

TH
V 437

FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC
IN
FORMAL CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

By
EVELYN VARRONE
B.S., M.S., Juilliard School of Music

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

April, 1959

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

17800

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
A. The Subject.	1
1. The Subject Stated and Explained	1
2. The Significance of the Subject.	1
3. The Subject Delimited	11
B. The Method of Procedure.	111
C. The Sources for the Study	111
I. THE HISTORICAL PLACE OF MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP	1
A. Introduction	1
B. The Nature of Worship	2
1. True Worship Defined	2
2. The Rational as a Means to the Non-Rational	3
3. The Place of The Formal Worship Service.	4
C. The Main Elements of Worship	4
D. A Historical Survey of Christian Worship	5
1. The Worship of the Primitive Church	5
2. The Growth of Liturgy	7
3. The Foundations of Early Worship	8
4. The Period from 590 to the Reformation.	10
5. The Reformation	11
6. Contemporary Formal Worship	11
E. A General Survey of Music in Christian Worship	12
1. The Influence of the Synagogue	12
2. The Formative Period in Christian Music	13
a. The Distinction Between Sacred and Secular.	13
b. Gregorian Chant.	14
c. Principles of Liturgical Worship	14
3. The Tenth Century to the Reformation	15
4. The Effect of the Reformation on Church Music	16
5. Organ Music and the Anthem	18
F. Summary	19
II. MUSIC AS A BASIC ELEMENT IN WORSHIP	21
A. Introduction	21
B. The Nature of Music	22

G14t

39241

MAY 1959

1.	The Primary Raw Materials.	22
2.	The Secondary Raw Materials	23
C.	The Main Elements in Music.	25
1.	Melody	25
2.	Rhythm	28
D.	The Aesthetic Qualities of Music.	33
1.	Aesthetics Defined	33
2.	The Aesthetic Attitude.	34
3.	The Nature of the Aesthetic Experience.	36
4.	The Purpose of Music	39
E.	Art and Religion	42
1.	The Unity of Art and Religion	42
2.	The Three Ultimate Values.	43
F.	The Value of Music and The Aesthetic Experience in Worship	45
G.	Summary	48

III.	THE SELECTION AND PERFORMANCE OF CHURCH MUSIC.	50
A.	Introduction	50
B.	The Ministry of Music	50
C.	The Function of Church Music	52
1.	Church Music as an Applied Art	52
2.	The Place of Music in a Service of Worship	53
D.	General Standards for Selection and Performance of Church Music	57
1.	Characteristics of Church Music.	57
2.	Standards of Selection and Performance	60
E.	Three Specific Functions of Music in Worship	62
1.	The Organ Prelude	62
a.	The Place of the Organ in a Worship Service	62
b.	The Function of the Organ Prelude	64
c.	Selection of the Organ Prelude.	64
d.	Performance of the Organ Prelude	66
2.	Selection and Performance of the Anthem.	66
3.	Congregational Singing and The Hymn	71
a.	The Importance of the Hymn	71
b.	The Selection of Hymns	74
c.	The Singing of Hymns	75
F.	Summary	78

IV.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	79
-----	-------------------------	----

BIBLIOGRAPHY	82
--------------	----

INTRODUCTION

FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC
IN
FORMAL CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

Throughout the history of Christian worship, music has been one of the avenues by which men have been lifted Godward. The purpose of this thesis is to consider the functions of music in formal Christian worship in order to emphasize the importance of the careful selection and proper performance of church music today.

2. The Significance of the Subject

All true Christian worship springs from a sense of God's Presence. It follows therefore that every part of a service of worship has one primary function, that of making the Presence of God more real. Each component of a worship service must seek to make a person "more aware of God, more sensible of our profound need of Him."¹

.

1. Winfred Douglas: Church Music in History and Practice, p. 5.

The nature of music and of worship has made it possible for them to be closely and meaningfully related. It is because of the intense personal quality of music and its ability to transmit deep spiritual values that it has maintained such a vital place in Christian worship. Therefore, the importance of church music and of its careful selection and performance cannot be overestimated. It is hoped that in some way this thesis shall contribute to a better understanding of the value of the ministry of music in the Christian church.

3. The Subject Delimited

It is the purpose of this thesis to deal only with Christian worship and music as a part of such worship. Since the field of church music is so broad, it could not be adequately covered in a work of this scope. For this reason a more detailed study will be given to three specific forms of music used in a formal service of worship within the Protestant church. These forms are the instrumental or organ prelude, the anthem, and congregational singing as specifically encountered in the hymns. These findings will be related to the formal or liturgical worship of the Christian church today. Since much of the music of the church is in the hands of people who have not had formal training in

church music, this study is directed primarily to the lay person within the Christian church.

B. The Method of Procedure

The first chapter of this study will be devoted to a consideration of worship: its nature, essential elements and history. This is in order to arrive at a more concise understanding of Christian worship. This chapter will also survey the history of the use of music in worship and somewhat more specific attention will be given to the organ prelude, the anthem and congregational singing.

This historical survey of music in Christian worship will be followed in the second chapter by a study of the nature of music: its raw materials, basic elements and aesthetic qualities. This chapter, therefore, will contain a discussion of the qualities of music which enable it to contribute to worship.

The findings of these chapters will form the basis for the consideration in the third chapter of the importance of church music and some guiding principles for its selection and performance.

C. The Sources For The Study

The primary sources for this study are the following books: Worship by Evelyn Underhill; The Worship

of The Church by Massey Shepherd; Church Music-Illusion and Reality by A. T. Davison; Church Music In History and Practice by Winfred Douglas; The Arts and The Art of Criticism by Theodore Meyer Greene; The Nature of Christian Worship by J. Alan Kay; Aesthetics by Hunter Mead; Music In Worship by Joseph N. Ashton and Art and Religion by Von Ogden Vogt.

The secondary sources are additional books on worship, church music, music theory, art and religion and aesthetics. All of these books are either owned personally or they have come from the New York Public Library, or the libraries of Union Theological Seminary, The Biblical Seminary in New York or the Juilliard School of Music.

The final source has been the writer's training at the Juilliard School of Music and five years as church organist and choir director.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL PLACE OF MUSIC
IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

CHAPTER I
THE HISTORICAL PLACE OF MUSIC
IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

A. Introduction

A small group of men and women, gathered together in a room somewhere in Jerusalem about nineteen hundred years ago, lifted up their voices as one in prayer and were overwhelmed by the reality of God's Presence.¹ In a present-day church, hundreds stand to affirm their faith or to sing a hymn and they too, like the first Christians, know that God is very real and very near. Throughout the centuries, the framework in which Christian worship has been set has changed but the inner core, the actual experiencing of God which is the very heart of worship, this has remained the same.

Church music as a part of this framework has also changed radically. It is a long way from the simple singing of psalm melodies with hallelujahs interpolated after each clause to the elaborate choral music which is heard in the Protestant church today. The intention of this study is to consider the true functions

.

1. Acts 4:23-31

of music in worship and the ways in which these functions have remained the same regardless of the period in which the music is written or performed.

The purpose of this chapter is to survey the use of music in Christian worship from the Apostolic church to the present day, taking into consideration the nature and essential elements of worship. Specific attention will focus upon the prelude, anthem and congregational singing. This survey will serve as a background or foundation for a consideration of the specific qualities of music which contribute to worship and the practical application of these considerations to present-day church music.

B. The Nature of Worship

1. True Worship Defined

The definition of Christian worship varies with almost every person seeking to define it. According to one writer, "worship is man's response to the nature and action of God."¹ Winfred Douglas states that because of man's relationship to God, namely as redeemed mankind, "worship is his primary and eternal activity."² Such worship results in the wholehearted offering of

.

1. J. Alan Kay: The Nature of Christian Worship, p. 7.
2. Winfred Douglas: Church Music in History and Practice, p. 3.

one's total being to the glory of God. In her comprehensive book on worship, Evelyn Underhill gives a broad yet meaningful definition of worship. She says, "worship, in all its grades and kinds, is the response of the creature to the Eternal."¹ These definitions have one thing in common. Worship involves a response on the part of man to the Being of God. What then is the nature of this response?

2. The Rational as a Means to the Non-Rational

The true worship of Almighty God is a mingling of rational and non-rational experience. That is to say, a creature responds to the Eternal in such a way that no words can express the experience for who can apprehend the actual Presence of God. Yet in a service of worship, this non-rational type of experience is brought about by rational means such as the reading of scripture, kneeling in prayer or the quiet notes of the organ prelude. These are but means to an end however for the essence of God cannot be expressed completely in such ways. The senses are but avenues to the deeper things.

Rudolf Otto states that the very core of "the quite unique and incomparable experience of solemn worship"² resides in what he calls "creature-feeling", the

.

1. Evelyn Underhill: Worship, 2nd Edition, p. 3.
2. Rudolf Otto: The Idea of The Holy, chapter 3, p.9.

response of the creature to the overwhelming sense of the objective reality of God. This experience results in such expressions as adoration and thanksgiving but they are not actually the experience itself. The definition of worship as "the response of the creature to the Eternal" previously stated can be useful here in pointing up the statements just made.

3. The Place of The Formal Worship Service

Thus a true worship experience does not depend so much on the outward form of a service as it does upon the awareness of the creature's relationship to the Creator and this relationship is changeless. This is not meant to imply that the formal structure is not important for it is the purpose of this study to discover the significance of the outward form of worship. This discussion has been included for the purpose of defining the essence of worship. The form of the service and specifically the musical portions of it may then be considered in their proper light, namely as means toward an end, not as the end in itself.

C. The Main Elements of Worship

Although the heart of the worship of God is the actual realization of His Presence, there are certain elements of worship which either lead up to or flow out from this experience. They are inseparable

from real worship although, as it was stated above, they are not the essence of it. Massey H. Shepherd states and discusses the following elements, adoration and praise, penitence, revelation (through the reading of the Bible and the sermon), petition, intercession and offering.¹ Kay touches upon essentially the same things.² It is not the purpose of this discussion to go any more deeply into the elements of worship than to state them. It is necessary to keep them in mind, however, as "Christian worship is always directed toward the sanctification of life."³ A person who, in truly worshipping God, responds in a prayer of thanksgiving or of rededication is being motivated anew to live a sanctified life. This is the ultimate goal of worship. It is toward this goal that every portion of the service must contribute.

D. A Historical Survey of Christian Worship

1. The Worship of the Primitive Church

The worship of the early or primitive church was in a sense twofold. The early Christians continued to worship in the Temple or if outside Jerusalem, in the synagogue and continued to use some of the Jewish prayers and other characteristics of Jewish worship. They com-

.

