



The Voice Of Truth

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Instrumental Music in Worship Right or Wrong? (Part 1)

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Generally, the world frowns on those who refuse to use mechanical instruments of music in their worship, but with those who truly follow Christ; it is a matter of principle and respect for God's authority. The guiding principle in churches of Christ is: "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." A strict adherence to this basic principle is the reason for the omission of instrumental music in the worship of the churches of Christ. Let us examine some reasons why people use instruments of music in worship.

There are those who attempt to justify the use of mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship upon the grounds that they like it. But, in worship unto God we must be concerned about what God likes not what we like. In worship we are seeking to please God, not ourselves. In His book, He has told us what will please Him, and the only way we can please Him is to do what He says in the way that He says (**John 4:23-24**).

Look at this argument, all things which I like are things which may be used in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship is a thing I like. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. Using this logic, I like Raisin Bran, toast and coffee, but I have no scriptural right to add these to the

Lord's Supper just because I like them.

There are those who contend that if mechanical instrumental music may be used in the home that it may also be used in worship. Oh, no. We have many things in the home we do not have in worship. Look with me at this argument. All things which are right to have in the home are things which are right to have in Christian worship. Mechanical instrumental music is a thing which is right to have in Christian worship. We scrub pots and pans at home, but we do not when we assemble to worship. We eat fried chicken and gravy at home, but only eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine at the Lord's Table. Many things are permissible and wholesome in domestic settings that would be out of place in worship. Paul recognized this when he prohibited a mixing and mingling of a common meal and the Lord's Supper, Paul told them to "eat at home" (**1 Cor. 11:20-34**). The Lord commanded the bread and the fruit of the vine, and that excludes our taking any other food we like at the Lord's Supper; even so, the Lord has commanded us to sing, make vocal music, and that excludes any other music. Games and ping pong or playing video games are all right in the home setting, but would be sinful if made into worship elements.

It is frequently claimed that we can have mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship because there is going to be instrumental music in heaven (**Rev. 5:8; 14:2**). But the verse which mentions harps also mentions "golden bowls full of incense" (Rev. 5:8). This is very obviously figurative language, and even the people who use instrumental music readily agree that at least a part of the passage is figurative, for none of them contend that the elders were carrying prayers about in literal bowls. If the bowls are not literal, then neither are the harps. Let us look at this argument. All things which John heard in heaven are things which may be used in Christian worship. Harpers harping with their harps (**Rev. 14:2**) is a thing which John heard in heaven. Therefore, harpers' harping with their harps is a thing which may be used in Christian worship. In the first place, John did not hear harpers. The record says that John heard a voice; the voice was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps. John saw horses in heaven. What about riding horseback in Christian worship? "And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (**Luke 20:34-36**). There will be no marriage in heaven. Does this mean a Christian man or woman who is married can't be in the church here on earth? No faith, no hope in heaven; does this mean there is no faith or hope in the church?

Many contend that mechanical instrumental music may be employed in Christian worship upon the ground that "David had it." Let us look at this argument. Mechanical instrumental music in worship is a thing which David practiced. Therefore, mechanical instrumental music is a thing which may be practiced in Christian worship. David offered animal sacrifices to God. Can we offer animal sacrifices in our worship? If men bring instrumental music into the worship

today on the ground that it is mentioned in the Old Testament, consistency demands that they bring animal sacrifices. If a man leaves the offering of animal sacrifices out of the worship today on the ground that Jesus did not include them in the New Testament, he must also leave out the playing of instruments for the same reason. David practiced polygamy. Is the Christian authorized to? What if a man would justify the use of instruments by the Law of Moses? Here is the answer from Paul: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (**Gal. 5:4**).

(Part 2 of this article will be in next week's bulletin)

THINK! THINK! THINK!

Most people believe in life after death, and the majority of these believe that they are destined to enjoy the pleasures of heaven. There is, however, something that should worry those people. Hebrews 9:27 declares, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Voltaire, the noted French atheist, spent his life lecturing and writing about his disbelief in the almighty, yet is quoted as saying with his final breath, "Oh, God, if there is a God, have pity on my soul, if I have a soul." The term "judgment" as introduced in the scripture means that there is going to be a dividing of one group of people from the other. It is easy to decide that one group pleases God while the other does not please him. Therefore, those who please are separated from those who do not.

-Borrowed-