

are officially connected with and responsible for the work of the choir, to see to it solemnly that they themselves are doing their utmost to foster and illustrate this noble ambition.

Let the clergy be especially determined that none but the upright and worthy are admitted to the ranks of their choir, so that, if they cannot obtain those who by heredity or education and sympathy are churchmen and communicants, their men and boys are at least blameless in character, reputation and conduct. Let them, whether competently musical or not, attend the choir practices in order to stimulate reverence, and so check, by precept and example, all that is unseemly in the House of God; and also to encourage, in every way, the efforts of the choir towards greater proficiency in their work of praising God.

Let our choir masters, upon whom so much depends, and who frequently—too frequently, as I would humbly suggest—hold in addition the office of organist; let them see to it that the church music, which they have to select and perform, is in every respect the very best that can be produced; that the choir, men and boys, are thoroughly trained and practised, not only in the proper method of voice production and culture, and in the general theory and practice of music, but in every single part of the church service, so that they, as a matter of conscience and principle, vigorously refrain from putting off the choir with that hideous and miserable farce of meeting in the vestry or practice-room for one night in the week, in which the whole proceedings seldom extend beyond the half-hour, being late begun and as quickly as possible ended, in order to betake one's-self to a more congenial sphere or more attractive appointment, and which consists in that rapid, jaunty, careless run through the Sunday chants and hymn tunes which is considered sufficient preparation for singing in the presence of the Most High. Such a thing as this cannot be dignified with the name of a practice, and the inevitable and awful result of such disgraceful indifference and neglect is that slovenly, blundering and halting rendering of the Divine service, which is positively an insult to the majesty of God.

Let the organist, perhaps the most responsible of all choir officials, and with the power certainly to make or mar a service, also see that he is truly what he professes to be, doubtless, a competent musician—one who, with full knowledge of his noble craft in all its branches, knows how, without blunder, noise, conceit and selfishness, to accompany the service, and that in a reverent devotional and intelligent spirit, which would never seek to make the service in God's House a medium for the exhibition of his powers of execution, or of the extent of his theoretical or practical knowledge, and which would recoil in horror from the thought of pandering in any way to the ignorant or depraved tastes of those who can appreciate as music for the church the productions of the theatre, opera, concert halls or drawing room, or the worthless effusions of fifth-rate composers.

And let each individual chorister, old and young, also lay to heart St. Paul's injunction to the Christians of Colosse: 'Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.' Let this supernatural motive permeate every department of our choir work. As singers 'to the Lord' let us in the choir-vestry, as much a portion of God's House as any other part of the building, be filled with that sense of solemn reverence and responsibility which must check the trifling and playing, the loud talk upon topics totally alien to the place and occasion, the bustle, confusion and noise attendant upon the careless garbing of our distinctive vestments, which so often mark our assembling and robing for Divine Service, and which are so unseemly.

Let us, before taking our places, seize the opportunity of collecting and settling our thoughts so that in all sincerity we may chant our Amens—so may it be—to the preparatory vestry prayer for cleansing and purification. With reverent mien let each one proceed from vestry to choir and there in silent prayer again invoke the blessing of God upon their labors, so that the 'O Lord, open Thou our lips,' with its response, 'And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise,' may be no meaningless though musical expressions to commence the choral portions of the service, but earnest prayer in ordered harmonious sound for heavenly aid and grace.

And with the thought before us that we are 'singers to the Lord,' let there be none of that uncouth, unintelligible, senseless gabbling or monotonous drag and drawl which so often mar our service of song—none of that careless, irreverent attitude or behavior, the playing, laughing or talking so common among some of our younger choristers, all of which ought on every occasion in the House of God to fill our minds and mark our outward deportment.

As singers to the Lord and not under men, let there be none of that desultory and irregular attendance both at the choir practices and church services which is fatal to the efficiency of any choir, however proficient individually its members may be, or perhaps consider themselves to be. For it is only by constant, regular, hard practice together that we can as a choir 'sing and give praise with the best members that we have,' and unless this most vital and important part of their work is so far as possible loyally and cheerfully carried out by every chorister, we cannot honor God with our offering of praise, which will rather prove an

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