1. Massey Shepherd: The Worship of The Church, Part I, Ch. 2.
2. Kay, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
3. Underhill, op. cit., p. 77.

bined the new and special teaching of Jesus Christ with the "practice, teaching and symbolism of the Temple."¹ As Qualben puts it, "there was an organic relation between the Old Testament congregation and the New Testament church."² In fact the influence of the synagogue on the development of Christian worship cannot be overestimated.

The reading and expounding of scripture, the singing of psalms and canticles and the recital of prayers, all these were carried into primitive Christian worship from the synagogue. But there were also distinctively Christian elements, namely the setting aside of Sunday for worship and specifically that act which was at the very heart of early Christian worship, the "breaking of bread" or the Lord's Supper. According to Qualben there were at first two services held on Sundays. One in the afternoon which was made up of praise, prayer and preaching and the evening meeting which ended with a common supper or "love feast" followed by the Lord's Supper. Characteristic of these early church gatherings was the overwhelming sense of Christ's Presence which resulted in spontaneous, inspirational prayer and praise along with exhortations of the prophets. These types of religious expressions, as they were repeated, gradu-

.

1. Ibid, p. 218.
2. Lars P. Qualben: 4th Edition-1942, A History of the Christian Church, p. 62.

ally became the liturgy of the early church. Through their repetition the experiences inherent in them were also repeated.

2. The Growth of Liturgy

There were two contrasting parts to this early worship and they gradually developed into two representative types of worship. The "breaking of bread" became the increasingly liturgical celebration of the Lord's Supper. The free "spiritual exercises" mentioned above, evidencing the working of the Holy Spirit within the lives of the believers, is still much in evidence at the present time in some churches although the triumph of the liturgical over the spontaneous element in common worship came relatively early in church history.

At first the early Christians used the term liturgy as applying to the public functions of the church which were taken charge of by its official ministers. Gradually the liturgy assumed a more fixed form as these public rites and ceremonies were authorized by the church and became its service of worship. The ritual, "the vocal organ of a liturgy",¹ was made up of prayers, songs, reading and preaching. In at least the first two expressions of worship the congregation took part fully.

.

1. Shepherd, op. cit., p. 46.

By the opening of the third century, the liturgy of the Christian church was already developing its classic form.¹ By the end of the fourth century, this liturgical form had been established throughout the church.

As Christianity emerged from this period of its infancy, its worship developed many beautiful and ceremonial forms. More and more church buildings were erected since the need for them grew once the persecutions had ended and Christianity had been recognized and elevated by Constantine. The Lord's Supper was still the heart of the worship service although what had once been a simple act was becoming greatly elaborated.

Before going on into the following eras of church history, it may be helpful to summarize those features which formed the "great central tradition of the Christian church."²

3. The Foundations of Early Worship

The foundations upon which the worship of the first Christians was built were the Word and the Eucharist or "the uttered Word and the Living Presence."³ At first believers entered fully into the service of worship, speaking as they felt led by the Holy Spirit and repeating corporately the Apostle's Creed or the

.

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 242.
2. Ibid., p. 243.
3. Ibid., p. 120.

Lord's Prayer. Music was an important part of these early worship services. "All ancient Christian music was vocal",¹ and the believers were able to take part fully in this means of expressing their faith.² The trend however was toward an increasingly elaborate ritual with less and less participation on the part of the congregation. As the service of worship became more involved, the music also became increasingly difficult and beyond the abilities of the common man. As early as 367 the Council of Laodicea prohibited congregations from taking part in the liturgy, including the music.³ This fact is of great importance in considering the place and development of music in the church up until the time of the Protestant Reformation.

The worship of the early church has been studied in greater detail than the following periods will be because, as it has been already stated, it was during these developmental years that the "primitive cultus" or central tradition of the church was established. Though these elements have undergone changes, they form a continuous link with the formal Protestant worship of today.

.

1. Curt Sachs: Our Musical Heritage, p. 52.
2. Col. 3:16
3. Sachs, op. cit., p. 62.

4. The Period from 590 to the Reformation

It is not within the scope of this thesis to consider the long and involved growth of the Roman Catholic church in any detail. There are, however, some observations or principles which are well worth noting for the light they shed on worship in the period from approximately 590 to the Reformation.¹

The increasing growth and complexity of the hierarchy within the church allowed popes, priests, monks and nuns gradually to take over the administration and, to a large extent, the participation in the worship service. The Roman mass took the place of the sermon as the central part of the service. Public singing became restricted to choirs made up of priests only. Increasing emphasis was placed upon the sacrifice rather than the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the result that by the thirteenth century, the cup holding the consecrated wine was withheld from the common people. This meant that the rite which had formed the very heart of primitive worship, that action which more than any other made real the Presence of the Risen Christ through the remembrance of His death and passion, was being taken from the great mass of believers and given into the hands of

.

1. For more detailed information on this period of church history, see Underhill, Part II, Ch. XII and Qualben.

a few. In short, worship was becoming more formalized at the expense of its power and sense of communion with God. This does not mean that no one worshipped God during this period but that the rational helps toward a non-rational experience of God were to a great extent denied the people.

5. The Reformation

With Martin Luther and the Reformation, much of this power was restored. The ancient balance between the Word and the Sacrament was reinstated and the elaborate system of ritual which had grown up in the Roman church was attacked. The result was not the complete abolition of this ritual but rather, in the Lutheran church, its recasting in the mold of the Reformation.

There were, of course, reactions even to the Lutheran liturgy, as seen in the rigid Puritanism of John Calvin which sought to do away with "creaturely aids" to worship in an effort to concentrate fully upon the glory of God. Through the centuries, however, successive efforts toward the revival of liturgy have been made.

6. Contemporary Formal Worship

At the present time in the type of service being considered in this thesis,¹ many aids to worship

.

1. See page ii of the Introduction.

are used. The ritual within each church, as for example in the Methodist church, has been set although it is possible to change the specific order of worship. The liturgical elements, namely the acts of prayer, praise, the hymns, litany, the collect and above all the sacrament of Holy Communion with all the ritual involved are all present in formal Protestant worship today. They are the framework for the actual experiencing of the Presence of God which is the aim of every worship service.

E. A General Survey of Music in Christian Worship

1. The Influence of the Synagogue

Music has been an essential part of the worship of the Christian church from its very inception. At first the Christians continued singing from the Hebrew Psalter. This was the hymnal of the first believers. However the Old Testament words and concepts could not give full expression to that which was distinctively Christian and directed toward Christ. Therefore hymns which were definitely Christian in character were added to the music of the church. The singing of hymns has always had a very important place in corporate worship for "it is in hymns above all that we hear the accent of the people's worship."¹

.

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 107.

Another important feature of Jewish music which was carried over into Christian worship is that of the refrain or congregational response, so often missing in worship services today. After each verse of a psalm was chanted, the congregation repeated the first verse of the psalm as a refrain. On festivals when the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 114-118) were sung, the congregation interpolated a halleluja after each clause.¹

2. The Formative Period in Christian Music

The formative period of Christian music actually began after the persecutions had ended and the believers were free to worship openly and therefore more elaborately. Douglas says that this period consisted of approximately three centuries, from the end of the persecutions to the time of Pope Gregory the Great.² The three primary sources which influenced Christian music were Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Christianity arose amid a Hebrew culture in a Graeco-Roman world and each contributed to the music of the Christian church.

a. The Distinction Between Sacred and Secular

As the church spread, it collected many melodies until, by the beginning of the seventh century, a large body of music was in existence. Even before this, however, the Church Fathers had realized the

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

tremendous potentiality which resided in music. They were very careful to keep a marked distinction between secular and sacred music and attempted, even to the point of narrowmindedness, to ban all save that which they considered proper from the service of the church. Yet the danger which they sought to avoid was and still is a very real one.

b. Gregorian Chant

To Gregory, who was Pope from 590 to 604, belongs the distinction of having made the final arrangement and most complete compilation of the liturgical chants of the early Christian church. Characteristic of this music is its freely flowing rhythm and great melodic beauty. It was all monophonic, that is consisting of only one line of music. According to the Harvard Dictionary of Music, "the present-day repertory of Gregorian chant consists of nearly three thousand melodies."¹ Gregorian chant was only one of four great liturgies, the others being the Ambrosian, Gallican and Mozarabic. Of the four, only the Gregorian and Ambrosian are in use today.

c. Principles of Liturgical Worship

The following principles of liturgical worship were set by the year 600 A.D.:

.

1. Willi Apel: Harvard Dictionary of Music, p. 305.

1. Music was to be sung to the glory of God, not man. It was just as much a part of the worship as the prayers or litany. Its purpose was never mere decoration.
2. The worship that was sung was an expression of the voice of the whole church. Each member of the congregation took part in the "active praise of the whole."¹ There was a dialogue between the Bishop and the congregation, the congregation had simple refrains and there were more difficult compositions for the choir. Even Scripture lessons were read in melodic patterns. Such a use of music, in some respects similar to the way it is used today, provided opportunities for the skilled and unskilled in music.
3. The words were always the important thing and the music was subordinated to them. Unless there was repetition of the words or phrases themselves, as for example the "Holy, Holy, Holy" of Revelation 4:8, there was no repetition in the music.

These principles have been quoted at length because of their relevance to church music today. This period of church music is rich and important in its development. It took 600 years to produce the "first fully developed body of artistic worship music, the Gregorian Plainsong."²

3. The Tenth Century to the Reformation

The tenth century saw two important musical developments, the evolution of musical notation and the rise of polyphonic music. It is interesting to note that it also took 600 years for this second type of

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., p. 27.
2. Ibid., p. 65.

music to reach its highest peak. As the forms of music developed they became increasingly difficult and so the congregation did less and less singing while specially trained singers took over the performance of music. This was typical of the whole trend of worship which was gradually being taken over by a very few while the majority of the people had to be content with a passive role in the service of worship.

In the fourteenth century the first appearance of a new art-form took place, the Mass. Names of great composers began to emerge here and church music continued to develop until vocal polyphony reached a stage that has never been surpassed. The sixteenth century was known as the "Golden Age of Polyphony" yet because the atmosphere of the music was truly reverent and sacred, this great music did not attract undue attention to itself but rather pointed the way to worship.

4. The Effect of the Reformation on Church Music

The primary musical achievement of the Protestant Reformation was that it restored music to the common man. "Protestantism rose to power on the inspiring strains of the congregational hymn."¹ The hymnals of the various churches since the Reformation are indicative of the tenor of Christian worship. If music had

.

