

**INSTRUMENTAL
MUSIC**

or

**A CAPPELLA
PRAISE**

in the

WORSHIP OF GOD???

By

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INTRODUCTION

At the dawning of the 19th century a number of godly men from different Protestant backgrounds resolved to sever their denominational ties and be non-denominational Christians. As they preached their “back to the Bible message” it found favor with their neighbors and so it began to spread like fire in dry brush. Devout souls from virtually every kind of denomination joined their ranks. They were variously known as “reformers and restorers” but they thought of themselves as Christians.

As they searched the Scriptures to find what God had ordained for his worship, they embraced several things not commonly found in the denominational churches of their day. They discovered that baptism must be by immersion and for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4). They learned that the early church communed weekly, not monthly, quarterly or annually (Acts 20:7). They found that the first Christians praised God without the use of instruments of music (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 13:15). These things they adopted as necessary if they were to be like the original Christians.

The belief in acappella praise was virtually unanimous among them. In 1859, Dr. L. L. Pinkerton of Midway, in Woodford County Kentucky introduced instrumental music into the worship of that congregation. He not only wanted it in his congregation, he became a strong advocate of its use. Following the destructive Civil War, congregations in the northern states began using instruments in their worship. In the beginning it was the larger, affluent city churches who took that step. In time many others followed their example. Before an effective defense was mounted, the clamor for a piano or organ for a congregation had swept the majority of our churches into this significant departure from the ancient faith and practice of the church. Men like David Lipscomb, Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning and others put up a stiff resistance, but it was too little and too late. When the dust settled some 85 percent of our churches had chosen to use instrumental music in their worship. Along with that they created a Missionary Society to do the Lord’s work of evangelizing. They moved their women into positions of leadership in their congregations. In time, a sizeable number of them lost their faith in the inspiration and authority of the Bible and sunk into skeptical, theological liberalism. By 1906 the separation in the two groups was obvious and final.

With determined effort, the handful of survivors, led by a few faithful preachers, set out to rebuild and recover from that disaster. In the next fifty years, Churches of Christ had phenomenal growth. Filled with evangelistic zeal, they planted congregations across the nation and around the world. The numbers grew to be equal to those who had chosen the path of will-worship.

In those wonderful years of prosperity a fatal mistake was made. Many preachers and elders assumed that everyone clearly understood why we worship without instrumental music. As time went on, less and less was said or written about the sinfulness of that practice. In the same time-frame more and more of our young preachers pursued their higher education in secular universities, and divinity schools operated by denominational bodies. There they found the concept of restoring the ancient faith to be a laughing stock. The authority of the Bible was challenged and their faith in the worship and practice of the early church was shattered. Many of them came home to preach or teach in our Christian schools. Either they were mute, not setting forth the case for our acappella praise or in some cases, they set about to change the thinking of their brethren and bring instrumental music into their worship.

Most brethren were naive. They thought our people were so committed in their rejection of instrumental music that it would never again trouble our churches. They were wrong. They ignored the early signs as men of corrupted faith began to challenge our practice and vaguely suggest that perhaps we were wrong in refusing instruments in our worship. The tilting point came in the 1980s when leaders of the Independent Christian Churches invited some of our preachers and educators to join them in a series of Restoration Forums where the matters dividing us would be discussed. Rather than our men making a strong biblical case for acappella praise, they were courted and seduced into thinking our praise was *only our tradition*. They came home preaching and teaching that false notion. By the turn of the 21st century the false teaching that had been quietly festering in the body of the church broke out across the face of our brotherhood. Now, for the first time in a century, some congregations of the Church of Christ were introducing instrumental music into their worship and even insisting that the Scripture approved of their new practice.

How far this departure will spread is yet unknown. How much damage the church will suffer is yet unclear. Already we have lost upwards of 300 congregations, many of them large city churches. Three of our largest universities and one small college have been won over. This time, the resistance has not been slow in confronting them. With the help of God, we will oppose their efforts and do our best to persuade our brethren to reject them and their instruments.

The lessons of this book will help its readers to know why we worship as we do and what is scripturally wrong with the use of instrumental music in worship. It will also answer many of the questions that are commonly raised by those are desirous of walking in the light of God's Word.

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INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

We worship God in song without the use of instruments of music for three basic reasons.

1. Christ did not authorize it. In his Great Commission, he said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go, make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). If you read the New Testament carefully you will notice that not once do you find any instruction for the church to praise God with instrumental music. You do however find several references to singing in worship such as the passage in Ephesians 5:19-20. Remember, Christ is head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22). He has all authority and we are to teach men to observe all things whatsoever he commanded us (Matt. 28:18-20).

2. We are committed to worshiping and serving Christ as did the first Christians. Historically we know that it was only after churches had drifted far from the teachings of Christ and his Apostles and had evolved into what is now known as the Roman Catholic church that instrumental music was introduced. In 670 A.D. when Pope Vitalian I had an organ installed in his church it caused such a furor that it was withdrawn and not until the 13th century did it become a common practice. The Greek Orthodox church did not allow the use of instrumental music until the last century...and even now in some areas of the world they still do not use it. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church wrote that he had no objection to there being instruments of music in their chapels so long as they were neither seen nor heard during worship. John Calvin, father of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, called instrumental music a relic of popery, of the same character as beads and incense. Charles Spurgeon, the greatest of all Baptist preachers, refused to allow any instruments to be used with the singing in his congregation in London. This list could be extended. We are not unique in our position.

3. Our Bible consists of two grand divisions, Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was given to the Hebrew people to regulate their faith and practice. It is from God and inspired and inerrant, but it was intended for that ancient form of worship (See Deut. 5:1-3). The New Testament was given to regulate the worship and service of those who follow Christ. Note the following verses that tell us that the Old Testament is no longer our standard for faith and practice. Paul explains to us that in his death upon the cross, Jesus fulfilled that Old Law, took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. He then exhorted us to "Let no man judge you" respecting its ordinances. Other verses that teach this lesson are Ephesians 2:14-15; II Corinthians 3:7-11; Hebrews 8:6-13. The Hebrews were given specific authority from God to use instrumental music in their worship. "Hezekiah...set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandments of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets." Thus when they praised God with instruments, they did what God had authorized them to do. If we had such authority expressed in the New Testament, we could do the same. But we do not find such.

When we go to the Old Testament to find approval for instruments of music, we could also go there to find approval for burning incense in worship, for a tribal, hereditary priesthood, animal sacrifices, circumcision, polygamy and other interesting practices. They all stand or fall together.

If you had been in Jerusalem in the first century and were privileged to worship with those first disciples, do you think you would have had instrumental music? Today we wish to worship as they did and as the New Testament authorizes us to do.

WILL GOD ACCEPT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

God tells us to worship him in song (Col. 3:16). Men have added instrumental music to the worship. Does God accept what has been added to his expressed will? Consider the following:

* Christ has all authority. He said, "Go...teach all nations, baptizing them...teaching them to observe all things...I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:18-20). We are to observe only what Christ has commanded in our service to him. But he does not command instrumental music for worship. Therefore, we should not use instrumental music in worship.

* Paul teaches us to admonish one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody (not on instruments) but with our heart (Eph. 5:19). In the New Testament, there is no mention of instrumental music in the worship of the church. This point is further emphasized when we realize that Jesus, the Apostles and Jewish converts were all accustomed to the instrumental music used in their temple worship.

* A musical historian notes that, "Only singing, however, and no playing of instruments, was permitted in the early Christian Church" (**Music, History and Ideas**, p. 34).

* Instruments of music were first introduced into churches in 667 A.D. by Pope Vitalian. This was after the church had been thoroughly corrupted by apostasy.

* Paul warns us "not to go beyond what is written" (I Cor. 4:6). John says, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God" (II John 9). To add instrumental music to our song worship is going beyond the doctrine of Christ. Those who do so "have not God."

* Moses relates the story of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who were priests of God. God commanded that when burning incense in worship they should use coals from the fire that burned perpetually on the altar of the tabernacle. They presumed it was alright to use fire from some other source. When they drew near to offer this strange fire, God made the fire flash out and consume them (Lev. 10:1-3). This drastic lesson teaches us not to add anything to God's worship that is not authorized by Him.

Churches of Christ worship God with vocal congregational singing. This is according to Scripture.

TWO INSTRUMENTS: ONE OF GOD, THE OTHER OF MAN

It has been said that the human voice is the most perfect musical instrument ever created. Seven generations after Adam and Eve we read of Jubal who "was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe" (Gen. 4:21). Since his day, men have created scores of different kinds of musical instruments. There certainly is nothing wrong with instruments wherewith men can make music. The author of these lines owns a number of instruments and plays a several different kinds of them. The problem arises when man decides that he want to introduce his invention into the worship of God without God's authorization or permission. It is not likely that those who take such liberty have thought through what they are doing.

For example: The Bible tells us to **speak** "one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19). With his, voice man can sing hymns that teach and admonish others. But no instrument can do that.

God's word instructs us, to **teach and admonish** "one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). A man or woman can, with the words of their songs, teach lost sinners to come to Christ, to believe and obey him; to follow his footsteps. But no musical instrument is capable of such teaching. A skilled musician could play for hours and no one would know what God expected of him.

Scripture commands us to **admonish** “one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16). To admonish is correct and encourage another to forsake his sin and serve God according to his will. The words of many of our hymns do just that. With our voices we sing “**Trust and Obey**” or “**Careless Soul Why Do You Linger?**” No musical instrument yet invented can admonish a person. It can entertain them, but not admonish them.

God wants us to “**sing with the spirit**” and “**with the understanding**” (I Cor. 14:15). The Christian who is singing praise to God does this. His mind and heart are involved in his singing. But a trumpet, a drum or a piano has no ability to understand. In fact, the instrument is only a helpless tool in the hands of a musician.

We told to **sing and make melody with our hearts** unto God when we worship him (Eph. 5:19). Any Christian, anywhere on the earth can sing and make melody with his heart, but not a single musical instrument can do this. They have no heart. They cannot sing.

The writer of Hebrews tells us to “**offer up a sacrifice of praise to God...that is the fruit of lips which make confession to his name**” (Heb. 13:15). With my voice I can do as God has said. But my violin, my guitar, my mandolin cannot fulfil this command.

In the hands of a skilled musician, an organ, a piano or even an orchestra of instruments can make beautiful, thrilling, entertaining music. However God has not called for this kind of music for his worship. Christ is the founder and head of the church. In his Testament, he plainly teaches us to sing, but there is no instruction to play instruments of music. When we assemble to worship our purpose should always be to do the will of our Father who is in heaven. That attitude is essential if we hope to enter the kingdom of heaven! (Matt. 7:21). Thus we sing, we teach, we admonish, we praise God but we have no instruments of music to accompany us as we do so.

* The author is indebted to an unknown poet for the main idea of this lesson.

4.

SACRED MUSIC 101

Just as today’s school kids know little or nothing about history, Western Civilization and America’s illustrious past, so many in the church (including preachers) seem to know little about the history of the religion of Christ and of our attempts to restore the faith and worship He instituted. From the great **Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature** by McClintock and Strong (Vol. 6, pp. 757-759), we offer the following basic introduction to the worship of the early Christians.

It was the practice of the early Christians to praise God with congregational singing. **Pliny** in his letter to Trajan (103-104 A.D.) observed that Christians would “meet before day to offer praise to Christ.” **Tertullian** (160-220 A.D.) and **Eusebius** (260-340 A.D.) described the praise worship of the church in their day thusly, “Arising at the dawn of the morning, they sang hymns to Christ as God” (Eccle. Hist. 3:32). **Justin Martyr** (100-165 A.D.) wrote, “We manifest our gratitude to him by worshiping him in spiritual songs and hymns, praising him for our birth, for our health, for the vicissitudes of the seasons, and for the hope of immortality” (Apology, 5:28). “Their psalmody was the joint act of the whole assembly in unison,” according to **Hilary** (A.D. 355). **Chrysostom** (347-407 A.D.) wrote, “It was the ancient custom, as it is still with us, for all to come together, and unitedly to join in singing...all join in one song...” (Hom. 9: Vol. 12:, p. 349). McClintock and Strong then conclude, “Such was the character of the psalmody of the early church...”

Under a section appropriately headed “**Innovations,**” the authors note, “The appointment of singers as a distinct class of officers in the Church for this part of religious worship, and the consequent introduction of profane music into the church, marks another alteration in the psalmody of the church. These innovations were first made in the 4th century;

and though the people continued for a century or more to enjoy their ancient privilege of all singing together, it is conceivable that it gradually was forced to die, as a promiscuous assembly could not well unite in theatrical music which required in its performers a degree of skill altogether superior to that which all the members of a congregation could be expected to possess. An artificial, theatrical style of music, having no affinity with the worship of God, soon began to take the place of those solemn airs which before had inspired the devotions of his people. The music of the theater was transferred to the church, which accordingly became the scene of theatrical pomp and display rather than the house of prayer and of praise, to inspire by its appropriate and solemn rites the spiritual worship of God.”

The Church Historian **J. A. Neander** wrote, “We have to regret that both in the Eastern and the Western Church their sacred music had already assumed an artificial and theatrical character, and was so far removed from its original simplicity that even in the 4th century the abbot **Pambo of Egypt** complained that heathen melodies (Accompanied as it seems with the action of the hands and the feet) had been introduced into their Church psalmody”

Jerome (342-420 A.D.), in remarking upon Ephesians 5:19, says: “May all hear it whose business it is to sing in the church. Not with the voice, but with the heart, we sing praises to God. Not like the comedians should they raise their sweet and liquid notes to entertain the assembly with theatrical songs and melodies in the church, but the fire of godly piety and the knowledge of the Scriptures should inspire our songs...”

The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-1563) “arranged the choral service on a proper footing, freeing it from all extraneous matters, gave choral music also a sanction which it had hitherto wanted. From that time the Church of Rome began to display that profound veneration for choral music which it has continued to manifest down to the present day” The same spirit that worked to introduce the choirs and solos in ancient times is still at work and is seen in our agents of change.

In section III, under **Use of Instruments in the Church**, **McClintock & Strong** continue, “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.” “...the general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the 5th or 6th centuries; yea, even **Gregory the Great**, who towards the end of the 6th century added greatly to the existing Church music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments. Several centuries later the introduction of the organ in sacred services gave a place to instruments as accompaniments for Christian songs, and from that time to this they have been freely used with few exceptions. The first organ is believed to have been used in Church service in the 13th century.

Although our position is presently a minority view such was not always the case. Notable scholars from various religious bodies understood the Bible’s teaching just as we do.

* **Charles Spurgeon**, the greatest Baptist preacher of the 19th century England, refused to allow instruments of music in his Metropolitan Tabernacle.

* **Adam Clark**, the brilliant Methodist Bible commentator, wrote, “the whole spirit, soul and genius of the Christian religion are against this (instrumental music); and those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and that where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous bauble from the worship of the infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship in spirit and in truth” (**Commentary**, Vol. IV, p. 684). He continued, “I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe they were productive of much evil...instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor.”

* **John Wesley**, founder of Methodism is quoted by **Clarke** as saying, “I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are **neither heard nor seen.**”

* **John Calvin**, founder of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, wrote, “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 (Catholics) therefore, have foolishly borrowed these, 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." (Commentary on Psalm 33).

* **Thomas Aquinas**, Roman Catholic theologian, wrote, "instrumental music as well as singing is mentioned in the Old Testament, but the church has accepted only singing on account of its ethical value"... Therefore their use is unwise, and consequently the Church refrains from music instruments" (**Summa Theologica**, Question 91, Article II).

Alexander Campbell, great preacher and scholar of our Restoration Movement, wrote, "That all persons who have no spiritual meditations, consolation and sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aids is but natural. Pure water from the flinty rock has no attraction for the mere toper or wine bibber. A little alcohol, or genuine Cognac bandy, or good old Madeira is essential to the beverage to make it truly refreshing. So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think that instrumental music would no only be a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritual-minded Christians, such aid would be as a cowbell in a concert." (**Millennial Harbinger**, Series 4, Vol. 1. p. 581). (These quotes as cited by James Tolle in his excellent tract, **Instrumental Music in Worship**.)

Keep this information safely stored and when the sirens of change seek to convince you that our congregational *a cappella* singing is only our tradition, share it with them for they obviously know not the Scripture nor the past history of the church.

5.

FOUR LAWS VIOLATED BY THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

1. The **law of faith** forbids it. Paul says, "We walk by faith not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). But faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The New Testament of Christ says nothing about using instrumental music in worship. We cannot do so while walking "by faith."

2. The **law of worship** does not allow it. Jesus said that our worship must be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The use of instruments is neither spiritual nor according to the truth of God's Word. For man to presume that he knows what God wants for worship, when God has not so indicated, is arrogance.

3. It violates the **law of unity**. Paul exhorts us to speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among us; that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and same judgement (I Cor. 1:10). Those who bring in instruments of music divide the body of Christ by speaking things contrary to sound doctrine (I Tim. 1:10).

4. Introducing instruments of music in our worship violates the **law of silence**. Since God has told us to sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph.5:19), we have no basis to assume that any other kind of music will be acceptable to him. We must not go beyond what is written (I Cor. 4:6 ASV). We must abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9). We are to teach that which Christ commanded; but he nowhere taught us to praise him with instrumental music.

Those who wish to be faithful to the Head of the church and their Savior will gladly respect the teaching of their Master and abide in the ways of the primitive church. (I am indebted to Glen McCoy for the first three points of this lesson).

WE MUST RESPECT THE “LAW OF SILENCE”

Total respect for God’s Word demands more than many are willing to give. We must study, perceive and accept the authority of God’s silence. He does not have to say “thou shalt not” in order to prohibit a thing. Failure to recognize or accept this principle has been one of the fundamental, underlying causes of our religious differences. Some of those who went before us recognized the importance of this principle.

“It is evident that whatever God has not commanded and has not instituted by express commands of Scripture He does not want observed nor does He want to be served therewith, nor will He have His Word set aside nor made to suit the pleasure of men.” This was written by Dirk Phillips in the 16th century, in his book **Vindication**. (Quoted by J.D. Murch, **Christians Only**, p. 15).

