

# **Mechanical Instrumental Music in Worship**

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

## Introduction:

- A. John 4:19-24; 2Peter 1:12-16
  - 1. Important to remember why we worship the way we do.
    - a. Doing it because of tradition and soon drift away from the truth
- B. God has told us what kind of worship He wants.
  - 1. He told Cain and Abel - Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17; Gen. 4:4-5
  - 2. He told Nadab & Abihu
  - 3. He told the Jews; Matt. 15:8-9
    - a. Doctrines of men, when added to God's instructions for worship, make worship vain
  - 4. He has told us - John 4:24, 17:17
    - a. God's word tells us how to worship God in song

## **I. REASONS THE UNINFORMED OFTEN GIVE FOR OUR REFUSAL TO USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP TO GOD**

- A. We don't like mechanical instruments in music.
- B. We think vocal music is better than accompanied music.
- C. Our objection is cultural (like the Amish to autos).
- D. We cannot afford a piano.
- E. We don't have anyone qualified to play.

## **II. THE REAL REASONS WHY WE REFUSE TO USE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP TO GOD**

- A. Jesus Christ did not teach the use of M.I. of music in worship.
  - 1. Matt. 28:20; John 14:26.
- B. The Holy Spirit never authorized the use of M.I. of music in worship.
  - 1. 2Peter 1:3; 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2John 9
- C. Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles all taught us to sing.
  - 1. Command - Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 13:15; James 5:13
  - 2. Examples - Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9  
1Cor. 14:15; Heb. 2:12
- D. The New Testament teaches us that musical worship to God was:
  - 1. Congregational - no special singers, choirs, duets, solos
  - 2. Vocal - no mechanical instruments of music
- E. To worship with the human doctrine based addition of instruments would make our worship vain and unacceptable to God.
  - 1. Matt. 15:8-9

## **III. DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP**

- A. First ascribed to pope Vitalian in 665 AD (Schaff).
  - 1. Not in general use in Catholic churches until 14th century.
- B. Denounced by most of the prominent denominational scholars.

1. Thomas Aquinas (Catholic, 13th century scholar) “Our church does not use mechanical instruments that she may not seem to Judaize.”
2. John Calvin (founder of Presbyterianism) “M.I. ... would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, lighting of lamps, or restorations of other shadows of the old law. The papists have foolishly borrowed this from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise, but the simplicity which Cod recommends to us is far more pleasing to Him.”
3. John Girardeau (Presbyterian author) “It has been proved that the church, although lapsing more into defection from the truth had no instrumental music for 1200 years. The Calvinist Reformed Church has ejected it from its worship as an element of Popery. It is heresy to the sphere of worship.”
4. John Wesley (founder of Methodism) “I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.”

#### **IV. DENOMINATIONAL ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY USE OF MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP:**

- A. “It was practiced under the law of Moses.”
  1. That law is no longer binding - Col. 2:14; Gal. 5:4
  2. Nor would such advocates be willing to be bound by it
    - a. James 2:10 - animal sacrifices, priesthood, robes, etc.
    - b. That which proves too much, proves nothing.
- B. “There are harps in heaven.”
  1. IF that were justification, then it would only authorize harps in worship.
  2. Also horses, incense, wild beasts, thrones, lamps, jewels, etc.
  3. Heaven is one realm; the church is another
- C. “If it is permitted at home, why not in the church?”
  1. We bathe, sleep, cook, watch TV, procreate in the home; that ok in the church, too?
  2. That which proves too much, proves nothing.
- D. “Must use our God—given talents.”
  1. Cattle and hog callers; belch contest winners; boxing; bull fighting; cow chip tossing; WV liars contest winner, etc.
- E. “Not forbidden to use M.I. of music in worship.”
  1. Not forbidden to make mud pies and throw them around, either!
  2. The New Testament does not forbid everything that might be done.
    - a. Not forbidden to hog call, bull fight, or fly kites.
  3. The positive command to sing eliminates other activities; including cattle calls and M.I. of music.
    - a. Lord’s supper specifies unleavened bread and fruit of vine; that eliminates bagels, buttermilk biscuits, apple juice, V8, roast beef, and mushrooms
  4. The Law of Exclusion - an expressly specific instruction eliminates all other alternatives, however reasonable they may seem.

- a. Doctors' orders; shopping instructions
- 5. How big would the Bible be if it contained a list of all of the things we were not to use in the Lord's Supper?
- F. "Psallo means to play an instrument."
  - 1. E.V. Srygley - "A little Greek is a dangerous thing; and, I don't mean Aristotle Onassis."
  - 2. Reasons why this is a flawed defense: IF M.I. of music are required...
    - a. Then for 1200 years, Christians worshipped vainly.
    - b. The Church in the New Testament worshipped falsely.
    - c. None of the 25 most accepted translations of the Bible are correct
- G. "The piano is just an aid to our worship, like songbooks, pitchpipe."
  - 1. It is an addition to what God has said - Rev. 22:18-19
  - 2. An aid does not change what God has said or require a different action
  - 3. An instrument changes singing to playing - Gal. 1:6-9
  - 4. Common lament of denominationalists, "No one sings anymore."

## **V. ABUSES TRACIBLE TO USE OF MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP**

- A. Violation of the command to sing by those who just listen to another play.
- B. Increased tendency to squabble over virtuosity.
- C. Second and third generation introducing more exotic instruments.
  - 1. Gospel rock, bluegrass gospel, heavy metal gospel.
- D. Encourages alterations in other parts of worship.

### **Conclusion:**

- A. We are not being divisive in proclaiming the truth on this subject.
  - 1. Those who change God's requirements for worship by adding the instrument have caused the division.
  - 2. 1Kings 18:17-18 - history has repeated itself once again
- B. As churches have moved further away from demanding book, chapter, and verse for what is practiced in religion, the worship changes from praise and reverence for God to what is pleasing and agreeable to men.
  - 1. Who are we seeking to please? - Gal. 1:10-12
  - 2. If we desire to please God, then let us worship God's way.