

Denominational Doctrines

Part 2 - Instrumental Music

Introduction:

- A. First thing noticed by new visitors.
- B. Instrumental music is common to almost all denominations.
 - 1. It is has not always been. (Clarke's comments)
 - 2. It is now the exception and not the rule.
- C. Instrumental music subject to three basic objections:

Discussion:

I. No New Testament References to It.

- A. Only singing. (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Jas. 5:13).
- B. References to them in heaven. (Rev. 5:8; 14:2; 15:2).
 - 1. If literal, then other things too.
 - 2. If in heaven puts it in church: angels, infants, etc.
- C. Old Testament references. (Psalms 150, cf. Gal. 5:1-4)
 - 1. N. T. worship not same as O.T. – commanded then – 2Chron. 29.26
 - 2. Also animal sacrifices, etc.
- D. History and quotes from scholars, etc. (see pages 2 & 3)

II. No New Testament Principles Include It

- A. Does not have to be specified to be authorized or forbidden.
 - 1. Abraham's expedients for offering. (Gen. 22:2-3).
 - 2. Jewish synagogue apparently under general authority to teach, etc.
 - 3. Golden calf not specified, but graven images were.
- B. Does have to be included in generic terms if not specified.
 - 1. Illustrated by common every day affairs.
 - 2. Illustrated by Bible examples. cf. Gopher wood.

III. New Testament Principles Exclude It – See PPT Chart

- A. It is a human tradition like hand-washing ritual. (Matt. 15:1-9)
- B. It does not respect silence of the scriptures. (Heb. 7:11-14).
- C. It goes beyond doctrine or gospel of Christ. (2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:8,9).
- D. It adds to the word of God. (Rev. 22:18-19).

Conclusion:

- A. Let us understand seriousness of unauthorized religious activity. (Cain, Nadab & Abihu)
- B. Let us content ourselves with scriptural things in worship.
- C. Let us sing without adding some other kind of music.
- D. Let us sing with all of our ability, improve it when we can.

The first appearance of instrumental music in church worship was about the sixth century A.D. The exact date of its introduction varied in different localities; but it can safely be concluded that there was no general practicing of it until after the eighth century, and even after this date it was long resisted by leading religionists. The quotations to follow present historical information about the practice of the primitive church regarding music. The scholars who are quoted all concur that instrumental music was not part of the worship of the primitive church.

A) The American Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, page 688, "The Pope Vitalian is regarded to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, King of Franks in 755."

B) Chambers Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, page 112, says: "The organ is said to have been introduced into church music by Pope Vitalian in 666 A.D."

C) The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 2, page 1702, states: "In the Greek church the organ never came into use, but after the eighth century it became common in the Latin church, not, however, without opposition from the side of the Monks...the reformed church discarded it; and though the church of Basil very early introduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation."

D) The McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. 6, page 759, "The Greeks, as well as the Jews, were wont to use instruments as accompaniments in their sacred songs. The converts to Christianity accordingly must have been familiar with this mode of singing; yet it is generally believed that the primitive Christians failed to adopt the use of instrumental music in their religious worship."

E) Lyman Coleman, Presbyterian scholar and author makes the following statements in his book, The Primitive Church, page 370-371, 376-377, "Both the Jews in their temple service, and the Greeks in their idol worship, were accustomed to sing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity, accordingly, must have been familiar with this mode of singing...but it is generally admitted, that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship...Such musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries."

F) Professor John Girardeau, Presbyterian Professor in the Columbia Theological Seminary in Music in the Church, page 179, makes the following statement: "The church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for 1200 years" (that is, it was not in general use until that time).

G) Dr. Frederic Louis Ritter, History of Music from the Christian Era to the Present Time, page 28, "We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. It was, however, purely vocal."

Religious leaders on Instrumental Music:

A) John Calvin, one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church: "Musical instruments in celebrating the praise of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews." John Calvin's Commentary, Ps. 33.

B) Adam Clarke, the greatest commentator of all time among the Methodists: "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (musical instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity." Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 4, page 684.

C) John Wesley, the reputed founder of the Methodist Church, is quoted by Adam Clarke to have said: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen." Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 4, page 684.

D) Martin Luther, a distinguished reformer, "called the organ an ensign of baal." McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, page 762.

E) Charles H. Spurgeon, recognized as one of the greatest Baptist preachers that ever lived, who preached for 20 years to thousands of people weekly in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, London, England, did not have musical instruments in the worship. M.C. Kurfeest, Instrumental Music in the Worship, page 196.

F) Conybeare and Howson, famous scholars of the Church of England, in commentary of Eph 5:19 say, "Make melody with the music of your hearts, to the Lord...let your songs be, not the drinking of heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment, not the music of the lyre, but the melody of the heart." Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. 2, page 408.

G) J.W. McGarvey, well-known minister of the Church of Christ, "It is manifest that we cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the obvious and only ground on which a restoration of Primitive Christianity can be accomplished." What Shall We Do About the Organ?, page 4.