

# GOD, WHO TOUCHEST EARTH WITH BEAUTY



Have you ever camped under towering pine trees near a spring of running water . . . and . . . in a quiet moment . . . been so touched by the beauty surrounding you that your thoughts turned toward God as the source of *all* beauty?

You could probably guess that the hymn, *God, Who Touchest Earth With Beauty*, was written by someone who had experienced just this kind of moment. Her name was Mary S. Edgar and she was director of the Glen Bernard Camp in Canada. She wrote the hymn first as a portion of an initiation service for the campers; but now the hymn is used not only in America but in Japan, France, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, New Zealand — even by the Cree Indians.

How many of the “similes” or ways of comparing the beauties of nature with the beautiful qualities possible in human personality can you find in the stanzas:

“Purity” like the \_\_\_\_\_

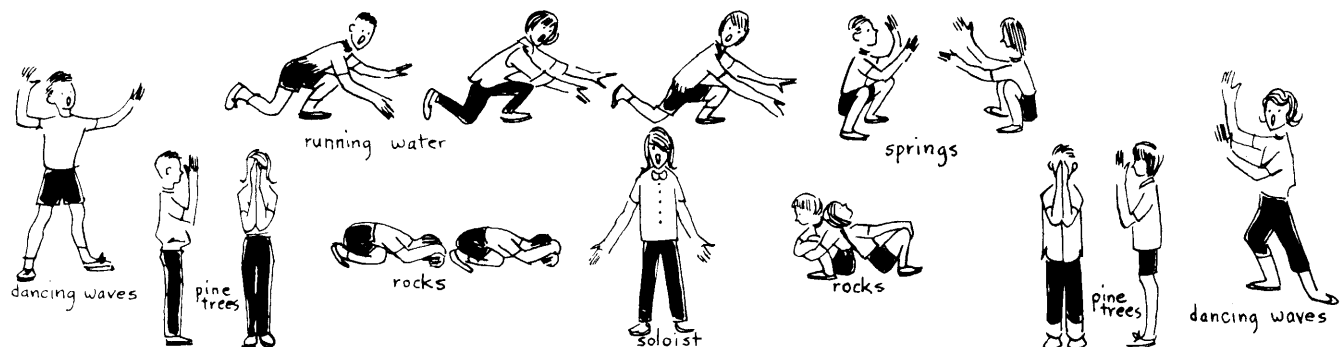
“Strength” like the \_\_\_\_\_

“Gladness and Free-Spirited” like \_\_\_\_\_

“Upright” like \_\_\_\_\_

“Thoughts high-lifted” like \_\_\_\_\_

Some choirs have interpreted the words with movement for a youth retreat service. They have used a soloist to interpret the first and last stanzas as a solo with the rest divided into smaller groups to represent the “springs and running water,” the “rocks of towering grandeur,” the “dancing waves in sunlight,” the “pine trees” and so on. The starting position could be something like this:



Many tunes are used with Mary Edgar’s text, including the one in our CHORISTERS’ LITTLE HYMNAL, “Bullinger,” by E. W. Bullinger. The harmonization of this tune makes for easy camp singing since only four different pitches are used in the alto part. Dr. Austin C. Lovelace has written a beautiful anthem with an entirely different tune. It is called *God of Beauty*.

Find all the slurs in the hymn — and if you have forgotten what a slur is, notice that each time one is used, it joins two different notes which are sung with a single word or syllable. Do you remember how a slur differs from a tie — both in appearance and in meaning?

The quiet moments of inspiration that can happen in the midst of a camping trip or vacation are important . . . but even more essential is to act upon the prayer that God “makes our hearts anew” after we have returned to our busy everyday life. It is easy to want to be upright as a pine tree when we stand in its shadow; but the real test is in being just as upright and strong when the “pine” is only a memory of a wonderful summer experience!