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# How to Praise God Today or Can We Have Instrumental Music in the Worship?

F.W. Smith

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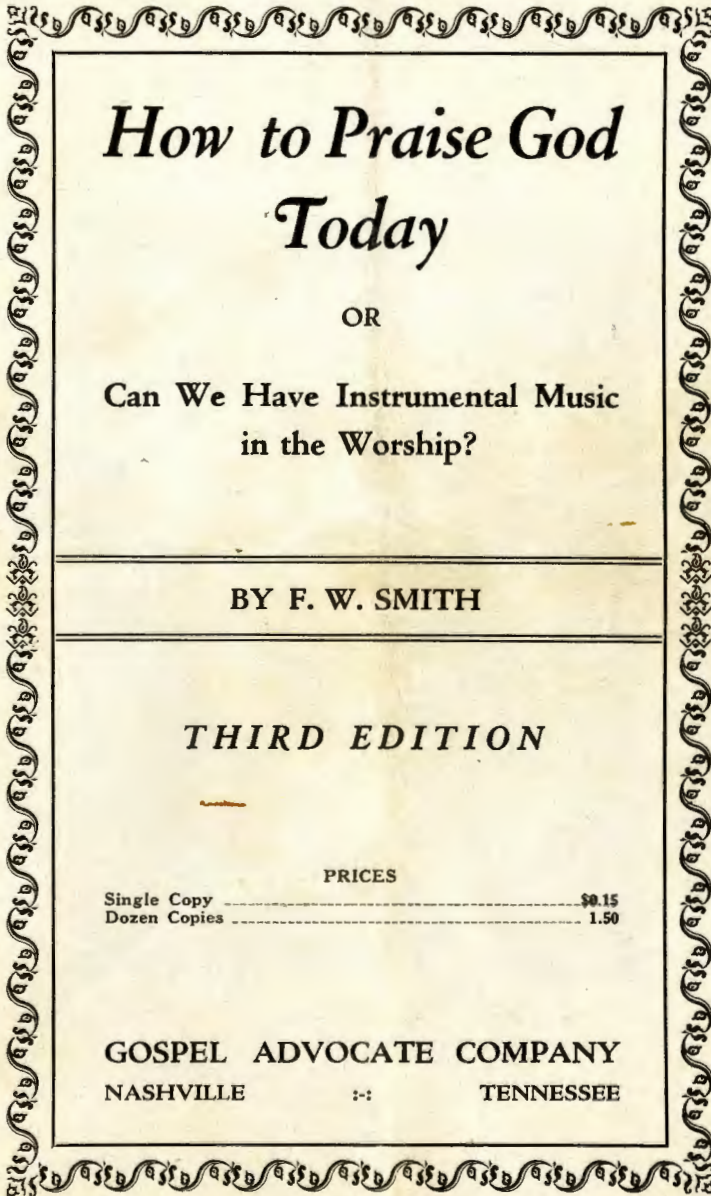
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# *How to Praise God Today*

OR

Can We Have Instrumental Music  
in the Worship?

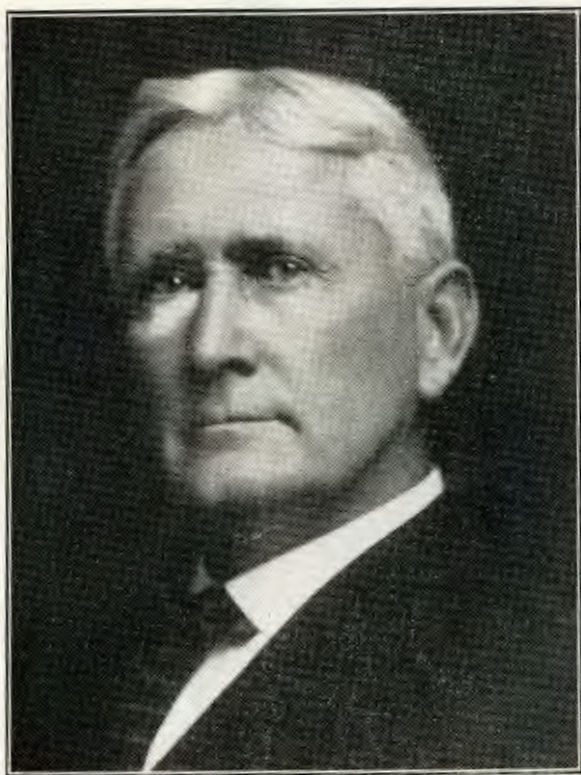
BY F. W. SMITH

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F. W. SMITH

# HOW TO PRAISE GOD TODAY:

OR,

## CAN WE HAVE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP?

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It will be observed that no question is raised regarding praise under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations; but, how shall we praise God today, under the Christian dispensation, by which we are now governed in our worship and service to him. This clear distinction between the different dispensations will serve to narrow the field of investigation, thus bringing the subject within its proper limits, as well as avoiding any confusion which might arise from mixing Judaism with Christianity. It is well in the beginning to emphasize

### THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUBJECT.

This is derived, in the first place, from the wisdom, honor, and glory of God; and, secondly, from the salvation of the soul. These are all involved in every command God has imposed upon man. The smallest act of divine legislation is attended by God's wisdom, glory, and honor; and every command must be complied with in the *very way* he has specified, or else we set aside these divine attributes. Inasmuch, therefore, as the soul's salvation depends upon upholding the majesty of God's law, which can only be done by conforming strictly to his requirements, it behooves every soul to be absolutely certain that whatever is done as worship or service to him is *authorized by his word*. With this undeniable fact illustrated and emphasized in all of God's dealings with the race in the ages passed, we cannot be *too particular* in demanding divine authority for everything we do as worship and service to him. Having thus stated what is regarded as an unquestionably im-

portant preliminary to the matter under consideration, I will now proceed to lay down the only correct basis upon which to conduct a Scriptural and logical investigation of this subject—viz.:

