

## ARGUMENTS FOR INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ANSWERED

### Int.

1. Aim: To show that there is no justification for the use of instrumental music in our worship to God.
2. Col. 3:16 **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."**
3. We do not use instrumental music in worship. Why? It is not because:
  - a. We don't like it
  - b. We can't afford it
  - c. We've never had it
4. There is no authority in the N.T. for the use of Instrumental Music in our worship today.
5. Col. 3:17
6. But men today like to use it and they make every effort to justify it.
7. The issue about instrumental music has long divided the religious world and has caused much discussion. There are three positions that people have taken about instrumental music in worship: **(1) Commended (2) Optional (3) Forbidden.** Number 3 is correct.
8. Many who have become Christians in recent years and Children growing up who are not acquainted with the discussions about instrumental music need to know the truth about this subject. We also tend to forget with the passing of time.
9. We are told to be ready to answer: I Pet 3:15 **"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"**

10. Here are some of the arguments put forth by the advocates of Instrumental Music and an answer to them.

[1] Talents [2] Just an Aid [3] Home [4] Not condemned [5] Draws a crowd [6] Will be in heaven [7] Beautiful [8] Used in O.T.

### Discussion

#### I. **I HAVE TALENTS TO PLAY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ?**

A. Phone call a few days ago from man who used this argument to justify instruments.

B. People have musical talent, do you mean they cannot use that talent for God?

1. Maybe this argument is based on a misunderstanding of Matthew 25:15.

a. In this parable, "talents" is a word for money.

b. Even if "talents" did have to do with one's proficiency in playing a musical instrument, it still would not justify the use of an instrument in worship.

c. **The worship of the church is not a talent show !**

2. Talent is one thing, Bible authority is another - what does the Bible say ?

a. II Tim. 2:15

b. I Cor. 4:6 **"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and [to] Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think [of men] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another."**

c. Singing is the only music authorized in the New Testament !

C. What about other people who have talents unrelated to musical abilities?

1. If the worship is to be a talent showcase for one kind of talent, then why not another?

2. Some are talented in basketball, should that be worked into a worship service?
3. Why not admire the artist's painting, as an act of worship?
4. What do we do about people who have talents in cooking, sewing, gardening, carpentry, or fishing? Can we use their talents in worship ?

D. What we do in worship is what God has commanded us to do!!!

E. Worship to God is not a Talent Show !!!

## **II. IT IS JUST AN AID**

- A. There is much confusion in discerning the difference between an "addition" and an "aid." What is the difference? How is an "addition" distinguished from an "aid"?
1. An addition occurs when a particular action has been altered, or the fundamental composition or substance of a thing has been changed.
  2. An aid alters nothing; it merely facilitates the implementation of the action or substance, without changing anything.
  3. Perhaps several examples will help us focus on this.
    - a. A mother sends her son to the market to buy a loaf of bread.
      - (1) He brings the bread home in a bag. The bag is merely an aid.
      - (2) Should he purchase a candy bar as well, he has disregarded the instruction of his mother by an addition.

- b. A man takes his automobile to the service center for an oil change.
- (1) The attendant may use a wrench and funnel to aid in his replacement of the oil. There is no problem with that.
  - (2) But we all understand that if he puts on 4 new tires he has added something that was not authorized.
- c. Jesus taught that the communion supper is to consist of bread and fruit of the vine.
- (1) A table, plates, and cups facilitate (aid) the implementation of those commands.
  - (2) But to add Pizza and Coke is to be guilty of addition.
- d. When the church commences the musical portion of its service, the saints may "sing," for such is enjoined by God (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).
- (1) Christians may employ song books, a projection screen, or a tuning fork (to determine the appropriate "pitch"). Still, though, in the final analysis, they would be singing only.
  - (2) On the other hand, if the church sings to the accompaniment of an organ, those thus participating have added something to what the Lord prescribed. There now are two types of music - vocal and instrumental. The nature of the original command has been supplemented.
- e. Additions are wrong.

- B. Some may ask about our practice of using visual aids during the sermon.
1. Specifically, it may be asked why we oppose the use of instrumental music, but allow the use of a projector to display charts and graphics during the lesson.
  2. The basic answer to this question involves distinguishing the difference between something which "aids" versus something that "adds."
  3. We can use a "visual aid" during the preaching of a sermon.
    - a. It has been repeatedly proven that people retain more of what they are taught when they both hear and see the main points of emphasis.
    - b. Therefore, a printed outline or words written on a blackboard are helpful to the learning process.
    - c. Similarly, an overhead projector/slide projector or one of the new computer driven video projectors is a significant "aid" in teaching God's Word.
    - d. As long as the end result (teaching Biblical truth) is not changed, the use of appropriate "aids" is not wrong.
- C. We have no authority for using an instrument in our worship to God. To add this is wrong. It is an addition not an aid !