1. Federal Lee Whittlesey: A Comprehensive Program of Church Music, p. 159.

contributed nothing else to worship throughout the years but the hymns, it still would have more than justified itself by supplying the need for the outward expression of faith which music is able to do so well.

"In the center of the new musical movement which accompanied the Reformation, stands the great figure of Martin Luther."¹ Luther was a fine musician in his own right and he fully realized the potentialities in music which enabled it to be a powerful means of conveying the gospel. Such great hymns as "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and "Out of The Depths I Cry Unto Thee" are ample proof of this fact.

Stylistically, Catholic and Protestant church music sounded the same for they both drew upon the same source, that of the traditions of the old church. The essential difference between the two was that in Protestant music religious considerations were placed before aesthetic ones. It was this principle of spiritual religion or a religion based on the experiencing of a personal and immediate faith which controlled the musical thought of the Protestant church.

No discussion of Protestant church music would be complete without mentioning the name of Johann

.

1. Paul Henry Lang: Music In Western Civilization, p. 207.

Sebastian Bach. Polyphonic church music reached its pinnacle in the great religious music of this composer. His music has contributed abundantly to the worship of God from the time in which it was written until the present day.

5. Organ Music and the Anthem

Organ music increasingly came into its own during this period although it had been in use since the close of the twelfth century. The organ is now firmly established as a valuable part of the service of worship and considered the most suitable instrument for use in public worship. The reasons for this will be considered in the next chapter.

The choral anthem, also a regular part of the worship service today, had its origin in the Pre-Reformation church after 1500. Actually the anthem is outside of the real liturgy of the church but nevertheless it serves a purpose within the service. The great and ancient liturgical texts such as the Graduals and Alleluias of the Mass have disappeared. The non-liturgical anthem has taken their place. The choir is still needed therefore yet it does not usurp the function of the congregation by leading it.

After the Reformation, hymns and chorales were written in the vernacular but it was not until 1662 that

provision was made for the anthem within the service of worship. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw an increasing secularization of the anthem and it wasn't until the nineteenth century, with the works of Samuel Sebastian Wesley, that "the true devotional note again appears in the English anthem."¹

F. Summary

Thus music has shown itself to be an integral part of worship throughout the history of the Christian church. "Music has always been married to ritual in liturgical worship."² Through this very brief survey it has been seen that worship began as a relatively simple thing. The overwhelming sense of the Lord's Presence served as the stimulus for worship. The first ritual was carried over from the worship of the synagogue and included the singing of the Hebrew psalms.

As the church grew and spread, its liturgy, now containing distinctively Christian elements too, gradually became more elaborate and the music more specialized. As a result the great mass of the people were denied all but a very meagre participation in the service of worship.

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., p. 145.
2. Shepherd, op. cit., p. 53.

The Protestant Reformation changed this, however, and with the principle of the priesthood of all believers, men and women were once again granted a more active part in worship. The outstanding musical contribution of this period as well as in successive times of reform is the wealth of hymns which form such a rich heritage for the Protestant church.

In the formal worship service of today music has its own place in the ritual. Its potentiality, so clearly recognized by the early Church Fathers is the same now as then. There is within music a great power to lift men upward to the place where they forget all things except God. This is true worship.

CHAPTER II

MUSIC AS A BASIC ELEMENT IN WORSHIP

CHAPTER II

MUSIC AS A BASIC ELEMENT IN WORSHIP

A. Introduction

A survey of the historical place of music in Christian worship clearly shows that there has always been a close relationship between the two. This is not only true of the Christian religion however, for music has been allied with religion from the very beginnings of each. This fact emphasizes an important question. Why has music maintained such a position of importance in religion throughout the history of mankind? The purpose of this chapter is to seek the answer to this question by means of a study of music itself.

This will be done by first considering the raw materials of music and their organization by means of melody, harmony and rhythm. This will be followed by a study of the aesthetics of music with specific attention focused upon the aesthetic attitude and experience. A brief consideration of various theories of the purpose of music will prepare for an inquiry into the relationship between art and religion. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the value of music and the aesthetic experience in a service of worship.

B. The Nature of Music

1. The Primary Raw Materials

Music has been considered the most abstract of the arts and yet at the same time that form of art which is capable of producing the most direct and immediate response within a person. It is abstract because of the raw material with which it is put together, namely audible sound. These sounds may vary according to pitch, timbre, intensity or duration. Pitch is "the location of a musical sound in the tonal scale, proceeding from low to high."¹ Timbre is the quality or color of a tone. Timbre changes as a pitch is sounded upon different instruments or by different voices and for this reason Middle C on the violin has a tonal quality which is distinct from the same pitch played upon the French horn. A tone will also vary according to volume and the length of time that it sounds. Thus, the raw material with which a composer has to work are musical tones of varying qualities which alternate with silence or rests. Theodore Meyer Greene speaks of these as the "primary raw materials of pure music."² These sounds are quite neutral or amoral although some tones

.

1. Apel, op. cit., p. 584.
2. Theodore Meyer Greene: The Arts and the Art of Criticism, p. 46.

of a certain intensity, timbre or even pitch are capable of producing a limited kind of aesthetic response apart from any formal organization, such as in a melody.

Because of the type of medium which makes up the raw materials of music, it has been called the most formal as well as the most abstract of the arts and the form of art which lends itself most readily to mathematical analysis.¹ Such a conception of music as merely sound and silence, while true as far as it goes, gives only a partial explanation of the nature of music. Actually, these "primary raw materials" are more like the clay with which the potter works.

2. The Secondary Raw Materials

The fact that a composer will take these materials and organize them into musical pieces indicates a purpose. In other words, music must have something to say and what it has to communicate must be understood by others. Attitudes such as joy, sorrow, despair or hope are common to all men and such states of feeling or willing are capable of being expressed through music. Even before a composer begins to formulate or write down a composition or an artist to perform a piece, there must be the possibility of expressing

.

1. H. Osborne: Theory of Beauty, p. 102.

something which will be meaningful to the composer and those who hear the piece. Thus the "secondary raw material"¹ of music is the content or attitudes which are capable of being conveyed by means of the primary raw materials. These life-values as John Hospers calls them are those things which "come from life, from the world of experience outside art. . ."² At this point it is necessary for the sake of clarity to state that the music which is under consideration here is pure music or music which is only instrumental and which does not try to convey specific scenes or events.³

In summary, the raw materials which form the basis for the nature of music are the variety of sounds due to pitch, timbre, volume and length. These stand at man's disposal along with those attitudes and feelings which provide content for music because they are common to all men and therefore capable of expression by means of an artistic medium.

.

1. Greene, op. cit., p. 47.
2. John Hospers: Meaning And Truth In the Arts, p. 12.
3. Vocal and programme music present a more complicated situation since they combine more than one medium of expression. Vocal music in the form of hymns and anthems will be considered more specifically in the next chapter.

C. The Main Elements in Music

1. Melody

The three essential elements of music which mold and shape the raw materials into meaningful forms are melody, rhythm and harmony. Of the three, the former has been common to music from its very beginnings. Monophonic music, defined as "melody without any additions in texture,"¹ constituted the main body of all music from its beginnings through the first thousand years of the Christian era.

A melody is a succession of musical tones which are grouped in such a way as to enable them to be heard as a complete, yet individual entity. According to H. Osborne a melody is the sum of the individual tones and must be apprehended as a unit, not as single pitches.²

A melody derives its character from the relationships between pitches which are called intervals and from the rhythmic patterns. A great deal of movement in half-steps creates an entirely different type of melodic line than does movement of a diatonic or stepwise nature. The effect of each type of melody upon the listener is also different. The importance

.

1. Apel, op. cit., p. 436.
2. Osborne, op. cit., p. 106.

of intervals in determining the character of a melody cannot be over-emphasized. There are some intervals which are more pleasing to the ear than others. The major third (G-B) and the octave are examples of pleasing intervals. Discordant intervals such as the second (C-D), the seventh (G-F) or the tritone (C-F#) are less pleasing to the ear because they sound incomplete in themselves and demand resolution to a more pleasing and complete interval. Descending or ascending movement in a melody, the pull away from or toward the tonic or tonal center, the interspersion of rests and the rhythmic configuration are also important contributing factors in determining the character of a melody and therefore the response which it engenders within the listener.

The tonal structure of music is expressed by means of the scale, "the tonal material of music arranged according to rising pitches."¹ There are many different kinds of scales all of which are derived from the all inclusive chromatic scale, a scale of twelve half-steps. The scale upon which European music is built is the diatonic scale which assumes its characteristic major sound by means of the arrangement of whole and half-steps. The white notes on the piano, beginning and

.

1. Apel, op. cit., p. 662.

ending on C make up the major scale. The minor scale which is made up of another combination of whole and half-steps also occupies a prominent place in western music. These scales have been the bases for the structure of modern music from the 18th century to the present-day. The diatonic scale system goes back to the modes of ancient Greece and although the early Christians rejected the chromaticism of Greek music, "there is no question that the general diatonic scale system, out of which the Gregorian modes were eventually formed, is Greek."¹ The "logical continuation" of the scale is the life giving source of melody.²

A vocal melody is a heightened form of speech and the addition of words increases the capacity for conveying emotion. George L. Raymond says that even pure music or melody without words is "representative of the intonations of speech" or in some instances a "development of something that lies behind the intonations of speech."³ Therefore a melody, with or without words is capable of expressing the innermost longings and feelings of men by means of its structure. Even though the sounds that make up the primary raw material of music are neutral in themselves, they can become

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., p. 20.
2. Apel, op. cit., p. 437.
3. George Lansing Raymond: The Essentials of Aesthetics, Third Edition, p. 82.

impregnated with meaning when put together in such ways that the melodic line takes on certain additional connotations. A melody then becomes "religious or irreligious according to the emotions it stirs."¹ This fact is of great importance in the selection of music to be used in a service of worship. There are some types of melodies which are not suitable for worship and which are in fact able to draw the mind away from, rather than toward God.

2. Rhythm

A. T. Davison says that rhythm is the most personal element in music, and the medium through which the individual most naturally expresses himself.² Rhythm is inherent in the very nature of the universe and man cannot help but respond to it. Rhythm is suggested in all natural movement and is perceived in such activities as the regular beating of the heart, the rise and fall of inflected speech, in the swaying of trees in the wind and in countless other ways. It is no wonder then that man responds with so little effort to rhythm in music and that an actual physical response is more apt to be provoked because of strongly pulsed rhythm than by any of the other elements.