#### THE CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP.

The question as to what these are must be settled before we can make any safe or satisfactory progress in the investigation of this matter. Furthermore, it must be settled in such *clear, definite, and Scriptural* terms as to forbid any flaw in the premises, lest our conclusions be false and the time spent in the investigation wasted. Hence, I submit the following passage, which sets forth the conditions of acceptable worship in the very terms suggested: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4: 24.) It will, I presume, be admitted by all that "praise" is included in the term "worship," and, therefore, is to be rendered "in spirit and in truth." This fact *limits* the music we offer as praise to God to that *kind* only which is found to be in spirit and truth. It is not sufficient to offer such music as can be rendered "in spirit" only; it *must also* be "in truth." We learn from the conditions of acceptable worship as announced by Jesus himself two things. (1) The worship must be done in spirit. This means that when we worship or praise God, our hearts must be in it. We *must* be honest and sincere in what we do. The word "sincere" is composed of the two Latin words *sine cera*, which mean "without wax." In the days of old when those beautiful marble palaces were being erected along the Tiber, workmen would fill cracks in the marble with wax to hide the defects from the owner; but in process of time the wax would fall out, leaving the deception to plain view. So it transpired that when a contract was let it was stipulated that the building was to be "without wax," or, in other words, the workman was to be sincere in his work. Just so in the worship of God we must be sincere, and this requires the whole heart, thus fulfilling the first condition—"in spirit." (2) The worship must be "in truth." To worship in truth

means according to truth—that is, the revealed will of God. Our praise, then, must be directed by his word, else it is lacking in one of the essential conditions of acceptable worship. With this well-defined and well-established Scriptural basis for our investigation, we are prepared to take another and equally important step—viz.:

#### HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE PRAISE TO GOD?

For this information I unhesitatingly affirm that we are altogether dependent upon the instructions of the apostles, who were divinely called, qualified, and commissioned to teach the disciples to observe all things commanded by our Lord. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 19, 20.) In connection with this world-wide and time-lasting commission, note the following: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." (John 16: 13.) This language was addressed to the apostles, and is applicable to none others. They had the most important work committed to them ever given to men or angels—that is, the mission of teaching man how to worship and serve God acceptably in order that he might gain heaven and be crowned with immortal glory. Again: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." (Gal. 1: 8.) The gospel embraces more than the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It includes the whole scheme of redemption, of which praise to God is a part. If any man or angel, therefore, teach as praise or worship to God anything not authorized by the apostles, he rests under the condemnation of Heaven. With this commission and their divine quali-

fication, we are beyond *any* question *bound* to the teachings of these Spirit-guided men in learning what the will of God is concerning "praise" and every other act of worship and service to him under Christ. When God gave to Moses the pattern of the tabernacle, enjoining him *particularly*, "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25: 40), he would not suffer the workmen employed in its construction to enter upon their divinely appointed task without supernatural wisdom to guide them in their work. "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, Jehovah hath called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise skillful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of skillful workmanship. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of workmanship, of the engraver, and of the skillful workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any workmanship, and of those that devise skillful works." (Ex. 35: 30-35.) Thus it is seen that the construction of a material building, which was, with all of its vessels of the ministry, to become a type of the spiritual tabernacle, or church of Christ and its service, was not left to the wisdom of men. Not *one single item* in the whole matter but what was made and arranged according to divine wisdom. Shall we expect less of the substance, the church of Christ, with its worship and service, than of the tabernacle, which was only the shadow? Is it reasonable to conclude that God would be less particular in the building and arranging of the worship and service of his church than he was of its type, the tabernacle? The idea is preposterous and altogether out of harmony with faith in God. The whole matter of worship and service rests upon *faith*; and as faith

comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10: 17), we *must* have his word dictating every such act performed, or else we are found walking by human wisdom instead of the wisdom of God. One of the most palpable *mis-uses* of the word of God I have ever noticed is the effort to sustain the practice of instrumental music in the worship by claiming authority for it from the Old Testament Scriptures, because it is said in Rom. 15: 4: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime [in the Old Testament] were written for our learning," etc. As a matter of course, those things were written for our learning; but *what* are we to learn from them? How to praise or worship God? The man who makes such a claim is surely hard pressed for arguments with which to sustain himself in an unscriptural practice. What, then, do we learn from the things "written aforetime?" I answer: Examples of *faith* and *obedience* to inspire and encourage us in our struggle for eternal life, as well as examples of *unbelief* and *disobedience* to warn and check us in the unlawful gratification of the flesh. (See Heb. 11; 1 Cor. 10.) It is "written aforetime" that Noah built an ark. Must Christians, therefore, build arks? A Christian would be looked upon as *foolish* who would build an ark, for the simple reason that God has not commanded Christians to build arks; and yet he has as clearly commanded Christians to build arks as he has to praise him with instrumental music. Many lessons are learned from what is "written aforetime" concerning Noah and the ark, two of which are here noted. (1) We learn a lesson of *loyalty* to God in Noah's conforming *strictly* to the divine pattern in the construction of the ark. (2) We see the manifestation of Noah's *perfect* faith in the provision of God for the salvation of himself and family. If it be possible to get the advocates of instrumental music in the church to see the great importance of *loyalty* to God and be content with the *divine provision* in his praise, God will then be honored and many aching hearts healed. Principles are recorded in the Old Testament which are to govern us now, but certain acts of worship and service are not to be done *now* because we find such in the Old Testament.



Another and equally as gross misrepresentation and abuse of the word of God is found in the use made of this passage: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) It is claimed that as the Old Testament as well as the New Testament Scriptures are inspired of God, therefore we are at liberty to appeal to the Old Testament as *authority* for instrumental music in the praise of God now. There is a well-established rule in logic which says: "That which proves too much proves nothing at all." According to this rule, the argument based upon the passage just quoted must go by default, because it proves entirely *too much*. If we are to go back to the Old Testament in order to learn what to *do* as praise to God now, can we not go there to learn everything else we do as worship and service to God just as well? Why single out *one item* in the worship and go back there to learn how it is to be done? The reason for this is said to consist in the fact that while the New Testament enjoins "praise," it does not tell *how* it is to be rendered. Hence, we are forced to learn this from the Old Testament. How any *sane* man with the New Testament Scriptures before him can make such a statement as that is *most singular indeed*. It can only be accounted for on the ground that a zeal for an unscriptural practice hath blinded the eyes. The New Testament does not only enjoin praise, but specifies clearly *how it is to be done*. "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5: 19.) Again: "Singing with grace in your hearts unto God." (Col. 3: 16.) The apostles would have been poor teachers, after passing through such a radical change from Judaism to Christianity, to enjoin an act of praise without telling *how* it was to be done. They were very clear and specific on all other matters. What reason, then, can be assigned for their silence on the matter of *how* "praise" is to be rendered? Was it because the people under former dispensations had been accus-

