

Does the New Testament Condemn Instrumental Music in the Church? (1)

Advocates of instrumental music in Christian worship often present such questions as these: Does the New Testament condemn instrumental music in worship? Did Christ and the apostles ever condemn the use of instruments as an aid to singing? Did they ever refuse to have fellowship with followers of Christ who could not sing without the aid of a musical instrument? And they ask for chapter and verse where such things are condemned in the New Testament. If chapter and verse cannot be found that expressly condemns instruments of music by naming them, they insist that those who condemn such are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.

It seems to me, however, that they should be able to see that they are working from the wrong end of the matter. Instead of asking if the New Testament condemns instrumental music in worship, they should be asking if the New Testament authorizes the use of such. Instead of trying to find where Christ and the apostles condemned instruments as an aid to singing, they should be making an effort to find if they ever sanctioned the use of instruments as such an aid. It would be much better to search for the chapter and verse that commands men to sing with an instrument of music. After all, our worship is not to be gauged by what the New Testament does not condemn by name, but rather by what it authorizes to be done. If we were to do everything in worship that it does not strictly forbid in so many words, there would be no end to which we would go. But we should endeavor to do what the New Testament authorizes as worship to God.

Suppose the advocates of other practices in religion would confront members of the Christian Church with

the same argument they make in favor of the instrument, what would Christian Church members do? The Catholic makes an effort to justify his practice of burning incense in worship and of praying to the Virgin Mary. He wants to know where the New Testament condemns the burning of incense in worship. He calls for the passage that forbids praying to the Virgin Mary. What would the instrumental music advocate do in a case of this kind? Would he give to the Catholic the chapter and verse that names these practices and condemns them? And the Mormon contends for his use of light bread and water as elements of the Lord's Supper, and he calls for the verse of Scripture that says we must not use them. Where did Christ or the apostles ever condemn light bread and water as elements on the Lord's Table? The Methodist could defend his practice of infant baptism upon the same ground. With the same degree of confidence manifested by the musical instrument advocate he would say: Where did Christ and the apostles ever say you should not baptize babies? What would the Christian Church member do with all these problems? By what method would he show the Catholic that it is wrong to burn incense in worship or to pray to the Virgin Mary? How would he prove to the Mormon that he should not use light bread and water on the Lord's Table? And how could he show the Methodist that he should not baptize babies? Certainly he could not read the passages that name these things and say, "thou shalt not" do them. I know exactly the course he would pursue. He would show the Catholic that he was laboring from the wrong end of the matter; that he should be asking where the Lord ever authorized men to burn incense in Christian worship or to pray to the Virgin Mary. And he would inform the Mormon that he should find the verse of Scripture that sanctions the use of light bread and water for the Lord's Supper. Furthermore he would tell the Methodist to find authority for his infant baptism in the word of God instead

of asking for the verse that condemns it. In all of this he would certainly be right. But he is just as wrong as they are when he contends for his instrumental music in Christian worship.

Does the New Testament condemn these practices? Certainly so. Keep in mind, however, that a thing does not have to be mentioned by name in order for it to be condemned. If so, then none of these practices stand condemned, and we are at liberty to practice them all, with a hundred other things that might suit our fancy. But many religious practices are condemned by the New Testament by virtue of the fact that they were left out. As to prayer the Bible is specific as to the one to whom prayer should be offered. In **Phil. 4:6**, Paul says: "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*" This is divine authority for prayer—it tells men to pray to God. Many other Scriptures might be added to this that affirms the same thing. And when the Bible tells us to make our prayer unto God, that eliminates other beings as persons to whom we should pray. This verse is a condemnation of the practice of praying to the Virgin Mary, for Paul says to pray to God, and that leaves Mary out. As nowhere does the Bible authorize us to pray to the Virgin Mary, then that practice stands condemned by New Testament teaching. The person who condemns such practice is not the one who is teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, but it is the person who adheres to such practice without any divine authority to do so. *...to be continued*

Bible Banner - April 1942

W. Curtis Porter from Charlottesville Beacon

BIRTHDAYS

Joy Parish, 04-23; Jeremy Gragg, 04-24.

ILL

Sunday: Millie Robertson (PM).

Wilba Hopkins had outpatient tests on Friday. Steven Schleif was admitted to Olathe Medical Center for tests and treatment and was released on April 14. Millie Robertson is scheduled for surgery on April 22.

Those battling cancer: Ledgia Campbell, Vic Cuney; Betty James and Cleo Stone. Please remember these in your prayers.

HOME BOUND

Kathleen Camp is in Room 101 at the Royal Terrace Nursing Home in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Barbara James' Aunt, Evelyn Marquardt is at the Sweet Life of Rosehill in Shawnee. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Wilba Hopkins is in Springfield, MO visiting relatives this weekend. Ted Thrasher is in Dyersburg, TN for the lectures. Tom Tucker and his daughter, Mary, are visiting relatives in New Jersey.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

There are several Gospel Meetings and a Youth Rally in our area over the next few weeks. See the flyers in the foyer for details and take advantage of these opportunities to hear the Word!

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 43; Sunday PM, NA; Wednesday PM, 35

Spring Gospel Meeting

"Grave and Eternal Matters"

April 26-30, 2009

Randy Carr of Belle, MO

Those To Serve

April 19, 2009

BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Cole

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER John Dodson
PRESIDE..... Chris Edwards
ASSIST.....Steve Brown
ASSIST.....Dave Parish
CLOSING PRAYER.....Jared Nelson

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Jeff Nemechek
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Cody Carter
LORD'S SUPPER..... Chris Edwards

WEDNESDAY 22nd

SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
INVITATIONJared Nelson

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

Phone: (913) 764-2325

E-mail: olathecocf@sbcglobal.net

CHURCH OF CHRIST

515 WEST PARK

P.O. BOX 482

OLATHE, KANSAS 66051

www.kc-cocf.org/olathe.htm

www.oabs.org/olathe.asp