.

1. Cynthia P. Maus: Christ And The Fine Arts, p. 22.
2. A. T. Davison: Church Music - Illusion and Reality, p. 84.

Because of this, the types of rhythm which find their way into church music must be carefully guarded.

The power inherent in rhythm was clearly recognized by the Christian church of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, surrounded as it was by folk tunes and dances with their strong and regular beats. The church sought to avoid the dangers of such rhythm by the use of plainsong or the Gregorian chant. The text was all important and the music with its rhythmic stresses was guided solely by the declamation of the Latin words. In contrast to metrical rhythm where the "normal accent recurs in regular intervals, called measures",¹ the rhythm of plainsong was free and lacking in regularly recurring accents. Thus much of the danger of provoking merely a physical response was avoided.

Rhythm is a difficult term to define and is almost easier to experience than to explain. It may be defined simply and inclusively as "everything pertaining to the duration of the musical sound."² It is the varying lengths of tones which constitute rhythm. Accent or pulse is an important factor in rhythm, for music with steady, strongly accented beats may produce one kind of physical reaction while a syncopated or irregular rhythmic stress can result in quite

.

1. Apel, op. cit., p. 640.
2. Ibid., p. 640.

another response. There is nothing inherent in rhythm itself which is either sacred or secular for it is only one of the elements which make up a piece of music. Certain rhythms can take on secular connotations, because of use outside of the church. Their suggestivity is due to association, however, and not to anything which is inherent in rhythm itself. An example of this is found in the use of triple meter or $3/4$ time in the church music of the Middle Ages. It was employed almost exclusively at that time. Since the advent of the lilting waltz, however, the use of this meter is found much less frequently and discretion must always be used in the performance of anything in triple time. As Davison puts it so aptly, even where such pieces or hymns are used, there is the danger of being "wafted back into the era of stately dancing."¹

For the sake of clarity, melody and rhythm have been considered as two separate entities. In actuality they are woven together and cannot be separated. Each has its specific contribution to make to the over-all form of a musical composition.

3. Harmony

Harmony, the vertical or chordal structure

.

1. Davison, op. cit., p. 30.

of a musical composition adds depth to melody. It was not considered one of the essential elements of music until the middle of the 16th century. Monophonic music, consisting of a single melodic line, had developed into polyphonic music with its complicated textures comprised of many voices. Each part was still considered an entity in itself, however, and the movement was horizontal, not vertical. Several voices moving at one time produced a variety of intervals and although some were considered more pleasing to the ear than others, which involves a limited amount of harmonic thinking, harmony as chordal movement was not fully utilized until after the year 1650 when the system of tonality or tonal centers was established.¹

Harmony may be consonant or dissonant. A consonant chord is satisfying to the ear and denotes an effect that is musically complete. A dissonant chord sounds incomplete, sometimes even harsh and requires resolution to a more stable and pleasing harmony. Dissonance creates "areas of tension" which give meaning to "areas of relaxation" so that the sense of arrival or rest is heightened by the contrast of unrest or tension.² As harmony developed, chords became more

.

1. Apel, op. cit., p. 322.

2. Joseph Machlis: The Enjoyment of Music, p. 22.

complex and rich and capable of very dramatic effects. In harmonic music the melody is in the soprano for the most part with its effect heightened by means of the chordal progressions underneath. This is in marked contrast to polyphonic music in which every voice is of equal importance.

Harmony is more sophisticated than melody¹ and can easily become an end in itself. This is an important factor in the selection of music for a service of worship. Music which draws attention solely to itself is defeating its purpose of drawing men to God.

In summary therefore, music is the organization of sounds by means of melody, rhythm and harmony. To use Greene's terminology, these structural elements constitute the "primary medium"² of music. The fact that music is composed at all implies that it has something to communicate and it has been seen that there are universal expressions and attitudes which music is capable of conveying. The realization of these potential expressions is called the "secondary artistic medium" of music.³ A creative artist is able to take his own first-hand experiences of human emotions

.

1. Ibid., p. 23.
2. Greene, op. cit., pp 54-58.
3. Ibid., pp. 58-62.

and transform them into that which is universal and therefore common to all man's experience. "Thus transformed, these emotions and attitudes can then be taken up into the work of art and given individual expression in and through specific musical patterns."¹ The creation of these transformed attitudes and their re-creation on the part of the listener lead into the area of aesthetics and the aesthetic experience. The nature of music and its value in a service of worship cannot be fully understood apart from a consideration of the aesthetics of music.

D. The Aesthetic Qualities of Music

1. Aesthetics Defined

The nature of the universe has been so ordered that the fact of beauty is thoroughly engraved in all human experience.² It has been natural, therefore, for men throughout the centuries to seek to define and justify their response to beauty. This study of the beautiful is called aesthetics and two corollaries are implicit in such a study. These are the consideration of an object and of those qualities which make it beautiful and the study of the aesthetic response to such

.

1. Ibid., p. 59.

2. Bertram Morris: The Aesthetic Process, p. 1.

an object. For example, a symphony of Beethoven possesses certain aesthetic qualities because of its structure. The contours of the melodic lines, the intricacies of rhythmic and harmonic textures and the formal unity of each movement, all contribute to the qualities which reside within the structure of the work itself¹ and which are capable of provoking an aesthetic response within the listener. In so organizing this composition, however, Beethoven was also working with the "secondary medium" of music, namely the expression of universal attitudes or the "artistic subject matter".² The re-creation of this subject matter on the part of a sensitive listener results in an aesthetic experience. Greene uses the term aesthetic "to signify the distinctive quality of any object of awareness which is capable of evoking a re-creative response in an aesthetically sensitive spectator."³ Thus the term aesthetic used in this way denotes an attitude toward an object brought about by qualities which are inherent in the structure and by the "artistic subject matter" which prompted that structure.

2. The Aesthetic Attitude

The fact that the aesthetic attitude has

.

1. Greene, op. cit., p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 60.
3. Ibid., p. 6.

warranted so much study in an effort to understand it, indicates that such an attitude is different from the normal experiences of everyday life. A statement by Hospers illustrates this fact. He says that, "The aesthetic attitude can occur only when the practical response to our environment is held in suspension."¹

Hunter Mead gives the following characteristics of the aesthetic attitude.² There is a sense of detachment when an individual is caught up in a moment of complete absorption by an object of beauty. The concept of time and space is lost and in a very real sense the person shifts from one level of experience to another. A term often used to describe this attitude is "disinterested." A person who is completely immersed in the appreciation of a work of art is not seeking to fulfill or advance private concerns of his own. In other words, there is a non-possessive attitude toward that object. The terms detached and disinterested are not meant to imply complete unrelatedness to the world of human life and emotions. For, even though such experiences are distinct, there is a continuity between aesthetic experiences and those of everyday life. "The aesthetic is no intruder in experience

.

1. Hospers, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Hunter Mead: Aesthetics, pp. 13-27.

from without. . . , it is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience."¹

The last characteristic of the aesthetic attitude mentioned by Mead is that of the need for a sense of separation between an object and the individual. This is referred to as "psychical distance"² and may be illustrated by the mounting and framing of a picture in order to heighten its effect or the separation of an orchestra from the audience in a concert hall.

Thus the aesthetic attitude is the impersonal and detached contemplation of an object, "that attitude which directs attention to an object as the fulfillment of experience."³ This mood, while distinct, nevertheless maintains a continuity with the emotions or life-values of every-day experiences.

3. The Nature of the Aesthetic Experience

A description of the aesthetic attitude is a preliminary step in a consideration of the aesthetic experience. This attitude may be defined as the outward manifestation of a much deeper and more penetrating

.

1. John Dewey: Art As Experience, Fourth Impression, p. 46.
2. Mead, op. cit., p. 26.
3. Morris, op. cit., p. 30.

experience. A person gazing in rapt wonder at a Rembrandt painting or listening to a Chopin nocturne is not merely a passive spectator but is very much involved himself in the re-creation of the work of art. "To perceive, a beholder must create his own experience."¹

One of the key terms in an understanding of the aesthetic experience is perception. True aesthetic experience is perceptual and therefore more abstract than if clear or conceptual ideas were involved.

Philosophers and psychologists speak of three levels of cognitive or knowing experience. The first level is that of sensation and is the simplest of the three. Sensations are any stimuli received through the sense organs. The second level is that of perception or "sensations plus meanings".² These meanings are derived through the organization of the sensations into patterns as, for example, when a baby perceives a bottle of milk where once he saw only a mass of white.

The third level is the conceptual which signifies ideas such as those which are represented by all common nouns. Concepts categorize percepts and enable specific objects such as a chair to be classified with all chairs everywhere as the idea of "chair".³ Such

.

1. Dewey, op. cit., p. 54.
2. Mead, op. cit., p. 30.
3. For a fuller treatment of this subject, see Mead, op. cit., pp. 28-31.

concrete ideas are not present in a truly rich aesthetic experience. It is for this reason that a complete description of a musical composition, as often found in program notes, is not true to actual aesthetic experience. One does not have to have a specific picture in mind in order to appreciate a piece of music and it is often impossible as well as unnecessary to put into words what has been heard and experienced. "Music can be true to our feelings in a way that language cannot."¹

In the process of perception, sensations are transferred directly into feelings for the senses are able to grasp things as a whole immediately. Perceptual experiences, therefore, are much more direct than conceptual ones. "Sounds have the power of direct emotional expression."²

Seeking to define the aesthetic experience is not a simple matter. John Dewey refers to it as "appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying."³ Mead defines it as "a pleasurable absorption in the perceptual aspects of phenomena."⁴ There is agreement on the fact that, whatever else it may be, it denotes a completely satisfying experience.

Before leaving this very limited consideration

.

1. Hospers, op. cit., p. 195.
2. Dewey, op. cit., p. 238.
3. Ibid., p. 47.
4. Mead, op. cit., p. 29.

of the aesthetic experience there is one more phase of it which is worth noting. This experience involves a heightened sense of emotional consciousness but merely reveling in such emotions is not the aesthetic experience at its best. The richest kind of aesthetic activity takes place when the emotional response results in a responsible emotion.¹ Even as elusive a thing as an aesthetic experience may have practical outworkings when it serves as a stimulus for worthy and creative emotions.

4. The Purpose of Music

Although a consideration of the purpose of music is not actually an aesthetic concern, it is helpful for the purposes of this study to reflect upon it before proceeding to a discussion of the relationship between art and religion and the value of music and the aesthetic experience in a worship service.

