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THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP IN A SESSION OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL

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real and the two forms of prayer are right; but they are different, and cannot be brought too closely together without such a shock as may be fraught with danger.

Let the order of worship, then, be formal, dignified, classic, culminating in adoration. And then, at another time, when the God-appointed man finds himself moved to utter the sacredest things, let the spontaneous prayer be outpoured. Few are they who may well be trusted with this holy task! A score may read fittingly and adequately the general order of service where one may be trusted to lead in prayer. The service of worship may, indeed, prepare for this tender, intimate petition for the personal blessing. But for that sacredest thing let not the maker of rubrics assume to provide. His task is to prepare fitting means by which the souls of our young people may through a common service of worship expand to universal sympathies and rise to supreme adoration.

THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP IN A SESSION OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL

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In order to define the purpose of worship in a session of the church school, the results which are intended, thereby, to be achieved, should be stated. To find these results, we must go to the lives, the conduct of the pupils. The vital question is: What are these services intended to do for those who participate in them?

It is apparent that, in the lives of the pupils, there is need of a permanent mood of reverential awe, of confidence, of admiration. Their every-day attitude toward God should be appropriate in view of the nature of God. The question is not what they think about God, but what are their personal bearings toward Him. The influence of the service of worship should be registered in the character of the permanent relationship between the pupil and the One who to him is of supreme worth. Just as it is necessary, deliberately, to cultivate an attitude of love on the part of the pupil toward the neighbor, so it is necessary to aim, specifically, to cultivate in him, as an abiding life possession, an attitude of holy love toward God.

There is a tendency for every experienced emotion to pass over into a permanent mood. The latter may not be as intense as the former. It is spread out over a wider area. It does not interfere with thought and action. But in order for this desirable mood to remain an abiding quality of the pupil's life and conduct, he must experience, with something of frequency, regularity, and intensity, feelings that correspond to that mood. That is, reverence needs to be kept alive. At regular and frequent intervals he needs to *feel* the majesty of God and of his own relative insignificance; the power of God and of his own relative weakness and dependence on Him. In order to keep alive and to securely establish the permanent mood, such feelings as these must come to him with sufficient intensity, frequency, and regularity.

This principle would seem to raise the question of the purity of the feelings aroused in the service of worship. For a feeling of irreverence becomes a permanent mood in the same way as does the feeling of reverence. A service that is not properly conducted not only does not do good—it effects positive, spiritual injury.

An æsthetic appreciation of the means of worship cannot take the place of worship itself. One is concerned with form and the other with content. We may appreciate the literary beauty of a prayer or of a hymn and yet not really worship God in using them. There should be a certain congruity between the character of the form and means of worship and that of the nature of the One worshipped. A service that does not have stateliness and dignity would be in danger of arousing the wrong feeling. But even where the character of the service is appropriate, if the attitude of the prospective worshipper is that of æsthetic appreciation only, the service, as a service of worship, has failed in his case. There are "service tasters," we fear, as well as the old-fashioned "sermon tasters." When reverence gives way to æsthetic appreciation and the individual is no longer able to worship God even in a suitable service, what profound injury has come to that life!

Or, take a case where the fault is that of the service, rather than that of the worshipper. Where the element of novelty, for instance, is excessive, the difficulties in the way of there being aroused a true feeling of reverence are greatly increased. The effect, in aggravated form, is seen when one accustomed to worship in a service of marked simplicity of form attends a service that is highly ritualistic. To get beyond perception seems impossible. What is seen and heard is so impressive that the realities symbolized therein are overlooked. The music is heard but its deeper meaning is lost. The

necessity of being alert to discover what is the next thing to do or how to avoid becoming conspicuous through a mistake leaves little opportunity for worship. So in any service where it is necessary to give constant attention to the form, wrong feelings are apt to be aroused.

Still another undesirable type of situation is seen when the prospective worshipper's mind is not pre-empted with a wrong attitude, but when the service fails to hold his attention and interest. If there is no variety, month after month, this is apt to be the case. And if the ideas presented make apperception difficult, the same results obtain. A feeling of indifference is aroused. In many Sunday schools the service of worship that is intended to establish a mood of reverential awe in the lives of the pupils has actually resulted in making them permanently indifferent.

My plea, then, is simply this: Let each service of worship in the church school arouse a pure feeling of awe, of confidence, of admiration, of worship. Then, let these feelings be experienced with adequate intensity, frequency, and regularity by our boys and girls. Thus the reverential mood will become firmly established in their lives. And thus one purpose of worship in the church school will be achieved.

HOW EARLY SHOULD SOCIAL WORSHIP BECOME FORMALIZED INTO AN ORDER OF WORSHIP?

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The writer finds the title of his paper already formulated for him, but is inclined to ask in a preliminary way how worship can become social at all without at least the beginnings of formalization. If the child group assembles for worship, there must at least be a stated place and time for it. If there is singing, the words at least are fixed. If there is prayer, or scripture reading, or any assertion of faith or ideals, these things also tend to take a certain order, even if it be varied on different occasions. Every prayer memorized or repeated in concert is the beginning of ritual. Quarterlies and lesson-books print suggested orders of opening and closing services.