That there is such a principle is clearly stated in I Corinthians 4:6 where Paul writes that “ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written” (ASV). We see it applied in at least three instances:

1. In Acts 15:1 we read of certain brethren who taught circumcision as a Christian duty and insisted on its observance. The Apostles and elders wrote the brethren concerning this practice, “We have heard that certain (men) who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment” (Acts 15:24). They proceeded to repudiate the actions of those certain men. Even though circumcision had been commanded under the Old Covenant, it could not be bound upon the church since no commandment concerning it had been given.

2. In establishing the superiority of Christ over angels, the author of Hebrews writes, “having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son...” (Heb. 1:5). The very fact that God had not said to one of the angels these words, which he spoke to the Son, is proof of their inferiority to Christ.

3. While explaining the need for the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, the writer says, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah: as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests.” (Heb. 7:12-14).

If we do not respect the sacred silence of God’s word, then no one can object to infant baptism or sprinkling, counting beads, burning of incense and a thousand other things that God did not specifically forbid being introduced into the faith and worship of the church. The concept that “I can do anything God does not forbid” in Christian worship lets in an avalanche that few are ready to accept. See also Leviticus 10:1-3 where Nadab and Abihu violated this law by offering strange fire. God had not specifically forbidden the use of their fire by a positive command. However, it was forbidden since He had specified that they were to use coals from the perpetual fire on the great altar before the tabernacle for incense (Lev. 16:12).

It is the silence of the New Testament authorizing instrumental music in worship that leads us to reject that practice and other like-additions to our faith and worship. J.D. Murch comments on this theme: “Within the last generation the Church of Christ has made a phenomenal growth. This is due to two things:

(1) Its people have stood like a Rock of Gibraltar for ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,’ amid the doubt and confusion super induced by liberalism. They have challenged the spirit of compromise, and worldliness, and dared, to be a ‘peculiar’ people teaching and practicing what they believe is the Bible way of life.

(2) They have come to realize that the silence of the Scriptures must be respected as well as the commandments of Scripture, but that obedience to its silences permits freedom of judgment and action” (Ibid. p. 313)

Sadly, few contemporary Christians understand the significance of the “silence of the Scriptures.” Every leader and teacher should familiarize himself with this great principle that his own faith might be strong, and that he might also teach others. When a generation grows up that does not know this principle of truth, they may well reason like Martin Luther did, “I can do anything the Bible does not specifically forbid.” Look where that approach has led Luther’s

followers. Woe to the church when that day comes.

7.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

For some sixty years churches of the American Restoration Movement worshiped in harmony, without the use of instrumental music. In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton brought a melodeon into the church at Midway, Kentucky to improve their worship in song. His excuse was that their singing was so poor that the rats had been frightened away. One of the elders, a Bro. Adam Hibler and his slave, Rueben, secretly removed the instrument by night and hid it in the attic of Hibler's house. This did not discourage Dr. Pinkerton for he soon replaced the lost instrument.

Although instrumental music was slow in gaining acceptance, by 1900 most city congregations had accepted the innovation and numerous rural churches done the same. When the division that resulted from this and other innovations was noted in the 1906 religious census those who chose the instrument claimed 8,293 congregations and 982,701 members, They were identified as Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches, Those brethren who refused the instrument could claim only 2,649 churches and 159,658 members. A fierce battle has been fought and a fearful price paid. From a ragged handful of survivors we have rebounded to our present strength of some 13,500 congregations and 1,250,000 members here at home and perhaps as many as two million abroad.

Now some brethren are proposing resumption of fellowship with the Christian Churches even though they continue to use instrumental music in worship. Some are questioning whether our fathers should have stood their ground in opposition to it? It is helpful to go back and review the reasons why we reject instrumental music in Christian worship.

Why We Do Not Use Instrumental Music

We are Christ's church, therefore under his authority. The church was purchased with his blood (Acts. 20:28). He is head over all things to his church (Eph. 1:22) We must be subject to Christ in all things (Eph. 5:24). Since he has all authority, we are obliged to teach men to observe all, and only, those things he has commanded (Matt. 28:18,20).

Christ specifically instructs us how to worship God. We are told to sing and make melody in our heart (Eph. 5:19). No mention is made in his will of playing n instruments of music in worship. Scripture warns us not to go beyond the things which are written (I Cor. 4:6). To go beyond the doctrine of Christ leaves a man or a church without God (II John 9). We are straightly warned not to add to or take away from God's Word (Rev. 22:18-19).

We Are Not Under the Old Testament

Perhaps the most frequent objection raised to our practice is that instrumental music was used by saints under the Old Testament. The argument is faulty at heart. God authorized the Hebrews to use instruments of music in his worship (II Chron. 29:25) That He has not done for the Church of Christ. Furthermore, the old law has been removed, nailed to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14). To argue for Old Testament authority would prove too much. The Old Testament not only authorized instrumental music but incense, animal sacrifices and polygamy. Few people would want to accept all of these items in the church. A New Testament church does not worship according to the Old Testament.

History Tells Us The Origin Of Instrumental Music In Worship

The first use of it in a church is attributed to Pope Vitalian I of the Roman Catholic Church in the year c.a. 660 A.D. His doing so created such a furor that the practice was rejected and did not become commonly accepted until after the time of Thomas Aquinas, c.a. 1250 A.D. (Joseph Brigham, **The Antiquities of the Christian Church**, London, Henry Bohn, 1850, Vol. 1, p. 315).

Does It Really Matter If We Use Instrumental Music in Worship?

There is the kind of mind that is not impressed with the need to be submissive to Christ's authority. The New Testament pattern of worship means little to such people. They commonly raise the question, "Is it really any great thing if a church chooses to use mechanical instruments?" To advance such an argument reveals a serious deficiency in their Bible

knowledge and understanding.

Numerous Old Testament examples teach us that God expects us to do what he says, the way he says, for the reason he says, if we expect his blessing on our worship and service.

The rejection of Cain's sacrifice demonstrates this (Gen. 4:3-4). "By faith Able offered a more acceptable (Heb. 11:4). Paul tells us that "faith cometh of hearing and hearing of the Word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The Genesis record tells us that Abel offered a blood offering by faith, i.e., as God directed. It was received of God and Able was blessed. Cain offered the fruit of the ground, which God had not authorized. It was rejected because it was not of faith, i.e., not according to the divine directive. He substituted that which he thought should be acceptable. It was not! This lesson teaches that it is not enough just to worship, no matter how sincerely. Acceptable worship must be according to the Lord's instruction else it will be rejected. Christ's Will instructs us to sing in worship (Eph. 5:19). To add an instrument is to make the same mistake as did Cain. May we learn from his sad experience.

Remember the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron. These young priests offered strange fire upon the altar of incense "which God had not commanded." Fire from the Lord enveloped them and they perished on their first day of active service at God's house (Lev. 10:1-3). The key is found in the words "which God had not commanded." The divine instruction was that they use only fire from the perpetual fire on the great brazen altar before the tabernacle. They substituted "strange" or different fire and discovered the hard way that God meant what he said about his worship. What a fearful price they paid, but it is recorded for our learning (Rom. 15:4). Here we see what has come to be known as God's law of silence or exclusion. When a thing is specifically commanded, that eliminates all other possibilities that men might propose. They might have reasoned that "fire is fire;" that "one fire is as good as another" or that God did not say don't use fire from you campfire." They were dead wrong. Those who use the above logic regarding instrumental music make the mistake of Nadab and Abihu. Should we expect God to judge them differently?

There is the case of Uzza. When David wished to move the ark of God from Kiriathjearim to Jerusalem, he commissioned two good men, Uzza and Ahio to transport it on an ox cart. A great parade of celebrants accompanied the procession, worshiping God. All went well until the oxen stumbled and Uzza reached forth his hand to save the sacred ark from crashing to the ground. To the shock and dismay of all, Jehovah smote him and he fell to the ground dead (I Chron. 13:7-10). Consternation swept over all. What had gone wrong in this noble and holy event? The answer is found in chapter 15. After three months of study and reflection David said, "None ought to carry the ark of but the Levites; for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him..." "For because ye bare it not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that *we sought him not according to the ordinance*...the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah" (I Chron. 15:2, 13-15).

Now the problem is evident. Their intention was good. They were sincere. But they failed to honor God by following his instructions. Their mistake has been repeated ten thousand times by those who would worship him. The tragic case of Uzza and Ahio is written for our learning. Approach God in his appointed way. In worship he has told us to sing (Col. 3:16). Do it and be blessed. Change the divine order at your own peril!

Think of righteous Noah. He built an ark to the saving of his house (I Pet. 3:20). When God commissioned him to construct the life boat, he gave specific details. The size was to be 300 cubits x 50 x 30. It was to be constructed of gopher wood and sealed with pitch. There were to be three decks and one door. Moses tells us "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him ..." (Gen. 6:13-22). Judge ye, what would have been the result if Noah had presumed to make the ark larger or smaller? What if he had selected a different wood or design? Would God have blessed and saved him? Believe it who will?

God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). If we make the same mistake as did Cain, Aaron's sons, or David's men, we should expect a similar judgment from a just God. If, like Noah, we worship according to that which God commands, we will be rewarded for our faithfulness.

We sing praises to God without instruments for such is God's express will. It is not a matter of tradition or opinion. It is a matter of faith!

This question wracked the brotherhood a hundred years ago and has now raised its ugly head again. Please, brethren, learn the lesson of the past. Don't be lead into this transgression against our holy Lord. Reject the unauthorized practice and rebuke those who promote it (Rom. 16:17). We must take our stand against this and every sinful innovation upon

8.

INADEQUATE REASONS FOR ACAPPELLA WORSHIP

For generations Churches of Christ have endured the scorn and ridicule of ignorant people who derided them for their refusal to use instruments of music in their worship. To meet and respond to those cavilers our brethren formulated arguments based on scripture and the facts of church history. These were presented in their sermons, articles and books. They were successfully used in debates, primarily with representatives of the Christian Churches. Their reasoning satisfied the millions of people who embraced their goal of going back to the Bible and being simple Bible Christians.

Today, we face a different situation. We have a generation of members, many of whom have never heard our reasons for rejecting instrumental music as we offer our praise to Jehovah. Most of our Christian Schools, where most of our preachers have been trained and where multitudes of our members received their education, have failed to teach their students this important aspect of our worship. As a consequence of this failure, we now have a significant portion of our membership who have no idea why they worship with acappella praise rather than with instrumental accompaniment. Consequently, it is nothing more to them than a tradition; "the way we have always worshiped."

As pressure mounts to compromise with the world and to shed those things that isolate us from the Evangelical denominations we see a few who have resolved to accept the use of instruments. Others are torn between the innovation and the tradition of acappella to which they have been accustomed. This has resulted in some most unusual reasoning for their continuation with acappella praise.

* The most common statement among those caught up in the current of the change movement is, "Our tradition is to sing without instruments." They do not mean that this is an Apostolic tradition handed down to us (II Thess. 2:1:5). They mean our practice originated among uninspired human beings and thus is without biblical authority. To them, this means that they can choose to use instruments or sing without them and their choice is without consequence. They evidently have forgotten that Jesus condemned as vain worship, traditions, doctrines and precepts of men (Matt. 15:6-9).

* Some continue with acappella praise, because they say, "We love our acappella singing with its four part harmony." The mistake of this reasoning is that they chose acappella because it pleases them. They forget that in our worship we "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God" through Christ (Heb. 13:15). It is God whom we must please. If we sing just to please men (ourselves) we should not be servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10). Christ expects us to strictly obey all things whatsoever he commanded (Matt. 28:20).

* In this same vein, some are heard to say that they fear if we allow instruments and choirs in our worship we might lose our ability to "sight read" and sing with harmony. While we do have Biblical instruction to sing and make melody in our hearts unto God (Eph. 5:19), there is no command that we be able to read music or sing a particular part of harmony.

* Some are prepared to stay with the acappella worship, even though they do not believe it is necessary to do so. Their excuse is, I don't want to disappoint my parents or grandparents by bringing in instrumental music. They do not mind disappointing God or Christ, but they don't want to offend their family members. I remind them that Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." (Matt. 10:37).

* There are some who have no objection to adopting instrumental music but for the sake of their older members (who incidentally are the financial base of their congregation), they will not go that route. Again this makes the decision on "pleasing men and those who give significant gifts." Neither of these are noble reasons.

* Others reason our acappella praise is so beautiful we don't want to change. But they have no problem with those who do opt for instrumental praise. So again we see the decision being made, not on what does God want, but what is their esthetic preference. This is obviously an inadequate reason for how we worship.

* There are some who are saying, we really have no objection to the use of instruments, but we don't want to choose a course that will alienate or separate us from the mainstream of the brotherhood. That is good, but it ignores the right or

wrong of the matter.

* Some say, "It is a non-issue but we want to remain neutral in the matter since it is still controversial." Neutrality in things sacred is to try to please God while standing with one foot in the camp of truth and the other in the camp of error.

Faith based on such flimsy reasons is worthless. Christ has all authority in the church (Matt. 28:18). We are to observe all things he commanded (Matt. 28:20). He does authorize us to sing, but no where does he authorize the use of instruments of music. Those who go beyond his teaching have not God (II John 9-11). While we appreciate each congregation that continues to worship according to the Bible, for their sakes we hope they will learn to do so for valid reasons. The words of Jesus will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

9.

TWO COMMON MISTAKES REGARDING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Across the centuries, since the founding of our Faith, there have been two fundamental mistakes made by folks regarding the worship of God:

(1). It is a mistake to judge the rightness or wrongness of a practice by whether we personally find it appealing to our taste and senses. Remember we are offering our worship to Jehovah, the Great I AM. It must be pleasing to him. Whether I get an esthetic thrill from it is not really important. I hazard the guess that not many of us modern Americans would have enjoyed taking an innocent lamb to the temple and watching the priest slit its throat and offer it for a sacrifice. Yet that is exactly what God called for. Those who did that received the blessing, those who did not were rejected. Remember Cain and Abel's offerings (Gen. 4:3-5). We can sing our praises unto God and be assured that we are doing what he said, in the way he said to do it. If we use instrumental accompaniment along with our singing, we can never have that assurance.

(2). The second mistake is to assume that anything that is esthetically beautiful must be pleasing to God. This is evident in Catholicism. The world's most beautiful art, sculpture, architecture and music are offered to God in that system and millions assume that makes it acceptable to God. A thing may indeed be a beautiful work of man's creativity and not be acceptable to God. Remember the prohibition about having no graven images before his face (Ex. 20:4-5).

We must remember how Christianity began and flourished without any of those beautiful things. Those were its glory days. Simple faith, simple worship, simple places of assembly: made for pure, unadorned Christianity. They praised God with their voices, without instrumental accompaniment (Heb. 13:15). They sang and made melody with their hearts (Eph. 5:19).

We do not deny that some instrumental music is beautiful, thrilling, uplifting, but since it is not authorized by Christ for the worship of his church, we cannot use it in our services.

Should our meeting place and our singing please us that is well and good but it is no guarantee that they will please God.

WORSHIP: ANTIQUITY, AESTHETICS AND EMOTION

In the thinking of many of our neighbors, antiquity, aesthetics and emotion play a large role in how to worship God.

Antiquity speaks of things that are ancient in years. Some folks think that Catholicism or some of the older Protestant churches are, by virtue of their antiquity, where God wishes them to be. But antiquity cannot make wrong right. Old error is just as unacceptable as today's version. The Lord's church is two thousand years old: the oldest of all existing churches, but it is often new to a community or to a particular person. Although he may have just heard of Christ's church, it has long been here and it is his misfortune to have not learned about it earlier. Remember that old is not enough; a church must be as old as the New Testament of Christ.

Aesthetics is the study and appreciation of things beautiful. It involves such things as art, sculpture and fine music. Art is beautiful. Fine music is both inspiring, entertaining and relaxing. The thunderous peels of the pipe organ thrill the aesthetic nature of many souls. However scripture does not make aesthetic beauty the standard for acceptable worship. God has specifically forbidden the making and use of statuary (graven images) for worship (Deut.5:8-9). Even the great art of the Italian masters cannot be used as aids or objects of acceptable worship. Early Christians worshiped without fine, opulent houses of worship, without fine art and sculpture and without the finery of instrumental accompaniment to their singing.

Emotion in worship has its place. We must love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). Emotion however, must always be in subjection to the will of God. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). We must obey from the heart that form of teaching (Rom. 6:17). Emotion, bereft of truth, is not just harmless, it can be an unacceptable substitute for true worship. It can lead to worship that is chaotic and confusing (I Cor. 14:33, 40).

Acceptable worship must be "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). That worship can be offered to God in a manner totally acceptable without a beautiful building, the use of the fine art, statuary, musical instruments and musically trained and directed choirs. It was so with those first Christians. It can be so even today. When I worshiped with the Lord's church in Sukkakunaland in South Africa, I saw worship as it was in those early days. The church consisted of virtually every citizen of the village. Having no meeting place, they met under a tree, sitting on the ground. They praised God with their songs and taught one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19). They communed with bread and fruit of the vine from an ordinary drinking cup and plate. They had elders and deacons. They had classes for their children. They sent out missionaries. Thus did the first Christians as they assembled in the country side, in their caves and private homes.

It is perfectly fine to appreciate the beauty of lovely things human artistic skill has created. It is wrong however, to assume that such beautiful things can improve on the worship God has set forth in Scripture for us to present unto Him.

11.

THINGS SUITABLE FOR WORSHIP

To have musical talent is a gift from God. Music can be wonderful form of recreation. We are entertained by our favorite kind of music. With musical skills a person can earn a living. Music is used in worship of God. Different kinds of music are suited for different occasions. For example for weddings we have wedding music, the same for funerals. For victory parades we play marches, for small children's parties we play kid's music. Music designed for worship is not suited for square dances, nor is the hoe-down suitable for worship.

