

What is good Sabbath school singing? Singing that may be joined in, comprehended, and enjoyed by the majority of the children present. Singing, that while elevating in its character, is simplified for the use of the child, with a certain amount of movement and rhythm in it, pure sentiments, naturally, earnestly, but cheerfully expressed. Slow, doleful hymn tunes should never be heard in Sabbath school, though the tender, the sympathetic, if carefully, earnestly and meaningfully used are within the domains of youthful thought and expression. The musical exercises should never be taken beyond the reach of the possibilities of the child's taking part in the Sabbath school.

The Sunday school choir should, in my opinion, be abolished. The entire school should be the choir. Much precious time and labor are now wasted in the musical field by a want of system. Our adult singers are called upon to be members of the Tabernacle choir, the ward choir, the mutual improvement choir, the Sunday school choir, and they are not fit members of any unless they take time to receive some training, which necessitates the attendance at a singing class every week. They try to do their duty by joining all, and find it impossible. Then one organization begins to tear the other down. Then a good Sunday school choir, a poor ward choir, and vice versa, etc. Something must be neglected, and it is a constant struggle to keep up organizations. Choir leaders become disheartened, and all progress is clogged. A choir is not only unnecessary as an independent organization in the Sabbath school, but a detriment, inasmuch as it deprives the majority of the privilege of taking actual part in this exercise which should be the one class for all in the school. Singing should be one of the regular studies of every Sabbath school, taken by all at once. Twenty minutes, or even half an hour, should be devoted to it—the last of the session.

Here the songs would be taught, part singing would be practiced, the entire school turned into a choir, one night's work less for the over-worked singers and conductors (a blessed relief) and equally a beneficial relief for most schools to have half an hour less of other exercises supplanted by as much in singing.

While there are a few, a very few, competent men in charge of our Sunday school singing, the great majority of them are far from being capable of putting to good use the vast amount of talent found in the schools. The very time they have to spend in the struggle of keeping up the choir precludes any self-improvement, and as Brother Maesser often so truly tells us, "A man can not impart what he hasn't got." Today it is painfully evident throughout the Territory that our leaders in music have not kept pace with the advancement of the masses. Do not misunderstand me. The masses do not understand music now better than the choir leaders; but while the people in general have advanced a hundred per cent. in love and appreciation for and ability in music, during the last fifteen years, the average choir leader of today is but little more proficient or progressive than the choir

leader of fifteen years ago. Why? He hasn't had time to progress—too many duties have been piled upon his broad shoulders. He has ambition to delve deeper, that he might have more treasures to impart; but he hasn't a free moment in which to delve; hence by degrees he gets into a beaten path and soon lives in the past. Who of you is not grateful that there are schools where young men may attend for years to learn how to properly teach the principles of the Gospel? Is it not time that those whose ability and love for music prove that God has implanted it there for some noble and practical purpose should have time and opportunity to fit themselves to lead and direct progressively the tens of thousands who are growing up, bubbling over with song, within our mountain valleys? These leaders must have special training for this, or fail to command the full confidence of even children in their work. If you would have your singing in your Sabbath schools improve, see that he who has charge has the time and opportunity to improve also, as the one becomes impossible without the other. You need a training class for young conductors, just as much as you do for young missionaries or school teachers. Again, do not misunderstand me. Music should not and cannot be studied for any practical use alone, but the instructors in music (and a choir leader is nothing if not an instructor), must give special study to that branch.

How much of my own work here in Salt Lake City has been made comparatively fruitless for the want of unity in action between myself and the various leaders having local charge of music, where the children under my training should have become of service in the ward Sabbath schools. The various modes of procedure—no two alike—were all perhaps different to mine, and the children, being successful with me, naturally had no confidence in a reverse course. Hence the cry would often be "We can't do anything with Stephens' pupils." Once, while paying a visit to a certain school in this city, I was openly accused of this, notwithstanding that nearly all the young ladies (scarcely out of my children's classes) who constituted the choir were my pupils. The singing at the school did not show that anything was being systematically done by anybody's pupils; it was a house full of fine material in a confused state. So far as the singing was concerned, I had prepared the material, but the local leader had not the least idea how to put them in their places; and because they did not jump into position and arrange themselves or fit in any shape his fancy for the moment might suggest, I was to blame, of course.

Take the building of our great Temple as a comparative case. The architect has done his work; every stone has been calculated upon and chiseled into exact shape; all is correct. But the stone layers have no idea of his plan; they have been accustomed to build at random, and they misplace the stones. Result: even the shaping of each stone makes it a misfit, and the stone layer, or those in charge, blindly blame the stone cutter for making the stone unfit to be laid—at random.

How ridiculous you say. It has

been precisely my experience in my labors with the Sabbath schools of this city. What will obviate such a difficulty? A proper study of plan and action. If I prepare the material, is it not reasonable that those who use them should understand the method of preparing, and continue in the work in systematic order? The Sabbath schools of this city need a class for the instruction of young music leaders, and if even those of mature experience attended such a class, it would result in system and uniformity.

My opinion on the point as to what music we should sing is that the selections to be found in the new book just issued by the Sunday School Union cannot be excelled or even approached in suitability, even of music (to say nothing of sentiment) by any eastern published books. I would wish for but little if anything else from which to train my school in singing for the next three or four years if I had charge of a school; and it is my belief that leaders who ignore it for eastern selections are pasturing in mistaken fields, neglecting richer food especially prepared for them. I do not believe in being blindly exclusive. There are sweet morsels even for children to be culled from outside works, that it would be a veritable loss to pass them by. Leaders should be conversant with the best of everything published in their line. Then if our home work falls behind they can be a means of stirring up our own talented composers to better work.

The singing book should be the property of the child using it, and become a part of the Sunday school dress, as it were. The neat, clean dress, combed hair, blackened shoes, kerchief and music book in hand, should be the leading points of the picture—"a child on its way to the Sabbath school." One book might serve two children, provided they can stand or sit together during the musical exercises. The work of rousing the young, and the old to some extent in music has been so well accomplished by jubilees, classes, schools and concerts, that now they pause, waiting for capable men and system to lead them on to greater perfection.

Our future, musically, depends upon what shall be done in this direction. Our wonderful musical talent will avail us little if not intelligently directed in a proper channel. With these few reflections I will close, wishing a speedy renewal of progress to music in the Sabbath schools.

Supt. Griggs suggested that as frequent circulars were sent by the general officers of the Sunday School Union, which often were important for reference, and if the Sunday schools were to provide themselves with a scrap book in which these circulars could be preserved, they would be more useful to them.

The Thirteenth ward school was requested to furnish the music at the next meeting of the Union.

Benediction by Supt. C. H. Gold, of Brighton.

JOS. HYRUM PARRY, Sec'y.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 25.—Dr. Gannier reports that Mrs. Harrison slept several hours today and is comfortable and resting quietly tonight.