composers who have consecrated their talents to the service of the laster and have hild of their best on Hisplar. It cours that Master, and have laid of their best on His altar. It seems that even the endorsation of the General Assembly is an insufficient guarantee of the suitability of nymns for public worship, as even

the Presh terian Hymnal is not permitted to be used. With such a congregation of young people as Cook's Church possesses there are great possibilities of development in the service of praise. Let us hope that a broader spirit may foon prevail and, that the gift of song may be cultivated to its full capacity in the sunging of paalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Organ volum-taries are employed in opening and closing the service of the inatrument is used simply as an accompaniment to the voice. It for a provided should be used with so many limitations. The organist of the church, Mr. Guest, plays with much taste and skill, and might safely be trusted to introduce compositions such as would not shock those earnest Presbyterians who look upon e veryinno-vation as a step towards Rome.