

The theology of the hymn

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Theology, as a sacrum discipline, studies the relations between human and God, and the religion serves for the reconstruction and consolidation of these relations, practically between the prayer and his Creator.

The term “religion” has common root in Latin language with the term “ligament”. Religion it's based on dogmatic knowledge, given by the Theology, and on faith, which it's a capacity of the soul to believe the divine promises.

Which it's the role of the hymn in faith's image? The hymn (the song of praise, the song of confession, of dedication, of thanking, of adoring etc.) has the scope of sensitizing and purification of the mind, by stimulating the emotional capacities.

Emotional memory it's much more efficient in religion than the rational memory, based only on arguments. There were cases in which people who got carried away in life and got lost drowned in sins, woke up to reality after hearing a hymn, which they used to know from their childhood, from their faithful parents.

The voice of Gospel is much more powerful and attractive for the faraway souls, in the moments when it's accompanied by music, comparing to a simple predict, even an eloquent one. This truth was known by all the great evangelists, from Moody to Billy Graham, and the proof for this was the fact that all their campaigns of evangelize the music was not split from preachment.

The Bible sets forth that God's creation it's also accompanied by music, when he creates the worlds, the galaxies, the rational human beings.

*“Where were you when I created the earth? ...when the stars of morning blew up in songs of exhilaration, and when all God's sons were joyfully singing?” **Iov 38, 4.7***

The Israel nation was instructed by prophets and priests in the arts of sacrum music for the same scope: the emotional sensitize so that they could receive the great religious truth.

In order to achieve its scope, the hymn has to meet some technical and esthetical qualities; either it could turn from blessing to real curse. Which are those qualities that make a hymn to be dignified for using it in holy scopes?

1. The music of the hymn has to be in accord to the lyrics, meaning that the message of the music has to be the same as the message of the words. Because of the fact that this condition was not strictly respected horrible results appeared with awful associations between the text and the music. If we research the collection of contemporaneous hymns, we will notice how

the authors easily can join solemn and holy lyrics, like the one regarding the oblation for Messiah, with melodies for dancing, for partying and for locals.

This is a very huge blasphemy! The cause that brought this decadence to the hymn it was and still is the ignorance of the great power that music has regarding his emotional message. They didn't pay attention to the fact that this message (the inner echo) it's much stronger than the message of the lyrics. If many times you just cannot understand it, while it's sang, the music, in change, entails by capturing the attention in totality and persists for longer in your mind, after it was presented. The most persistent element of music, which remains like an obsession in the listeners' mind it's the rhythm. Maybe that's the reason for which this telluric element it's so promoted, amplified and diversified in the sacrum music... to desecrate it!

There is an unseen producer, enemy with the good, who inspires people to desecrate everything that left from the classical valor of hymnology. The great hymns of the XVI and XVII centuries were modified, “meaning they were treated after models of the entertaining music” so that they could annihilate the force of the extraordinary melodically message that they have. In this way the ear it's captured by the rhythmic group, next to the melody, and the orchestra, so called modern, specific to street music with electric guitars, batteries, saxophones, accordions etc. so that the desecration it's complete. It's very hard to answer what connection could be between this fiesta of noisy and godlessness sounds and the holy lyrics. There are some neo protestant churches with orchestras for music, with amplifiers and deafening loud speakers, where they create a disco atmosphere, with “hard” rhythms and with weird tones, never heard before – because of the synthesizer – which terrorizes old-age prayers, and those with selected preferences for the school of classical music.

2. A second pure religious quality, that the hymn should have it's the continuity. If the hits are ephemeral, the great hymns inspired by God are eternal. The real religious music it's a specific form of manifestation of divine love. It's not “Eros”, neither “Fileo”, it's “Agape”. This supreme Love “Agape” it's a universal principle that flows from the Big “I am” in Iowan 4, 16 we find written that: “God is Love”. The manifests like: light, air, heat, music, theology, sacrum arts in general and others. In 1Cor. 13, 8 it is said that “Love never will disappear”. The true hymns that come from “The Father of lights” (Jacob, 1, 17) are manifests of Love that immolates, of non egoist Love which gives itself for other's happiness and have the essence of immortality in their private structure.

Great classical composers known and intensely searched this essence of deathlessness, this divine “vibration”, a fact that pushed them to break and damage scores, hundreds of manuscripts which did not correspond to the principle of continuity. Some realized to do more, some realized to do less about the deathlessness of their creations. The contemporary industry of hymns, of carols and other products so called religious, which filled the world with kitsch, not only that doesn't cloy the hunger souls for spiritual food, but it debases their taste, keep them away from their real utility.

An academic hymnology based on musicological analyses, on historical data, etc. it is necessary and useful only for the specialists. In order to be useful for people, it should bring its fetch to separate the valor from non valor, in the field of religious music, to get more involved in the education of tastes by promoting some quality repertoires, by combating (with musicological, medical and psychological arguments) those cheap products that easily assert, from the first audition, but which are real drugs of desecrate illiteracy.

“Let's grow in every way”! This is the way that apostle Pavel in Efeseni 4, 15 stimulates us. An authentic religion means growing in “every way” not only in moral knowledge: culture, esthetic tastes, custom about life, science etc.

In 1Cor 13, 11 again apostle Pavel says: *“ When I was a child, I was talking like a child, I was feeling like a child, I was thinking like a child; when I grew up, I have abandoned everything that was childish.”* Unfortunately, most of our fellows still are at the stage of childhood, regarding musical preferences.

On the scale of musical evolution the rhythm without melody it's situated on the lowest step. Barbaric nation don't have melodically instruments. They know only the rhythmic instruments. From this stage until melodically there is a big step, exactly like that one from melody to polyphony and harmony. Unfortunately, humanity is heading to the stage of barbarism, if they don't take decision to educate the teenagers, and the hymn it's not absolved of this destiny.

The evolution of the society from savage till civilization it's much more alike the evolution of a person from the stage of childhood till his maturity. Regarding the grade to percept music, the stage of childhood can be prolonged until the anilities, if they don't work to educate and auto educate their selves, so that they would develop their esthetical preferences. What can be more disappointing than a church formed by mature people, but with childish preferences for the sacrum music?

At the beginning, children adore the pure and simple rhythm, without melody, and then they start to like only the simple melodies but very well rhythmical and amplified, which would have short and repeatable phrases. They prefer noisy pulsate instruments, and they push their selves away from the melodically ones with expressive sound, like the violin. This kind of preferences can be easily noticed at those mature people that have gradually developed their understanding for musical language by repeated auditions, going through the evolution of the musical phenomenon, from monody till polyphony, from chorus music, till symphonic music and room music.

Only by filling this “cultural empty” we can hope to refresh the hymn, as it was back in its period of glory in the XVI-XVII century; and the mission of the hymnology it's to keep the old musical standards checked during the time and recommended by the sacrum Word: *“Talk between you with psalms, with laudable songs and with spiritual songs, and sing and bring from all your heart praise to Lord.”* Efeseni, 5, 19