God has told us that in this Christian age we are to "sing and make melody in our hearts" unto him (Eph. 5:19). It is a wonderful thing to be able to play the saxophone, the guitar or the drums, but they are not appropriate for the worship of the Creator and Savior. A wise person knows that there is an appropriate time and place for things and observes that propriety. A faithful child of God does what the Master specifies without arguing. That is what it means to call Jesus Lord (Lk. 6:46). That is what it means to be his servant (Rom. 6:16-18).

12.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO USE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

- * Did Jesus ever appoint or approve of instrumental music in the worship of his church?
- * Did the Apostles of Christ ever sanction the use of instrumental music during their years as leaders of the church?
- * Did the primitive church ever use instrumental music?
- * How long was it before any church used instrumental music in their worship?
- * Why then would you want to use it or presume to do so?

(The first three questions are from Glen McCoy, *Return to the Old Paths* p. 242).

13.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP FAILS THE TEST

Manufacturers have quality control tests to assure their product meets the required standards. Schools have exams to determine if their students have successfully completed the course and learned the prescribed material. Mechanics test the various aspects of a vehicle or machine to be sure it is working properly. Paul exhorts us to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good: abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:21).

The faithful disciple of Christ will subject every religious practice to the tests set forth in God's Word. This testing will include the use of instrumental music in the worship of God.

* We should test the use of instruments against the finality of Scripture. Jude tells us "the faith was given once for all" times (Jude 3). Jesus himself warns us against adding to or taking away from his teaching (Rev. 22:18-19). History tells us that the earliest instrument used in worship to God through Christ was by Pope Vitalian I in 667 A. D. It also tells us the practice was rejected and another 500 years passed before the use of musical instruments in worship became common. It fails this test!

* **There is the realm of Christ's authority.** John tells us that "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9). In the kingdom of Christ, thus his teaching has preeminence. He has all authority (Matt. 28:18). A careful reading of the New Testament of Jesus will reveal that not a single verse can be found authorizing the use of instruments of music in the worship of God. To justify their instruments, advocates must go outside of the teaching of Christ. Some look to the Old Testament, some to public opinion, human reason or ancient tradition, but none can bring forth authorization by Christ and his appointed representatives. Instrumental music in worship fails this test! It users, have neither God's approval nor his blessing.

* **There is the test of wills.** The Bible speaks of God's will to which the righteous will always conform (Matt. 7:21). It also mentions "will-worship" (Col. 2:23). "Will-worship" is that which man performs because it pleases him. He cares not what God, has said. He wants it, he is going to have it. This is a common approach among those who are determined to have their instruments to accompany their singing. Paul goes on to say that things in the category of "will-worship" are of no value! Only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven. Those whose worship is based on their "will-worship," might enjoy it now, but it will testify against them when they stand before Christ to give account of their earthly conduct (II Cor. 7:10).

* **Instrument music fails the test of authorization.** Christ founded his church (Matt. 16:18). He is "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22). God has given him all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). We are to teach converts to observe all things that Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20). But our Lord did not in any way authorize or approve of the use of instruments of music in his worship. It fails this test as well.

* **The use of musical instruments fails the test of origins.** True worship was ordained by God and revealed to us on the pages of the New Testament of Jesus. Worship other than or different from that revealed in the Bible originated with men. Jesus said, "In vain do they worship we, teaching as their doctrine the precepts of men" (Matt. 15:9). This practice pits the thinking of finite, sinful men against the sinless Savior whose knowledge and wisdom are omniscient. It cannot stand this test.

* **Because the addition of instrumental music is done in defiance of Christ's warning to neither add to nor take from his word, it is an act of presumption (Num. 15:30).** Mortal man presumes that he knows better than Scripture and that he can change the things of God (II Pet. 2:10). In this, it fails the test of submission to God and his revealed will.

* **The use of instrumental music in God's worship violates God's law of silence.** Some call it His law of exclusion. By this we mean that when God has told us what he wants regarding a particular practice, such as praise in worship, he expects us to do that and nothing more. We are clearly taught to sing, teach and admonish with our psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, to make music with our hearts unto God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). If God had wanted us to use musical instruments in praising him he would have told us. The pharmacist is not free to change or add to the doctor's prescription. Neither is the contractor free to ignore or change the blue prints when building a house for a customer. We do not have the liberty to add to God's worship. It is true that God has not said, "Thou shalt not use musical instruments." He did not have to say that because he has clearly told us what he do want; i.e. singing in worship. God gave Noah the plans for the ark that would keep his family safe in the coming flood. Noah dared not change even the smallest of those instructions. Thus Paul clearly warns us not to go beyond that which is written (I Cor. 4:6 ASV).

A reputable company will not market a product that fails the quality control tests. For the same reason, a faithful congregation of Christians will not offer instrumental music in its worship of God.

TWO KINDS OF MUSIC

Music dates back to the earliest days of the human race. Jubal a descendant of Cain, we are told, was the first to make musical instruments (Gen. 4:21). The ability to create music and play musical instruments is often a special gift with which one is born. Most can learn to play an instrument or sing, although a few seem to be tone-deaf and unable to distinguish the various tones of the musical scale. Along the way from the distant past to the present, many men chose to add instrumental music to their worship. Among those who worshiped idols, such additions made no difference as their entire system of worship was offensive to Jehovah (Deut. 27:15). God instructed David to use instruments of music in the tabernacle of Jehovah (II Chron. 29:25). When Christ established his church he called for singing hymns in worship, but he made no provisions for musical instruments to accompany them. For the first 667 years vocal music prevailed in all the various churches where Christ was honored. When Pope Vitalian I sought to introduce their use in Rome it ignited a firestorm of opposition and he was forced to remove the instrument. After another 600 years of apostasy had done its work, instruments became an accepted part of worship in those churches that followed the pope of Rome. Those identified as the Eastern Orthodox churches continued with their acappella worship unto the present. Some of them do now allow their use.

The point of this lesson is to note two different kinds of music that have found their way into churches. As in the beginning there are churches that feel constrained to worship God as he has instructed us in his word. They offer up the fruit of their lips as a sacrifice of praise to their Creator (Heb. 13:15). Musical praise to God is an act in which each person present is expected to participate. We are to speak one to another in our hymns (Eph. 5:19). Acappella praise can be offered to God in any language, in all kinds of situations. The poorest of congregations can sing their praises to God as well as the most affluent. Even saints in prison can, like Paul and Silas, lift their voices in praise of Jehovah (Acts 16:25). The uneducated primitive can sing hymns as well as the college graduate. This kind of worship needs no elaborate facility with perfect acoustics to be acceptable. A congregation might meet under a tree and sing with full acceptance. Those who thus worship God do not need to have special musical training in order to participate, although some rudimentary knowledge of music is helpful in learning new songs or in effecting harmony within the singers. Books with a thousand hymns are wonderful, but not a necessity for saints to praise God with their voices. From the little children, just learning to sing, to the aged saints with graveled voices, all join in such worship. This kind of worship involves being filled with God's Holy Spirit and speaking to other worshipers with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in ones heart and making melody with the heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). It is engaged in as part of the worship assemblies of the church.

There is another kind of music we style "performance and observation music." By this we mean that skilled singers and musicians perform and the audience is expected to sit quietly and observe their presentation. This type of music is found in both secular and religious settings. One could attend a concert on Saturday night and observe the skilled musicians and talented vocalists. Then on Sunday he could go to his church and do the same. The songs would be different but the roles of the artist and the observers would be the same. Performance music is usually reserved for those with musical training and exceptional voices and musical skills. These must be well developed and trained. While this level of music can certainly be entertaining and thrilling to hear, it is not the kind of worship one reads of in Scripture. The praise of worship is offered to the Creator, it is not intended to entertain mortal men. It must please God, not men.

The failure of performance music in worship is twofold. Many churches will forgo singing of some of their hymns in order to hear the majestic sound of the organ being skillfully played by a fine musician. In such cases there can be no teaching and admonishing one another and no making melody with the heart to God. The second failure is the fact that many churches, lacking a skilled musician in their membership, will hire a person who does even share their faith to perform for them. I once worked with a fine old man who was an Episcopalian, but he was employed to sing for a wealthy Presbyterian church.

I enjoy all kinds of quality music. I frequently attend concerts to hear my favorite entertainers and musicians. I pay the

price for my ticket and thoroughly enjoy it. It is pleasant to my senses and taste, but it is not worship. When I attend church, I go to worship my God. I sing with the spirit and with the understanding. Although we have a brother lead us by choosing our hymns and beginning them in the correct key and tempo, I do not applaud him, or even consider him a part of my act of worship. I sing to teach my fellow worshipers, to praise my God and to refresh my soul. I hope that you do the same.

15.

J. W. McGARVEY'S REASONS FOR REJECTING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

John W. McGarvey was one of the great scholars of our brotherhood. His many fine books are still circulated and read by our people. In the final quarter of the 19th century when some brethren began to advocate the use of musical instruments in worship, McGarvey wrote an article for the Christian Evangelist setting forth his objections to the practice. His reasons are still valid today.

- "1. That the use of instrumental music in worship under Christ originated in the Roman Catholic church.
- "2. That none of the Protestant churches, except those which came out of Romanism and brought this practice with them, tolerated it until the present century (19th), having rejected it in the earlier and purer days.
- "3. That it was not tolerated among the disciples (our brethren, jhw) until after the year 1869. The first organ used among us was introduced in the Olive Street church, St. Louis at the cost of a division in the church..."
- "4. That in the Greek Catholic church, which is older than the Roman Catholic, and has ever opposed many of the innovations of the latter, it has never been employed..."
- "5. That in the churches established by the Apostles and their successors it was unknown and continued to be unknown for more than six hundred years.
- "6. That its absence from the apostolic churches, established as they were by men who had been accustomed to its use in Jewish worship and compose as they were of members, both Jews and Gentiles who had been accustomed to its use in their former modes of worship, implies a deliberate rejection of it by the Holy Spirit...
- "7. That, as the acts of public worship are matters of divine prescription, the introduction of an unauthorized element among them is will-worship, which is condemned by the Holy Spirit.

"With these facts before me, I was forced to the conclusion that the practice is a sinful innovation upon the divinely-appointed order of Christian worship, and my final conclusion was that if it should be introduced into the church where I held my membership, against earnest protest, I would remove my membership if practicable, to another congregation where I could worship without its presence..."

Unlike Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb and Benjamin Franklin the preacher, Bro. McGarvey grew weary and discouraged in his fight against this innovation in the worship of the church. Although he continued to worship where no instrument was used, he ceased to speak and write against it. He described his decision as follows:

"...but when all the papers through whose columns I could hope to reach those who were engaged in it were closed against the further discussion of the subject, and when the minds of those whom I might have hoped to convince were equally closed, I desisted because I did not wish to spend my time whistling against the wind...I leave the future of the practice to the providence of God, believing that there will yet come a reaction against it and knowing that, when primitive Christianity shall be fully and triumphantly restored among men, this practice will have passed away with all the other human devices that have encumbered the church"

That happy day for which he hoped came when our fathers refused to follow the piped pipers of digression. They took their stand on the Word of God and continued to worship Him as other faithful saints had for generations past, lifting

up their voices in joyful praise. Soon they grew and multiplied and outstripped those who preferred their instruments more than unity with their brethren. May we not cast away the heritage that is ours.

* McGarvey's article is reprinted in James Bales' *Instrumental Music & New Testament Worship*, pp. 371-373.

16.

THE VOICE OF THE PIONEERS ON INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Back in 1932 Bro. John T. Lewis of Birmingham published a book he entitled, *The Voice of the Pioneers on Instrumental Music and Societies*. That book, long out of print, served a useful purpose to clarify the thinking of our brethren and to refute the false claims of those who were promoting the use of instruments in worship.

Bro. Glenn McCoy has recently given us an excellent book on Restoration history. In the 15th chapter of his book, *Return to the Old Paths*, he discusses the rise of the instrumental music controversy among our brethren from c.a. 1860 to 1900. I share with you some quotes that will help you understand what our leading preachers thought about the subject 125 years ago.

Alexander Campbell wrote: "I wonder not then that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else 'hosannas languish on their tongues and their devotions die.' And that all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for their spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts should call for such aid, is but natural...So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in the church and whose animal nature flags under the oppression church service, I think with Mr. G. that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert" (p. 227).

Benjamin Franklin, the gospel preacher, was asked if there might be occasions when instrumental music would be acceptable. Franklin, with biting sarcasm responded:

* "Where a church never had, or has lost the Spirit of Christ..

* "If a church has a preacher who never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ, who has become a dry, prosing and lifeless speaker, so as to be entirely incapable of commanding and interesting an audience, it is thought that instrumental music would draw out and interest the people.

* "If a church only intends being a fashionable society, a mere place of amusement and secular entertainment, and abandoning all ideas of religion and worship, instrumental music would be a very pleasant and agreeable part of such entertainment" (p. 228).

John W. McGarvey wrote: "In the earlier years of the Reformation, there was entire unanimity in the rejection of instrumental music from our public worship. It was declared unscriptural, inharmonious with the Christian institution, and a source of corruption. In the course of time individuals here and there called in question the correctness of this decision and attempt was occasionally made to introduce instruments in some churches..." "...I again repeat, that every man who bows to the authority of God's word, must oppose the use of instrumental music in the church..." (p. 230-231).

Moses Lard: Responding to the question, What should be done with the churches using instrumental music, said, "What shall be done with such churches? Of course, nothing. If they see fit to mortify the feelings of their brethren, to forsake the example of the primitive churches, to condemn the authority of Christ by resorting to will worship, to excite dissension and give rise to general scandal, they must do it. As a body we can do nothing. Still, we have three partial remedies left us to which we should at once resort...Let those brethren who oppose the introduction of an organ first remonstrate in gentle, kind and decided terms. If their remonstrance is unheeded, and the organ is brought in, then let them at once, and without even the formality of asking for a letter, abandon the church so acting; and let all such

members unite elsewhere. Thus these organ grinding churches will in the lapse of time be broken down, or wholly apostatize, and the sooner they are in fragments the better for the cause of Christ” (p. 232-233).

Robert Richardson wrote, “The introduction of a musical instrument into a church is a triumph of the sensual over the spiritual” (p. 237).

These great men of God and those who shared their convictions were shouted down by their peers. Most of our churches preferred their organs to the fellowship of those who would not accept that unscriptural innovation. The result was the separation of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches from us. After a full century of recovery and rebuilding we have the bizarre spectacle of a few preachers among us, introducing instrumental music into their worship. Satan never rests. Fools never learn.

17.

WORDS OF A WISE MAN WELL WORTH HEEDING

For those unfamiliar with our history, for the first 60 years of our back to the Bible movement, none of our congregations used musical instruments in their worship. The practice of using instrumental music in worship first arose among our brethren in 1859 when L. L. Pinkerton and the church in Midway, Kentucky brought in a melodeon to assist with their singing. This issue troubled our brotherhood for the next 50 years. The greater number of our churches chose to embrace the instrument even if it meant disrupting the fellowship of the body of Christ. One of the men who manfully resisted the innovation a century ago was Bro. Joe S. Warlick. Brethren would do well to consider the words he spoke on the issue:

“The day on which a church sets up an organ in its house is the day on which it reaches the first station on the road to apostasy. From this it will soon proceed to other innovations; and the work of innovations once fairly commenced, no stop can be put to it till ruin ensues. Then the spirit which precedes and fosters these innovations is a most dangerous spirit—**dangerous** because cruel, intractable, and unreasonable. It is **cruel**, because it is ready to immolate everything that in the least stands in the way of its wicked work; **intractable**, because it will not yield even one tittle of its innovations; and **unreasonable**, because it will heed neither the voice of God nor that of man. Indeed, when a church has once introduced an organ we believe it to be true, as a general rule, (of those members who take the lead in the work) that they will suffer its Bible to be torn into shreds before they will part with their pet.” (From **The Stark-Warlick Debate**, *The Gospel Advocate*, p. 17).

Now events have gone full circle. We have worldly men in worldly congregations trying to make the use instrumental music in worship simply a matter of opinion, our acappella singing, just a matter of our tradition. They excuse those who bring it into their worship and devotionals. They label as misguided those brethren, past and present, who steadfastly refused to go with the multitude who demanded pianos and organs. They are ready to embrace the children of those who tore the cause of Christ asunder over this innovation and apologize for our fathers’ strong and biblical stand. Such apologists shame the cause of Christ and show themselves to be unworthy of the positions they fill as preachers for Churches of Christ. If they prevail, the church loses. If their carnal minds must have an instrument or perish, they need to go on to the Disciples of Christ and join those who share that same kind of faith.

DR. L. L. PINKERTON:**THE FIRST TO CHAMPION INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN OUR CHURCHES**

Lewis Letig Pinkerton, was born Jan. 28, 1812 near Baltimore Maryland; one of seven sons, five of which became ministers. While yet a young man he chanced to see a copy of Alexander Campbell's **Millennial Harbinger**. Campbell's appeal for the truth and justice stirred Pinkerton deeply. When he was privileged to hear Campbell preach the gospel in 1830, he confessed his faith and was immersed according New Testament teaching.

Pinkerton prepared himself for three careers, teaching, preaching and medicine. Campbell was impressed with the young disciple and wrote "I have no hesitation in recommending him to the confidence and communion of the brethren...I think he might be very usefully employed as an evangelist..." To Pinkerton, Campbell wrote, "...be instant on all proper occasions in preparing yourself, by laying up and hiding in your heart the law of the Lord. Have the first principles all well arranged in your mind, and the Scriptures which treat of them very familiar. Avoid all appearance of censoriousness, acrimony or irony in your speaking...strive to show yourself a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."¹ Bethany College eventually conferred an honorary Master's Degree upon Pinkerton.