The various theories of the purpose of music may be divided into two main groups. The more recent school of thought says that music is meaningless and that it does not possess anything in common with ordinary life outside of music. According to this concept of its purpose, music is appreciated only for

.

1. Morris, op. cit., p. 6

its own sake and understood on its own terms. Music as absolutely non-illustrative is "apprehended by a special and isolated Musical Faculty"¹ and has no reference to anything else in the nature of man. The aesthetic response to this kind of music would be the enjoyment of the formal attributes of a composition without any associations from or with life. This theory of the purpose of music does not provide a legitimate reason for its inclusion in a service of worship.

The other school of thought and that which has dominated the musical scene until recent times is that music does have meaning. Those who hold this opinion feel that music has something to communicate because it is related to all of life. There are several theories which come under this second school of thought.

The representative theory, though more common to the visual arts, has had its effect on music too. This theory seeks to reduce a work of art to a copy or reproduction of another object. Another theory is that music is an emotional expression and assigns to it the primary purpose of conveying emotions. Such a concept leans heavily upon the associational values

.

1. J. W. N. Sullivan: Beethoven, His Spiritual Development, p. 21.

of art. The romantic works of such composers as Chopin and Liszt furnish examples of this highly emotional content in music.¹

J. W. N. Sullivan divides musical compositions into three classes, one of which belongs to the formalist school and the other two to the expressive.² In the first class are compositions which exist "in isolation" and are therefore meaningless except as the musical qualities themselves produce enjoyment. He speaks of the second class as those compositions which "spring from a spiritual context and express spiritual experiences."³ The term spiritual as used here refers to the inner depths of the personality. Such music springs from the richness of a composer's spiritual nature and are the result of numberless experiences which the composer has assimilated into his being. The function of this kind of music is to communicate these deep, spiritual experiences to others. The third class of musical compositions is comprised of programme music.

It is the second type of music which stirs man most deeply. The appreciation of such music does not exclude the enjoyment of the more formal aspects

.

1. A more comprehensive survey of the theories of the purpose of art may be found in Mead, op. cit., Part III, pp. 177-298.
2. Sullivan, op. cit., pp. 21-37.
3. Ibid., p. 28.

of a piece but the meanings conveyed are not isolated from the rest of life. Instead they are more comprehensive and capable of satisfying deeper needs. Music with such a purpose has an important place in the worship of Almighty God.

E. Art and Religion

1. The Unity of Art and Religion

Throughout the history of mankind, art and religion have been so closely related that it is often difficult to separate them. Von Ogden Vogt attributes this unity to three factors. They are closely identified as to origin, subject matter and inner experience.¹

The beginnings of both art and religion are obscure and it is difficult to say which one came first in the development of mankind. In fact, in the primitive, tribal religions, they were inextricably woven together. According to the judgment of anthropologists, most of the arts, including music, were "developed out of exercises and objects originally devised for the magical control of divinities."² There is evidence in the rich culture of ancient Greece³ and throughout the history of the Jewish nation of the important place

.

1. Von Ogden Vogt: Art and Religion, p. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Lang, op. cit., pp. 1-6.

music held in their religious life.¹ The history of music in Christian worship also shows clearly how closely related the two have always been.

The second factor contributing to the unity of art and religion is that they deal for the most part with the same subject matter. "Religion has been historically the great fountain source of art."² The principal themes of the arts have always been religious.

Their unity goes even deeper than this, however. It has its roots in the very consciousness of man and in his experiencing of the three categories of ultimate or supreme value, beauty, truth and goodness.

2. The Three Ultimate Values

It has been said that "beauty is one of the essential necessities of human existence."³ Beauty, truth and goodness constitute what are known as the three ultimate values and they permeate all of life. All three are intrinsic in the very nature of religion and the omission of any of them results in a loss of vitality and meaningfulness.

These values are considered absolute because they are not created by man, "they exist in their own

.

1. Curt Sachs: The Rise of Music In The Ancient World, pp. 59-62.
2. Vogt, op. cit., p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 4.

right."¹ They are comprehensive values, taking in all of man's experiences and they are closely interwoven into the very fabric of his being. Percy Dearmer says that all spiritual things which man may rightfully desire group themselves under these three values. As examples, he states that "mercy is a form of goodness; accuracy, of truth; and harmony, of beauty."² Human activities also fall under these headings with the moralist belonging to the category of goodness, the scientist to the truth and the artist to beauty.

The ultimate values may also be approached by means of the consciousness. The consciousness consists of three elements: feeling, thinking and willing. These are interdependent and all must be present if an experience is to be fully meaningful. Feeling is closely connected with aesthetic activity and therefore to beauty; thinking is related to the intellect and the absolute value of truth; and willing is associated with the moral realm of goodness.

These values are taken even more deeply into man's experience by relating them to "the three intellectual attributes, wisdom, knowledge and understanding."³ The point of all this is that the ultimate values cannot

.

1. Percy Dearmer: Art and Religion, Second Edition, p. 56.
2. Ibid., p. 55.
3. Ibid., p. 81.

be disassociated from the experiences of man without destroying the unity of his personality. These values are interrelated and interdependent¹ and infuse all of life's experiences. In the sense that religion binds the three values together, "interpreting beauty as life, truth as light and goodness in the activity of love,"² art has a valuable place in worship.

Worship is an art in itself and seeks to satisfy the desire of the human nature for experiences which minister to the whole man. Such a purpose, in order to be fulfilled, needs the contribution which art and the aesthetic experience can make. Thus the unity of man's experience and the relationship of the ultimate values to this unity have deemed it expedient for art and religion to be intimately related throughout the history of mankind.

F. The Value of Music and The Aesthetic Experience in Worship

The place that music has always maintained in religion is an indication of its value as a means of worship. But wherein does this importance lie? In light of the preceding study, the value of music and of the aesthetic experience is found primarily in two principles inherent in their basic makeup.

.

1. Ibid., p. 87.
2. Ibid., p. 90.

The perceptual nature of the aesthetic experience enables certain patterns of sound to be heard and translated immediately into deep feelings which are inexpressible in words. It is not that a different set of feelings are experienced by means of music, but that these feelings are expressed more directly and fully than they could be by means of conceptual ideas. Sense-perception enables a person to become instantly aware of emotions without having to reason out why he feels a certain way and what such feelings mean. As Greene notes:

A musical composition presents itself to us first as an intrinsically satisfying pattern of sound, and these related sounds arouse in us instantaneously, as they are played, a continuous pattern of specific emotions, feelings and impulses.¹

Thus, feelings and knowledge can be communicated through the medium of music that could not be conveyed in any other way for "music begins where speech leaves off."²

Underlying this perceptual communication with its direct means of conveying feelings, is the unity of man's experience and the penetration of all these experiences by the three ultimate values, beauty, truth and goodness. It is this unity of feeling, thinking and willing, inherent in the makeup of man, which makes

.

1. Greene, op. cit., p. 355.
2. Ibid., p. 488.

it possible for "sensible stimulation" to give super-sensible suggestions.¹ The only way that a human being can be led to an experience of God is by way of the natural senses, even though the actual experience is of a super-natural quality. This unity of experience makes it possible for a person, in perceiving beauty, to pass beyond this to the perception of the Divine.² Otto speaks of the law of the association of feelings³ and the attraction of ideas as making it possible for rational elements to become penetrated by the non-rational or super-natural.⁴ "Art becomes a binding link between men and draws them together toward God."⁵

The value of music and the aesthetic experience in a service of worship, therefore, resides in their capacity to communicate deep spiritual concepts by means of feelings which the music, by means of its structure, engenders. These feelings are too complex and profound for verbal expression but they can be experienced by means of sense-perception. "True art is the articulation of spiritual reality."⁶

.

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 26.
2. Vogt, op. cit., p. 4.
3. Otto, op. cit., p. 43.
4. Ibid., p. 49.
5. Vogt, op. cit., p. 27.
6. Samuel H. Miller: "Works of Art Are Things In Themselves", International Journal of Religious Education, Feb., 1959, p. 17.

G. Summary

In a very real sense, music is paradoxical in nature. It is the most abstract of the arts because of the raw materials which make it up, namely audible sound and the possibility of communicating universal concepts and emotions. At the same time, music is an extremely personal art, capable of evoking feelings which reach into the very depths of the personality and which cannot be received or expressed in any other way. These raw materials are essentially devoid of aesthetic values although the potentials for such values are there.

These raw materials are organized by means of melody, rhythm and harmony. They are not put together haphazardly but with a definite, creative intent on the part of the composer. By means of the structure of a piece, its melodic lines, rhythmic patterns and harmonic progressions, the composer expresses his own innermost feelings. Through the creativity of the composer and because of his ability to experience things more intensely, his personal feelings are transformed into universal ones and are projected to others through the medium of music.

A true appreciation of such music involves enjoyment of the formal structure and a re-creation

within the individual of the emotional content. Both facets of the aesthetic experience need to be present if the experience is to be truly a rich and profitable one. In fact, the response to the formal aspects of a composition may lead directly into a realization of the spiritual realities being conveyed by these aspects.

Music conceived of in this way is not merely the handmaid of religion. It can and should be appreciated in its own right. But such an appreciation must not constitute the whole response to any music found in a service of worship. Formal enjoyment may then lead the person on to the point where he responds with his total being, feeling and will as well as intellect. Music is natural in a worship service because it appeals to the whole man and it is the whole man who is involved in the worship of a God of beauty, truth and goodness.

"Music doth withdraw our minds from earthly cogitations, lifteth up our spirits to heaven, and maketh them light and celestial."¹

.

1. John Harrington Edwards: God and Music, quotation by Chrysostom, p. 140.

CHAPTER III
THE SELECTION AND PERFORMANCE
OF CHURCH MUSIC

CHAPTER III

THE SELECTION AND PERFORMANCE OF CHURCH MUSIC

A. Introduction

As the title of this chapter indicates, its purpose is of a more practical nature than the previous two. A study of the nature of music and of its historical place in the worship of the Christian church has shown the position of importance that it has maintained throughout the centuries. In order for this study to be meaningful, however, these findings must be applied to formal worship of the church today.

It is the purpose of this chapter to consider the importance of the ministry of music and to set forth some basic principles for the selection and performance of such music. Special attention will be focused upon the organ prelude, the anthem and the hymns.