tomed to praise in the worship of God, and, therefore, did not need instruction on this part of the worship? If so, why did they give instructions regarding many other things which were done as worship and service before the establishment of the church of Christ—as, for instance, prayer, thanksgiving, contribution, etc.? It is simply *not true* to say that the apostles did not tell us *how* to praise God. They did do it, and that *in the clearest of terms*. By way of anticipation, I will at this point introduce the following question:

IS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
SINGING IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD, A PART  
OF THAT WORSHIP?

The importance of this question arises from the fact that many of God's children are led into the sinful practice of instrumental music in the worship by the plea that such music is no part of the worship, but simply and only an aid to the singing, just as the note book or tuning fork. That this claim may be seen in all of its falsity and deception, I will call attention to what God *says* and to what he *does not* say on this matter. "It came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and symbols and instruments of music, and praised Jehovah," etc. (2 Chron. 5: 13.) From this it is clearly to be seen that the vocal music and the instrumental music, blending into *one* sound, constituted the praise to God. Hence, the instrumental music in this connection was as much a part of the worship or praise as the singing, or vocal music. But, as still further evidence in support of the position that instrumental music in connection with the praise of God is worship, note the following clear and unmistakable announcement: "And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of Jehovah began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David king of Israel. And all the assembly worshiped, and

the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished." (2 Chron. 29: 26-28.) This is what God *says* about such music in connection with other acts of worship, and he *does not* say anything anywhere contrary to this. God says it is *worship*; and until the advocates of instrumental music in the praise of God can find where he says that such music, at the time specified, is not worship, they must abandon the false claim that it is simply an aid to the singing, just as the note book. A thing which is itself a *part* of the worship cannot be made an *aid* to the worship. Hence, this fact completely sets aside the false and misleading claim made by the perverters of God's praise. As to another claim—viz., that instrumental music makes the praise or worship more edifying—I will simply state that God, and not man, must settle this matter. It is freely granted that instrumental music in the worship would be more pleasing to the senses than simply the vocal; but we must remember that what is pleasing to man and in perfect harmony with his feelings and tastes is often very displeasing to God. This fact is most clearly demonstrated in the rejection of Cain and his offering. The first fruits of the field were much more beautiful, fragrant, and attractive than the bleeding, burning, and smoking lamb. One was pleasing to the senses and much more in harmony with Cain's idea of the fitness of things, while the other was very repulsive and altogether contrary to the idea of edification. But the record shows that God accepted Abel's lamb and rejected Cain's beautiful fruits. There is a reason for this, which embodies a great principle. That principle is expressed in the word "loyalty." God required a lamb as an offering, and Cain brought instead what was pleasing to himself. The lesson is: In our worship or praise to God we must not offer what is pleasing to us unless we are sure that that thing is pleasing also to God. It is not what pleases us in the worship that edifies or builds up our spiritual natures, but consciously and willingly doing what God commands. That thing may be contrary to every sense and feeling of our nature, as in the case of Abraham's offering

Isaac. Aside from the worship of God, the fruits of the field were just as pleasing to him as was the lamb. Did he not make the fruits of the field, which Cain offered, as well as the lamb, which Abel brought to the altar? Did he not, when creation was finished, pronounce them both, with everything else he had made, good? Why, then, was he pleased with Abel's lamb and displeased with Cain's fruits of the field? The writer of Hebrews explains the matter in these words: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous," etc. (Heb. 11: 4.) Why was it "more excellent?" Was it because of any intrinsic value in the sight of God? No. Was it because the lamb possessed within itself a peculiar virtue not found in the fruits? No. What, then? One was *commanded*, the other *was not*. One offered in faith, the other did not. Cain's faith was not at fault in the existence of God, but in the appointment of God. The fact that he brought the offering shows that he believed in God. But in failing to offer what was commanded, what he did offer was not of faith. The same is true of those who offer instrumental music in the praise of God because it is pleasing to them. It is not of faith, because not commanded. It cannot edify, because not commanded. But it is asked: "How can instrumental music, which was once a part of the prescribed worship of God, be displeasing to him in his worship now?" I reply by asking: How can the burning of incense, which was once a part of the prescribed worship of God, be displeasing to him in his worship now? Again: How could the eating of meat, which was once a part of the prescribed worship of God (in the Passover feast), be displeasing to him in his worship now? Simply because a thing as worship or service was pleasing to God under one dispensation is no evidence that the same thing will be pleasing to him as worship under a different dispensation. Why he rejected instrumental music from his praise under Christ is a matter entirely within the divine prerogatives, and we poor, ignorant creatures have no right to question God's action in the premises. Let us now consider this question:

### INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE HOME.

It is argued that because we have instrumental music in our homes, it is inconsistent to object to it in the worship; that whatever is permitted in the home can be consecrated to the worship of God. Under this plea instrumental music in the church has, in some instances, been defended. The same argument, however, will permit the eating of meat in the worship, as well as the music. Instrumental music is not rejected from the worship on the ground that it is sinful within itself, for it has no moral quality. Neither can meat be rejected from the worship on that ground, for both the music and meat are, in this respect, of the same nature. We do not, therefore, in permitting instrumental music in our homes, tolerate a thing that is sinful, any more than when we allow meat on our tables. Both meat and music can be sanctified to our pleasure and amusement. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4: 4, 5.) The talent for making music is just as much the gift of God as is the meat. It is sometimes claimed that if it be right to teach instrumental music in order to make money for the Lord's cause, it certainly could not be wrong to consecrate the same kind of music to his praise. Well, it is eminently proper to raise hogs in order to make money for the Lord's treasury; therefore, upon the same principle, the meat can be consecrated to his worship! People seem to lose sight of the fact that the worship is *prescribed* by God himself, and that he put into it *just what he wanted*, and that man is forbidden to add to or take from that worship. If the new covenant required simply *music*, without specifying the *kind* of music, there would be no ground for controversy concerning this matter. In such an event, either vocal or instrumental music would meet the demands of the case. But, unfortunately for the advocates of instrumental music in the worship, God has most clearly specified the *kind of music* he wants—viz., *vocal*. This specification is found in the word "sing," without the

slightest reference to instrumental accompaniment. It is proper now to raise this question :

DOES GOD FORBID THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL  
MUSIC IN HIS CHURCH ?