Pinkerton was privileged to be associated with some of the early giants of the Restoration movement. He was associated with Walter Scott in Carthage, Ohio, John T. Johnson and William Morton in Kentucky. Bro. Johnson wrote of him, "He is destined to do much good if he lives. I could sit and listen to him all the time."² He was an "earnest, eloquent, devoted and successful evangelist."³

In 1844 the new congregation in Midway, Kentucky invited Pinkerton to be their first minister. He was 32 years old and in the prime of his life. In ten years the church in Midway grew from 32 members to 168. Pinkerton immersed 154 of those added. Of the Midway church, J. T. Johnson wrote, "If I wished to witness a specimen of primitive Christianity in its modesty, humility, piety, simplicity, order, devotion, intelligence and liberality in Christian enterprise in providing for the poor, the church at Midway would claim my attention"

Pinkerton was a gifted writer and edited a number of Christian journals. He was an ardent opponent of slavery and the making, selling and use of alcoholic beverages. His ant-slavery militancy eventually cost him the respect and fellowship of most of the Kentucky churches.

Instrumental Music in Worship

The question of instrumental music in Christian worship had been occasionally discussed prior to 1859, but Pinkerton carved himself a place in our brotherhood history when he introduced a melodeon into the worship of the Midway Church. The decision to do so was not unanimous and bitter feelings were stirred. Within a few days the instrument disappeared and the mystery was unsolved for years. Many years later, upon the death of Bro. Adam Hibler, one of the church's elders, it was found stored away in his home. He and his slave Reuben had spirited it away and hid it. The pro-instrument folks were undaunted, they simply got another for their use.

Hearing of the Midway action, Benjamin Franklin, editor of the **American Christian Review** blasted them and all who were contemplating the same. Pinkerton took personal office and replied:

So far as is known to me...I am the only 'preacher' in Kentucky of our brotherhood who has publicly advocated the propriety of using instrumental music in some church, and that the church in Midway is the only church that has yet made a decided effort to introduce it.....if your article on church music reflects the notions of the Reformation as to what constitutes Christian courtesy, manly literature, logic, rhetoric, religion; nay, if any

considerable portion of the Reformation can even tolerate such coarse fulminations, then the sooner it is extinct, the better; and I, for one...would feel myself impelled by everything I owe my family, my country and myself, and my Savior, to aid in ridding the world of it, as of an immeasurable abomination.” 4

It is interesting that Pinkerton offered no scriptural justification for introducing the instrument. He said the singing at Midway was so bad that the rats had been scared away from the worship, hence they needed instrumental accompaniment. The example of the Midway church was like a match tossed in a field of dry brush. Following the war, churches throughout the land began buying organs and pianos to “aid in their worship.” For forty long years the battle raged. Churches by the hundreds divided over the issue. Eventually the brotherhood was rent, leaving the Christian Churches/Disciples of Christ with their instruments and Churches of Christ with their acappella singing. Dr. Pinkerton’s famous melodeon is now housed in a glass case at Midway College. An object of historic pride to those who use instrumental music in worship, but viewed as Aaron’s golden calf by those who are committed to doing Bible things in Bible ways.

Heresy Charges

Charges of heresy were brought against Pinkerton by the Lexington church in 1870. It as reported that he claimed to belong to the church universal and was responsible to no particular congregation. They felt that his conduct for several years had been schismatic and calculated to stir up strife and division in the body. Numerous offensive citations were noted from his published writings. In his usual biting and sarcastic style, the doctor looked at their letter and replied that he “would rather plead guilty than read it.” He said he enjoyed the extracts from his own writings so well that he regretted the brevity thereof. He closed by saying that if the Lexington elders had invited his assistance, he could have gotten up a much stronger case against himself than they had done...” 6

Pinkerton has been dubbed “ the first liberal of the Restoration Movement.” He wore that titled without shame or embarrassment.

* He held heretical views about congregational government and organization In 1854 he wrote in the *Christian Age*:
“It has long been our conviction, that the Presbyterian organization is Scriptural and expedient. We believe that every church should have a plurality of elders, one of which should be a preacher...we believe...the Presbyterian plan of operation, through presbyteries and synods, the best extant...churches are left at liberty to adopt such a plan of cooperation as shall seem best adapted to secure the ends mediated by the cooperation.”

It is noteworthy that he offered no Scripture for this view. To those who disagreed with his view he wrote, “The greatest little tyrants I have known have been the greatest sticklers for what they call the independence of churches” 7

* Pinkerton was an eager participant at the meeting held in Cincinnati in 1849 to organize the American Christian Missionary Society. He opposed all effects to appease those brethren who objected to the Society arguing that such an organization was essential. 8

* His views on church membership were heretical. Pinkerton affirmed that he would accept into fellowship a pious, unimmersed soul who had previously held membership in some other religious body. In 1873 he wrote in the *Christian Standard*, “I will not, therefore, thrust my translation of a Greek word (*baptidzo*) between your conscience and your God.” In the same piece he stated, “The New Testament is not a code of cast-iron laws for trembling souls; but a rule of life for loving children—not a hole through a granite rock through which fools and Pharisees are required to crawl...but the ‘King’s highway’ on which rational beings with free sprits...walk.” 9

* His views on the inspiration of the Bible were faulty. In 1869 he wrote, “It is now more than twenty years since we were compelled to abandoned what Neander calls, ‘the red theory of the plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures....’ Young men who go out to preach the Gospel in these days, committed to a theory that requires them to believe...that the ninth verse of the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm was inspired...will be liable...to perpetrate a great many follies in the name of the Lord.” 10

* Pinkerton’s views on salvation grew progressively liberal. In an article written about an imaginary Bob Lawson from the Gosser Creek church, he defended Lawson who believed that “a great many people will get to heaven without being immersed.” Bob Lawson believed that only immersion was baptism and that baptism was for remission of sins, but he also believed “that God will accept the spirit of obedience in some cases for exact conformity to law.” 11

* He went even further in a parabolic story he composed about a widow O’Flanigan and her son Mike, ignorant

immigrants from Ireland. Unchurched and unChristianized, they died without profession of faith in Christ, repentance, baptism or church membership. After painting an emotional, heart-rendering picture of these poor lost souls, Pinkerton wrote, "When I consider the infinite patience of God with sinners here, I am induced to hope that light may rise on the destiny of many poor wretched ones, after they have passed to that undiscovered country..." 12

His friends liked to point out that "no unsoundness can possibly be charged to his faith in Christ—his person, his authority, his mediatorial work." 13 But then Christ made it clear, that "not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt.7:21).

Death came to L. L. Pinkerton January 28, 1875. In 1896 the Midway church dedicated its new auditorium. The principal stain-glass window bore a picture of Dr. Pinkerton. To this day those who visit the church can see the doctor, looking over the congregation he made famous by his disobedience to Christ's Will.

Thus ends the story of a man of great talent, energy and ability who make his mark upon the brotherhood of the Restoration churches. His great potential for good was marred by his heretical views of things sacred and his unyielding, warlike and censorious spirit. He was truly the grandfather of our current generation of change agents. They have copied his agenda almost "to a T." They should be rejected as was he.

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1. John Shackelford, Jr., **Life, Letters and Addresses of Dr. L. L. Pinkerton**, Cincinnati, Chase & Hall Pub. 1876, pp. 21-22
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 30
 4. William H. McDonald, **Whatever Others Might Do. A Look at the Principles of L. L. Pinkerton**. A speech delivered at Midway College on the 175th anniversary of the birth of L. L. Pinkerton, typescript, Jan. 28, 1987. pp. 5-7.
 5. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-79.
 6. *Ibid.*, pp.104-105.
 7. *Ibid.*, pp.107-108.
 8. *Ibid.*, pp. 99.
 9. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-111.
 10. *Ibid.* p, 113.
 11. *Ibid.* p. 115-116.
 12. *Ibid.* pp. 116-117.
 13. *Ibid.* p. 118

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GOOD ACAPPELLA SINGING IS A POWERFUL ARGUMENT AGAINST INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

For a century and a half our brethren have striven to improve and refine our a cappella singing. Men with fine musical training and Biblical knowledge edited excellent, scripturally sound hymnals. We taught our members to "sight read" and how to sing four part harmony. We trained our song leaders how to pitch their selections correctly and properly count the time of the songs they sang. We instructed them how to choose their selections and coordinate them with the lesson of the hour. We had singing schools and practice sessions that we might truly teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual and sing with grace in our hearts (Col. 3:16).

In days past, our religious neighbors often visited our assemblies and were impressed with our ability to sing the lovely hymns of praise to Jehovah in a way that thrilled those present. Often they commented positively on the quality of and uplifting nature of the singing. Rather than a detriment, congregations with good acappella singing found it to be a powerful statement to those who visited their services. With such wonderful singing, who needs an organ, a piano or a guitar? I worked with a Jewish man who attended a service with me. The thing that impressed him was the acappella singing. Many years ago, I remember reading that the Catholic bishop of St. Louis had visited the services of a number of different churches. When he visited a Church of Christ he was overflowing in his praise of their singing.

The hymns of the church should be a tie that binds the old and the young of the church together. Today, I recall my mother singing, "Farther Along" and "The Old Rugged Cross" and other sweet hymns as she rocked her babies to sleep. I remember my grandfather, who was an elder, singing the great hymns of Zion. I remember attending church as a small child and marveling at the sound of 400 or more Christians, led by Bro. Joe Ridley, a masterful director, singing "Love Lifted Me." But the campfire songs, known and loved by young people, are unknown by the senior members of the church. Rather than being a unifying experience, they create a chasm between these vital elements of the congregation.

Before he entered politics, Gen. James Garfield, later President of the United States, preached among the Disciples of Christ/Christian Churches. A note in his diary expresses his thoughts regarding a visit to the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London, England. He went to hear Charles H. Spurgeon preach. Spurgeon was considered the greatest preacher of the 19th century. Each week thousands flocked to hear his powerful lessons. He insisted that the song service in his congregation always be acappella. He equated instrumental accompaniment with other additions of Catholicism.

Garfield wrote, "At half-past eleven Spurgeon came in, and at once offered a short, simple earnest prayer, and read and helped the whole congregation to sing Watts' stirring hymn: *There is a land of pure delight*."

For the first time in my life I felt some sympathy with the doctrine that would reject instrumental music from church worship. There must have been five thousand voices joining in the hymn. The whole building was filled and overflowed with the strong volume of song. The music made itself felt as a living, throbbing presence that entered your nerves, brain, heart, and filled and swept you away in its resistless current."

(Published in the 1883 volume of Century Magazine, and is quoted in "Charles H. Spurgeon: His Faith and Works," H.L. Wayland, Copyright 1892 by the American Baptist Publication Society. (Adapted)).

It is not just singing that makes such an impression. There are several factors that combined, leave such an impression.

- * The worshipers must engage in the singing with zeal and enthusiasm.
- * The ability to sing the four parts of harmony also adds much to the beauty of singing.
- * The song leader must be an able singer who also knows how to lead a congregation..
- * He must pitch his songs correctly and set the proper meter. To sing "The Old Rugged Cross" in an upbeat tempo

destroys the beauty of the lyrics. To sing **"Marching to Zion"** in the meter of a funeral dirge does the same.

* The song must be wisely chosen. A song that is unknown by or beyond the ability of the congregation will not be lovely to those visitors who hear them struggling with it.

* Songs must be appropriate for their place in the worship. An opening song should be a call to worship such as **"God is Love."** The song before prayer should be a prayer song or one that teaches about prayer such as **"The Beautiful Garden of Prayer."** The song before communion should relate to the death of Christ or the act of communing. **"I Gave My Life for Thee"** is excellent for this occasion. Before the lesson, a song that is related to the subject of the hour is helpful. If the lesson is on Missions, **"Send the Light"** is an excellent choice. Invitation songs should invite sinners to respond to Christ. A closing hymn should express that idea. **"Take the Name of Jesus With You"** serves this purpose well. A multitude of hymns are available for each aspect of worship.

Just as sermons are planned, so should the songs be planned. These two aspects of our worship, when well done, not only edify the Christians assembled for worship, they go far in teaching and persuading the lost to surrender their lives to the Savior. For many visitors who come our way, we will have only one opportunity to teach and persuade them to chose the Savior's Way. We must never allow them to go away with an unfavorable impression of the Lord's church.

PART TWO

QUESTIONS ABOUT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND WORSHIP

20.

IF GOD WAS WORSHIPED WITH INSTRUMENTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT COULD WE NOT DO THE SAME?

Dear C. T.: It is quiet true that God was worshiped with songs accompanied by instruments in the Mosaic era. He was also worshiped with animal sacrifices. Could we used them now? If not, why? He was served by a priestly caste, drawn exclusively from one tribe. Can we do that now? Why? He was served with incense? Could we do that? It was an act of religion, under that system, that all males should be circumcised else they could not come into His presence. Could we practice that now?

To be a Christian means to follow Christ and be under his authority (Matt. 28:18). To be obedient to his word is the significance of confessing him as "Lord" (Rom. 10:9-10). Remember, Jesus asked? Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things I say? (Luke 6:46). Bristling won't answer the question. I seek to bind nothing on you, but I do seek to expound the message of Christ as it is written.

THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN OLD TESTAMENT WORSHIP

Mr. Waddey: Why are there no musical instruments in the "Church of Christ?" As your scriptural defense, Ephesians 5:19 is cited to explain why musical instruments should not be used in a "Church of Christ" My question is, and you've probably heard this question before, since Ephesians 5:19 also reads, "Speak to one another with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts." Going back to the book of psalms, isn't the book of Psalms considered a hymn book and prayer book of the Bible?.....there are many kinds of poems such as hymns of praise and worship of God....and of course you know of Psalm 150.....the whole psalm is praising God through using musical instruments or is this taking the Scriptures out of context? I mean everything that has breath praise the Lord, right? Please help me understand thanks, NL

Dear Friend in Christ: We worship God in song without the use of instruments of music for three basic reasons.

1. Christ did not authorize it. In his Great Commission, he said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go, make disciples of all nations....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matt. 28:18-20). If you have read the New Testament carefully you will have noticed that not once do you find any instruction for the church to praise God with instrumental music. You do however find several references to singing in worship such as the passage you cited in Eph. 5:19-20. Remember, Christ is head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22).

2. We are committed to worshiping and serving Christ as did the first Christians. Historically we know that it was some 630 years before instrumental music was introduced into Christian worship. It was only after churches had drifted far from the teachings of Christ and his Apostles and had grown into what is now known as the Roman Catholic church that this practice was introduced in 670 AD. It caused such a furor that it was withdrawn and not until the 13th century did it become a common practice. The Greek Orthodox church did not allow the use of instrumental music until the last century...and even now in some areas of the world they still do not use it. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church wrote that he had no objection to there being instruments of music in their chapels so long as they were neither seen or heard during worship. John Calvin, father of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, called instrumental music a relic of popery, of the same character as beads and incense. Charles Spurgeon, the greatest of all Baptist preachers, refused to allow any instruments to be used with the singing in his congregation in London. This list could be extended. We are not unique in our position.

3. Our Bible consists of two grand divisions, Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was given to the Hebrew people to regulate their faith and practice. It is from God and inspired and inerrant, but it was intended for that ancient form of worship (See Deut. 5:1-3). The New Testament was given to regulate the worship and service of those who follow Christ. Note the following verses that tell us that the Old Testament is no longer our standard for faith and practice. Paul explains to us that in his death upon the cross, Jesus fulfilled that Old Law, took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. He then exhorted us to "Let no man judge you" respecting its ordinances" (Col. 2:14-17). Other verses that teach this lesson are Ephesians 2:14-15; II Corinthians 3:7-11; Hebrews 8:6-13. The Hebrews were given specific authority from God to use instrumental music in their worship. "Hezekiah...set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandments of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets." Thus when they praised God with instruments, they did what God had authorized them to do. If we had such authority expressed in the New Testament, we could do the same. But we don't find such.

When we go to the Old Testament to find approval for instruments of music, we could also go there to find approval for

burning incense in worship, for a tribal, hereditary priesthood, animal sacrifices, circumcision, polygamy and other interesting practices. They all stand or fall together.

If you had been in Jerusalem in the first century and were privileged to worship with those first disciples do you think you would have had instrumental music? Today we wish to worship as they did and as the New Testament authorizes us to do.

22.

THE JEWS USED INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN THEIR WORSHIP. WHY CAN'T WE?

Dear Brother Waddey: The Jews were musical people, and often used instruments as accompaniment and as stand-alone facilitators of praise, and inasmuch there is no verse in the NT that condemns musical instruments in assemblies, why could we not surmise that instruments were used in private worship and in public assemblies in NT times? Willis

Dear Bro. Willis: An old maxim says "That which proves too much proves nothing." Using your logic, I offer the following parallel:

The Jews sprinkled water in some of their ceremonies of cleansing (Num. 8:7). The Jews were a religious and worshipping people. In as much as the New Testament does not condemn the sprinkling of water for cleansing from sin, why could we not surmise that sprinkling can be used for baptism? Would you accept this? I think not!

The point you obviously overlook is that they Hebrews were specifically authorized to use instruments of music in their temple worship. "And he set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, wit psalteries, and with harps...for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets" (II Chron. 29:25). We are not Hebrews, we do not worship according to the Old Covenant. I challenge you to go to the New Covenant of Christ and find the commandment to use instruments in the worship of Jehovah's spiritual house, the church! You know such cannot be found. You can find instructions to sing and make melody with the heart (Eph. 5:19), but none for the use of man-made instruments.

There are two distinct ways of looking at Christianity. One says I want to obey Christ in all things. Whatever he says that will I do, I will not presume to go beyond that (II John 9). The other says I want to do what I like in my worship to God. If Christ's way agrees with my desires I will do it. If not, I will chose my way over his. Considering the reasoning of your above letter, which of these two ways are you pursuing?

DID DAVID HAVE GOD'S AUTHORITY TO USE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

Bro. Waddey: My question is about instruments in worship. I am a member of a church in which I play the drums for our praise team, up until learning about your beliefs, I never considered that it might be wrong. There is nothing inherently evil about it in anyway, and it is still praising God. I know that you are going to say that the New Testament does not mention the use of instruments and so you simply choose not to use them. That is a simple and harmless decision, but in the Old Testament David praised with the sound of trumpet and with the harp and lyre and symbols and so on and so forth. You would reply to this by saying that they also sacrificed bulls and burned incense, but Christ fulfilled and completed the old laws and we do not live by those anymore. The point I make is that David did not praise God with music and instruments, dancing and whatever else he could because God commanded him to, he praised God that way because he loved him, and because he wanted to do everything he could to praise God. Christ set aside the Old laws, but that was not a law in the first place. David did not praise with instruments because of a law, and I don't think that I have to stop doing it because of a lack of one. Just because Christ didn't say to do it, doesn't mean that he was opposed to it. Just as God was not opposed to the way David praised, even though he didn't specify it. I am eager to hear your response to this. I am not writing to tear down your beliefs, because it is surely not wrong to praise God in the way you choose, I am simply seeking to further my understanding of my faith. Peter.

