

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHURCHES.

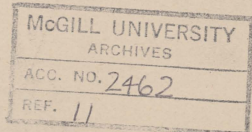
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(2) The introduction of instrumental music is proved by experience to tend to the decay of congregational singing, and to the introduction of many kinds of musical performances not tending to spiritual edification, but more akin to the mission of the opera house than to that of the church of Christ. It has hence led to differences of opinion and to contention; so that the organ may truly be said to have been an instrument not of harmony but of discord.

(3) The introduction of instrumental music leads to confusion of ideas as to the applicability of the temple service of the Jewish church to the Christian church, a principle which if once admitted opens the way to every species of ritualism. In connection with this we find the advocates of instrumental music speaking of a service or ministry of song, of which there is no mention in the New Testament—praise in the Christian church being the spontaneous and united offering of the whole Christian people, and the harmony of voices being merely a means to this end. It is to be observed that though instruments of music were used in the Temple ritual by Priests and Levites, they were not introduced into the Synagogue worship, which more nearly corresponds with that of the New Testament. We have no right therefore to cite the Jewish precedent, unless we adopt also the sacrificing priesthood; and if we do this we go over at once to Rome. It is further to be observed that all this has nothing to do with what has been called "singing the Gospel." This



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(4) Attempts are made to vindicate the introduction of instrumental music by the still more mischievous doctrine that this is necessary to attract young and worldly people to the church by ministering to their sensuous tastes. This is directly contrary to the teaching and practice of Christ and His Apostles; to the conduct of our reforming forefathers, who left the magnificent ritual of Rome for the simplicity of the Gospel; and to all experience of human nature, which shews that such meretricious attractions are fatal to the true prosperity of the church, and tend to delude unwary souls into a belief that they are worshipping God when they are merely gratifying their own senses; while these petty attempts to attract the thoughtless, disgust and repel from religion the more earnest and practical class of minds.

(5) The introduction of instrumental music is a waste of the means at the disposal of the church for the promotion of the truth, and should on this ground be condemned by every thoughtful Christian. The sum invested in a single city church organ, is often sufficient to support one or two missionaries to the heathen or to the neglected districts of our own country. Viewed in this way, and in the light of the previous statements, the sound of the organ should be to the ear of the Christian nothing less than the dirge of lost souls.

(6) The case of those who have always been accustomed to the use of instrumental music and other so-called aids to devotion, is different from that of those whose predecessors had emancipated themselves from such elements of the world, and who afterwards return to them. The latter are in every way less excusable than the former.

(7) It is held by some that in "non-essential" matters of this kind, when a majority is in favour of a change, the minority should submit. It is clear, however, that this cannot be correct, otherwise a numerical majority could always override the truth, and it would become a duty rather than a crime to follow the multitude in downward ways. The minority may submit if they can reconcile it with conscience and principle to acquiesce in the innovation, but they ought to retire if they cannot, in consistency with their felt duty to Christ, do so.

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and of those who adhere to them, may involve a terrible responsibility altogether disproportioned to the importance of the question at issue. If they should be in the wrong, or influenced by motives of ostentation and worldly conformity, how can they answer to Christ for introducing the seeds of evil and dissension among His people. If they think they are right, there is a still higher law; for if in the pursuit of what is confessedly not necessary even to the external worship of the Church, they offend the weakest of their brethren, they thereby expose themselves and the congregation which they represent to that solemn denunciation of our Lord—"Woe to that man through whom the offence cometh"; and they cannot expect any blessing from God until they repent and make amends for the evil they have done.

(9) Though it is true that in recent times Assemblies and Synods of Presbyterian churches have agreed to tolerate the use of instrumental music, it is to be feared that they have done so rather from a weak desire to preserve outward unity than from regard to any principle. The larger catechism of the Westminster divines holds that the second commandment forbids "devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any wise approving any religious worship not instituted by God himself;" on the ground of "custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence soever." It might relieve the minds of some who profess to adhere to the Westminster standards, if information could be given as to how and where God has 'instituted' the use of the organ in Christian worship. Let it be observed also that it is in relation to this very commandment that we blame the Church of Rome for the introduction of images and pictures, which may also be held to gratify taste and promote worship.

(10) It may be held that there is express testimony in the New Testament against mechanical aids in praise. Not only are these not referred to as in use, but no mention is made of them except in the symbolic language of the Revelation. Farther, the word *Psallo*, which might be supposed literally to refer to playing on a stringed instrument, and if taken in this very literal sense might be supposed to permit the use of stringed instruments as an accompaniment to the voice, is used in connections which show that it means something quite different, namely, the melody of the inner spiritual man, and is properly so translated in our version. For example, this word occurs in the expression:—"I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also," 1 Cor. xiv. 15.—"Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord," Eph. v. 19. The same sense applies to the only other passages in which it is used—Rom. xv. 9; Jas. v. 13—so that it may truly be said that the only

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