This is a plain and altogether fair question, which is most emphatically answered in the affirmative. I will now proceed to prove this positive affirmation. The gospel of Christ, by which we are governed in our worship, is both *exclusive* and *inclusive*. It includes everything commanded or authorized in the worship, and excludes everything not divinely authorized. Hence, the logic of the case does not require me to produce a prohibitory command saying in so many words: "Thou shalt not have instrumental music in the praise," as we are often called upon to do. To show that this position is well taken, I will ask the disciple who advocates the *organ* to show me a command saying in so many words: "Thou shalt not baptize infants and idiots." His reply must be: "There is no such command." Why, then, does he not baptize infants and idiots? He replies; "The gospel forbids me to do so." But how does the gospel forbid such baptism? Again, he answers: "By telling me what *kind* of people to baptize—viz., believers, thus *excluding* all others." Good! Now, why does he not eat meat with the bread and fruit of the vine when he communes? Again he answers: "Because I am forbidden to do so." In what way? "The New Testament tells me what to eat and what to drink; and when I have eaten and drunk what I am told to eat and drink, I must *stop* at that, and this *excludes* everything else from the Supper." Good! Superlatively good! Now, be fair and honest enough to apply the same logic to the matter of instrumental music in the praise of God. You have been restrained from baptizing infants and idiots, and also from eating meat in the worship of God, by the *exclusive* principle of the gospel; and now, by the *very same* principle of exclusiveness, you are *compelled* to refrain from the use of instrumental music in the praise of God. The gospel authorizes but *one* kind of music in the praise of God—viz., *vocal*. We are told to *sing*, but are *not* told to *play* a musical in-

strument. Now, when we make the *kind* of music we are told to make, we must *stop right there* and not make in addition another kind, no matter how pleasing such music may have been to God under a former dispensation, nor how pleasing it may be to us. God has, then, forbidden the use of instrumental music in his praise by the *exclusive* feature of the gospel

#### HOW CAN WE APPROACH GOD IN WORSHIP?

This is one of the most vital questions ever propounded to mortal man. In order to be saved, we must come to God; but we can come *only* in the way he has prescribed. When the old covenant was completed, Moses, the lawgiver and type of Christ, sprinkled with blood the book containing the covenant. Hence, every command or act of worship and service to God was dedicated or *sealed* with the blood of the animal, which stood for and typified the blood of Christ. Not only so, but he sprinkled with blood the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. This tabernacle, with its worship and service, typified or represented the church of Christ, with its worship and service. "Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward. Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood." (Heb. 9: 18-21.) From that day until the Jewish system of worship and service was nailed to the cross and taken out of the way no Jew could approach God in any act of worship or service unless that thing had been *sealed* with the typical blood. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Matt. 15: 9.) The reason the act of washing hands was rejected by Jesus as worship to him was that it was not among the blood-sealed appointments of God. In the service of the tabernacle not a spoon, shovel, pan, or any other vessel could be

used unless it had been *sealed with blood* at its construction. Two priests, who had been properly consecrated to the priesthood and who were divinely appointed to officiate in the tabernacle, are found dead beside the altar. Did they die from apoplexy or some other heart failure? No. They were smitten by the hand of God. For what? For offering that which God *commanded not*. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah." (Lev. 10: 1, 2.) What an awful warning to man! So they were slain for offering *strange* fire. But what made it *strange* fire? It was not taken from the right place. The fire of the altar was sealed with the blood, and instead of getting the blood-sealed fire they brought fire before Jehovah from some other place; hence, it was *strange* fire. The application of all this is plain. The new covenant, under which we live, is *sealed* with the blood of Christ. Every act of worship and service is sealed with his blood, and we cannot approach God without this blood. Inasmuch, therefore, as his blood can be found only on what he has commanded, and as he has commanded only vocal music, we would be very unwise and disloyal to bring into his praise instrumental music. We must not forget that the worshiper is as much bound to use the *means* ordained for praise as he is to render the praise itself. The Christian covenant says "sing," but nowhere says "play." "For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." (Matt. 26: 28.) This passage connects the blood of the Son of God and the new covenant. If, therefore, the offering of fire which had not been sealed with the blood of the animal made it *strange* fire, and the service in consequence rejected, will not offering music which has not been sealed with the blood of Christ make it *strange* music and the praise in consequence rejected? If not, why not? When the men in whom God had put his Spirit, enabling them to be infallible workmen, conforming



strictly to the divine pattern in the construction of the tabernacle, had finished the work, putting the furniture and all the vessels of the ministry in their proper places, nothing was to be added or taken away. Just so, after the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Spirit, had established the church, arranged all of its worship and service according to divine directions, nothing was to be added and nothing to be taken away. We cannot have instrumental music in God's praise without adding to the worship of the spiritual tabernacle. The fact that instrumental music was not a part of the worship of the tabernacle service, but was introduced into the temple worship after the book of the covenant and the tabernacle had been sealed with the blood, does not argue that we can use in the worship things not sealed with the blood of Christ. The instrumental music introduced by David at the command of God was *added* to the system of worship sealed with blood; hence, it was, in this respect, as all the other acts of worship and service. See 2 Chron. 29: 25: "For the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets." We are asked: "Has God's ear so changed that instrumental music, which was once so well pleasing to him in his worship, is displeasing to him in his praise now?" A sufficient reply to this is: Has God's nose so changed that the odor of burning incense, which was once so well pleasing to him in his worship, is displeasing to him now in his praise? God is represented as smelling the burning incense as well as hearing the music. (See Amos 5: 21.) Therefore, if we adopt the instrumental music because it was pleasing to God's ear, we can, for the same reason, adopt the incense because it was pleasing to God's nose.