B. The Ministry of Music

The unity of art and religion, combined with the ability of music to enrich and to stimulate worship, have enabled music to maintain a position of great importance in the worship of God. The significance

of this ministry is emphasized by the fact that "music is more extensively employed in the church service today than ever before."¹ It takes up approximately one-third of the entire period of worship. The trend is toward the use of more music in non-liturgical as well as liturgical churches. Along with this increase in the use of music, there must be a corresponding growth in the realization that this music should be of a suitable quality for worship. It has been previously stated that music is sacred or secular according to the emotions it stirs and it is unfortunately true that much of the music which finds its way into a service of worship tends more toward the secular than the sacred.

That there is such a growing realization of the need for the best music to be used in worship, is evidenced by the formation of such organizations as the National Fellowship of Methodist Musicians. This group has as its purpose the satisfaction of the urgent need within the educational and worship ministries of the church, for the highest and best that is in music. The findings of the two preceding chapters emphasize the need for just such a deepening awareness of the place music has in the over-all ministry of the church. The perspective of this thesis limits music to the

.

1. Joseph N. Ashton: Music In Worship, p. 1.

formal service of worship but it also has an important contribution to make to the entire program of a church,

It is worth noting that any person who is interested in providing for the best in the ministry of music is qualified for "associate membership" in the National Fellowship of Methodist Musicians. Any person who is participating as a musical leader in any way within a church is eligible for full membership. Even though all churches cannot afford, or perhaps do not need so-called professional musicians in order to maintain their ministry of music, all churches can seek to have a musical program which consists of good and spiritually edifying music. A ministry of music in the real sense of the word is possible for any church, regardless of its size or budget. Where there are people who are interested in providing for a better program of music and who are willing to apply some principles of careful selection and performance to the music of their worship service, a fruitful and edifying ministry of music can become a reality.

C. The Function of Church Music

1. Church Music as an Applied Art

At the risk of some repetition, the value and the basic function of music in formal Christian

worship will be considered at greater length before outlining some fundamental principles for its selection and performance.

"Church music is an applied art."¹ This is in contrast to what Davies and Grace call pure music.² Music may be said to be pure when its sole purpose and meaning for existence is found within itself. Such music does not seek to convey any meaning outside of itself and it is appreciated only for its own sake. Church music is termed applied because it is set within a specific situation for reasons other than just the enjoyment of its formal values. Church music may be defined therefore as "music applied to the purpose of public worship"³ and for this reason there should be some qualities which distinguish it from other types of music. This differentiation results from the purpose or application of the music as well as from some qualities found within certain kinds of music which may be termed religious or irreligious. The need, therefore, for great care in the choice of music included in a worship service becomes evident at once.

2. The Place of Music in a Service of Worship

There are relatively few people today who

.

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Walford Davies and Harvey Grace: Music and Worship, p. 15.
3. Ibid.

will deny that music is a valuable means to worship, but the conceptions of wherein this value lies vary greatly. There is a vague awareness that it has purpose, but just what this purpose is, is often given little consideration. The musical ministry of a church mirrors its conception of the function of music in its service of worship.

It is not unusual for church music to be thought of as "traditional routine."¹ Music that has been a part of the worship service for as long as the congregation can remember seems therefore to be necessary. Joseph Ashton states that such a view of church music "treats it as something without significance -- harmless to be sure, yet somehow indispensable."²

Another view of the function of church music is that it serves as something to fill up time before and during the actual service. The organ prelude is viewed as background music (sometimes for conversation) and fills in until the service begins. Music with this purpose serves as "a kind of interlude in religious worship", as Lowell Mason has put it.

There is another attitude which Ashton calls the "laissez-faire" treatment³ and which conceives of

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. Ibid.

church music as being either unimportant or too involved a matter to get mixed up in. Here, as in the two views previously mentioned, there is no real understanding of the value of music as an actual means to worship.

In contrast to these rather indifferent approaches to church music are those which go to the other extreme by making music an end in itself. It becomes then a form of entertainment and an attraction, sometimes used to draw people to the worship service. A corollary of this view is the importance sometimes attached to individual participants or an emphasis upon paid soloists or quartets. Here, too, the stress is upon being entertained.

These are only a few of the many views held of the function of church music.¹ They point up the fact, however, that one of the first things a church must do in seeking to improve its ministry of music, is to analyze what the prevailing thought is concerning the place of music in the service of worship. Many of the views mentioned are correct in part, but none represent the complete purpose of music in worship.

To present a more positive picture of what church music should be, it is helpful to return to the definition given by Davies and Grace. Church music is

.

1. For a more detailed study of the various views of the function of church music see Ashton, op. cit., pp. 1-5.

"music which is applied to purposes of public worship." According to Ashton, the "ideal of church music is found in its function"¹ and this function is religious. He goes on to say that "the heart of church music must be the consciousness of this religious nature."² This does not imply that there is only one type of music which can be used in a worship service, but that music must be chosen with the idea that its purpose is to aid in bringing the congregation into a deeper awareness of God's Presence. Music, as well as all the other artistic effects of a worship service should be a sincere expression of worship itself. Since the nature of music and the aesthetic experience make it possible for some music to reach into the depths of a person's being and to lead him, by mysterious yet direct ways from such an experience to the worship of God, the burden for choosing music with these qualities rests upon the person responsible for the music of the worship service. This is, in most cases, the minister of music, the organist or the choir director.

Granted that a church's concept of the function of its music has been carefully considered and the correct perspective gained, what are some

.

1. Ibid., p. 6.
2. Ibid.

standards or principles of choice and performance which would aid in the upbuilding of a meaningful ministry of music?

D. General Standards for Selection and Performance of Church Music

1. Characteristics of Church Music

Before discussing more fully three specific functions of music in worship as found in the organ prelude, anthem and hymns, it is helpful to set forth some general standards for the selection and performance of church music. These standards are based upon the essential characteristics and requirements of church music and the resulting differences between sacred and secular music.

It has been seen that the raw materials of music are actually devoid of any secular or sacred connotations.¹ The situation changes as these raw materials are organized into musical compositions by means of melody, harmony, rhythm and the ideas which the composer is seeking to express. Many factors then must be taken into consideration, such as the type of melody used, the rhythmic patterns involved and the responses aroused by them, whether through associations, pure aesthetic enjoyment of the form or the direct

.

1. Ante, p. 22.

appeal to the emotions. Even though these things do not make a piece "absolutely and inevitably religious"¹ or irreligious, there are certain characteristics of church music which may be kept in mind when choosing music for worship.

Ashton speaks of four factors which enter into all church music.² These are the "musical, the conceptual, the ceremonial and the associational." The unity between religion and art, stemming from their common rootage in the experiences of man, enables music to be of valuable service in the worship of God. The second factor in church music and one which differentiates the sacred from the secular, is the conceptual. In worship, it is the conception of a God Who is adored and Who motivates to dedication and aspiration, that gives direction and consequently content, to the music. For this reason a distinction can be made between sacred and secular music. "Music is religious according to the emotions it stirs",³ and the ideas which the composer was seeking to convey and which underlie the music largely determine the emotions stirred.

The third factor mentioned, the ceremonial, is the result of the great difference between worship

.

1. Ashton, op., cit., p. 9.
2. Ibid., pp. 8-13.
3. Maus, op. cit., p. 22.

and other activities. The efforts to encourage and enhance the mood of reverence and awe which increase the "reality-feeling" of God's Presence have given rise to certain forms and rituals within the church. Music as an integral part of these efforts is also part of the ceremonial and

it is the great glory of genuine church music that worship may find in it the mood which is consonant with this ceremonial element in religion, a mood which may awaken, express and embody the religious.¹

The fourth factor in church music is the associational and there are two ramifications of this factor. Music cannot be divorced from the rest of the service or from the physical surroundings of the worshipper. It is intimately associated with them and is enhanced or robbed of some of its effectiveness by means of them. In the same sense, music can supplement their value. Such associations stem from the present situation in which the music is performed. There is another type of association which is more powerful, however, and which arises from the many past experiences of worship which are part of man's consciousness. Thus music draws upon the wealth of past experiences which reside within man and can result in the re-experiencing

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 11.

of religious emotions. Repetition of acts and experiences are a means of deepening the understanding of the spiritual realities they are intended to convey.¹ There is, of course, the danger that associations of this type will divest the music of new and fresh insights, and the associational factor must not be relied upon too heavily. It is important also to recognize the fact that the music used today is also building up future associations.

The best church music will combine all four factors and it is well to keep them in the foreground as the requirements or selective standards of music are considered.

2. Standards of Selection and Performance

Davison gives two important requisites of true church music. The first requirement is that church music should vie with the best music in any field, sacred or secular. The church has a heritage of fine music and there is no need for it to be satisfied with second best. The second requisite is that all church music must seek to create an atmosphere of worship in which God, not man, is seen as the important figure.² All true worship is directed to God. The music of the

.

1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 26.
2. Davison, op. cit., p. 107.

church must be a reflection of the mood of worship in general, namely dignified, controlled and conducive to meditation. Music which embodies these standards is fulfilling its purpose as a means to worship for

only in so far as music or anything else may become a medium or means of conveying or embodying the religious spirit and religious experience may it be truly termed religious.¹

Another important aspect of church music is that it should contribute to the unity of the service of worship. An anthem which has no relation to the over-all theme of a service creates a lack of unity. It becomes a thing in itself rather than an integral part of the whole service of worship.

These then are a few general principles for the selection of church music. Even the best music, however, can suffer because of a poor performance. The way in which music is re-created in a worship service is of the utmost importance. If the function of church music is to convey spiritual values, then the performance of this music must be in accord with this purpose. A performance, whether it be by soloist, choir or congregation should be deeply religious and devotional in character. This does not mean that it is sombre and depressing for "in church music, as in worship, there

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 9.

should be joy and confidence, rapture, aspiration, poise and earnestness."¹ This rules out theatrics and false pathos of any kind. As each performer, whether he is a soloist or choir member, enters into the experience of worship himself, the music being performed is enhanced and becomes a means to worship for others.

E. Three Specific Functions of Music in Worship

1. The Organ Prelude

a. The Place of the Organ in a Worship Service

Church music is both vocal and instrumental and for the most part they work together rather than separately. There is a valuable place for instrumental music, however, and the organ is almost universally accepted today as the instrument most suited for use in worship. There are many reasons for this opinion. The organ, because of its mechanical make-up is capable of producing broadly sustained melodies with great varieties of volume and timbre. The ability of a certain timbre, harmonic progression or melody to cause deep responses within a listener which may prompt or lead into spiritual areas of experience, has been seen as a part of the nature of music.² The organ is exceptionally well suited for the conveyance of such

.

