

FROM "THE ARCHIVES"

("The Annual" - May 1948)

"The introduction of choirs and anthems into the services of the Churches of Scotland and England during the nineteenth century was a convincing demonstration of the need in any service of worship for a period of contemplation and spiritual devotion, a time when the worshipper, in response to the stimulus of that inspiration of the spirit which is the essential of all true art, is lifted into the realms of the infinite and the sublime. This power of stimulation is shared, of course, by all the arts in varying degrees. Music, however, exerts its influence to this end more readily than most of them; more so than architecture, however dignified and noble, or painting or colour, however beautiful, though these most certainly do serve to deepen and enhance our enjoyment of such moments in worship. Congregational singing, or any form of word-speaking, cannot help us here. It is true that congregational singing is the unsurpassed medium for the corporate expression of religious emotion; but it cannot give that essentially "private" and personal sense of withdrawal and contemplation which is the proper function of "music heard". The one is a giving out, the other of absorbing; and the two are complementary. Both, let it be stressed again, are highly desirable in any complete form of public worship. It is superfluous to add that in either case the music chosen must be of the best and the most fitting, if it is to serve faithfully the high purpose which inspired its creation.

"The inclusion of the anthem and of other choral settings into our services has the support of tradition. Long years of patient trial and experience have bequeathed to us a great store of good music, the reverent performance of which has fully demonstrated its effectiveness in increasing the devotional value of our services - a God-given inheritance whose advantages we neglect to our immeasurable loss."

Herrick Bunney

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