

HYMNS AND PRAISE SONGS: THE EXPLANATION

An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended a large church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was.

"Well," said the farmer, "It was good. They did something different, however. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns."

"Praise choruses," said his wife, "What are those?"

"Oh, they're okay. They're sort of like hymns, only different," said the farmer."

"Well, what's the difference?" asked his wife.

The farmer said, "Well it's like this -- If I were to say to you: 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' well that would be a hymn. If, on the other hand, I were to say to you:

Martha Martha, Martha,
Oh, Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA,
the cows, the big cows, the brown cows,
the black cows, the white cows, the black and white cows,
the COWS, COWS, COWS
are in the corn,
are in the corn,
are in the corn,
are in the corn,
the CORN, CORN, CORN.

Then, if I were to repeat the whole thing two or three times, well that would be a praise chorus."

The sequel!

Coincidentally, the same week, a young businessman from the city who normally attended a church with contemporary-style worship, was in the old farmer's town on business and visited the farmer's small town church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was.

"Well," said the young man, "It was good. They did something different, however. They sang hymns instead of regular songs."

"Hymns," said his wife, "What are those?"

"Oh, they're okay. They're sort of like regular songs, only different," said the young man.

"Well, what's the difference?" asked his wife.

The young man said, "Well it's like this -- If I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' well that would be a regular song. If, on the other hand, I were to say to you:

Oh Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry.
Inclinest thine ear to the words of my mouth.
Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear
by and by to the righteous, inimitable, glorious truth.
For the way of the animals who can explain,
There in their heads is no shadow of sense.
Hearkenest they in God's sun or his rain
Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced.
Yea those cows in glad bovine, rebellious delight,
have broke free their shackles, their warm pens eschewed.
Then goaded by minions of darkness and night,
they all my mild Chilliwack sweet corn have chewed.
So look to that bright shining day by and by,
where all foul corruptions of earth are reborn.
Where no vicious animal makes my soul cry.
And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn.

Then, if I were to do only verses one, three and four and do a key change on the last verse, well that would be a hymn."