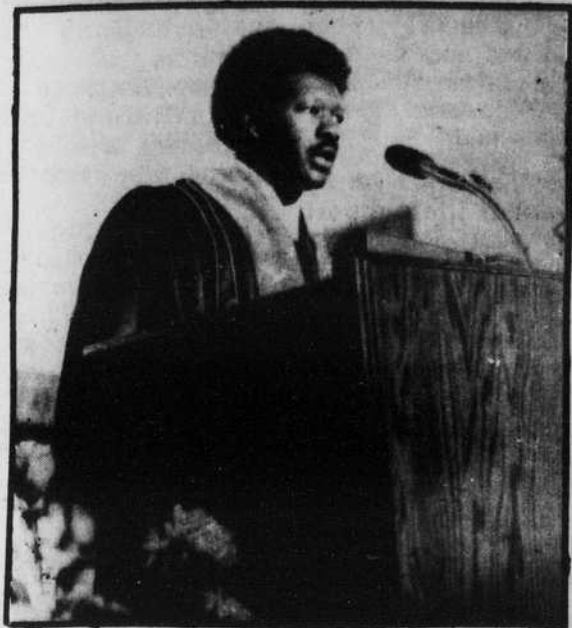


RELIGION



By: Rev. Sam Roberson

SACRED MUSIC

The power and influence of sacred music in worship are not understood and appreciated as they ought to be. Even where music is highly cultivated in Christian congregations, the interest is too often artistic rather than spiritual. Music may become high art in the house of God, but that does not make it worship. Of course, it should be artistic in the best sense of the term, but only

that it may be more devout. In the old temple services of the Hebrews, music, together with sacrifices and offerings, constituted almost their only worship.

Indeed, in our less pretentious Christian services, singing constitutes almost the only act that can be called worship in the strictest sense. Like prayer, the service of song may express adoration, confession, supplication and praise. But, unlike prayer, all can vocally unite in this act of worship "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19).

Worship through music is a pleasant privilege, which animates the dull and soothes the agitated spirit. While it comforts and inspires the saints it, more than any other part of religious service, attracts the unconverted and the unbelieving. It is the act of worship in which all occupy a common attitude and mutually bear a part. It is not, therefore, strange that sacred song has occupied so large a place in the history of Christian worship and that the affections of the renewed heart cherish it so fondly and resort to it so constantly. Christianity has sung its triumphs through the ages, and around the world.

Church music should be primarily the united expression of the assembly — the worship of all uttered in song. It is not a performance by a company of musicians for the entertainment of the congregation, but an act of worship by the congregation itself. It is not to be an act of worship performed by others to which the people are to listen, but an act of worship which they themselves are to offer. "Let the people praise Thee, O God: let all the people praise Thee" (Ps. 67:5).

Since the true idea of sacred song is that the people shall worship, not witness, a performance, the style of music should be such as the people can perform.

A great variety in style and execution may be very well introduced in one or two anthems, chants or sentences by the choir, so familiar that the people can sing them without an effort to remember the tune and without danger of losing it, all thought being given to the sentiment and spirit of the words.

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Prayer Poem

Sabine Baring-Gould, writing during the period immediately following the U.S. Civil War, gave to the church a number of magnificent poetic monuments. One of these was "Now the day is over." Another is "Onward, Christian soldiers." This latter hymn is a call to arm ourselves spiritually to serve as warriors for the Lord. It calls upon us to be strong and not afraid.

*Onward Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus,
going on before;
Christ the Royal Master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
see his banners go!*

*Refrain:
Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.
Like a mighty army
moves the church of God;
Brothers we are treading
where the saints have trod;
We are not divided,
all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
one in charity.*

*Onward, then ye people!
Join the happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
in the triumph song;
Glory, land and honor
unto Christ, the King,
This through countless ages,
men and angels sing.*

Joyously, courageously, expectantly we go through life with the words on our lips (and its realization in our spirits) that "only" "greater" things await us!" God makes us overcomers. Join in the company of God's victors in your church this week.

VICTORY BAPTIST HOLDS 22nd ANNIVERSARY

Praise and Thanksgiving poured out at the celebration of Victory Missionary Baptist Church's 22nd Anniversary, October 29 and 31. Sharing this year of rejoicing were Rev. Coleman of Greater St. James Baptist Church and Rev. Davis of Second Baptist Church, who, accompanied by their church choirs, delivered stirring messages as guest

preaching ministers for the two scheduled programs. Other churches represented were, Rev. Bennett of Zion Methodist; Rev. Wesley of Bethel Baptist Church and Rev. Carroll of Calvary Baptist Church. Victory was blessed with this communion of saints who shared in giving God the glory for a victorious 22-year journey.



Rev. A. J. Thompson, Pastor
Victory Missionary Baptist Church

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