But we are told that when David speaks of the praise of God with musical instruments in his sanctuary, he has reference to the church of Christ! This is bold *assumption* without *one iota* of proof. Did not God have a sanctuary in David's time, and was not David himself in that sanctuary? "Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion." (Ps. 114: 2.) Again: "Thy holy [sanctified] people possessed it but a little while; our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary."

(Isa. 63: 18.) What was "trodden down?" The people of Israel, who were God's sanctuary, to which David referred when he said: "Praise him in his sanctuary." (Ps. 150: 1.) And now, to "cap the climax," we are told that when David said, "Sing his praise in the assembly of the saints," he was speaking prophetically and referred to the praise with musical instruments in the church of Christ, because there were no "saints" under the Old Testament to praise God! Any man who would make such an argument as that is in sad lack of Biblical information, or else *willfully perverts* the word of God in order to sustain an unscriptural practice. No "saints" in the Old Testament! "A saint is a holy or godly person; one that is so by profession, covenant, and conversation." (Cruden's Concordance.) Were there no such people in Old Testament times? "For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God." (Deut. 7: 6.) Holy people are sanctified people, and sanctified people are saints. ". . . . and let thy *saints rejoice in goodness.*" (2 Chron. 6: 41.) Again: "As for the saints that are in the earth, they are the excellent in whom is all my delight." (Ps. 16: 3.) "Yes, but there was no 'assembly' of saints in the Old Testament." Indeed! "And there *assembled* at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very *great assembly.*" (2 Chron. 30: 13.) Mark you, this assembly was composed of saints, or holy people, and it was an assembly for *divine* worship. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness," etc. (Acts 7: 38.) The word "church" in this verse is from the same word translated "church" when reference is made to the body of Christ. Therefore, if when the members of the church assemble they constitute an assembly of saints, the same is true when the saints assembled under the Old Testament. And now, to show beyond any doubt that David had *no reference* at all to the *church of Christ* and its praise, I will ask the reader to turn to the Psalm and read it, noting carefully verses 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Ps. 149. Those who were to sing praises with timbrel and harp were also to have in their hand a two-edged sword, with which to execute vengeance upon the nations and

punishment upon the people, and also to bind their kings with chains, etc. Is this the spirit of the new covenant? We are expressly told that our weapons are not carnal. (2 Cor. 10: 4.) Any one ought to see at a glance that David is speaking of praise under the old covenant, where God's people were also permitted to slay the nations with the sword. It comes in bad grace and in the height of inconsistency for such a man to oppose the Pedobaptist, who appeals to the Old Testament for his authority on the subject of infant membership in the church of Christ. We are no more bound by the first part of the commission (Matt. 28: 19, 20.) on the subject of *membership* in the church than we are by the second part of the commission on the subject of *praise* in the worship of God.

#### THE LAW OF LIMITATION IN DIVINE WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

This is found to be the end of the commandment. "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written." (1 Cor. 4: 6.) Paul has reference to the things written by himself and the other New Testament writers concerning the worship and service of God, and he positively *restricts* us in our worship to what they wrote. And as they did not write the authority for instrumental music in the praise of God, the use of such music is going *beyond* what "is written." Again: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God." (2 John 9.) As Christ did not teach himself nor instruct his apostles to teach the use of instrumental music in his praise, those, therefore, who so teach and practice have not God.

#### NOTES, HYMN BOOKS, AND TUNING FORKS.

The claim so generally made that the organ, or musical instrument in the worship, is nothing more than an aid, such as notes, hymn books, and tuning forks, is the most plausible and sophistical reasoning invented by the advocates of instrumental music in the worship.

Hence, that it may appear clear to all who are seeking the truth how utterly false this reasoning is, I will insert the following from one who is an acknowledged student of the word and a logician of the first rank: "Among the various and multifarious arguments advanced by the advocates of instrumental music, none perhaps is more deceptive and misleading than the assumption that all that is involved in the use of instrumental music as an aid to the ear is involved in the use of the notes as an aid to the eye. The fallacy in this specious and plausible plea, which has, no doubt, misled many unwary hearts, consists in assuming that the notes and the music of the instrument are on a par; that each fills its place 'just as' the other does, which is not only not true, but is a palpable contradiction of facts. If the instrument were used 'just as' the note book is used—that is, in a way so as simply to aid in doing what is commanded, and not, at the same time, in doing what is implicitly forbidden—there would be no harm in it; but this is not true. Let us look at the facts. The thing we are commanded to do is to sing—to make vocal music. When the instrument is used in the manner under discussion—that is, so as to make instrumental music—something more than aiding the ear in doing what is commanded is done, and that something more is the very thing which, in this specific connection, the Lord has implicitly forbidden—namely, instrumental music is made. But this is not the case when a note book is used. The notes simply indicate to the eye the tune which is to be sung, and they do not, at the same time, do anything that is in any way forbidden. If the instrument should be so used as to do nothing but to aid in singing, which is the thing commanded to be done, there would be no harm in it; but in the case in question, in addition to aiding the ear in doing what is commanded, if, indeed, it be such an aid at all, it makes also another kind of music—namely, the very kind which God himself rejected from the new order of worship under Christ. Thus failing to discriminate between things vitally different, it is easy to beguile the unwary and to make it appear to them that the instrument and the notes do in principle the same

thing, the one simply aiding the ear 'just as' the other aids the eye; but it is only in appearance, for it assumes the very point in dispute. Be it ever so powerful an aid to the singing—or to anything else for that matter—it cannot be justified on this ground, for the simple reason that it also does that which is implicitly forbidden." (M. C. Kurfees.)

The above is a sufficient refutation of not only the note-book and tuning-fork argument, but also answers the argument against the chart or blackboard in preaching. In using a diagram for illustration in teaching the word of God, we are not using as an aid a thing which God has forbidden, but simply doing what he has commanded—namely, teaching.