### III. **IT IS USED IN THE HOME**

- A. Some argue that since we can use instruments at home then it is all right to use them in our worship. It is not a question of what is done in the home.
1. The home is a separate institution from the church.
  2. Because of the nature of the home, there are many things it may do that the church has no business doing.

- a. A home may engage in recreational activities, may go into business, may have a cookout, and do dozens of things which are not related to the worship of the church.
- b. In 1 Timothy 5:16 Paul makes a clear distinction between the individual (home) and the church. **"If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."**
- B. Just because something is done in the home does not make it suitable for worship of God in an assembly. 1 Corinthians 11:33-34 (meals) **"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."**
- C. Scriptural Objection 2 John 9 **"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."**

#### **IV. IT IS NOT CONDEMNED** "God Didn't Say Not To"

- A. When God specifies something, He does not have to specifically exclude everything else
1. Gopher wood for the ark (Gen. 6:14)
  2. A lamb without blemish (Ex. 12:3-6)
  3. A red heifer (Num. 19:1-4)
  4. A brazen serpent (Num. 21:8)

- B. God did say to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13)
1. And God did say not to add to or take from His word (Deut. 4:2; 5:32; 2 Jn. 9-11)
  2. Can we use buttermilk and cornbread for the Lord's Supper since God didn't say not to?
  3. The question that we must answer is not "Where did God exclude playing?" but rather "Where did God include playing?"

#### **V. IT IS POPULAR AND DRAWS A CROWD**

- A. There are some defending instrumental music because they insist it is the popular thing to do and helps to have a big crowd!!!
1. Instrumental music is an attempt to be like the world, to try to win the world in a way that pleases them.
  2. This makes the church more like the world and the world less like the church.
  3. Many denominational worship services now resemble worldly concerts.<sup>1</sup>
  4. If Acappella music was effective in the first century it can be effective in the modern world today.
- B. There are many things we could do to get a crowd!!!! If that was all we wanted....
1. Giving money to everyone who attends !
  2. Giving a free car to someone sitting in a lucky seat !
  3. Should we use this as a technique to draw people to worship?
- C. Jesus condemns those who sought him for the wrong reasons. John 6:26 **Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."**

D. Our purpose in worship is to please God, not get a crowd.

## **VI. INSTRUMENTS WILL BE IN HEAVEN**

A. It is argued that there will be instrumental music in heaven (Rev. 4: 1; 14: 1-3; 15:2-3) and so what is good enough for heaven is good enough for the church; so we may have instrumental music in the church.

1. If the harps are literal in heaven, then other things mentioned within the contexts would also have to be taken as literal.
  - a. This would mean the throne, the book, the bowls and incense would be literal (Rev. 5).
  - b. It would have the literal names written on literal foreheads, a literal throne and literal virgins (Rev. 14).
  - c. The seven plagues, the temple, the gold girdles, bowls and smoke must also be literal (Rev. 15).
  - d. Then dust on the heads, a stone cast into the sea, and the blood of prophets and saints would necessarily be literal also (Rev. 18).
2. This makes nonsense out of a beautiful prophetic pictorial portrayal.
3. Horses and Armies are mentioned in Revelation 19:11,14
  - a. Shall we have horses in our worship?
  - b. Shall the church have armies on horses to go out to battle?
4. "Those things are symbolic, not literal" is the reply.
  - a. Yes, that is so, just like the harps are symbolic. There will not be literal mechanical instruments in the next world.

- b. The persons who make this argument know they cannot find the instrument in the New Testament church as God designed it and revealed it in the scriptures, so they will get it another way!
- B. Moreover, if the status of heaven is the norm for today, why do Christians continue to enter the relationship of marriage? The marital union will not exist in the spiritual environment of the future (see Mt. 22:30; Lk. 20:35).
- C. Suppose, however, instruments are authorized in heaven.
- 1. That does not make them authorized in congregations today.
  - 2. If instruments are authorized in heaven, they are by instruction and design of God.
  - 3. Where is God's design and instruction for them to be used in his congregations today?
  - 4. It is not a question of what is found in heaven.

## **VII. IT IS BEAUTIFUL - IT SOUNDS MUCH BETTER**

- A. Why do some want to play or listen to instruments in connection with worship?
- 1. God has not commanded it. Why do they want to do it?
  - 2. Is the motive spiritual or worldly? Can instruments speak or praise God? Do they have understanding or a spirit? Paul calls them "lifeless things that make sounds" (1 Cor. 14:7) and someone without love is compared to "sounding brass or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1). What is the spiritual value of that?

