

THE KIND OF MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Those Who Are Accustomed To Denominational Bodies, But Unfamiliar With The Church, Are Surprised (At Times Offended) To Find That We Do Not Use Instrumental Music In Our Worship.
- B. Questions, Naturally, Are Raised In Their Minds As To Why We Do Not Use Instruments Of Music In Our Worship.
 - 1. Are we too poor to afford the instrument?
 - 2. Are we musically untrained?
 - 3. Are we fanatical... Why?

II. AIM.

- A. To Furnish An Answer From God's Word For Our Difference Of Music In Worship.
- B. To Strengthen The Faith Of Our Members, Who May Not Be Able "To Give An Answer For The Hope That Is Within Us," In Serving God As He Has Directed.

III. OUTLINE.

A. WHAT STANDARD MUST WE USE IN SERVING GOD?

- 1. Majority?
 - a. Average man takes things for granted in religious matters:
 - 1) Seldom questions the scripturalness of any practice to which he is accustomed, or which seems logical to him.
 - 2) Seldom thinks about whether a thing is well-pleasing to God. (*Heb. 12:28-29*)
 - b. Religious questions are not settled by the majority, but by that which pleases God. (*Ex. 23:2*)

2. Old Testament?

- a. It is often argued that since the mechanical instruments of music were used by the "Old Testament worthies," they must be permissible today.
- b. Change of priesthood changed the law. (*Heb. 7:12, 22*)
 - 1) Under the Levitical priesthood, animal sacrifices were offered, etc.
 - 2) Under the priesthood of Christ, spiritual sacrifice is to be offered (*Rom. 12:1-2*), etc.

3. New Covenant?

- a. Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth under the New Covenant. (*John 16:13*)
- b. The apostles, being guided into all truth, and speaking in "words which the Holy Spirit taught them" (*1 Cor. 2:12-13*), authorized singing under the New and better Covenant. (*Heb. 8:6*)
 - 1) *Eph. 5:19*.
 - 2) *Col. 3:16*.
- c. We must find authority for the mechanical instrument of music in the New Covenant in order to know that it is well pleasing to God today.

B. WHAT ARGUMENTS ARE USED BY THOSE WHO USE THE INSTRUMENT IN WORSHIP?

1. The Ψάλλω (Psallo) argument:

- a. Many who use the mechanical instrument of music in worship, argue that authority for the instrument is found in the Greek word, ψάλλω (psallo). Their reasoning goes like this:
 - 1) In *Eph. 5:19*, we are commanded: "speaking to one another in psalms (ψαλμοῖς)" from (ψάλλω) "...singing and making

melody (ψάλλοντες) *with the heart...*"

- 2) The New Testament was written in Greek, and *psalms* is a translation of ψαλμοῖς, derived from ψάλλω, which means *to play on a stringed instrument, to sing to music*. Thus, Eph. 5:19 authorizes singing with a stringed instrument. (Remember that this is the argument used by those who believe the instrument is pleasing to God.)

b. The above argument looks reasonable, but, upon closer investigation, it is found to be incomplete.

- 1) The etymology of ψάλλω (psallo).

- a) Earliest meaning: *"to pluck off, pull out, i.e. the hair..."*

- b) Later, it came to mean: *"to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang,"* e.g. the bow or carpenter line.

- c) From this basic definition, it came to mean: *"to touch or strike the cord, to twang the strings,"* (e.g. of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate).

- d) In classical Greek: *"to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp, etc."*

- e) In the New Testament koine Greek: *"to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praise of God in song."* (See: Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Thayer, Joseph Henry, DD., p. 675.)

- 2) Note that the basic meaning of ψάλλω (psallo) is:

- a) To *"twang"* or cause to *"vibrate,"* etc.

- b) The thing *"plucked or vibrated"* must be specified, e.g. the bow-string, beard, harp, etc.

- c) By New Testament times of koine Greek,

the word had come to mean "to sing" without reference to an instrument of music.

