

IS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP SCRIPTURAL?

INTRODUCTION:

1. Definition:

- A. Worship: The act of homage and reverence to God as laid down in the New Testament.
- B. Instrumental Music: That made on a mechanical instrument.
- C. Scriptural: (1) Command; (2) Example; (3) Necessary Inference.

I. WAS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC USED IN THE WORSHIP SERVICES OF APOSTOLIC CHURCHES?

- 1. Scholars of Church History Say There Was No Instrument.
- 2. Jesus Left It Out of His Instructions.
- 3. The Apostles Left It Out of Their Teachings.
- 4. Greek Catholics (Orthodox) Never Used It in Their Worship.

II. SOME THINGS LEFT OUT OF NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP THAT WAS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- 1. New Testament Worship Must Be This Side of the Cross.
 - A. The Old Testament Law was still binding while Christ was on earth.
- 2. Left out Saturday as a day of worship.
- 3. Left out the musical instrument in worship.
- 4. The fact that the majority of religious world used it does not prove it.

III. ARGUMENTS USED TO JUSTIFY THE USE OF THE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENT:

- 1. It was practiced under the Law of Moses
 - A. The New Testament is silent and we are not to take Moses' Law.
 - B. To be consistent would have to bring over incense and animal sacrifice.
 - C. Rom. 7:1-4: Have become dead to the Law and married to Christ.
 - D. Col. 2:14-18: The Old Law was nailed to Cross - taken away.
 - E. Gal. 5:4: Those going back under the Law have fallen from grace.

2. Say that instrumental music is not specifically forbidden
 - A. This puts a premium on the silence of the Scriptures.
 - B. Would be all right to practice anything not specifically forbidden.
 - (1) Counting beads, incense, praying to Mary, changing Lord's Supper to a common meal.
 - C. God said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts ..."
 - (1) They are merely assuming that it is all right with God.
 - (2) The burden of proof rests with those using the instrument.

3. They say that the instrument is only an aid to singing
 - A. It is not on par with books, chairs, lights, heat, pews, building, etc.
 - B. When the instrument is added, we no longer have an aid-but an addition.
 - (1) We have two kinds of Music - Vocal and Instrumental.
 - C. Does not help the singing, but rather hinders.
 - (1) God's Word furnishes us to every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16)

4. They say it is just a matter of Christian liberty. (I Cor. 10:28)
 - A. We have only that liberty which the New Testament gives us.
 - B. Must not cause our brother to stumble by practice.
 - C. We are not to add to the Word of God. (Rev. 22:18-19)

5. Since we use it in the home, we can use it in the worship
 - A. Many things practiced in the home are not wrong, but such things as eating of meat, washing hands, piano playing, when made an item of worship, become sinful.
 - B. Can dance with wife at home - not during worship of church.
 - C. It is sinful to worship God anywhere, anytime, with an instrument.

6. Say that there will be instrumental music in Heaven (Rev. 14)
- A. John heard the voice of one as the voice of harpers.
 - B. This would justify burning of incense, angels, etc., in worship.
 - C. What is to be in Heaven does not justify itself in New Testament worship.
7. They say the Greek word "Psallontes" means to play on an instrument
- A. Say idea of instrument inheres in the word just like the idea of immersion inheres in the word "baptize."
 - B. They say on the other hand that it is scriptural to sing either with or without the instrument.

It would be unscriptural to sing without an instrument if the idea of an instrument inheres in the word "Psallontes" and we have a direct command to do it.

- (2) It certainly is not possible to "baptize" either with or without immersion.
- (3) This would mean that everyone would have to have an instrument before he could sing. Not only would he have to have one but he would have to play it.
 - a. Eph. 5:19: Those doing playing did the singing. This does not justify the modern practice of one person doing all the playing and all the rest doing the singing.
 - b. Illus: Farmer plowing corn would need banjo, guitar.
- C. It is true that idea of instrument inheres in word "Psallontes"
 - (1) That instrument is the heart - Everyone of us has one.
 - a. Man Worships God with his heart.
 - 1. Rom 6:18: Obeyed from the heart.
 - 2. Heb. 4:12: Discerner of thoughts of heart.
 - 3. Matt. 9:4: Thinks.
 - 4. Prov. 15:28: Studies.
 - 5. Mark 2:8: Reasons.
 - 6. Matt. 13:15: Understands.
 - 7. Rom. 10:10: Believes.
 - 8. Matt. 22:37: Loves.