Dear Bro. Peter: From the contents of your letter I can discern:

- * That you most likely are a member of the Church of Christ;
- * That your congregation has now adopted the use of instrumental music in your worship;
- * That you had never been taught why Churches of Christ have not and most still do not use instrumental music in worship;
- * That when you encountered such teaching someone either tried to provide you a justification for what you are doing or pointed you to written material prepared by one of our progressive brethren which seeks to assure you that you are not wrong in playing your drums while the church is worshipping.

Unfortunately you have gotten faulty advice. If you will read **II Chronicle 29:25** you will find that when King Hezekiah reformed the Temple worship "he set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; *for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets...*" David introduced instruments of music in the temple because "the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets" namely, Gad and Nathan. Thus your argument about David fails.

You should remember that although the Old Covenant authorized the use of musical instruments for those it governed, you are not a Jew. You are a Christian. You are not amenable to the Law of Moses, but to the Law of Christ (Matt. 28:18,20). On the day of judgment you will not be judged by Moses, David or the Old Testament, but by the words of Christ (John 12:47-48). Christ, through his Apostles, has told us to sing and make melody with our hearts unto God (Eph. 5:19). When you sing you are doing what he has told you to do. When you play your drums you are doing what your preacher wishes or perhaps what you wish to do. But your preacher has no authority to grant you that permission, and you have not right to presume to offer to God what he has not authorized or approved of.

As you friend and brother in Christ, I hope you will take these thoughts to heart and cease from your unauthorized practice. Be content to worship your Creator as he has instructed you. You need never fret about that being wrong.

24.

ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ANSWERED

Dear Bro. Waddey: My neighbor cites I Timothy 4:4 in a modern translation, which renders verse 4 as "everything of God" is good. He interprets that very widely to mean that everything created by God, musical instruments included, should be suitable for use in worship. My opponent believes that the Church of Christ created the "Law of Silence" to justify our negative biases toward anything, especially instrumental music. He was once a member of the Church of Christ. Now he bashes the Church vehemently from every angle.. He seems to have some profound grudge against the Church of Christ and is lashing out with a one-man smear campaign. Bill

Dear Bill: Regarding the argument of your disputant that everything God made is good for worship: God made us sexual creatures and made sexual love an important ingredient of married life...but he did not intend it for his worship. It is interesting that many of the ancient pagan religions did involve what they called sacred fornication...such was practiced in the Baal worship so vehemently fought by the prophets of God. It was also an aspect of Aphrodite worship in Corinth.

Like his other points, he is wrong about the Church of Christ inventing the idea of the "law of silence." You can see it clearly stated in Acts 15:24. Mistaken brethren were teaching disciples that they had to be circumcised, to whom the Apostles gave no command." Hence they were acting without divine authority. The Hebrews writer cites it in his 7th chapter, verse 11-14. Christ could not serve as a priest on earth since he was of the tribe of Judah "as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests." The Protestant Reformer, Huldreich Zwingli, appealed to this law in his dispute with Luther. He argued that we can only do in Christianity that which the Lord has authorized. The early Calvinists all used the same reasoning. Perhaps your friend does not know nearly so much as he claims.

As to the man's bitterness. There is no more hateful enemy than the turncoat..or apostate. Their pride demands that they try to destroy that which they have abandoned...to prove to themselves it was truly unworthy of their loyalty.

You have done your best to help the poor fellow. You can only turn him over to the Lord and pray that the eyes of his heart may be opened at some future date...before he stands before his offend Lord.

Use your time and energy to help those who sincerely want help. Such choices often confront those who are seeking to lead men to the Savior.

ALLEGED REASONS WHY WE NEED INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Dear Bro. Waddey: I must take issue with you on your objections to our churches using musical instruments with their worship. Without getting into technicalities, I can cite three good reason why we need to make this change. 1. When God gives a person a gift, He expects him to us it to His glory. He has surely blessed some folks with superior musical skills and we must not keep them from using those skills to God's glory. 2. We must have instrumental music if we hope to keep our young people who love contemporary Christian music. 3. God wants us to offer him our best in worship. Anyone will tell us that a well trained chorus and good musical accompany are much better than our usual vocal singing. Wayne:

Dear Wayne: First may I point out that you have given me you opinion about why musical instruments are needed, but you did not offer any Scripture to substantiate your points. As servants under Jesus Christ, we are subject to his authority (Matt. 28:18,20). We must be able to read from his word regarding these matters. We are charged to teach converts to obey all thing He has commanded.

1. It is true that God gives us our various gifts and talents (Rom. 12:6). You would however have a hard time showing from Scripture that God expects every person to use his every gift in the worship assembly of the church. One man is gifted to run like a deer. He can use his gift to compete in races, but there is no place in our worship for running. He can, with the rest of us, sing, pray, commune and give his gifts, but he can't use his gift of speed in the church. A lady was given the gift of preparing wonderful meals. She excels as a culinary artist, but there is no place for gourmet meals in the worship of God. She might use her gift for hospitality or for ministering to the sick and aged, but in the assembly she must be content to worship as the rest of us do. These examples could be multiplied, but the point is made. Not every God-given gift is to be exercised in the worship of His church.

Some do have superior musical skills, but that alone does not authorized them to use them in worship. For example God has instructed us to sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19). A brother or sister may be a master on the piano or organ, etc. but God has not authorized the use of instruments in his worship, therefore they have no right to perform for the church. A person may have a wonderful voice, fine training and be acclaimed by the world, but Paul describes the praise worship of the church as "speaking one to another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19). Plainly put this means singing by all, not just a gifted singer.

The gifts we receive are certainly to be used, but the occasion will not always be in the worship assembly of the church. If God has said "No," we have no obligation or right to display our gift in the church.

2. God is keenly interested in the salvation of the young and every elder, preacher and member should share that concern. But in the Lord's church we have no right to ignore his instruction in order to reach, teach and keep a particular category of Christians. Single adults would greatly benefit from a dating service that caters to Christians. But that is not a part of God's worship. Christians in the military need weapons and survival training, but that is a part of our worship. Tired Christians need a place and opportunity to take a nap, but that is not appropriate for the worship assembly.

Young people who clamor for instrumental music do so because they have not be properly taught from God's Word the reasons for our acappella praise and our rejection of instrumental music.. While the youth of the church are important, they must not be allowed to take precedence over God's will. We must remember that God placed the leadership of his church in the hands of men who are elders, not novices (I Tim. 3:6). Babies demand things that could pose a danger to them. They cry in protest if they cannot have them. Wise parents do not yield to their unwise demands. Nor should the church yield to young people who demand to have their instrumental music or they will refuse to attend. Frankly I think this is an excuse offered by adults who want the instrument, but do not want it known that they are causing the stir. They blame it on the youth.

3. Yes, God wants us to do our best, and give our best to him in worship and all other aspects of Christian service. Your mistake is in assuming that God's estimate of what is best is the same as yours. The Father reminds us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah" (Is. 55:8). He does not demand that I must be as good a singer as the man who is gifted and well trained. So long as I do the best I am able to do, he is pleased with me. We parents operate on this same plane with our children. A family may have four children. One may be gifted in his schooling, the other in creative work, another in music and the fourth in horticulture. The parents expect each child to do his or her best, but it would be a mistake to demand that they all excel in all four fields. Our heavenly Father delights in a little child's first attempts at singing hymns. He also delights in that praise of the child's parents and the struggling efforts of the aged grandparent, hard of hearing, short of breath and with gravelly voice.

The praise that pleases the great Jehovah is that which is offered, in spirit and in truth (John 4:24); that which is obedient to his instructions. He wants "a sacrifice of praise...the fruit of lips which make confession to his name" (Heb. 13:15). He wants us to speak one to another with our psalms, hymns and spiritual songs as we sing and make melody with our hearts unto him (Eph. 5:19). That an obedient child will be happy to comply with. Neither of your three reasons is adequate to justify going beyond what is written in the New Testament of Jesus (II John 9-11).

26.

DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZE THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

Dear Bro. Wadley: I have read attempts to prove that the New Testament authorizes the use of instrumental music in worship. The basic thesis is as follows:

"According to Young's Analytical Concordance, the same word translated psalms in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 is also the word used to refer to the Old Testament book of Psalms in Luke 20:42, Luke 24:44, Act 1:20 and Acts 13:33. Many of the verses in the book of Psalms say to sing using musical instruments (e.g., Psalms 33:2, 92:3 and 144:9)."

"Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary defines the word translated psalms in these verses as a set piece of music, that is, a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument; a "psalm"); collectively the book of the Psalms."

"Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible defines this word as a song of praise (on an instrument)"

I would appreciate your thoughts on this reasoning. Isn't it also true that early Christians abstained from instrumental music to distance themselves from pagan religions that used instruments? Willis

Dear Willis: If the passage in Ephesians 5:19 authorizes the church to use instrumental music in its worship, we must ask why from the beginning in 33 A.D. unto 667 no one figured that out and no one used instrumental music in worship? In 667, Pope Vitalian I introduced the first instrument into Christian worship. Since its presence stirred great controversy, it was withdrawn. It was 500 years later before the use became wide-spread.

The Hebrews sang praises to God with instruments because God clearly commanded them to do so. Note II Chronicles 29:25, "for the commandment was of Jehovah." Jesus fulfilled and retired the Law of Moses when he died on the cross (Col. 2:14-16). In its place he gave us his New Covenant and tells us to obey all things whatsoever he commanded (Matt. 28:20). In his covenant we find no instruction or example of churches using instruments in their praise. That a psalm can be sung without instrumental accompaniment is evidenced by the fact that Jewish families sing them in their home

devotions, we and other a cappella churches sing them in our worship. Are you aware that Presbyterians were also acappella in the early stages of their history? A friend is writing a history of their departure from their original practice.

Grammarians have noted that the meaning of the verb form of "*psallo*" evolved over the years and that by the first century it meant to sing but did not necessarily include instrumental music. Dr. Everett Ferguson notes this in his study on "**A Cappella Music in the Public Worship of the Church**" 1972, p. 13-15.

Note too that Paul was careful to indicate the instrument which was to be used when singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs: "Making melody with your heart" (Eph. 5:19). Thus he speaks metaphorically, likening the heart of the worshiper to a harp, with which we sing our praise to our God.

It is also helpful to notice Colossians 3:16 which is a similar passage about praise. There Paul indicates two significant purposes of our singing: "teaching and admonishing one another." This is something an instrument cannot do. It can assist us in singing, it can thrill us with its lovely sounds, it can entertain us, but it cannot teach or admonish us.

27.

DOES GOD AUTHORIZE HYMNALS, PITCH PIPES, ETC?

Mr. Wadley: I know of neither a prohibition nor authority given for the use of a hymn book. I see no problem in using one, for it helps us with our congregational singing. How would we show it is authorized by God? Macy

Dear Macy: We can know God has prohibited a thing if he tells us in his word, "Thou shalt not do this." Thus we are told, thou shalt not steal, kill, commit adultery, etc. We can know a thing is forbidden if its opposite is required of us. If I am to love my neighbor as myself, then for me to despise my neighbor is automatically wrong. If a thing is shown to be evil in some Bible example I can know it is wrong, even if I have no direct prohibition. For example when David ordered Uriah put in a precarious position in the battle, that he might die. Although there is no specific prohibition that spells out such conduct, the way God responded shows us his displeasure.

When God specifically tells us what he wants us to do, all other alternatives are thereby prohibited. For example when he said, "Go make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them..." (Matt. 28:19), that excludes making disciples by having them sign a contract or by having them make a financial commitment. The exclusive and only way to make disciples is to baptize them. Likewise when he said "baptize" them, that verb is very specific, it means immerse. Hence by authorizing immersion, he excluded sprinkling, pouring, etc.

God can and does give us general or generic commands that order us to do something without providing the details. When he does so we are left to our own discretion as to how we will implement that command. He said "Go make disciples" but he did not specify any mode of travel. Hence the command authorizes us to use any honest and honorable mode of travel in fulfilling that command. The things necessary to fulfilling a command we call expediences. For example if we are to baptize we will need suitable clothing, and a suitable place. Thus a church is authorized to provide a baptistry, clothing and towels for baptisms.

We are commanded to sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19). The command to sing is specific. Thus it excludes playing instruments. However, to sing together we need to have some way to see the words of the hymn. Hence the command authorizes us to provide hymn books for singing, a pitch pipe for the song leader and lights for the assembly.

All that we do must be by Christ's authority (Matt. 28:18, 20). That authority may be expressed in a specific command

or in one that is generic. Rather than say, "He does not forbid this," the faithful disciples asks, "What did Christ tell us to do?" This distinguishes the faithful Christian from the worldly disciple who wants a religion that pleases him. This has been a marked distinction between churches of Christ and our religious neighbors.

28.

DOES EPHESIANS 5:19-20 REFER TO CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP?

Dear brother: I am not a preacher ...I am a school teacher fighting the in-roads of change seemingly alone. I have studied hard and written material on the music question using Ephesians 5:19. The preacher here gave a lesson saying this passage has nothing to do with worship. He claimed that the context is not about a worship service and that this passage is erroneously used to make it a "worship passage." He sighs that we would take a text out of context and apply it as we have. He says the passage is not directive for worship at all. I was not ready for this twist and am still a bit confused as to how to counter it. Maybe you can help. J. B.

Dear Bro. J. B.: Thanks for your letter and question about Ephesians 5:19. Your experience is not unique. Now you see what they mean by "the new hermeneutic." To be able to introduce their new doctrines and practices into our churches, agents of change face the daunting task of responding to plainly stated Scriptures that stand in their way. Their method of getting around them is to say, "Oh they have been misunderstood, or used out of context." In reading the literature of the change agents, I find that "claiming the context will not allow a commonly held conclusion is often used. Their strategy being to intimidate their questioners. The implication is "I am a scholar and your are not. I declare that this verse cannot be used. Case closed." Don't be intimidated.

I suspect that if you really knew, your preacher does not think it wrong to use instrumental music in worship of the church. I have observed that those who have embraced that position rarely ever voluntarily say so. I imagine it is from fear of losing their job. Rather, over a period of time they seek to undermine the faith of their hearers in such doctrines by casting doubt on our common understanding of what the Bible says on the subject.

You might wish to ask your preacher in a very concise and pointed way, "Do you believe it to be contrary to Scripture, therefore sinful, for a Church of Christ to use instrumental music in worship? If so, please show me a verse that proves it to be wrong?"

A quick check of four commentaries reveals the following:

Ellicott notes that it refers, "perhaps chiefly, to public worship"

Wescott states, "The Christian congregation... joins in the various forms of praise..."

Michael Weed, (The Living Word Commentaries) "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...stresses the manner in which the Christian gatherings should display their exuberance in the Spirit. On verse 20 he writes, "The context is now broadened beyond that of the corporate worship..." (p. 177-178). Weed is a member of the church and Christian educator.

Burton Coffman writes, "Regarding the questions of whether or not the public assemblies or worship services of the Christians are referred to here, it seems best to construe the passage as having exactly that application." (p. 220). (Coffman was a fine Christian scholar).

Not until the change agents decided that they needed a way to justify their use of instrumental music did any preacher or scholar among our people argue that Eph. 5:19 had no reference to Christian worship.

Be strong in the Lord. Don't give in, don't give up, don't compromise.

CAN YOU READ A PSALM WITHOUT A HARP?

Those change agents who are seeking to introduce instrumental music into our churches have borrowed dozens of excuses from their peers in the Disciples of Christ, the Christian Churches and other denominational bodies.

When we cite Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:19, that we speak one to another in *psalms*, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with our hearts, they triumphally pounce on the word "*psalms*." Ignoring the lexical evidence that notes that by the first Christian century, the word "psalmos" had evolved to include unaccompanied singing. They assert, "You cannot sing a psalm (*psalmos*), without an instrument!"

I have a few simple question for these profound scholars of ancient biblical languages.

- * If it is impossible to sing a psalm without accompaniment on a stringed instrument, i.e., a harp, would not every singer be obligated to play a harp as he sang the psalm?
- * Would having a harp be necessary only when singing a psalm, but not when singing hymns and spiritual songs?
- * If the word *psalmos* demands that one pluck the strings as he does his psalm, would he then have to pluck his harp when he reads the psalms? When we study the Psalms in a bible class, must we accompany ourselves with harps? When we read the Psalms in our home devotions, must we break out our harps and accompany ourselves? When the change agent preaches a sermon on the Twenty-Third Psalm, must he accompany his reading with his harp? If not, perhaps those fountains of linguistic wisdom could explain why such is not the case!

WHO IS ADVOCATING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

Dear Bro. Waddey: We are having some brothers visit us from America who see nothing wrong with using instruments of music in worship. They are telling us it is alright if we want to use them. Is this common among our churches in America? Lucius

Dear Bro. Lucius: There are three classes of people whom you might encounter regarding the use of musical instruments in worship.

1. Some Christian Churches, who use instrumental music and other denominational practices, use the name Church of Christ. In at least some cases this is done to deceive brethren in third world nations who do not know their history. Over a century ago they were part of the Lord's church, but they turned aside about 1900 A.D. and have continued to drift farther away from God's word. They are similar to us in some ways, so they can easy fool those who are unaware of the past.
2. There are some 300 preachers and congregations in our midst (out of some 10,000 congregations) who have become very liberal in their thinking. Those we call change agents for they want to change the faith and worship of the Lord's church. Some of them are already using instruments in their assemblies. First they argue that it is a matter of tradition, not scripture, then along the way they always adopt the instruments. They deny that God's Word is a pattern that we are to follow (II Tim. 1:13). They reason that sincerity is the only import thing in worship.
3. Third is a larger group among us who are weak in their faith. They have no conviction about such things as

instrumental music. They do not use them. They do not promote their use, but neither do they take a strong stand against them. Given enough time they and their churches will be overtaken by the error. The vast majority of our brethren do not and will not use instruments. They view them as a violation of God's law. We are told to sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19). That is what God wants and thus we do it, just as he has said. We are told not to go beyond the teaching of Christ (II John 9-11).