#### MAKING THE ORGAN A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP.

It is universally charged upon those who oppose instrumental music in the worship that they make instrumental music "a test of fellowship." Let this charge be tested by the truth. What is the condition of Christian fellowship as laid down by the Holy Spirit? "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7.) I presume that no one will deny that the "light" is the truth, or the word of God. (Ps. 119: 105.) This being true, fellowship can only exist as all walk in the truth. Hence, until it is shown that the word of God authorizes instrumental music in his praise under Christ, those who introduce it are guilty of setting aside the word of God—making instrumental music a *test* of Christian fellowship.

#### THE TWO COVENANTS.

I will now submit an argument drawn from the two covenants. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." (Heb. 8: 8.) Again: "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old." (Verse 13.) This new covenant is that to which Paul refers when he says: "And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant." (Heb. 9: 15.) It is true that we find in

this covenant some principles that were in the old covenant, but this fact does not forbid its being a *new* covenant. I wish to emphasize the very important fact that there is a *clear line* of distinction drawn between these two covenants in the Scriptures. The line between Canada and the United States is no more clearly drawn than is the line between the old covenant and the new. Taking it for granted that no one will call in question this distinction, I submit the following diagram, which will aid materially in this investigation:

THE OLD COVENANT.

Judaism.

Acts of worship and service.

---

Keeping the Sabbath.  
 Burning incense.  
 The priesthood.  
 Instrumental music.

---

How we learn God's will:  
 1. By precept.  
 2. Example.  
 3. Necessary inference.

---

An aid.  
 The word "psallo."

THE NEW COVENANT.

Christianity.

Acts of worship and service.

---

The first day of the week.  
 Prayer.  
 Every Christian a priest.  
 Vocal music.

---

Instrumental music came in  
 over six hundred years this  
 side of the apostles.  
 No command for it.  
 No example for it.  
 No necessary inference.

---

Cannot be an aid.

If one is coming from Canada to the United States, he meets with a revenue officer, whose duty it is to see that certain goods are not taken across the line between these two governments without the tax is paid according to law. And, as we have seen, no one has a right to cross the line between Judaism and Christianity with acts of worship and service without a Scriptural passport from the apostles of Jesus Christ, I, therefore, propose that we station by that line, as a defender of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, a man who claims to be only a disciple of Christ, with no creed but the New Testament, and who, notwithstanding this, uses instrumental music in the worship. As our brother is performing the duty of a sentinel,

three men approach the line from the side of Judaism. One wants to cross into the church of Christ with the Sabbath. Our watchman promptly demands the Sabbatarian's authority for introducing into the worship under Christ the keeping of the Sabbath. He demands either a command, example, or necessary inference from the apostles. Receiving neither, he turns the Sabbath man back. Next he addresses the Catholic, who is about to cross with his golden censer and incense, demanding of him the same as of the other man; but, receiving no better proof, turns him back also. The Episcopal, with his robe and official priesthood, fares the same fate. They are all told that the only way in which we can learn the will of the Lord is either by precept, approved example, or a necessary inference. And as they have produced neither, they must abandon the Sabbath, the incense, and the priesthood. But the Catholic is so fond of his golden censer and is so pleased and edified in witnessing the ascending smoke of the burning incense, while its delicious odor lingers around the altar, reminding him of the ascending prayers of the saints of God and their rich savor to Jehovah, as they come before him, that he feels he must have it in the worship. So he turns his face toward the line once more, with the same censer and incense, demanding the right to cross this time with incense as an "aid" to his prayers in the worship of God. Again, our defender of the faith denies him the right to bring it from Judaism to Christianity. He is told that the apostles gave specific directions concerning prayer, that they prayed themselves and taught others to pray, but *never* used incense in the worship, neither did they so much as even mention it. And, besides this, the word of God says that the burning of incense at the time and in connection with his worship is also itself an act of worship. Therefore, until it can be shown where God says that the use of incense in connection with his worship will not be a part of the worship itself, it cannot, in the very nature of the case, be made an "aid" to the worship. This time the man with the golden censer and his incense is turned away forever. By this time our admiration for the watchman upon

Zion's walls is intensified. We can but admire his loyalty to God, and appreciate to the fullest extent the clear reasoning employed in defending the worship against the innovations of men. But, alas! We are *astonished* when we see him let the "disciple" with no creed but the New Testament cross the line from Judaism to Christianity with instrumental music! The Catholic with the incense, who has been turned back, witnesses this performance and approaches the watchman with the astounding questions: "Did the man with instrumental music who has just crossed over this line produce a 'Scriptural passport' from the apostles of Jesus Christ for the instrument in the praise of God? Did he show where the apostles *commanded* the use of instrumental music? Did he produce an *example* for instrumental music approved by the apostles? Did he show a passage or passages of Scripture given by the New Testament writers from which we must necessarily *infer* that instrumental music was used for any purpose in the praise of God under Christ?" What of the night, watchman? What have you to say? Is it not proper for the man with the incense to say: "Physician, heal thyself?" This defender of "the faith" knows full well that the new covenant is as *silent* on the subject of instrumental music in the praise of God as it is on the subject of burning incense for the same purpose. Does he reply to the man with the incense: "I only use the instrumental music as an *aid* to the singing?" If so, will not he receive this reply? "The apostles gave specific directions concerning singing in the worship of God; they sang themselves and taught others to sing, but *never* used instrumental music in the worship, neither did they even so much as mention it. And, besides this, the word of God says that the use of instrumental music at the time and in connection with his worship is also itself an act of worship. Therefore, until it can be shown where God says that the use of instrumental music in connection with his worship will not itself be a part of the worship, it cannot, in the very nature of the case, be made an 'aid' to the worship." No matter what David *did* or *said* regarding praise to God with instrumental music, we are under a new covenant, and