9. Zeph. 3:14: Rejoices.
10. Neh. 2:2: Sorrows.
11. Acts 15:9: Purifies.

(2) Eph. 5:19: "Aido kai psallontes en kardia tou Kuriou." Sing and make melody with the heart to the Lord.

D. In the final analysis, the Scripture is silent
- So are we.

IV. WHEN AND BY WHOSE AUTHORITY WAS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INTRODUCED INTO CHRISTIAN WORSHIP?

1. The American Cyclopaedia: "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the Churches of Western Europe about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor, Constantine Copronymus, to Pepin, King of the Franks, in 755." (Vol. 12, p. 688).
2. Chamber's Encyclopedia: "The organ is said to have been first introduced into church music by Pope Vitalian in 666. In 757, a great organ was sent as a present to Pepin by the Byzantine emperor, Constantine Copronymus, and placed in the church at St. Corneille at Compiègne. Soon after Charlemagne's time, organs became common." (Vol. 7, p. 112).
3. Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Though the church from time to time appropriated the secular artforms from their rise to their maturity, its chief authorities were always jealous of these advances, and issued edicts against them. So in 1322 Pope John XXII denounced the encroachments of counterpoint, alleging that the voluptuous harmony of 3rds and 6ths were fit but for profane uses." (Vol. 17, p. 84, Art Music).
4. Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia: "In the Greek church, the organ never came into use. But after the eighth century, it became more and more common in the Latin church; not, however, without opposition from the side of the monks... The Reform church discarded it; and though the church of Baset very early introduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation." (Vol. 2, p. 1702).
5. Fessenden's Encyclopaedia: "1. Vocal music. This species, which is the most natural, may be considered to have existed before any other. It was continued by the Jews, and it is the only kind that is permitted in the Greek and Scotch churches or, with few exceptions, in dissenting congregations in England. The Christian rule requires its use both for personal and social edification (Eph. 5; Col. 3). The vocal music of the imperial choristers in St. Petersburg incomparably surpasses in sweetness and effect the sounds produced by the combined power of the most exquisite musical instruments. 2. Instrumental

music. This is also a very ancient date, its invention being ascribed to Tubal, the sixth descendant from Cain. This instrumental music was not practiced by primitive Christians, but was an aid to devotion of later times, is evident from church history." (P. 852, Art Music).

6. London Encyclopaedia: "Pope Vitalian, in 658, introduced the organ into the Roman churches to accompany the singers. Leo II in 682 reformed the singing of the psalms and hymns, accommodating the intonation of them to the manner in which they are sung or performed at the present day." (Vol. 15, p. 280, Art Music).
7. Thomas Aquinas, surnamed the Angelic Doctor, one of the most learned scholastic doctors produced by the church of Rome in the thirteenth century, and a voluminous writer, says: "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize." (Bingham's Ant., Vol. 3, p. 137).
8. Erasmus (Desiderius), a contemporary of Martin Luther, and the most renowned classical scholar of his age, who is represented by high authority as "the most gifted and industrious pioneer of modern scholarship," says: "We have brought into our churches a certain operose and theatrical music; such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words as I hardly think was ever heard in any of the Grecian or Roman theaters. The church rings with the noise of trumpets; pipes and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a theater, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time in learning these whining tones." (Commentary on 1 Cor. 14:15-19).
9. John Calvin, the illustrious founder of the Presbyterian denomination, says: "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and 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. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in the known tongue (1 Cor. 14:16) . . . What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound?" (Commentary on Psalms 33).
10. Theodore Beza, the great Genevan scholar and translator, who was a friend and co-adjutor of Calvin, says: "If the apostle justly prohibits the use of unknown tongues in the church, much less would he have tolerated these artificial musical performances, which are addressed to the ears alone, and seldom strike the understanding even of

the performers themselves." (Giradeau's Ins. Music, p. 166).

11. The English Convocation, an ecclesiastical body of the Church of England, composed of bishops and clergy, with the Upper and Lower Houses, is an important witness in the case:

"In the beginning of the year 1562," says Hetherington, "a meeting of the Convocation was held, in which the subject of further reformation was vigorously discussed on both sides. (Here is one alteration that was proposed.) That the use of organs be laid aside. When the vote came to be taken, on these propositions, forty-three voted for them and thirty-five against; but when the proxies were counted, the balance was turned, the final state of the vote being fifty-eight for and fifty-nine against. Thus, it was determined by a single vote, and that the proxy of an absent person who did not hear the reasoning that the Prayer-Book should remain unimproved, that there should be no further reformation, that there should be no relief granted to those whose consciences felt aggrieved by the admixture of human inventions in the worship of God." (Hetherington's Hist. Westmin. Assem. of Divines, p. 30)

Thus, the Church of England was at one time on the verge of excluding instrumental music from the worship, the practice being retained by a single vote.