I exhort you in the name of the Lord, do not allow these false teachers and traitorous brethren to influence you to go against God in this matter.

31.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP: A FRIENDLY DISCUSSION

Bro. John: . I'm very glad to have found your website. I'm a brother from the Cruzada Church of Christ here in the Philippines. My local church prefers to use musical instruments in our worship services. We do believe that we are one with you, for a difference in using instruments or not should not come between the body of Christ. How do you brethren regard us who use musical instruments in our services? Also, what can you say about the efforts of some instrumental and non-instrumental churches to merge (I hear they sing half of the songs in a capella then half with instruments). I hope to hear from you soon. Isaac

Dear Bro. Isaac: If you are a part of the body of people called Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ we do have much in common. In fact, the two churches of which we are part at one time were united in the worship and service of the Master. Christianity had its beginning in Jerusalem following the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. But our Back to the Bible Movement had its genesis here in America in the early days of the 19th century. The first generation of those early disciples all worshiped without instruments of music. It was about 1860 that some of the large, wealthy, city churches decided to introduced instruments to assist their singing. The issue was hotly discussed for some 40 years. My ancestors were convinced that since the early church did not use instruments (they were not introduced and widely used until about 1250 AD) and since the Scripture plainly tells us to sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph. 5:19), we should continue to worship in the ancient fashion. Those of your persuasion argued they could do anything the Bible does not specifically forbid. Thus they introduced their instruments, causing a break in fellowship. Of course there were other matters such as missionary organizations to manage, oversee and control the mission work of the churches, women preachers, fellowship with denominational bodies, preachers serving as the pastors of their churches, and viewing the church as a denomination rather than as the body of Christ.

In your letter you indicate that you could worship acceptably with or without musical instruments. The problem is we cannot worship with them and believe ourselves to be acceptable to God. If you have been immersed in the name of Christ for the remission of your sins and if you wished to come and worship with us, you would be warmly received. If you would not promote or make an issue about the use of instruments you could be in good fellowship with us. Together we could worship and serve the Master. We cannot strike a compromise with the truth Christ has given us or the worship he has ordained. It would be like asking us to strike a compromise with the Lutherans who baptize by sprinkling. The Master has spoken. We are to be buried with him in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

God bless you and keep you ever in the path of his truth.

IS THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC WRONG ON ALL OCCASIONS ?

Dear Mr. Waddey: Since you do not use instruments of music in the church do you think all instrumental music is wrong?
Lazarus

Dear Lazarus: I am speaking of the music we offer in worship to God. In our worship we must "observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded" (Matt. 28:20). Since we only find vocal music mentioned in connection with Christian worship in the New Testament of Christ, it is our conviction that is all we should offer him (Eph. 5:19).

This in no way, discourages or prohibits our participation in other kinds of music in other situations. For example, I play a number of musical instruments. I frequently go to homes for the elderly and entertain them with my music. I enjoy making music with my fellow musicians in the social realm. I attend concerts and symphonies on a regular basis. I have taught school children how to sing and play instruments as part of their educational process. All of these have nothing to do with what I do when I assemble with the church to worship God.

Think of it in relation to the Lord's Supper. For his church, Christ ordained a simple memorial of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matt. 26:26-29). I eat food on many occasions. I eat meat and vegetables. I drink milk, tea or coffee. I eat dessert. When I assemble with my fellow-Christians to worship and remember Christ's death I must restrict myself to the bread and fruit of the vine he prescribed...if I truly wish to please him. So it is with the kind of music I offer him in worship.

MAY CHRISTIANS USED INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN SOCIAL GATHERINGS?

Bro. John: May Christians use instrumental music in social occasions? Please explain Isaiah 5:12. Moses

Bro. Moses: The key to properly interpreting and applying God's Word is to understand the context in which the verse is found. Isaiah wrote: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands." (Is. 5:11-12). First, the context tells us this was written to Hebrews who lived under the old Covenant of Moses. Second, chapter 5:8-23 is a collection of woes God pronounced against them because of their wicked lives of greed (vs. 8) drunkenness (vs. 10), partying (vs. 12), wickedness (vs. 18), arrogance (vs. 21) perverting justice for a bribe (vs. 23). From this we note he is not speaking of their worship in God's temple. He is describing their wickedness of their private lives. The passage has nothing to say about how Christians should or should not worship God. Even if it did, it is part of the Old Covenant that was taken away by Christ, being nailed to his cross (Col. 2:14).

To determine how we Christians should worship, we turn to the New Testament of Jesus. His words will judge us in the

last day (John 12:48). We are to observe all things that he commanded (Matt. 28:20). Christ authorizes us to sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph. 5:19). He does not authorized the use of man-made instruments in his worship.

34.

Instrumental Music and Webster's Dictionary

Dear Mr. Wadley: I don't know how you can claim to have the whole truth and omit the instrument, when Webster even says that those psalms you mention in Ephesians. 5:19, in the Greek, were to be accompanied. A Friend

Dear Friend: Webster is neither our standard nor authority in Christ. If the word *psalmos* demands that an instrument be used, why did not the early Christians understand it that way? Why did it take 670 years before the first instrument was introduced in Christian worship...and that in a Catholic Church. Why did it cause such an uproar that another 500 years passed before it became a matter of common usage.

Your Bible has the Book of Psalms in it, but you do not need an instrument to read and profit by them. In most hymnals in use today there are psalms set to music. We sing them without accompaniment in Churches of Christ. We do so without any difficulty. If one must have an instrument to sing a psalm how is that possible?

If the word *psalmos* demands that all who sing play an instrument do you follow that practice? Do you provide each worshiper a harp as you do a hymnal? Why not?

The answer to the problem is found in carefully looking at the text. Paul says "speaking one to another" (that does not require an instrument) in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing....(that does not require an instrument) and making melody with your heart . Rather than making melody with a harp, he says do so with your heart (Eph. 5:19).

35.

DOES PAUL'S VIEW ON CIRCUMCISION ALLOW THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Dear Bro. Wadley: The Richland Hills Church now is using instrumental music and observing Saturday night communion. Rick Atchley says instrumental music is like circumcision or expediency; you can do it or not do it as long as you don't force anybody to do it. Paul had Timothy circumcised but would not allow Titus to be circumcised. It was not a matter of salvation. Therefore instrumental music is the same principle. Please show me the fallacy of this comparison .Kim

Dear Kim: You are probably aware that Bro. Rick Atchley is the leading spokesman for the change movement that is

damaging Churches of Christ around the world. That Richland Hills church is the largest congregation among us seems to have intoxicated Bro. Atchley and filled him with false pride. It has caused him to say and do many things contrary to the teaching of Christ. He is seeking to remake the church in his own image rather than according to the pattern provided by Christ. We must not only reject his faulty teaching, but warn others of his error.

Bro. Atchley's comparison of instrumental music in worship with circumcision is a false analogy. It is like a man comparing apples and oranges.

* In the New Testament God has prescribed for us the kind of worship he wants us to give him. He has not prescribed either instrumental music nor circumcision for Christians.

* Singing has to do with the worship of God. The circumcision of Timothy, the Jew and Titus, the Greek, had to do with the Christian's relationship to the Law of Moses. If one taught that circumcision was necessary to salvation (Acts 15:1) he was wrong and was to be resisted. If one were circumcised for other reasons it was a matter of indifference (Gal. 5:6).

* If his logic proves that we have choice in the way we worship God with our praise, it would also prove that we have choice in the way we commune, the way we pray, the way we give our gifts to God. If the example of circumcision allows them to add instruments to their worship, it would also allow Mormons to choose water rather than fruit of the vine for communion, for the Catholics to have only bread for the layman (as they did in days past). It would allow for taxing, tithing, bazaars and raffles instead of freewill offerings to God as each has purposed in his heart. It would allow for magic shows, scientific lectures and weight training instead of preaching the gospel. Those inclined to do any or all of these things could argue that Paul's practice regarding circumcision justifies their so doing. It would allow for the use of candles, beads and images in prayer and offering our prayers through other mediators than Christ (I Tim. 2:5).

* If taken seriously, this teaching would mean that there is nothing in the Bible that can be taken as universally binding on humanity. It is relativism. Some would choose one thing, others choose the opposite and both are right per this mistaken doctrine. It ignores the fact that Christ has provided us a pattern to follow (II Tim. 1:13; Heb. 8:5). It would negate Christ's instruction to teach converts to obey all things whatsoever he commanded (Matt. 28:29).

* Those who practice infant baptism and church membership also use circumcision to justify their unscriptural practice. They reason since circumcision made a baby boy a member of the covenant nation, so baptism of a baby will make him a Christian and a member of the church. Their failure was two fold. (1). They failed to notice the difference in the old and new covenants and that we are under the new. (2). They did not notice that nowhere does the Scripture make such a connection between circumcision and baptism. Strange that now some progressive-minded members of the church are making a similar use of circumcision to justify the unscriptural practice of using instruments of music in worship.

* He ignores that fact that 667 years passed before instrumental music was brought into any church. It was Vitalian I, pope of Rome, who did so. His actions created such a storm of controversy it was withdrawn and another 500 years passed before it became a common practice. Those who want instruments need to explain why this was so!

* Paul decision to have Timothy circumcised was done to eliminate a stumbling block to non-Christian Jews so they would afford him the opportunity to teach them about Christ. Atchley's decision to use instruments of music in worship is a concession to worldly-minded, unspiritual Christians to pacify and please them.

* Bro. Atchley and all the Change Agents share a common attribute. None of them feel constrained to have divine authority for what they do in worship. The desire to be like their worldly neighbors is sufficient to justify their decisions.

* That the use of instruments with singing is merely an expedient has been a chief argument of the Christian Churches for over 100 years. It overlooks the fact that a thing must first be lawful before it can be expedient.

* It has long been noted that if a man first decides what he wants to believe, he can then find something, somewhere in the Bible that can be used or misused to prove his preconceived notion. That is what Bro. Atchley has done.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

Dear Sir: I am impressed with your teaching but I can't understand why you do not allow instruments of music in your worship. I enjoy hearing the organ which I worship. Sammie

Dear Sammie: Each of us has presuppositions about many things, including religion. These presuppositions are based on our family background, prior worship experiences and ideas we have absorbed in life. To be a Christian means that we surrender our hearts, minds and life to Jesus our Lord and Savior. The will of Christ is revealed to us only in His New Testament. If Christ is truly our Lord, we will accept what he says and do it to the best of our ability. Our presuppositions will be surrendered to His will.

We praise God without instrumental accompaniment for several reasons:

1. We are to teach and do all things that Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20).
2. We are told to sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph. 5:19). There are no verses that tell us to worship God with musical instruments.
3. We are warned not to go beyond the teaching of Christ (II John 9-11)
4. It is a historical fact that the early Christians worshiped without instrumental music. In fact it was 667 A.D. before the first instrument was introduced into a church. It was rejected and it was about 1250 A. D. before the use of instruments became acceptable. In the past, Presbyterians and many Baptists rejected instrumental music. Even today there are a few who still do so. Within the last 5 years a Baptist minister by the name of Price has written an book explaining why his church does not use instruments with their singing.
5. To use instruments with our singing is to add to the worship prescribed by our Lord. That we are warned not to do (Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).
6. God wants the sincere and loving praise of His children. He is not impressed as we are by the physical beauty of our voices or our musical skills. Even the tone-deaf Christian should do his best in praising God in song. The same is true of little children and the elderly saint whose voice is cracked and graveled. He does expect us to do our best, whatever that may be.

God knows what He wants when we worship Him and was able to express that in his written Word, our Bible.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE NEW HERMENEUTIC

Dear Bro. John: Our minister says that the new hermeneutic has shown we are wrong in opposing instrumental music. He says the word "psalms" in Ephesians 5:19 includes singing with a harp. Since it was allowed in the Old Testament it must be allowed today. Many of us think he has a point. R. B.

Dear R. B and brethren: Are you Hebrews living under the Old Testament? If so you should by all means use instrumental music in your worship. If you are a Christian trying to serve Christ you should submit to his authority and follow his will. He does have all the authority (Matt. 28:18). Perhaps you could explain why for the first 667 years of Christian history no one used instrumental music in the churches? It was a pope who introduced the first instrument and it created such a furor that it was withdrawn. Only in the 13th century did the practice gain general acceptance. If it were so clear that the word "psalm" means a song with instrumental accompaniment why did they not figure that out? The term acappella means, "as in the church."

By the way, the "new hermeneutic" that some have adopted is really the old hermeneutic that those of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches used a hundred years ago when they decided to introduce the use of instrumental music into their churches

THE ROLE OF REASON IN KNOWING AND DOING GOD'S WILL

Dear Bro. Waddey: We don't use instruments nor would we ever, but not for those reasons. You are making up law and risk "another gospel" according to Galatians 1. Also, review Gnosticism as condemned by III John. You will shoot yourself in the foot with the Evangelicals using arguments made with John Locke's reasoning. Like most Church of Christ preachers, Locke thought that one could perfect himself by reasoning. They will find it easy to defeat that. Jack

Dear Bro. Jack: If you sing without instrumental accompaniment, but not for biblical reasons, then your reasons are really non-reasons. They are your preferences, or your traditions, or perhaps because you cannot afford an instrument or have no skills to play one. None of those reasons have any standing before Christ who says, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

It is my observation that those who are liberal in their theology use the words, legalist, legalism and legalistic in much the same way as our American political or social liberals use the words racist, homophobic and anti-feminist. They are pejoratives used to blacken all who disagree with their point of view. By calling a person or an idea by such terms they feel no need to point out their real objections to their teaching or logical reasons for rejecting them.

As to the philosopher John Locke and our fellow preachers, not one in 500 has read a line of Locke's writings. Many would not even know his name. I question whether Locke really thought of himself or any man actually perfecting

himself by any human method. I can say with certainty that no gospel preacher among the several thousand I have known thought he could attain perfection in this life by reason or any other method.

On the other hand if you reject the role of reason in man's pursuit of understanding the will of God, then you only have left the uncertain feelings or emotions of your human heart to guide you (Jer. 17:9). God has spoken to us through His Son (Heb. 1:1). That message is preserved for us in a book which we must read to understand. The very act of reading and comprehension involves the use of reason. When we read and comprehend the sacred message then our choice is to believe and obey it or to ignore it and do as we wish or feel.

Long before John Locke lived and wrote, the Holy Spirit guided an inspired man to commend the Bereans who listened to the preaching of the gospel, then searched the Scriptures daily to see if the message was true (Acts 17:11). He also guided a chosen man to write that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him (Heb. 5:9). So it is today. We study to show ourselves approved unto God (II Tim. 2:15), we obey that which we understand to be God's will (Matt. 7:21) and we believe and trust that by His grace (Eph. 2:8-9) He will welcome us to the heavenly home.

39.

DO HARPS IN HEAVEN JUSTIFY ORGANS IN WORSHIP?

Dear Bro. John: My preacher says that since the saints will play harps in heaven, it is not wrong to use instruments with singing in church worship. How do I respond to this? Sammy

Dear Sammy: The passage your preacher is referring to is Revelation 5:8 which says, "the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song..." While on the surface, the casual reader might conclude that the saints in heaven will be playing on harps, a careful analysis reveals a different conclusion. In this passage:

- * The twenty-four elders, not every saved soul are described as have harps.
- * Each of the twenty-four elders is described as having two items, a golden bowl and a harp.
- * The entire book of Revelation is filled with figures of speech and symbolic language. Hence we must ask what do these two items symbolize?
- * The Hebrews had a common literary device called "parallelism" by which they emphasized and illustrated their thoughts. Parallelism is the placing of two or more thoughts side by side like the tracks of a train are displayed. The second and following lines of the parallel explain, enlarge upon or emphasize the item of the first line. In this passage we see a classic demonstration of parallelism:

The elders had "golden bowls full of incense"

"Which are the prayers of the saints."

Each also had "a harp"

"And they sing a new song"

Thus we conclude that the bowls of incense symbolize the prayers that saints will offer in heaven. And the harps symbolize the songs sung in praise of Christ who purchased with his blood men of every tribe....(Rev. 5:9)

Those who look to this verse to justify having an organ or piano have the following problems:

- * It is generally thought that the twenty-four elders represent the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel and the Apostles of Christ.
- * All the elders in this passage had harps, but the churches using instruments have only one person playing their organ or piano, or a few playing in the band, while others watch and listen or sing. Per their reasoning each person should have his instrument.
- * If this justifies having instruments of music it would also justify us burning incense in worship.
- * Also each participant would need his bowl of incense.
- * It would be virtually impossible to play a harp and hold a bowl of incense at the same time. This illustrates the symbolic nature of this passage.
- * They assume that material harps such as men manufacture on earth will be in heaven where old things are passed away and all things are become new.
- * To conclude that because something is done in heaven therefore we have the right to do it on earth in the church is an unwarranted assumption. God certainly has not said so.

We also find mention of harps in two addition passages in Revelation. Both are explained as the above. In Revelation 14:1-3, a highly symbolic passage, John saw the one hundred forty four thousand. "And I heard a voice from heaven; *as* the voice of many waters, *as* the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was *as* the voice of harper harping with their harps: and they sing....a new song..." Notice John's use of the three similes. The sound was *as or like* the roar of waters (like the surf or a waterfall), like the crashing of thunder and like the sweet sound of harps. What he heard was the saved singing a new song praising Christ and it sounded like roaring water, crashing thunder and harp music.