1. Ibid., p. 35.
2. Ante, pp. 22-24.

values. By means of the richness and depth of tone produced, the organ can create an atmosphere of almost mystical calm and is able to sustain a "majesty, serenity, and elevation which is all its own."¹ This capacity for great expressiveness makes the organ an instrument which is especially suited for use in religious worship.

The question may well be raised as to whether or not the use of purely instrumental music does not make such music an end in itself. The answer to this question again refers back to the nature of instrumental or pure music. It has been said that "music begins where speech leaves off",² and in the absence of words, thoughts are often directed by means of perceptive listening³ and because of associational factors,⁴ to much greater depths than can be reached by words. Conceptual listening sets bounds upon the areas touched, that is if the words are carefully listened to. The organ therefore is

the one instrument deemed proper to accompany the worshipper through all the reflections, meditations, and dedications of a service.⁵

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 166.
2. Greene, op. cit., p. 488.
3. Ante, pp. 36-38.
4. Ante, pp. 59-60.
5. Whittlesey, op. cit., p. 141.

b. The Function of the Organ Prelude

Most formal worship services of today begin with an organ prelude. There are many conceptions of the purpose of the organ prelude and these conceptions depend a great deal upon the prevailing idea of the purpose of church music in general. Since instrumental music is able to be a means to worship in itself, it is logical to assume that the service of worship begins with the prelude rather than that the prelude leads up to the beginning of the service. The organ prelude sets the whole mood of worship and should serve to focus attention upon the things of God. The purpose of the organ prelude, therefore, is to clear the mind of distracting thoughts and to point the worshipper to higher spiritual realities through quiet meditation.

c. Selection of the Organ Prelude

In selecting music for the prelude, an organist must keep this purpose in mind and choose his music accordingly. Except on special occasions such as Easter or Christmas morning, the tone of the prelude should be subdued. This does not mean that it is weak or thin sounding but that it maintains a mood of calmness. The variety of timbre available on most organs allows for differences in the quality of sound although the quantity may stay within a relatively small area.

The volume may rise but sustained loudness draws attention to the instrument itself and can destroy the mood of serenity which is conducive to worship.

The prelude does not offer the opportunity for a short recital and simple, yet meaningful music is to be preferred over virtuoso type pieces. Sensual melodies involving a great deal of chromaticism or repeated upward skips of large intervals should be avoided as should excessively rich harmonic progressions. These, too, tend to call attention to the music itself or to send the mind off to regions which are not spiritual. Music which has associations outside of the church, such as the Londonderry Air, is also out of place in a worship service. Through the power of association a person may easily find himself wafted back to some point in his life quite apart from the worship service.

Ashton speaks of the German chorale prelude as "an ideal form of service prelude."¹ Polyphonic music with its subtle movement of inner parts is also a fertile source of music for preludes. The playing of a simple hymn, where the words are well known and meaningful, can be most effective in directing the thoughts to God.

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 154.

d. Performance of the Organ Prelude

The prelude always begins softly. It should never break in upon the stillness of the sanctuary and upon those who are seated in silence there. The prelude should begin so softly that it seems almost to be felt before it is heard. If the piece does not provide for this type of beginning, several measures may be improvised as a means of leading into it.¹

Many churches do not have large organs or trained musicians to play them. "The size of the organ and the skill of the player matter less than is generally supposed."² What does matter, however, is the intention of the organist and his understanding of the importance and value of organ music in a service of worship. The organ prelude will be a means to worship if it is played by a consecrated and capable (not necessarily professionally trained) person. One who has a "clear conception of what the service strives to accomplish,"³ and of the place music has in the fulfillment of this purpose.

2. Selection and Performance of the Anthem

Many of the principles mentioned in connection with the selection and performance of the organ prelude,

.

1. Whittlesey, op. cit., p. 143.
2. Davies and Grace, op. cit., p. 242.
3. Whittlesey, op. cit., p. 141.

hold true for the anthem as well. Like the prelude, the purpose of the anthem is to intensify the mood of worship, not to entertain. For this reason anthems should be simple and not too long.

Ideally, anthems should not be extended beyond the full expression of the devotional mood of their words, nor beyond the inherent implications of their musical material.¹

Undue repetition of words or musical phrases may detract from an anthem by calling attention to the formal structure of the music although repetition, when used to heighten the effectiveness of the words, can be a valuable means of emphasis.

An anthem should contribute to the unity of the service, and the words and mood will determine in what part of the service the anthem comes. There are two types of anthems, those of praise and those of prayer. The anthem of prayer is usually quite short and is sung more slowly. The anthem of praise is more outgoing in mood and is characterized by greater volume, a more rapid tempo and a greater degree of breadth. It is essential, therefore, that the anthem be placed in the proper part of the service. The order of worship may even be changed in order to accomplish a greater sense of unity. The minister, choir director and

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 141.

organist who work out their services of worship together, will find them much more effective in leading the congregation into deeper spiritual experiences. The anthem then, should grow out of the context in which it is placed and therefore intensify the mood of worship at that time.

An anthem combines vocal and instrumental mediums of expression. In order for them to be most meaningful, there must be a close working together of words and music. Both ought to be good, for sacred words can be rendered ineffectual by a melody which has secular associations. The thought content of the words serve as the guide for the composition of the music. They must agree in rhythm, accent and the mood being conveyed.

There are several important factors to consider when looking over the words of an anthem. For one thing, they must be theologically sound. "The best words for worship are Scriptural in sentiment, expression, or phraseology."¹ The words must be understood and this includes intellectual as well as audible understanding. The union of words and music heightens the effectiveness of both but also puts an additional burden upon the listener. For this reason care should

.

1. Whittlesey, op. cit., p. 115.

be taken to see that the words are clearly sung. A congregation cannot worship by means of something it does not understand and the intellectual level of a congregation should be taken into consideration when choosing an anthem. Words to be used in public worship are of a more impersonal nature and should be so phrased as to give utterance to the thoughts and needs of the whole group.

As with the prelude, "the best worship music is free from secular idioms."¹ Melody, rhythm and harmony must be taken into consideration since the ways in which they are used determine to a great extent the emotions aroused.² The degree to which these elements can effect a piece of music is stated clearly by Joseph W. Clokey when he says:

If the melody is sweet, suave, obvious, chromatic, or sequential, it will be unfit . . . these are the devices of the popular ballad. If the rhythm employs many dotted notes, triplets, syncopation, rhythmic sequences, it is unfit . . . these are devices of the dance music. If the harmony makes use of chromatic chords, modern dissonances, successive dominant seventh chords, diminished chords, it is unfit . . . these are the devices of the modern concert-room harmony.³

Both diminished and dominant seventh chords are

.

1. Ibid., p. 116.
2. Ante, pp. 25-33.
3. As quoted from Whittlesey, op. cit., p. 117.

examples of unstable and psychologically unsatisfying chords.¹

The combination of vocal and instrumental mediums provides for both conceptual and perceptual understanding. The mood and meaning of the words are heightened and given new depth by means of good music. The anthem, therefore, does not constitute a respite from the worship service in which the worshipper can sit back and relax and enjoy being sung to. It is for this reason that short and simple anthems with meaningful words are generally to be preferred over long and involved compositions. Such music, sincerely interpreted by the performer, is apt to be "nearer the heart and mind of the worshipper than is music of great elaboration."²

In selecting anthems the capabilities of the choir must be taken into consideration. It is far better to perform a simple anthem (some hymns make very fine anthems) and to do it well than to attempt more difficult things with unsatisfactory results.

The view a choir and its director hold of the function of music in a service of worship will largely determine their selection and performance of that music. Where it is understood that the purpose

.

1. Ante, p. 31.
2. Ashton, op. cit., p. 143.

of all church music is religious and therefore directed toward God and where each church choir member interprets the music personally and performs it sincerely, the anthem can be a valuable means of leading the worshipper to God.

3. Congregational Singing and The Hymn

a. The Importance of the Hymn

The music of the organ prelude and the choir anthem are limited in active participation to a relatively small number of people. When they are carefully selected and performed, they can be an important means of drawing the congregation into the worship of God. For this reason, there may, indeed there should, be actual participation on the part of the congregation rather than just passive listening. It is the congregational singing, however, which provides for the most direct musical expression of corporate worship. The hymns are the music of the people and "in whatever age or place the congregational character of hymn singing has been neglected, the Church has suffered inevitable spiritual loss."¹

The worship of God involves the whole being of man and so it has been natural for him to express

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., 191.

this worship by means of song. Corporate affirmation and expression of faith is a powerful force and the potency of group singing cannot be over-emphasized. The hymn has always been the means by which the Christianity of the common people has been expressed. "The great majority of people get their ideas of theology and religion very largely from hymns"¹ and every religious revival has been characterized by a fresh outburst of hymn writing and singing.

It has been said that "Christianity is the religion of spiritual song."² A historical survey of the use of hymns in Christian worship bears witness to this fact for they have been an integral part of the worship service since the beginning of the Christian church. The early church inherited a rich hymnody from the Hebrew worship services in the form of the psalter. As John Harrington Edward's states, the Christian church also gave birth to a valuable hymnody of its own.³ Throughout the centuries countless hymns have been added to the music of the church, making its heritage the richest of any religion in the world.

The power of these hymns to move people has been amply attested to. One of the best known examples

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 107.
2. Edwards, op. cit., p. 155.
3. Ibid.

of this is found in the words of St. Augustine. In referring to the hymns of St. Ambrose he says,

What tears did I shed over the Hymns and Canticles, when the sweet sound of the music of thy Church thrilled my soul! As the music flowed into my ears, and thy truth trickled into my heart, the tide of devotion swelled high within me, and tears ran down, and there was gladness in those tears.¹

It is said that even when the powerful oratory of John Wesley could not quell the unruly mobs, the people "were known to turn and slink away when the truth was sung at them in Charles Wesley's hymns."² Books have been filled with such stories of the appeal of hymns as well as with accounts of their composition. This invaluable heritage prompted Douglas to say that, next to the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, the hymnal is the most "precious spiritual treasure and spiritual tool" which the church possesses.³

The vitality of the worship of a church may be seen in its congregational singing. Too often this part of the service is the most neglected because of the failure to recognize the importance of the singing of hymns. When the value of hymns is understood, however, and a sincere effort is made to improve this part of the service, they can become a most potent

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., p. 164.
2. Edwards, op. cit., p. 158.
3. Douglas, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

means of leading people in the worship of God.

b. The Selection of Hymns

Much of the lack of vitality which is found in the congregational singing of today, is due to the careless or indifferent selection of hymns. The choosing of the hymns is usually left up to the minister. If they are chosen with the whole service in mind they can contribute a great deal toward its unity. The hymns, like the anthem, should fit into their context and serve to intensify the mood of worship at that time. Many times a hymn may be used to climax a portion of the service as the congregation is given the opportunity to articulate their experience of worship as a corporate body.

