

**THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH  
MUSIC, SHEWN FROM THE  
PRINCIPLES OF NATURE, THE  
TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE, AND THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE LITURGY**

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The importance of Church music, shewn from the principles of nature, the testimony of scripture, and the construction of the liturgy by James Cooper

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THE IMPORTANCE  
OF  
**Church Music**

SHOWN FROM

THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE,  
THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE,  
AND  
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LITURGY.

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## Preface.

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THE following Essay on *The Importance of Church Music* was written, as now published, in the form of a Lecture to the Members of the Church Institution of Bradford, delivered in June last, as introductory to the formation of a CHURCH CHORAL SOCIETY; the object of which is "to cultivate an improved knowledge and practice of Church Music in particular, and music of a sacred character in general, by Lectures, Lessons, and Exercises."

The Author has been induced, at the earnest request of some who heard it, to give it a less evanescent character, with the hope that it may lead others into whose hands it may fall to make similar efforts to heighten the standard of musical expression in Churches where improvement is desirable. Few Churches are without some one or more persons skilled in music and singing, who could undertake the office of a guide or precentor, if not a professed master of the science. Let the Clergy set forth the importance of its being done, as a matter which concerns the honour of God; and surely many, of the younger members of the congregation especially, would be found to concur in any suitable plan. Let them be enrolled as members of a

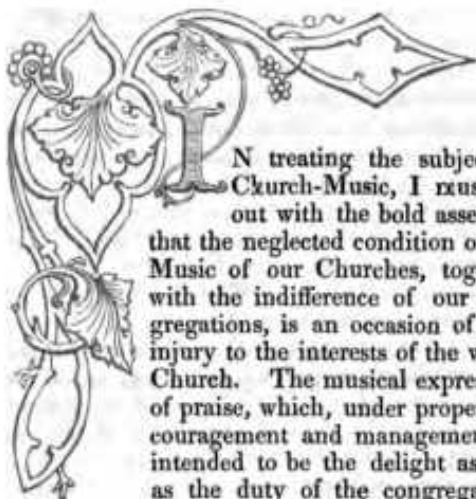
PREFACE.

Church Choral Society, meet weekly in the Church or elsewhere—begin with the simplest Church melodies—whether chants or psalm-tunes; let the appointed precentor classify them according to the character of their respective voices—then subdivide according to present capability. Let those who can read music practise any tune, chant, or anthem first—the rest listening in silence, till they have acquired some acquaintance with it, and afterwards endeavour to join in it. At the same time it will be necessary that there should be simultaneous lessons weekly to those who have not acquired the art of reading music.

Under some such regulations, superintended by the Clergy, and directed by a skilful hand, any congregation may be effectually trained to sing universally and to sing well.

It may also be observed, that the interest being once enlisted in Sacred Music, a foundation would be laid for a sound taste in music. Good Ecclesiastical Music would be loved beyond every other class; and the rising generation would learn to delight rather in the chorus of praise to God in his house, than in the trashy specimens too generally used in their hours of recreation.

*St. Jude's, Bradford,  
August, 1844.*



**I**N treating the subject of Church-Music, I must set out with the bold assertion that the neglected condition of the Music of our Churches, together with the indifference of our congregations, is an occasion of vast injury to the interests of the whole Church. The musical expression of praise, which, under proper encouragement and management, is intended to be the delight as well as the duty of the congregation, has become almost a matter of distaste; and instead of being, as it ought, and as it would, a source of attraction to the House of God, its neglected state rather tends to repel and drive many to other assemblies where they can realise more of the joyous aspect of Christian worshippers. Thus bad taste in



music is encouraged in other assemblies, because it is preferable to no taste; and partly on this account, the consecrated Sanctuary is frequently scantily attended, while the conventicle is crowded.

It is high time that due attention be given to a matter of such scriptural importance as uttering and shewing forth the praises of God. It is the leading idea of public worship, to offer praise and adoration to the Most High. This forms as it ought to do, the most prominent part of the public services of the Church; and is intended to excite in us suitable emotions of awe, reverence and love. It will be my object to point out and prove, that Music prompts the expression of praise, and aids the spirit of devotion: that it renders the sacred act of worship a pleasure instead of a weariness: and that thus, when due attention is given to the cultivation of sacred music and song, both as to its style and execution, the House of God becomes a scene of holy delight rather than of stern duty. Let our congregations, especially the junior members, be but disciplined aright in this matter, and we may easily reform what is justly a matter of complaint. By restoring the musical expression of our admirable liturgy, so far as circumstances allow, and taking some pains to arrive at correct harmony among our congregations, I feel assured that the effect would be to bring to public worship constantly many who only attend occasionally; others who are content to come once only on the Sunday, would make it convenient to attend as often as opportunity is afforded them; and many who count

the service of God a weariness because it is dull, would soon be attracted by the sublime and joyous aspect the House of God would present.

It is true that in many Churches great pains are taken to obtain from a stipendiary choir something like good music; and here and there we find an organist who is well skilled, and has cultivated a sound taste: but even this amount of excellence is rare. What we want, however, is not merely correct singing in the choir, but that general, nay universal participation in this sacred work of praise, which fills the House of God with divine harmony, and presents to the Lord our God a suitable oblation. We want to overcome the listless indifference, the fastidious fear of being heard to sing, the fancied incapacity, and the desire of being amused or delighted with the performance of the choir. We want to impress upon all *the duty* of singing the praises of God.

I am desirous therefore of directing your attention to the importance of this matter: and I propose to do so by setting before you sundry considerations which I hope will satisfy you, as they do me, that Music, as connected with divine worship, is not the insignificant matter which some suppose it to be, but that it is worthy of a degree of attention which it has very partially received, and of some painstaking among every congregation of Christian worshippers.

I propose, then, to adduce the following considerations in support of my proposition that Church Music is important:

1. The mutual adaptations of nature point out to us what is the proper expression of the praises of God.
2. Musical sounds producing certain effects upon our feelings, musical instruments are an excitement to our hearts, prompting us to the expression of the praises of God.
3. Holy Scripture records the use of Music and sanctions its employment.
4. The construction of our Liturgy evidently requires it.

These considerations will I trust be sufficient to satisfy us of the importance of the Music of the Church, and will lead me to urge upon you the importance of *cultivating* it.

*I. The mutual adaptations of nature point out to us what is the proper expression of the praises of God.*

When God created the world, he adapted all things with infinite skill and wisdom to one another so as to produce one harmonious whole. The infinite number of parts, like the materials of a noble edifice, were fitted and dovetailed together, so that they should give mutual and universal satisfaction. Among the individual elements of man's satisfaction and happiness is melodious sound: and as light is made for the eye, and the eye for light, so sound is made for the ear, and the ear for sound. There is a mutual adaptation of the one to the other.

At the same time, all things were created to give glory to God their Creator; to shew forth his praise,