In chapter 15:2-3 he sees the victorious saints by the sea of glass having harps of God. "And they sing the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb." Again we have the parallel of harps standing symbolically for singing. The argument of your preacher fails the test of sound exegesis.

IS THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP REALLY THAT SINFUL?

Mr. Waddey: Recently I discovered your website and am quite glad I did. Do you believe it is a SIN to use instrumental music in worship? Newton F.

Dear Newton: In answer to your inquiry about the use of instrumental music in the worship of God , yes, I view it as sinful. My reasons for so thinking are as follow:

- * We are commanded to observe all things that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20). But he did not command us to use musical instruments in our worship to God. Rather he told us to sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19).
- * We are warned against “going onward and abiding not” in the teaching of Christ (II John 9). Those failing to do so have not the blessing of the Father or the Son. But to use instruments of music in our worship is to go beyond the teaching that Christ gave us.
- * We are taught neither to add to nor to take from the words God has given us (Rev. 22:18-19). But to use instrumental music in our worship is to add to what God has told us.
- * Numerous Old Testament examples show us that when God commands his people to do something, he expects them to obey him just as he instructed. Note the cases of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-4) and Uzzah and Ahio (I Chron. 13:6-10; 15:11-15).
- * Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). When God instructed us to sing our praises unto Him that is his will and our responsibility. To do something different is to sin.
- * Historically we know for a fact that early Christians did not worship God with musical instruments. It was 1250 years before such were commonly used.... and that in the corrupted medieval church. Hence we worship God as we do, singing and making melody in our hearts unto Him.

41.

WHY WE DON'T HAVE INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN OUR CHURCHES

Dear Bro. Waddey: In writing against the use of instrumental music in worship you cite the case of Jeroboam and his golden calves. I am confused. They worshiped the golden calves. We don't worship our piano. Carrie

Dear Carrie: I am aware that no one literally bows down before and worships an instrument of music or a woman preacher/teacher. The point of my analogy is that Jeroboam ignored, defied and changed what God had plainly said about how to worship Him. He proceeded to create and add to Jehovah's worship additions, substitutions and things he considered helpful. Some among us today are behaving in the same manner by ignoring what God says about women

in positions of leadership and their public teaching “over” men (I Tim. 2:11-12; I Cor. 14:33-34) and about the way we should worship God in our praise (Eph. 5:19). The latter do so by utilizing instruments of music in addition to the voices and hearts of God's children. In such an analogy a spiritual lesson is derived from an actual experience in the material realm.

I do find it interesting that one definition of an idol is anything that comes between a man and his God. It is to prefer our own wishes and desires over God's Will in our lives. Those who place women in public leadership roles in our assemblies and who are determined to have their instruments clearly prefer them in the face of God's expressed will. In this sense these things as like idols.

42.

DO ELDERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO INTRODUCE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC INTO THE WORSHIP?

Bro. Waddey: If you are a member of a church and the elders decided to add instrumental music to the worship service, Is it sowing discord if you mail out letters to the members saying that instrumental music is wrong in worship? In other words, when is opposition to the elders not a sin? Tom.

Dear Bro. Tom: Thank you for your question. Yes, we Christians are to obey them that have the rule over us (Heb. 13:17). If however our elders should ask us to do that which is contrary to God's word, “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Children are obliged to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1), but not if their parents ask them to do something contrary to God's will. No man or group of men has the right to change the will of Christ on any subject. Neither do they have the right to teach others to follow them in so doing. For example if your elders should say that you should no longer insist that sinners be immersed for baptism, that they should be accepted on sprinkling, what would you do? Since the Bible is abundantly clear in teaching that baptism involves going down into the water and being buried with Christ (Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:3-4) the faithful disciple will not follow a preacher or an elder into any other kind of baptism. If the blind lead the blind, they both shall fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14).

If I were a member of a church whose preachers and/or elders presumed to go against the teaching of God's word in this or any other significant matter, I would have a higher duty to God to protest against their misguided efforts. Let's say your elders wanted to employ a practicing homosexual for their youth minister. Would you object? Would you be obligated to hold your peace because they are your elders? If you sought to warn the other members of the congregation and rally them to oppose this decision would you be guilty of sowing discord? No, you would not. The elders who embarked on such a wicked program would be the guilty party who were disrupting the life of the congregation.

ISN'T A CAPPELLA SINGING YOUR TRADITION?

Dear Bro. Waddey: The Church of Christ holds dear the traditions of the past. The scriptures say to make melody in your heart which means to give God praise that is sincere and from your innermost being. He doesn't care if you have an instrument playing along. David used instruments all the time. If God has given you the talent to play an instrument are you supposed to be ashamed of HIS gift? I don't think so. God says to believe in Him, to put on Christ in baptism after making the true confession. He does not say to believe as the Church of Christ says to.

I do not believe God is worried about instruments in our worship. That is not an issue of our salvation. God wants us to spread the Gospel to those who have not heard his Good News. We are to sow the seed and God will deliver the harvest. We are not the ones to judge. His burden is light, not a prison sentence. I think the church has been focused on tradition for many years. I also think that God will decide who goes to heaven and they won't all be Church of Christ. I've never considered myself a liberal, but it worries me that members of the church are so upset over issues that are not issues of salvation. It worries me that members of the Church of Christ set themselves up above others who proclaim to be Christians. It is God who knows our hearts . I believe God wants us to memorialize Christ's death with the Communion, He wants us to live under the new Law. But He wants us to understand the Old not just use it as good old stories. Don't let tradition rule your way of thinking. Don't let legalism weigh you down as a Christian. It is wrong to try to stir up trouble in the Church over issues that are not important toward salvation. Byron

Dear Byron: May I inquire if you are a member of the Church of Christ? From the content and tone of your letter I surmise that you might be of some other religious persuasion. By the way, David offered animal sacrifices, danced before the Lord, practiced circumcision among other things. Of course he lived under the Law of Moses, not the Law of Christ.

You say "I do not believe God is worried about instruments in our worship." May I ask who told you this, or in which verse of scripture did you find it? Our denominational friends say, " I do not believe God is worried about baptism in salvation." Do you concur with their unfounded assertion? Should I say, "I do not believe God is worried about weekly communion," would you conclude I am right in my statement? Some find it is easier to brush aside our appeal to scripture regarding the use of instruments with our praise, rather than show from scripture that God has approved the use of them in worship. This approach is common fare in the denominational world. Our appeal to scripture has set the Church of Christ apart from those man-made churches.

You say, "We are to sow the seed and God will deliver the harvest. We are not the ones to judge." When the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus is a created being, would your words apply? When the Baptists say, baptism is not necessary to salvation, would they apply? When Mormon's teach that all men are destined to become gods are we not to judge them? Do you not believe that we are to "judge righteous judgment?" (John 7:24).

You say that you have never considered yourself a liberal. Do you understand that a liberal is a man who take liberties with God's teaching. He ignores or sets aside aspects of God's message that he finds distasteful. Remember that to be obedient to Christ in all things does not constitute one a legalist. Were the Apostles legalists? Yet they obeyed Christ without question or dispute (Heb. 5:9).

By the way, would you point out for me two or three of those "traditions from the past of the Church of Christ" that you

mention.

I urge you to think about the seriousness of your answer. Remember Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father.... "

44.

STEPS THAT LEAD TO THE INTRODUCTION OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Bro John: The final step of using instrumental music in worship is like the old saying, "The straw that broke the camel's back." We need to recognize all the other little "straws as they are piled on the back. The "projection screen" is the first one. Contemporary music is a whole handful of straws. On and on. Because they are part of the plan to get ut to the final straw, they should be condemned as equal to the final straw. To me it is clear they are one and the same. You say, "Well, the screen is an aid and is not unscritpural." I understand that, but that is aiding their plan to ultimately capture a congregation. They are all tied together and all are wrong. It is time to recognize that and widen the war. Mark

Dear Bro. Mark: In many cases it is small steps can lead to disaster. . However we cannot condemn as sin what has not yet resulted in sin. For example, It is illegal to drive beyond the speed limit. Joe gets in his car. That is the first step. He turns the ignition, that is the second. He backs out of his drive into the street, the third step. He drives down the road to the highway, That is number four. He enters the freeway, number five. He begins to accelerate from 30 to 65 or whatever the speed limit might be, number six. Knowing Joe, we can be sure he is going to break the speed limit when he gets the opportunity. We report him to the cops. They might observe him through steps one to six, but they will do nothing because he has not yet broken the law. But when he put his foot down on the accelerator and zooms past the 65 mph speed limit, he has finally broken the law and can be ticketed and fined for so doing. It is true that some change agents begin a long program of small changes that will eventuate in the introduction of instruments, women preachers, etc. But until they reach the point of actual violation of God's law we cannot "arrest" them. As John put it, "Sin is transgression of God's law" (I John 3:4).

45.

WHY DID THE EARLY CHRISTIANS SING WITHOUT INSTRUMENTS?

Dear Mr. Waddey: Is it possible instruments were not used in early worship because of their availability or portability? Since God has not condemned the use of instruments why should we? Jeff

Dear Jeff: Large instruments such as pianos and organs were invented hundreds of years after the church had her beginning in 33 A.D. But if they had been authorized to use instruments it would have been both easy and convenient

for the early Christians to do so. Small, harps, lyres and other stringed instruments were available as is seen in temple paintings and ancient sculptures. Jewish Christians that had ever visited the temple in Jerusalem had seen the Levites with their many instruments and worshiped with them. Pagans had seen instruments in their temples. For some reason when they became Christians they did not bring instruments into their worship. The Hebrews had authorization from God to do use them in their temple worship (II Chron. 29:25). The New Testament of Christ provides no such authorization.

If you take the position that you can do anything God has not specifically forbidden (the common Protestant belief and practice) then you have opened the door to a hundred abuses. God does not forbid us to burn incense, to count beads, to dance in worship, to use hallucinogenics, etc. He does not forbid us to use milk and cookies for communion. On what basis would you object to such practices? The obedient soul seeks to know God's will and obey it. He does not look for exceptions and ways to get around the command God has given. For this reason we sing in our worship and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19).

46.

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC

Dear Mr. Wadley: I enjoy reading your posts on the web site. You present your arguments with skill and discernment, contrary to many, who only seek to criticize and scoff.

Is there any historical evidence indicating that first-century Christians employed only a cappella singing in their worship? Over the years, I've heard various stories holding that early Christians used this form of music simply to maintain a separate identity from pagan religions, which used musical instruments. Are there definitive references which substantiate that? We in the Church of Christ quote Ephesians 5:19 as a basis for a cappella singing, but neither that passage nor any other passage in the New Testament that I know of specifically forbids musical instruments as such. We only make that inference, an inference that is man's interpretation. Anyone can make "melody in their hearts," with or without instrumental accompaniment. Therefore, I was wondering if you knew of any historical accounts which show that early Christians used a cappella singing. Dr. D. W. P.

Dear Dr.: Thank you for writing. Historically we know that the early Christians sang their praises without the use of instruments. Historically we know that such was the universal practice until about 667 A.D. By that time the religion of Christ had been thoroughly corrupted and the beginnings of Roman Catholicism had emerged. The bishop of Rome sought to introduce musical instruments into the worship but the opposition was too strong and the matter subsided until about 1250 A.D. By then, few people had any degree of knowledge of Scripture and the matter was accepted.

To verify this historical background you should consult McClintock and Strong's **Encyclopedia of Biblical and Theological Literature**. Also you would profit from the books of Dr. Everett Ferguson on **A Cappella Music in the Church** and Dr. James D. Bales on **Instrumental Music**. Both authors do a fine job of tracing the development of the practice.

Your statement about our conclusions regarding Eph. 5:19 are not sound. It is incorrect to assume that God must specifically forbid a matter before it is forbidden. Only in the realm of religion would you take such a position. For this discussion, I am assuming you are a medical doctor. When you write a prescription for a particular drug, the pharmacist is not at liberty to assume that since you did not specifically forbid some other drug he is therefore at liberty to substitute it. When you instruct your bookkeeper to pay a specific bill, say your insurance provider, the fact that you did not forbid him to write checks for other things as well is not authorization for him to do so.

When Christ gave us the Lord's Supper memorial, he gave us specific items for the meal. He did not specifically say don't use other items. Yet to commune with milk and cookies, or with meat and tea would certainly be out of order. Christ has told us to sing praise to God. When we do that we are complying with his will. When we add instrumental music to the singing, we do so without his permission. That conclusion is not a human opinion. It reflects respect for what the Master has said.

47.

WHY WE REJECT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Bro. Waddey: "If Jesus did not condemn the use of instruments in worship, how can we?" Mitchell.

Dear Mitchell: The conclusion we reach will depend upon the concept we hold about how God authorizes a thing.

Martin Luther, with others following, argued, "I can do anything the Bible does not condemn. Huldreich Zwingli and others correctly argued, "we can only do what God has authorized in his word. Churches of Christ have followed the same Biblical approach as did Zwingli. Those who became the Christian Churches and accepted such items as instrumental music in worship, followed Luther's concept. Zwingli was right since the Bible lays down that proposition. Note the following:

Jesus instructed us to teach disciples to "observe all things whatsoever (he) commanded" the Apostles to do (Matt. 28:20). Anything he taught them, personally while here or through his emissary the Holy Spirit, I am authorized to teach. That which he did not command, I cannot teach with his approval. I can read where we are instructed (thus authorized) to sing unto God, but I cannot read a line about the use of instruments of music in worship. (See Eph. 5:19 and Heb. 2:11-12).

If I abide in the teaching of Christ, I enjoy the blessings of the Father and his Son. If I go beyond that doctrine in my teaching and practice I have not God (II John 9). I can sing praises in worship within the boundaries of Christ's teaching, but to add instrumental accompaniment, I must go outside the teaching of Jesus for my authority. Notice how some go to the Old Testament, some to tradition, some to human wisdom. But no one can find its authorization in the New Testament of Jesus.

Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 4:6 "not to go beyond the things that are written" in our religious practices. If I abide by his instruction, I can only sing in worship, for that is all that is written. We freely grant that the New Testament nowhere forbids by name the use of instruments, but it does not approve or authorize the practice by the principles stated above.

To argue for instrumental accompaniment on the grounds that it is not specifically forbidden, proves too much. Scripture no where forbids me to use soft drink for the communion or catsup on the holy bread. Yet all would immediately take exception if I did so. Why? Because Scripture plainly tells us what to use; bread and fruit of the vine (Matt. 26:26-29). If I should not go beyond what is written in the communion worship, on what grounds should I go beyond what is written in the song worship?

Remember, Christ did not condemn instrumental music, burning incense, counting beads, holy water, infant baptism, sprinkling for baptism, clerical uniforms and a hundred other items of humanly originated religious practices. If that justifies us in the use of musical instruments, then it must of necessity approve the other items as well. Few would follow this logic to its end.

As to the matter of church buildings and song books, we must remember that God authorizes things in two ways: (1) Specifically, and (2) Generically. When He instructed Noah to build an ark we see both of these illustrated. The ark, its dimensions and materials were specified. Noah was not free to change the number of decks, windows and doors, not to use any other material than gopher wood (Gen. 6:14-16). The kind of tools, the number of helpers and the schedule of

work were not stated. God left this to Noah's judgment. He was authorized to use whatever tools, helpers and schedule he needed to fulfill the general command to build the ark. In like manner, the charge to assemble and worship authorizes Christians to secure a suitable place so as to comply with the command. The command to sing authorizes such incidentals as songbooks, song leaders and pitch pipes.

God's command to build an ark could not be stretched to cover building a permanent temple. It took another command to do that. The authorization to sing cannot be construed to cover a different kind of music such as the instrumental variety.

Of course, since we are under the New Covenant of Christ, the fact that the Hebrews were authorized to use instruments in their temple worship, is of no consequence to us. Their use of instruments is in the same category as their use of animal sacrifices, incense and the Levitical priesthood. All were authorized by a former law not currently binding upon us.

Faithful Christians are committed to doing what Christ authorized, in the way he prescribed and for the reason he gave. That is the meaning of restoring New Testament Christianity.

48.

CAN WE SING WITH INSTRUMENTS IN HOME WORSHIP?

Dear Bro. John: Can we use a guitar when singing hymns at home? Audra

Dear Audra: It is my judgement and conviction that when we are worshiping, we should not use musical instruments with our singing of praises. I base this on the fact that all authority in Christianity belongs to Christ (Matt. 28:18) and that he expressly tells us to teach disciples to **observe all things that he commanded**. A careful reading of the New Testament of Christ reveals that we are told to sing and make melody with our hearts (Eph. 5:19), but we are nowhere told to play instruments in worship. We are straitly warned not to go beyond Christ's teaching (II John 9) and not to add to or take from his message (Rev. 22:18-19). I see no grounds for making a distinction between worship at home or in a congregational assembly.

That said, there is another aspect of this to be considered. Not all singing of hymns is worship. Congregations frequently have sessions of singing practice. Such is not worship. While driving in my car I might listen to a recording of Christian songs with instrumental accompaniment. I might sing along, but such is not necessarily worship. Worship must include the deliberate act of the will to offer praise and devotion to God. We can't worship by accident. There are times when it seems to me that one might sing a gospel song with accompaniment...for entertainment, but not for worship. For example you might be at a Gospel Music Festival, or Country Music show and sing along with the entertainers. As they sing a hymn. Their performance is not worship as one would offer to God in church or private worship. I realize that some would not agree with this conclusion, but you asked and I share with you my thoughts.

SHOULD WE USE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

Dear Bro. Waddey I would like to get your view on something I haven't seen any comments on: In regards to weddings and funerals held in the church building, is it okey to use recorded music with instruments. Why or why not? CH

Dear CH: Our commitment to worship and serve God according to the New Testament of Christ, and thus restore Christianity to its original purity, leads us to forgo the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church. This is because it was not practiced by the earliest Christians nor do we find any New Testament scripture that authorizes the practice.

Weddings and funerals are not worship services of the Lord's church. Nor is the building in which the church meets the church of which Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22). The saved people that meet to worship are Christ's church (I Cor. 12:27). A building is an expediency created by men to house the assemblies of the saints. Hence a thing that might not be allowed in the worship of the church, might not necessarily be wrong in a building used by the church for her worship.