3. Since instruments are lifeless things that cannot speak, and since God has not commanded their use, why are they used by certain people in their worship?
- B. Melodeon at Midway, Ky. was brought in because they wanted it to sound better.
- C. Beautiful for whom? For God?
1. What is beautiful to God?
  2. A beautiful sound? or a beautiful heart?
  3. A heart that submits to God and worships Him in accordance with His word.
  4. Even if you have a voice like a frog, you can obey God's command: **"be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Eph. 5:18-20).
  5. If you make melody in your heart to the Lord, to Him it will be beautiful.
- D. "It sounds much better."
1. This is a faulty argument in that it misunderstands the purpose of singing in worship. Its purpose is to praise God and to teach to one another spiritual truths (Colossians 3:16).
  2. Acceptable worship is not found in how good something sounds, but in the condition of the hearts of the worshipers as they carry out God's will.
  3. This argument is much like the "talent" argument in its misunderstanding of the purpose of worship.
  4. Carried to its logical end, this argument would allow additions of other food items to the Lord's Supper to make it "taste better."
  5. The Lord's Supper is not to be measured by how much man is pleased by the taste of the meal.

6. Singing is not judged by how much man is pleased by the sound of the music.

## **VIII. IT WAS USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

- A. Those who argue for instrumental music make several arguments based on the Old Testament.
1. All of these can be answered by pointing to the difference in the covenants.
  2. We are not living under the Old Testament; we are living under the New Covenant
    - a. Col. 2:14-17
    - b. Gal. 3-5
    - c. Heb. 7-10
- B. The O.T. law which authorized instrumental music has been replaced by the gospel of Christ (Rom. 7:4, 6-7; Gal. 3:23-25; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 7:11-12, 18-19; 8:6-13).
1. The NT only authorizes singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas.5:13)
  2. If we can use instrumental music in worship because David did, can we:
    - a. Offer animal sacrifices? (Ps. 20:3; 66:13, 15)
    - b. Dance before the Lord (2 Sam. 6:14)
    - c. Keep the Sabbath? (Ex. 20:8)
    - d. Have many wives? (2 Sam. 5:13)
- C. In the Old Testament they did several things that we do not practice. But we do not live under the O.T. laws but under the law of Christ in the N.T.

## **Conclusion**

1. Instrumental music should be opposed by those who respect the authority of God's word
2. One person said: "*I like it, and to me it is worship.*" "Well I want it anyway. I don't care if there is no scripture for it. I want it." I am afraid that is the real reason for its use.
  - a. That is the real issue in this matter, at least with some people.
  - b. God does not approve of such an attitude - Jeremiah 10:23- **"O LORD, I know that the way of man [is] not in himself: [it is] not in man that walketh to direct his steps."**
  - c. Worship according to man's will is not God's will (Colossians 2:20-23).
  - d. Will you submit to the will of God?
3. We have answered these arguments for Instrumental Music:
  - i. Talent,
  - ii. Aids in worship
  - iii. What is used in the home
  - iv. Not condemned
  - v. About it being popular
  - vi. Instruments being in heaven
  - vii. It sounds so beautiful
  - viii. Used in the O.T.
4. This is not a matter of one's likes or dislikes. It is not a matter of wanting to be argumentative or contentious.
  - a. Rather, it is a matter of having the proper respect for God and his word that one will do only that which God has authorized him to do.
  - b. Christian people respect the Bible to such a degree that they let it guide them in all matters of life and godliness.

- c. When one has such respect for the authority of the word of God, he will not yield to any temptation to add to it or take away from it. Christian people just want to go by what God has said in his word.
  - d. Faithful Christians will want to maintain the purity and simplicity of their worship to God. God has taught us how to worship; let us be satisfied with what he has had to say.
  - e. Singing is the only music God has authorized.
  - f. Therefore, let us restrict ourselves solely to singing for the music in the worship of God.
  - g. It is right; it is safe; and it is scriptural.
5. John 4:23-24 **"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."**

## ENDNOTES

- 1..Gospel Advocate: September 2004; Vol. CXLVI No. 9 "Acappella Evangelism" by don Ruhl, p. 20
2. Christian Courier May 15, 2000 "**Aid**" or "**Addition**" – **What Is the Difference?** By Wayne Jackson <http://www.christiancourier.com/penpoints/aidAddition.htm>
3. Spiritual Sword Vol.21 No.4 July 1990 P. 17, P.26-27

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