

TO-DAY'S CHURCH MUSIC

Is music important? Or is it just something to be gotten out of the way before the sermon can be presented? Christ commands that we worship in spirit and in truth. If we are putting something in our services that is no part of true worship then there is a deep shadow of insincerity in the services.

Music is important! Christ sang with His disciples before going to Gethsemane. Paul and Silas sang in jail. With a Charles Wesley probably John would not have been as effective. Without a Sankey. Moody would have lost his place with the great. Without a Barrows or Shea, Graham could not take his place as our prophet of today. Music is vital to the church of today.

Since music is vital, the kind of music we sing is important, and our attitude toward music should be keen. When we go to purchase a car, just because it has four wheels and a motor and we are told it is a car is no reason to make the purchase. Just because we see a few printed notes on a page with words under them is no justifiable reason for using it or calling it music.

Music has its quality as well as any other merchandise or service. The purpose of this article is to point up the fact that it is possible to become careless as to the quality of music in our worship. We are not to be satisfied in getting by with the easiest at the sacrifice of quality.

May we look at three things our Bible gives us as standards for good quality in music. First, "I will sing with the spirit." Second, "I will sing with the understanding." Third, "Sing with grace."

Singing in the spirit involves more than a high emotional tone. Anyone with a big smile, a witty personality, and rapid tempo can bring an audience into a high emotional key—whether or not he knows anything about music. True singing will bring the soul to an awareness that God is present; to an inward sense of His reality.

Spirit singing brings one to the knowledge that there is a message of strength and courage in the words of the hymns. Suppose Charles Wesley had written meaningless sentiments as found in some of our books today. His works would have perished long ago. The strength of the Wesleyan doctrine is undergirded by the hymns of Wesley.

Spirit singing also gives us the satisfaction that we are passing on to our children and the generations to come an inheritance that will bring joy and inspiration to live by. The great hymns of the Church will inspire our children to do more for the kingdom of God.

Singing in the spirit is only successful when supplemented with understanding. Know of what you sing—sing of what you know. Why be satisfied with just any song when there are rich and meaningful songs obtainable. We would never let a minister come into our congregation and preach a doctrine different than ours. Let's be sure the hymn books are doctrinally safe. Because it has a few old songs that our people know, is no reason to accept the entire book.

For a complete understanding of our church music one more thing is necessary—the singers. Never pick a person to sing or lead just because they have some musical talent. Exercise great care in selecting only those whose character is above reproach.

Again, I have had men tell me that their church was good, their pastor preached with depth and sincerity, they had a good standing in the community, and yet they felt they were not as effective as they should be. I always suggest that they are using only half their opportunity. Every Sunday morning and night we spend one hour in worship before God. If half that time is all that has been prepared for, if half that time is all that is taken seriously, if half that time is all we expect to get help from,

shouldn't we expect half results? Shouldn't we expect the ministry to be half effective? When our whole service becomes serious, sincere, and meaningful, then our message of salvation becomes clear to others.

We should expect the same type of life from our leaders of song as we do our ministers. We should expect the same devotion, sincerity, and reverence from our singers as we do from our ministers. If one is to be a minister in half of the corporate worship, he should carry the same devotion to God and His work as his partner in the opposite half.

Singing with grace does not mean singing gracefully. Nowhere in the Bible does it tell us that we have to have special talent or training to be of service to God. Just because you are skilled in all the art and mastery of singing, does not qualify you to sing with grace. The inner region of the soul is audible to God in the song that goes through the lips when singing with grace in our hearts.

Today's church will become effective through music, when we learn the value of singing with spirit, understanding, and grace in our hearts.

—The Wesleyan Methodist

WE BELIEVE IN RESTITUTION

Rev. David Anderson

The manifestations of sin in human life are almost impossible to compute. Fallen nature asserts itself because fallen man is powerless in the battle against sin until he is born again by the Spirit of God.

Men sin against God, against their fellow men, and against themselves. It is much easier to do wrong than to undo the wrong committed.

Restitution means "the act of making good any loss, injury, or damage." It is not always possible for people to make good every loss, injury, or damage, but we are expected to do all that lies in our power to make amends for our irrational conduct when we were led captive by the devil at his will.

When we were unsaved, we all wilfully sinned against God and injured His righteous cause. In order to get right with Him we truly repented of our wickedness, and since we have found pardon for all our sins, by His almighty grace we do all in our power to glorify God in every manner possible. By so doing, we prove to the world that our profession of salvation is genuine.

In sinning against our fellowmen, they may be injured by loss of property or loss of good name. Where these things exist they ought to be rectified at the earliest possible moment. Common honesty, as well as the Bible, teaches us these truths.

—American Holiness Journal

TROUBLES ARE ASSETS

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test of the Christian faith is the Christian's life. Wesley includes the following lines in his Notes on Acts:

"Ye different sects, who all declare,
Lo, here is Christ, and Christ is there,
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And show me where the Christians live!"

"Christ is the answer," has almost become a license tag cliché. But it is true! We serve the universe-making, man-making Christ. And, through Him, we are more than conquerors. So long as we match footsteps with Him, troubles are assets.

—The Free Methodist.

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