In selecting hymns, the ability of the congregation should be kept in mind. For the most part, the hymns should be simple enough to be sung easily by the congregation, for they cannot pay very much attention to the words if they are occupied with reading the music. The range of the melody is an important factor to keep in mind and those that go above an E are better left alone. An upper limit of D would be best for mixed congregations.

The words and music of a hymn must be considered just as carefully as those of an anthem. The same principles hold here as in the selection of

the anthem. The hymns must be carefully read for their theological content, clarity of thought and poetic value. "The full value of hymn singing is not realized until the singers feel the inspiration of the text."¹ It is sometimes a help to read through the words before singing a hymn in order to allow for single-minded attention to the text.

The music should enhance and heighten the effect of the words. The melody should not be so lyrical that it detracts from the words nor the rhythm so pronounced that the singer feels tempted to tap his foot. Instead, there should be an intimate working together of the words and music. The German chorale, "the noblest example of Protestant congregational song",² illustrates this unity and the quality of hymn which results. The ideal melody for a hymn has been described as one which is "self-contained and self-subsistent, one not dependent upon an harmonic accompaniment to give it character and life."³ A good test for a hymn melody is to play it unaccompanied, for the best melodies will still have meaning when sung in "bare unison."

c. The Singing of Hymns

John Wesley had some cogent things to say

.

1. Ashton, op. cit., 107.
2. Davison, op. cit., p. 61.
3. Ashton, op. cit., p. 117.

pertaining to the singing of hymns when he gave the following rules:

Learn these tunes . . . , sing them exactly as printed; sing all of them; sing lustily; sing modestly; sing in time; above all, sing spiritually, with an eye to God in every word.¹

Even though many congregations do not sing this way at present, they can be educated to do so. This may be done in several ways. One method is to provide for song services which are planned as worship services, not just as hymn-sings. The purpose of music in worship may be spoken of at this time and the congregation made more aware of the great value of the hymn and of congregational singing.

The choir may aid in strengthening the singing by practicing the hymns for the following Sunday at their regular rehearsal. They should not take over the singing but rather, should lead the congregation. Unison singing on the part of the choir and the congregation will lend force to the hymns. New hymns should always be practiced by the choir, for many congregations will hesitate or even stop singing if they do not sense the choir's lead.

One of the most fruitful ways of improving the singing of hymns is to work with the children and

.

1. Douglas, op. cit., p. 237.

young people in the church school or youth choirs. As Whittlesey says, if people are not singing now it may very well be because they never had the opportunity to learn the great hymns of the church when they were younger.¹

Much of the responsibility for the hymns rests upon the organist. He must set the tempo and see that the hymn is neither too fast nor too slow. The tempo should be chosen in accordance with the words and mood of the hymn. The tempo should be steady throughout the entire playing of the hymn. A strong foundation is needed for the singing but there should not be so much organ that the congregation is overwhelmed. Sudden changes of registration or volume should be avoided. "Ideally, the voices of the congregation should overflow the supporting tone of the organ."² The organist should be familiar with the words of the hymn and breathe with the singers. As Ashton says, the organist should "play the words." Phrase endings are made more explicit by making a clean break before beginning the next phrase. The final Amen may also be cut off from the rest of the hymn by lifting the hands off the keyboard.

Finally, congregational singing may be enhanced by some specific teaching about the hymnal

.

1. Whittlesey, op. cit., p. 160.
2. Ashton, op. cit., p. 205.

and certain hymns. A great many hymns have been written out of profound spiritual experiences and an understanding of the background of a hymn can effect its singing.

F. Summary

People may be deeply influenced by the music which they hear in a service of worship and for this reason the ministry of music is a vital one. There is need, therefore, for the careful selection and performance of all church music. It is possible for any church to improve its ministry of music, despite its size or financial status. The first step is the realization of the value of church music and its proper function within a service of worship. Then, by applying some basic principles of selection and performance to all the music which is to be included in the service, a meaningful and worthwhile ministry of music can be established.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. General Summary

Throughout the centuries men have sought various means to aid them in the worship of God. Music as one of these means has maintained an integral place in the worship of the Christian church. The purpose of this study has been to discover why music has held this place in order to determine the bases for the selection and performance of music in a service of worship.

The historical place of music in Christian worship surveyed in chapter one shows that music has been a part of the worship of the Christian church from its very beginning. Christians expressed their new faith by means of the songs of the Hebrew psalter. To these, hymns were added which were distinctly Christian. As the worship of the church became increasingly liturgical, the music tended toward more difficult means of expression and thus was often beyond the capacities of the congregation. The body of Christian music continued to develop throughout the centuries until the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther, fully realizing the value of music to stimulate and transmit the faith of the Christian church, restored singing to the congregation by means of the great hymns of the Reformation. The worship of the Protestant church today evidences a

close working together of music and religion.

Chapter two has shown that the key to the importance of music in Christian worship resides within the nature of music itself. Man can only approach the Presence of God by means of his natural resources. The most direct way for him to experience anything is by way of the senses and, for this reason, the arts and in particular music have been valuable avenues to worship. Music is basically made up of sounds which are capable of conveying meaning. These raw materials of music are organized into structured forms by means of melody, rhythm and harmony. The unity of man's experience coupled with the ultimate values of beauty, truth and goodness, which are ingrained in his very being, make it possible for him to approach truth in religion by means of the beautiful. Thus, music has been an invaluable means of leading people to the worship of God.

Because of its inherent power, the type of music used in Christian worship must be carefully selected and performed. Chapter three has shown that by the application of some basic principles of selection and performance, a church's ministry of music may be greatly enriched and improved. The organ prelude can be a valuable means of leading people to worship when it is reverently performed and carefully selected for its musical values. The anthem can intensify a mood of worship when placed in the proper part of the worship

service and again, when considered musically, theologically and poetically. Certain steps may be taken in order to improve the congregational singing, thereby improving the entire service of worship.

B. Conclusions

As a result of this study of the functions of music in formal Christian worship, the writer has become increasingly aware of the fact that music has a vital task to perform in leading people to a deeper experience of the Presence of God, which is true worship. We must carefully consider the importance of church music and its place within a worship service if it is to be used most meaningfully. All music within a service must have as its primary purpose the glorification of God and not merely the edification of man.

The Christian church has a musical heritage which is unsurpassed by any other religion. Such a heritage places a great responsibility upon those of us who are in any way responsible for the music of the service of worship. The ministry of music is at once a privilege and a challenge. Where church music is neglected or indifferently chosen, the worship service is deprived of a most valuable means of leading people to worship. Where the highest and best in music is used and the true function of church music is recognized, the worship of the church can be greatly enriched.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

- Ashton, Joseph N.: Music in Worship. Pilgrim Press, Boston and Chicago, 1943.
- Davison, Archibald T.: Church Music-Illusion And Reality. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1952.
- Douglas, Winfred: Church Music in History and Practice. Charles Scribners' Sons, 1937.
- Greene, Theodore Meyer: The Arts And The Art Of Criticism. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1940.
- Kay, J. Alan: The Nature of Christian Worship. Philosophical Library, New York, 1954
- Mead, Hunter: An Introduction To Aesthetics. The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1952.
- Shepherd, Massey H., Jr.: The Worship of the Church. The Seabury Press, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1952.
- Underhill, Evelyn: Worship. Harper & Brothers, 1937.
- Vogt, Von Ogden: Art & Religion. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1921.

B. Secondary Sources

- Apel, Willi: Harvard Dictionary of Music. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947.
- Bailey, Albert Edward: The Gospel in Hymns. Charles Scribners' Sons, New York, 1950.
- Bettenson, Henry: Documents of the Christian Church. Oxford University Press, New York & London, Sixth Printing, 1956.

- Bradley, F. H.: Appearance And Reality. Swan Sonnenschein & Company, London, MacMillan & Co., New York, 1893.
- Davies, Walford and Grace, Harvey: Music & Worship. The H. W. Gray Company, New York, 1935.
- Dearmer, Percy: Art And Religion. Student Christian Movement Press, London, 1924.
- Dewey, John: Art As Experience. Minton, Balch & Company, New York, 1934.
- Edwards, John Harrington: God and Music. The Baker & Taylor Co., New York, 1903.
- Einstein, Alfred: A Short History of Music. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1954.
- Feibleman, James K.: Aesthetics. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1949.
- Guggenheimer, Richard: Sight and Insight. Harper & Brothers, 1945.
- Hospers, John: Meaning And Truth In The Arts. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1946.
- Lang, Paul Henry: Music in Western Civilization. W. W. Norton and Company, 1941.
- Machlis, Joseph: The Enjoyment Of Music. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1955.
- Maus, Cynthia Pearl: Christ And The Fine Arts. Harper & Brothers, New York.
- Maxwell, William D.: Concerning Worship. Oxford University Press, London, 1948.
- Miller, Hugh Milton: An Outline Of The History Of Music. Barnes & Noble, Inc., New York, 1947.
- Morris, Bertram: The Aesthetic Process. Northwestern University, Evanston, 1943.
- Osborne, H.: Theory of Beauty. Philosophical Library, New York, 1953.

- Otto, Rudolf: The Idea Of The Holy. Translated by John W. Harvey. Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1928.
- The Philosophy Of Religion. Translated by E. B. Dicker. Williams & Norgate Ltd., London, 1931.
- Pratt, Carroll C.: The Meaning of Music. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York and London, 1931.
- Qualben, Lars P.: A History Of The Christian Church. Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, Sixteenth Printing, 1956.
- Rader, Melvin: A Modern Book of Esthetics. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1952.
- Raymond, George Lansing: The Essentials of Aesthetics. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, Third Edition, 1921.
- Reynolds, I. E.: Music and the Scriptures. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1942.
- Robertson, Alec: Sacred Music. Chanticleer Press, New York, 1950.
- Routley, Erik: Hymns And Human Life. Philosophical Library, New York, 1952.
- Sachs, Curt: Our Musical Heritage. Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, Fifth Printing, 1952.
- The Rise of Music in the Ancient World. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1943.
- Sullivan, J. W. N.: Beethoven, His Spiritual Development. The New American Library, First Printing, 1949.
- Whittlesey, Federal Lee: A Comprehensive Program of Church Music. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1957.