3) It should further be noted that:

- a) If ψάλλω (psallo) includes an instrument of music, then the instrument of music is not optional, but a command of God.
- b) One person can no more play the instrument for all, than one person can sing for all, because each one is to ψάλλοντες (psallontes), thus each one must play an instrument of music *if the instrument is included within the word.*

4) Finally, it is noted:

- a) That, as mentioned, the instrument to be vibrated must be specified.
- b) That, figuratively, the instrument which each Christian is to *psallontes* is specified, i.e. the heart (ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ): Thus the heart (emotional praise and understanding) is played to God by every child of God when he sings.

5) From an investigation of the ψάλλω (Psallo) argument, we see that it does not authorize the mechanical instrument of music in worship to God.

2. The Expediency (aid to worship) argument:

- a. Some argue that the instrument of music is merely an aid to worship, and not a part of the worship itself.
- b. This argument overlooks the fact that instrumental music is another kind of music (as distinct from vocal music), thus it is not an *aid*, but an *addition*.
- c. The above statement may be illustrated by:
 - 1) Noah and the ark.

- a) Noah was commanded to build the ark of gopher wood.
- b) A saw, hammer, pitch, etc., were aids (expedients) to obeying the command to build the ark of gopher wood.
- c) To have added pine, spruce, cedar, etc., however, would *not* have been an *aid* to building the ark of gopher wood, but would have been the *addition* of another kind of wood, and would have constituted disobedience to that which God specified: i.e. gopher wood.

2) The Christian and singing:

- a) Christians are commanded to *sing* psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, *making melody with the heart* to the Lord.
- b) Song books, song leaders, tuning forks, etc., are aids (expedients) to obeying the command to sing.
- c) To add an instrument of music, however, is to add another kind of music to that which God commanded (singing or vocal) and constitutes disobedience to that which God has specified: i.e. singing.

C. IS OBEYING WHAT THE LORD SPECIFIED "NIT-PICKING"?

1. The importance of obeying His commandments under the Old Covenant:

- a. Forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil may have seemed like "nit-picking" to them, but their disobedience brought death!
- b. Substituting what Cain wanted to give, vs. that which God commanded to be given, may have seemed like "nit-picking" to Cain, but that substitution caused Cain's offering to be rejected!

NOTE: Faith comes from hearing God's word

(Rom. 10:17), and Abel offered by faith (Heb. 11:4), therefore we conclude that God had told the boys the kind of sacrifice He wanted.

c. The accusation of Samuel to Saul of disobedience to God for sparing the "best" plus Agag of the Amalekites, may have seemed like "nit-picking" to Saul, but God rejected him as king. (1 Sam. 15:10-23)

2. The importance of obeying His commandments under the New Covenant is seen in that Christ becomes a Savior to those who obey Him. (Heb. 5:8-9)

a. "Not everyone...but he that doeth..."
(Matt. 7:21)

b. His will must be respected by obeying what He says, if we are to be His friends.
(John 15:14)

c. Obedience to His commandments is the only approved way of showing our love for Him.
(John 14:15, 21, 23-24)

3. The importance of respecting the silence of (*not adding to*) His word, as well as obeying all that He commands in (*not taking from*) His word.

a. Deut. 4:2; 5:32; 12:32.

b. Prov. 30:5-6.

c. Rev. 22:18-19.

4. It is not "nit-picking" to worship God with a cappella music, but rather it is showing our love and respect to Him by honoring His revealed will.

IV. CONCLUSION.

A. To Be Pleasing To God, That Which We Engage In As Worship Must Be Authorized By Our Lord In The New Covenant.

B. There Is No Authority Found In The New Testament For Mechanical Instruments Of Music In Worship To God. To The Contrary, Whenever Music Is Commanded In The New Testament, Singing Is Specified.

C. When We Sing A Cappella In Worship To God, We Show Our Love To Him By Acting Upon Revealed Authority For What We Do.