A wedding is a social event and thus, in my estimation, there is no wrong done if instrumental music is used in a wedding, regardless of the day of the week. They are family/social events in which Christians engage. They are certainly not wrong and there should be not objection to them being conducted in the meeting house of the church.

While God has specified the kind of music he wants us to offer him in our worship, he has not done so for weddings and funerals. While we are under divine instructions to "sing and make melody in our hearts" for worship (Eph. 5:19), no such restriction is placed on social events such as wedding and funerals.

That said, there is yet another consideration in deciding this issue. While a thing may be lawful, it may not be expedient (I Cor. 6:12). Because we have been troubled in the past by brethren who were determined to introduce instruments of music into the worship of the church, many elders have determined not to allow any mechanical instruments of music into their buildings. Past promoters of instrumental music often slipped the instrument into the worship by first getting it into the building for social purposes. We have a resurgence of that element again today

For some who are immature Christians, it is hard to distinguish between allowing an instrument for a wedding or funeral and to do so for a worship service. Wise elders have every right to say no to those desiring to do so if it would create a problem for weak members.

If allowing the use of instruments for such activities in the church's meeting house would cause confusion, it should be not be used for the sake of unity in the family (I Cor. 8:8-13; Rom. 15:1-3).

Another important point to remember is that God created his congregations to be self-governing. Hence so long as they do not violate some clearly stated biblical principle, a congregation might choose to handle such matters differently than you or I might would. We should respect their freedom under Christ to make such decisions.

While in my mind I can see a clear difference between worship assemblies and such events as weddings and funerals, and would not be confused or offended should elders allow an instrument to be used in a wedding or funeral, I fully respect those who feel such should not be done.

IS IT WRONG TO LISTEN TO "CHRISTIAN ROCK MUSIC?"

Hello: I have a question about Christian Rock music, that is heard on the radio or at a concert. It is a source of inspiration for many listeners. I feel spiritually lifted when listening to such music. However, I hear others say that Christian rock is not right and may be downright wrong. I agree that instrumental music in church is not acceptable, but is Christian rock really related to the command to sing in church? And is Christian rock forbidden by the Bible's command to "do all in the name of the Lord?" Dianne

Dear Dianne: Thanks for your question. It seems to me that we must make a distinction between Christian music offered as worship to God and that which is presented as entertainment. Since you agree that we should not offer instrumental music to God in our worship I will concentrate on the other music.

Across the ages many Christians have enjoyed Christmas carols with religious themes that are sung during the holiday season. Many have enjoyed hearing classical presentations of great pieces like Handel's Messiah. Some enjoy "Southern Gospel Music" or Negro Spirituals sung by professional groups. Others have cherished their tapes of great performers like Elvis Presley, Lawrence Welk's band or others singing Christian hymns. Now a younger generation enjoys hearing "contemporary Christian music" which includes the Christian rock style of music you mention. In my estimation all of these are in the same category. While it is acceptable to listen to and enjoy it as entertainment, we must not try to introduce it into the worship of the church. While I thrill at the presentation of the Handel's Messiah, Gospel Rock has the opposite effect on me. Such is a difference in personal taste and preference. I must grant you the freedom to enjoy your preference in music and you must do the same for me. Neither should try to forbid the other or press his preference on the other. Romans chapters 14 & 15 teach us that in matters of opinion we must respect each other's freedom and remember not to judge one another, since to our own Lord we stand or fall (14:4). The person who cites Col. 3:17 "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" must be willing to apply that rule to his own choice of music. If it forbids your choice of entertainment music, it likely would condemn his choice as well.

HOW SHOULD WE VIEW THOSE WHO LOVE CHRISTIAN ROCK MUSIC?

Hello John: I believe music for New Testament Christians is to be vocal only. (I've heard the Church of Christ believes this also). My belief is, either be in the world and listen to worldly styles of music or come out of the world and obey what the Word says to do in regards to worship (singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs).

I've been around some legalistic Christians and I don't want to be like them. But what is to be our attitude toward those who love Christian rock and other worldly styles of music, and don't see anything wrong with it?

I hope you can help me with this. Nancy.

Dear Nancy: Be assured that your question is not silly. The contemporary Christian music movement has millions of fans. The Christian rock genera is a subset of this movement.

It is true that we of the Church of Christ do not use instrumental music in our worship to God. Our reasons for this conviction are based on Scripture. We reason that since the New Testament of Christ teaches us to sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph. 5:19), but says nothing about us worshiping with instruments of music, we should be satisfied

to sing our praises to God. To add instrumental accompaniment to our worship we would view as adding to God's word (Rev. 22:18-19). Historically we know that the Christians in the apostolic age did not use instruments in their worship. In fact it was more than 650 years before the first instrument was introduced into any church. It created such a stir that another 500 years elapsed before the use of instruments was accepted. By that time (c.a. 1250 A. D.), the churches had abandoned the biblical pattern in almost every aspect of their faith and worship.

As to how we should treat those who love Christian rock music:

* First, we should love them and wish them well (Matt. 22:39).

* Second, we should attempt to teach them that God has in the New Testament of Christ provided us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:2-3) hence it is there that we must search to find how we should worship Him, not in the popular fads of the day.

* Third: we should remind ourselves of the distinction between what we offer to God in worship and what we might enjoy in our private lives. Most human beings like some sort of music. Not all music is religious in nature. Secular music can be wholesome, bad or neutral. We should make a distinction in religious songs offered in worship to God and the same songs sung in non-worship settings. For example, I often sing hymns when I shower, or when I am driving down the road or working. Such is not worship. Some listen to "Christian music on their radio" or view a concert of such on their television. In such a setting, it is entertainment rather than worship. If we speak of Christian worship, I would insist that we must worship as God directs, hence with vocal singing. As to what a fellow-Christian or friend might choose to listen to for his entertainment, I must grant him the same liberty that I would want for myself (Matt. 7:12). I don't care for contemporary Christian music. I dislike any form of rock or hip-hop music. My preference is traditional country music, popular music and lite-classical. So long as a person's preferences do not lead him to or involve him in sin, we must respect his right to pursue them.

52.

RAP MUSIC AND YOUTH DEVOTIONALS

Dear Bro. John: I have discovered that our youth minister is using so-called Christian rap music in our youth devotionals. This was shocking to me. When we discussed it with our preacher and youth minister, I was further shocked to hear them defend it as necessary to keep our young from being alienated. Can you provide me any information that might help them see their mistake in this matter? Jeffery

Dear Bro. Jeffery: You had every right to be provoked that the youth minister was using rap music in his youth meetings. Such worldly music that appeals only to the carnal senses has no place in the worship of God, including devotional meetings of young people.

* Note first that youth meetings are intended to be spiritually uplifting for young people. When they sing, pray and study it either is or is not worship to God. Ask the youth minister which of the two it is? If it is worship, it should be according to the principles set forth in Christ's testament. If it is not, it should not be conducted in the youth meetings which the elders provide for the edification of their young members.

* Rap music (even by groups claiming to be "christian") does not teach or admonish the hearers. In listening to it one is not "letting the word of Christ dwell in him richly" (Col. 3:17). It certainly cannot be classified as a psalm, hymn or spiritual song! Such music is not sung with grace in the heart of the singer. It does not speak to the hearers if the words cannot be distinguished by those who hear it. With rap music one cannot make melody in his heart (Eph. 5:19). There is no thanksgiving to God in such mindless pounding.

* Paul's point in I Corinthians 14 is that in worshiping and praising God, He expects us to rise above the mindless clatter of heathen worshipers. Thus Paul says, "unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" (I Cor. 14:9)... "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (I Cor. 14:19). Would not the same be true of our praise worship?

* By entertaining his charges with this kind of music, your youth minister is failing to do the job for which he is

employed. He is to teach the youngsters the will and way of God. He is to lift them up to a higher spiritual plain. He is to help them purify their hearts (James 4:8). He is to lead them in things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, things virtuous and praise worthy (Phil. 4:8). Rap music, even of the "christian" variety, fails to do this.

* His excuse about alienating the young people is *his excuse*, not God's will. The reason God placed the leadership of his church in the hands of "elders" i.e., older, wiser men, is that young people and youth leaders are often immature and ignorant of God's will and way. They need supervision and guidance. They should not be allowed to set policy for their congregational program. The idea that we must give disciples whatever worldly entertainment they want or they will get mad and turn away, is an indictment of them and their lack of loyalty to Christ.

* If they can justify rap music in their devotionals you could justify boggie woogie music, dixie land jazz, hip-hop or a marching band. You could even bring in African tribal music with drums, and clackers, perhaps some tap-dancing, etc. If not why?

* From what you say, I suspect that your preacher and youth minister would not be persuaded by any amount of reasoning from scripture. They want it, and that settles it for them.

I commend you for your efforts and pray that your fellow-elders will listen and support your entreaties. You might remind them that we have not benefitted our young people spiritually if we just provide them worldly entertainment. They could have that and not even attend your youth activities.

53.

DO WE PUT TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON SINGING IN WORSHIP?

Dear Bro. Wadley: Reading my New Testament I only find a few verses that speak of singing. Yet in the church it is frequently mentioned and always a large part of our worship. Is this something we should be concerned about? Randy

Dear Randy: It is true that there are only a few New Testament verses speak of our worship in song. On the other hand the Book of Psalms was the hymnal of ancient Israel and the early church. Along the way, Christians, with the gifts of poetic expression and music, created the hymns they sang. Even today, many of our hymns are based on particular psalms and on verses or events of Scripture history. The study of these is refreshing to those who long to worship in Spirit and in truth. Each congregation would do well to have a series of lessons on the great hymns of faith.

As to the scarcity of references to singing, God needs to say a thing only once to make it true and obligatory. A favorite verse of mine is Hebrews 13:15: "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." Our songs and prayers are our Christian equivalent of the various animal, drink and grain offerings of the Hebrews.

In the Book of Revelation, on two occasions, John describes the worship of the redeemed in heaven. In chapter 5:8 he writes "...and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sing a new song...." These verses are often misunderstood. People read them and say, "If we will have harps in heaven why can't we have them now?" The answer is simple if we understand how the Hebrew people expressed themselves. Their most common literary device is described as "parallelisms." By this we mean, to emphasize a point, they repeated it two or more times. Just as the two rails of the train track lay parallel to each other, so do their lines.

In parallelism, one line explains the other. Note the following:

Each one had a harp
And they sing a new song

Each had golden bowls full of incense
Which are the prayers of the saints.

We do not expect to be burning incense in heaven, but we will be praying to our God. Nor should we expect to be playing harps in heaven, but we will be singing His praises.

To my ears some of the most beautiful music on earth is that of Christians lifting up their voices in praise of Jehovah. To reach its best potential, there must be songs well chosen, a capable song leader and enthusiastic participation of the congregation. I might add good training in acappella singing and sight reading are valuable aids. Churches would do well to schedule a singing school every other year. That will greatly improved their singing.

Unfortunately, not all are gifted with a "musical ear" nor a voice suited for quality singing. Few have had musical training. We are sure God accepts their efforts as well as those who are the finest singers. We look forward to the day when in heaven we will sing with the angels and the redeemed of all the ages "Worthy are thou..."

54.

DOES NOT AMOS CONDEMN DAVID'S USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP?

Dear Bro. Waddey: Amos 6:1-5 says, "Woe to them...that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David..." Does this not make it clear that David sinned by bringing instruments into the worship of God? Jayce

Dear Jayce: You have misinterpreted the words of Amos. Your mistake is your failure to consider the context in which these words appear. Verse 1 tells us is the subject of his rebuke; "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and in the mountain of Samaria..."

In verses 3-6 he lists the sins of which the people were guilty and for which they would be punished:

- "That lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches;
- "And eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;
- "That sing idle songs to the sound of the viol: that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David;
- "That drink wine in bowls
- "And anoint themselves with the chief oils,
- "But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

Looking at the whole of the text we see their sin was their lavish and luxurious lifestyle and their corresponding lack of concern about the moral and spiritual welfare of the nation of Israel. For their selfish indulgence and indifference they would be swept away into captivity (6:7).

The context is not speaking of the corruption of temple worship, it is describing the life style of the corrupt, wealthy leaders of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As they indulged themselves in their banquets they feasted on the best food, sipped their wine and for entertainment sang idle songs and played and listened to music played on instruments such as David made. They cared nothing for the suffering of the poor people about them.

If from this passage we conclude that it was sinful for David to invent musical instruments, then we must also conclude that it is sinful to sing idle songs accompanied by instruments in other settings than worship; to lay upon a bed and recline upon a couch; that it is sinful to rub oils and lotions into your skin. It is easy to see that would not be a correct use of the passage. There is an old saying, "That which proves too much proves nothing."

Although many good brethren in days past have used these words from Amos when opposing the use of instrumental music in worship, we cannot continue to do so. David's authorization for introducing instrumental music into the sacred worship came from God via Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet (II Chron. 29:25).

Remember that our objection to the use of instrumental music in Christian worship is due to the fact that it is not authorized by Christ or his Apostles in our New Testament.

55.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP (A Review)

Dr. John Girardeau taught at Columbia Theologian Seminary for many years in the last half of the 19th century. He was a Presbyterian of the Old School. He strongly believed that congregations of his faith had no Bible authority to use instrumental music in their worship. He based his convictions on Scripture, church history and the historic teaching and practice of his denomination. The book is a classic defense of acappella praise in worship and a solid refutation of those who seek to defend their practice of using instruments of music in worship.

Since my earliest days in Bible College I have known of Girardeau's book. I have seen it quoted in numerous books and articles, but I could not find a copy for my own reading. Recently the brethren associated with the Gospel Hour radio ministry took it upon themselves to reprint this valuable book. Bro. Winford Claiborne has provided a helpful introduction to it.

Reading this book one will learn that most of the Calvinistic Reformed and Presbyterian churches refused to use instrumental music for the first 300 years of their existence. When the push was made to do so, the arguments used were virtually identical to those used by our digressive brethren (Christians Churches/Disciples of Christ) in the closing years of the 19th century. Those same arguments are now being used by our change agents to justify their acceptance of this denominational practice. The Scriptural arguments used by Girardeau are very familiar to those of our ranks who have steadfastly opposed the instrument. His primary argument is as follows: "A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, is forbidden." This truth operates positively to the inclusion of everything in the doctrine, government and worship of the church which is commanded, explicitly or implicitly, in the Scriptures, and negatively to the exclusion of everything which is not so commanded" (p. 15). He also does a fine job showing that Christians must look to the New Covenant of Christ for their direction and authority in all activities relating to the church. His record of the historical events in the early years of the Reformed church is very enlightening for those interested in church history.

Unfortunately Dr. Girardeau expresses his thoughts in the heavy and obscure language of the seminary. Thus the reader will have to struggle through many dry and dull pages in order to find the valuable nuggets of truth contained in the book. Bro. Claiborne and his coworkers have done us a useful service in reproducing this classic volume. Preachers especially will find it a valuable tool as they arm themselves to fight again the battle over instrumental music in the worship of the church. Order your copy of the book from The International Gospel Hour, P. O. Box 118, Fayetteville, TN 37334. Cost: \$10 plus postage.

A REFRESHER COURSE IN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

A century has past and the wheel of error has turned full-circle. The question of instrumental music in worship which our predecessors took as settled issue, has now been revived in our ranks. This is not a dispute with representatives of the Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches or some denominational body. These advocates are our own brethren. They have turned their backs on the worship they embraced and practiced when they first came to Christ and his church preferring the ways of men to that.

They have no new arguments to offer. Most of them simply reason it doesn't matter to God how we offer our praise to Him. This old error is like the virus that struck the little child with chicken pox and then 60 years later stuck again as shingles. Never forget that Truth makes us free from error and sin (John 8:32). Prepare yourself, teach your brethren, God's appointed way of worship. Confront and defeat all who try to corrupt the worship of the church. The following books will amply supply the needed ammunition to defeat the advocates of instrumental music.

Analytical Studies on the Subject:

- * Instrumental Music in Worship, M. C. Kurfees (The Gospel Advocate Co.).
- * Instrumental Music by James D. Bales (Order from Eddie Cloyer)
- * Old Light on New Worship by John Price (Simpson Pub. Co.).
- * Instrumental Music in the Public Worship, John Girardeau (The International Gospel Hour).

Debates on Instrumental Music in Worship:

- * Otey-Briney Debate. W. W. Otey and J. B. Briney, (Instruments and missionary societies).
- * Stark-Warlick Debate. J. Carroll Stark & Joe S. Warlick (Instrumental music in worship).
- * Hardeman-Boswell Debate. N. B. Hardeman and Ira Boswell (Instrumental music in worship).
- * Wallace-Barber Debate. G. K. Wallace & Burton Barber (Instruments in worship).
- * Wallace-Hunt Debate. G. K. Wallace & Donald Hunt (Instruments in worship).
- * Shelly-Dunning Debate. Rubel Shelly & Dewayne Dunning (Instruments in worship).
- * Highers-Blakely Debate. Alan Highers & Given Blakely (Instruments in worship).

Of course these books vary in the capabilities and scholarship of the disputants. But in them you will find virtually every argument man has devised to justify the use in instruments of music in worship and adequate replies thereto. The valuable books can likely be found in the libraries of Christian Schools. Some will allow check outs. You might be able to find them on-line

THE END

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

1. **Worship That Pleases Jehovah** (This book consists of 101 chapters on the various aspects of Christian Worship (Price \$10.50).
2. **Sacred Principles on Which We Stand** (This book contains 52 lessons on the fundamentals of Christianity, including worship) (Price \$13.00)
3. **Faith and the Good Doctrine** (This volume contains studies on 155 Christian Doctrines, including worship) (Price \$19.00).
4. **The Church that Christ Built.** (This books contains 59 discussions on every aspect of Christ's church, including her worship) (Price \$10.50).

**** Overseas orders will require extra postage.

Order From Church of Christ Foundation, c/o John Waddey, 12630 W. Foxfire Dr. Sun City West, AZ 85375. Pleases send you check with order.