According to Dr. Lightfoot, President of the Westminster Assembly of Divines from 1643 to 1649, sprinkling and pouring for baptism were voted on in precisely the same way, the practice in the instance also being retained by a single vote. This is a remarkable coincidence in the history of these Romish relics.

12. Joseph Bingham said: "Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so." (Works, Vol. 3, p. 137)
13. Lyman Coleman: "The tendency of this (instrumental music) was to secularize the music of the church, and to encourage singing by a choir. Such musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but they can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Previous to this they had their place in the theatre rather than the church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West." (Primitive Church, pp. 376-377)
14. Conybeare and Howson, two scholars of high repute in the church in commenting on Eph. 5:19, says: "Let your songs be, not the drinking songs of the 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 Paul, Vol. 2, p. 408)

15. John Wesley, the father of Methodism, when asked his opinion on the instruments being introduced into their chapels, said: "I have no objections to the instruments in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard."
16. Adam Clark (Methodist Commentator): I am an old man, and I here declare that I never knew them to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music is a science I esteem and admire, but instrumental music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions of the worship of the Author of Christianity."
17. C. H. Spurgeon (the great Baptist preacher), said: "Praise the Lord with the harp, Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, when Jesus gives us spiritual good, one can make melody without strings and pipes ... We do not need them. They would hinder rather than help our praise. Sing unto Him. This is the sweetest and best music. No instrument like the human voice."

CONCLUSION: THE LORD, THE APOSTLES, THE EARLY CHURCH, CHURCH HISTORIANS, AND RENOUNCED CHURCH LEADERS SAY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IS NOT AUTHORIZED FOR USE IN WORSHIP SERVICES TODAY. THIS IS ENOUGH PROOF FOR ALL.

A CHART OF GENERIC AND SPECIFIC COMMANDS

<u>COMMAND</u>	<u>GENERIC</u>	<u>SPECIFIC</u>	<u>BOUND</u>	<u>LOOSED</u>	<u>EXPEDIENT</u>	<u>OBEYED</u>
GO	XX		GOING	WAY...	RIDE, FLY, WALK	GO
TEACH	XX		TEACHING	HOW...	RADIO, Pulpit	TEACH
BUILD ARK		XX	BUILDING MEASURE WOOD	TOOLS	HAMMER, SAW	BUILD ARK
PRAY	XX		PRAYING	POSTURE	KNEEL, STAND	PRAY
GIVE	XX		GIVING	MEANS..	PLATE, BASKET	GIVE
SING		MUSIC	VOCAL	PITCH	TUNING FORK	SING
SING		XX	VOCAL	PARTS	BASS, ALTO, TENOR	SING
SING		XX	VOCAL	WORDS	MEMORIZED, BOOK	SING

TRANSLATIONS OF THE GREEK WORD: PSALLO

<u>Translation</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Rom. 15:9</u>	<u>I Cor. 14:15</u>	<u>Eph. 5:19</u>
1. German and English	1453	Sing	Sing	Make Melody
2. Tyndale	1534	"	"	"
3. Cramer	1540	"	"	"
4. Geneva Bible	1560	"	"	"
5. Rheims	1582	"	"	"
6. Douay	1611	"	"	"
7. King James	1611	"	"	"
8. Rhemish	1833	"	"	"
9. McKnight	1795	"	"	"
10. Anderson	1864	"	"	"
11. Bible Union (Baptist)	1865	"	"	"
12. Ellicott	1866	"	"	"
13. Tischendorf	1868	"	"	"
14. Bible Union (Baptist)	1869	"	"	"
15. Coneybeare and Howson	1869	"	"	"
16. Living Oracles	1873	"	"	"
17. English Revised	1881	"	"	"
18. American Standard Version	1901	"	"	"
19. Worrell	1904	"	"	"
20. Modern Readers	1907	"	"	"
21. Revised Standard Version	1946	"	"	"

NOTE: It will be well to keep in mind that the King James Version of the Bible was translated by forty-seven scholars and that the American Standard Version was translated by one hundred and one scholars.

Obviously, only vocal music is authorized. there is no room here for the mechanical instrument of music.