are *absolutely* shut up to the instructions of the apostles of Jesus Christ for our guidance as to *how* we must render praise to God today. Thus the men with the incense, the Sabbath, and the priesthood *completely* block the passage of the man with the instrumental music from Judaism to Christianity. But he is so fond of instrumental music in the praise of God, because to him it is so pleasing, and he thinks edifying, that he is not willing to surrender it yet awhile. And so he makes one more *desperate* effort to cross the line with the musical instrument. This time he tries to ride over in the word "psallo." This is his last and only chance; and if he fails in his effort with "psallo," he is forever driven back to Judaism with his instrumental music in the praise of God. And now the following claim is set up before the Adventist, the Catholic, and the Episcopalian: "(1) The new covenant enjoins the duty of singing; (2) the word 'psallo' is translated 'sing' in the New Testament; (3) 'Psallo' means to sing with instrumental accompaniment; (4) therefore, when I sing praises with instrumental accompaniment, I am doing what the apostles authorize." This is regarded as the strongest argument in the support of instrumental music in the worship of God, but a fair test shows that it will not stand. I have never met a man who would stick to the proposition and accept the legitimate conclusion of the argument based on the meaning of "psallo." If "psallo," translated "sing" in the New Testament, involves instrumental music, then we cannot praise God acceptably without it, no matter whether we sing hymns, spiritual songs, or psalms. We just simply *cannot* praise God as he directs without the musical instrument, no matter whether the singing be done in the assembly, at home, or on the highway. By the meaning and use of "psallo" instrumental music becomes a *part* of the faith, or gospel. Inasmuch, therefore, as we are commanded to sing, and as the word translated "sing" involves the use of musical instruments, he who fails to use such instruments in the praise of God and to teach others to use them is a violator of God's law. The argument on "psallo" as clearly involves two kinds of music in

the praise of God as the word "Supper" involves two elements—namely, bread and fruit of the vine. Consequently, we can no more worship God acceptably in the singing of his praise without instrumental music than we can proclaim the death of Christ by simply eating bread or drinking the fruit of the vine. It takes both elements to constitute the Lord's Supper; and likewise if the word "psallo" means to sing with instrumental music, we cannot praise God with simply vocal music. This is, *too much* "psallo" for the advocate of instrumental music in the praise of God; and yet he must accept it all, or else abandon forever his claim for such music in God's worship based upon the meaning of this word. What, then, are the facts in the case? Simply these: At one time instrumental accompaniment was one of the associated ideas of "psallo;" but when the New Testament was written, the word had dropped this idea altogether. In fact, it had been absent from "psallo" for one hundred and forty-six years before the apostles began their ministry. Sophocles, who was a native of Greece and for thirty-eight years professor of Greek in Harvard University, published a Greek lexicon in which he gives the meaning of words covering a period from 146 B.C. to A.D. 1100. He sifted every passage in Greek literature, but did not find where "psallo" meant to sing with instrumental accompaniment. So the organ man, who is so vigilantly guarding the line between Judaism and Christianity, cannot allow any one to come with musical instruments in connection with "psallo" even within one hundred and forty-six years of that line. The organ man will not accept the *inevitable* conclusion of his position with reference to "psallo;" therefore, he ought to abandon it. But what does the word "psallo" mean? In so far as this investigation is concerned, it does not matter whether we *ever* know what it means. One thing we may know beyond any doubt—namely, it *does not* mean to sing with the accompaniment of musical instruments. This fact is right upon the surface, and can be seen by every one who can read plain English, whether or not the person ever heard of a Greek lexicon. The fact is this: The apostles used the word in

connection with singing praise to God, and yet they did not use instrumental music in so doing. It is asked: "How do you know the apostles and the churches of the New Testament did not use instrumental music in the worship?" *Precisely in the same way you know they did not burn incense in the worship.* The burden of proof at this point rests upon the organ man, and by the principles of logic and fair dealing he is under the *absolute necessity* of showing from the *New Testament* Scriptures that they did use such music in God's praise. Most certainly the apostles would not have issued a command as a part of the praise of God and then not only violated that command themselves, but suffered others to do it, without some sort of reproof, which would clearly have been the case if the word "psallo" meant to sing with instrumental accompaniment.

*Old path guide 1883 May 27 G. Allen*  
MEANING OF THE GREEK VERB "PSALLO."

I herewith append what seems to me to be the truth with reference to the meaning of "psallo:" "The lexicons are uniform, so far as our observations extend, in giving 'pluck, pull, twang,' as twanging a bowstring or carpenter's line to make a mark; plucking the hair, beard, the strings of a musical instrument, and the like, hence to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, etc., as meanings of 'psallo.' . . . Whatever 'psallo' means *must* be present whenever the word is used. 'Psallo' is frequently used when playing on a musical instrument is wholly absent. Therefore, playing on a musical instrument is not the meaning of 'psallo.' . . . 'Psallo,' unqualifiedly, does not mean to sing at all. It is just as destitute of sing as 'baptidzo' is of water, and is equally as destitute of playing on a musical instrument as either one. It simply means to pluck, or its equivalent; and whether this plucking is of the beard, the hair, the bowstring, the strings of a musical instrument, or something else, must be determined by other words and not by 'psallo.' It determines nothing as to that, no more than 'baptidzo' determines the subject and element of baptism. The associated ideas of 'psallo' are given by lexicographers just as they are of 'baptidzo;' *and if we accept them in that*

*case, we are under absolute obligation to accept them in this.* Now, what does 'psallize' mean? To play on an instrument? No. No scholar will say unqualifiedly that it does. It means to pluck. It may mean to pluck a harp; it may not. Whether this or that is 'psallized' must be determined by qualifying words. The qualifying word shows *the instrument used in playing.* If you 'psallize' with the *harp*, that is the instrument; if you 'psallize' with the *heart*, that is the instrument; if you 'psallize' with the *spirit*, that is the instrument. Therefore, these (heart and spirit) were the instruments on which the Corinthians and Ephesians 'psallized.' When one instrument is named, another is not meant, nor can either be in 'psallizing' unless it is named, since it is not in 'psallo.' When baptism is said to be with water, you can't put in fire also, for the *water puts it out.* Just so when 'psallizing' is said to be with the heart, you can't put in the harp; and *this is the only kind of 'psallizing' found in the New Testament.* Under the ritualism of the law, 'psallizing' was with musical instruments when done in the praise of God; but now, in contradistinction to that, it is to be done in the spirit, the heart, the understanding. There is no instrument in the word, as every 'scholar' knows, and none mentioned in the New Testament but those *internal* ones whose harmonious chords are to be struck to the praise of Almighty God. So far as singing is concerned, that is commanded in other words; and so far as 'psallizing' is concerned, that is to be *in the heart.* In addition to the foregoing, I append all the passages in the New Testament where 'psallo' and 'psalmos' occur. Rom. 15: 9: 'I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing ["psallo"] to thy name.' 1 Cor. 14: 15: 'I will sing ["psallo"] with the spirit, and I will sing ["psallo"] with the understanding also.' Eph. 5: 19: 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms ["psalmos"] and hymns and spiritual songs, singing ["aidontes"] and *making melody* ["psallontes"] *in your heart to the Lord.*' James 5: 13: 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms ["psalleteo"].' Luke 20: 42: 'For David himself says in the book of Psalms ["psalmoon"].' Luke 24: 44: '. . . . All things written . . . in the

Psalms ["psalmois"] concerning me.' Acts 1: 20: 'For it is written in the book of the Psalms ["psalmon"].' Acts 13: 33: 'As it is also written in the second Psalm ["psalmo"].' 1 Cor. 14: 26: 'When you come together, every one of you hath a psalm ["psalmon"].' Col. 3: 16: '. . . Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms ["psalmois"],' etc." (F. G. Allen, in *Old Path Guide* for May, 1880.)

In addition to this clear and unanswerable argument regarding the meaning of the word by which it is attempted to justify the use of instrumental music in the praise of God today, I will give what J. W. McGarvey has said on the same subject: "No scholar of reputation has ever taken the position that the singing of psalms requires an instrument. It would be as easy to show that the Greek word for 'baptism' requires sprinkling. A few men among us who are overzealous for the organ have so argued, but they are not sustained by real scholars."

#### INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN HEAVEN.

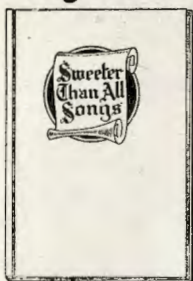
It is also contended that because there is, or will be, instrumental music in heaven, it certainly could not be wrong in the church on earth. This is a very *feeling* and altogether pathetic argument, but this matter must be settled by the authority of the apostles. The claim for instrumental music in the church on the ground that there is that sort of music in heaven seems to rest upon certain passages in Revelation, which I will give: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters: . . . and the voice which I heard *was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps.*" (Rev. 14: 2.) This passage does not even say there are harps in heaven, much less that harps are played. It is said that a "*voice*" was heard, and that it was "*as*" the voice of harpers harping with their harps. The sound was not that which emanates from a musical instrument, but from the *voice* of harpers. But our attention is called to Rev. 5: 8: "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and 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." Here it is claimed that a *literal* harp is in heaven. Does it not also in the very same connection speak of *golden bowls of incense*? But you say: "The passage says the incense is the prayers of the saints; hence, incense is used *symbolically* and not *literally*." Why do you say this? The reason is plain. If it be admitted that literal incense is offered in heaven, then it can be used in the worship on earth *precisely* for the same reason you put instrumental music in the worship now—namely, because we find it in heaven. But what about this passage? "And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." (Rev. 8: 3.) It is not stated in this passage, as in the other, that the incense is "the prayers of the saints," but that the incense was *added* "unto the prayers of all the saints." So if there are literal harps in heaven, with which instrumental music is made to the praise of God, there are also golden censers in heaven and a golden altar, on which is offered in the worship of God burning incense. If, therefore, as before stated, we are at liberty to have instrumental music in the church on earth because such music is in heaven, we are also at liberty to burn incense in the church for the same reason. Again, it is urged that "if the harps referred to as being in heaven are only symbols of something else, certainly it would not be wrong to have musical instruments in the praise on earth, since God uses such instruments with which to symbolize a thing in heaven." This does not relieve the embarrassing situation for him who advocates instrumental music in the church, since the *very same* argument can be made for the burning of incense in the worship of God, for incense is also used to symbolize something in heaven.

There is no possible way in which one can cross the line between Judaism and Christianity with instrumental music by the authority of God. Some reason, then, must exist for its absence in the worship in New Testament times. Were the apostles and early Christians

prejudiced against such music in the praise of God? No. They were trained up from infancy under Judaism, where they were accustomed to praise God in that way. Did they not understand the use of musical instruments? They certainly did. The priests were the musicians, and it is said that a great company of these became obedient to the faith. (See Acts 6: 7.) How, then, can we account for the absence of such music from the worship of God under Christ? Simply this: The Holy Spirit *left it out* of the worship when he guided the apostles into all the truth. The very *silence* of the New Testament on the subject is an *invincible* argument against its use in the praise of God today. According to the most authentic church historians, it was seven hundred and fifty-five years after the establishment of the church before any one crossed the line between Judaism and Christianity with instrumental music. "That instrumental music was not practiced by the primitive Christians, but was an aid to devotion of later times, is evident from church history." (Religious Encyclopedia by J. Newton Brown, Baptist.) "From the French church proceeded the use of the organ, the first musical instrument used in the church." (Neander's "Church History," Vol. 3, p. 1.) "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 660; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek Emperor, Constantine Copronymous, to Pepin, King of the Franks, in 755." (The American Cyclopedic, Vol. 12, p. 668.) Instruments of music in connection with the praise of God under Judaism are mentioned more than thirty-five times, but during the whole New Testament period there is not one *single* mention of such instruments being used in the praise of God under Christ. Why this difference? What necessity existed demanding the mention of them in the Old Testament that did not exist during the days of the apostles? None—*absolutely* none. Hence, the very fact that they are not mentioned in connection with the praise of God under Christianity is an *overwhelming* and *invincible* argument against their use today.

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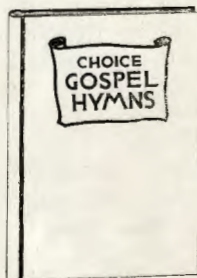
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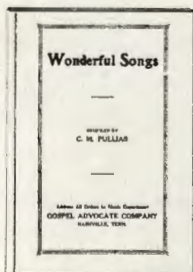


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