

# Musical Instruments in the Public Worship of God, Appendix A

## The Historical Evidence

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The word of God is the only authority and infallible standard for determining the doctrine, government and worship of the church. If one strictly adheres to the regulative principle of worship, the biblical case against the use of musical instruments in public worship is irrefutable (no warrant, no practice). Although the study of church history obviously does not carry the same weight as Scripture, it can be helpful nevertheless. The testimony from church history in support of the biblical evidence against the use of musical instruments in new covenant worship is incredibly strong. The great theologians and apologists (of both the eastern and western branches of Christendom) for at least five centuries regarded the use of musical instruments in public worship as things that belonged *solely* to the old covenant dispensation. If the apostolic churches had used musical instruments in their worship, the attitude toward instrumental music in public worship by the church fathers would be extremely difficult to explain. For those who read this book who come from a Reformed or Presbyterian perspective, note carefully that the non-use of musical instruments in public worship was the position of all the great reformers and theologians from the Calvinist wing of the Reformation. Most Presbyterians did not abandon the non-use position until the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sadly, there is only a small remnant of Presbyterians today that still follows the biblical practice. The one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honour God, is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute.  
—**Clement** (church father, Alexandria, A.D. 153-217).<sup>1</sup>

The *kithara* is the active soul being moved by the commandments of God, the *psalterion* is the pure mind being moved by spiritual knowledge. The musical instruments of the Old Covenant understood spiritually are applicable to us. The organ is the church of God composed of contemplative and active souls. The pleasant sounding cymbal is the active soul captured by the desire for Christ. —**Origen** (church father, Alexandria), *Commentaries on the Psalms* (3<sup>rd</sup> century).

Of old at the time those of the circumcision were worshiping with symbols and types it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the *psalterion* and *kithara* and to do this on Sabbath days (breaking the rest and transgressing the law concerning the Sabbath). But we in an inward manner keep the part of the Jew, according to the saying of the apostle (Romans 2:28f.). We render our hymn with a living *psalterion* and a living *kithara*, with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith

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<sup>1</sup> Some books and tracts attribute the following quote to Justin Martyr (A.D. 166): “Plain singing is not childish, but only the singing with lifeless organs, with dancing and cymbals. Whence the use of such instruments and other things fit for children are laid aside, and plain singing only retained.” This is actually a quote from Theodoret (5<sup>th</sup> century) that was mistakenly attributed to Justin Martyr.

and piety, we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms.—**Eusebius** (church historian/bishop, Palestine), *Commentary on Psalm 91* (4<sup>th</sup> century).

It was only permitted to the Jews as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now, instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal. Instruments appertain not to Christians. —**John Chrysostom** (church father, Eastern/Greek), *Homily on Psalm 149* (4<sup>th</sup> century).

If God allowed bloody sacrifices on account of the childhood of men, why do you marvel if also the music of the *kithara* and *psalterion* was played? —**Isidore** (abbot of Pelusium), *Epistles* (4<sup>th</sup> century).

You [God's saints] are "trumpet, psaltery, harp, timbrel, choir, strings, and organ, cymbals of jubilation sounding well," because sounding in harmony. All these are you: let not that which is vile, not that which is transitory, not that which is ludicrous, be thought of here. —**Augustine** (bishop, North Africa), *Commentary on Psalm 150* (A.D. 354-430).

It is time to turn to the New Testament to confirm what is said in the Old, and, particularly, to point out that the office of psalmody is not to be considered abolished merely because many other observances of the Old Law have fallen into desuetude. Only the corporal institutions have been rejected, like circumcision, the sabbaths, sacrifices, discrimination in foods. So, too, the trumpets, harps, cymbals and timbrels. For the sound of these we now have a better substitute in the music of the mouths of men. The daily ablutions, the new-moon observances, the careful inspection of leprosy are completely past and gone, along with whatever else was necessary only for a time—as it were, for children. Of course, what was spiritual in the Old Testament, for example, faith, piety, prayer, fasting, patience, chastity, psalm-singing—all this has been increased in the New Testament rather than diminished.—**Nicea** (bishop, Remesiana), *On the Utility of Hymn Singing* (5<sup>th</sup> century).

Simply singing is not agreeable to children, but singing with lifeless instruments and with dancing and clapping; on which account the use of this kind of instruments and of others agreeable to children is removed from the songs in the churches, and there is left remaining simply singing.—**Theodoret** (bishop, Syria), *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox* (5<sup>th</sup> century).

So it was not in any need of victims or craving odors that God commanded them to sacrifice, but that he might heal the sufferings of those who were sick. So he also allowed the use of instrumental music, not that he delighted in the harmony, but that he might little by little end the deception of idols. For if he had offered them perfect laws immediately after their deliverance from Egypt, they would have been rebellious and thrust away from the bridle, and would have hastened back to their former ruin. —**Theodoret** (bishop, Syria), *On the Healing of Greek Afflictions* (5<sup>th</sup> century).

But our Church does not make use of musical instruments such as harps and psalteries, in the divine praises, for fear of seeming to Judaize. As the Philosopher says (*Polit.* viii, 6), "Teaching

should not be accompanied with a flute or any artificial instrument such as the harp or anything else of this kind: but only with such things as make good hearers.” For such like musical instruments move the soul to pleasure rather than create a good disposition within it. In the Old Testament instruments of this description were employed, both because the people were more coarse and carnal—so that they needed to be aroused by such instruments as also by earthly promises—and because these material instruments were figures of something else. —**Thomas Aquinas** (philosopher and doctor of theology, Roman Catholic Church), *Summa Theologica* (13<sup>th</sup> century).

It is not the least part of Religion, that consisteth in the pompe of ceremonies, in cloathes, in vessell, candles, bells, organs, concertes, odours, sacrifices, gestures, pictures, in the choise of meates, & fasts & such other things that are in singular admiration & adoration of the unlearned people, who receive and take heed only to such things as are before their eyes. —**Cornelius Agrippa** (doctor of laws, member of the Roman Catholic Church, counselor to Emperor Charles V), *De Vanitate Scientiarum & Artium* (1510).

We have brought into our churches a certain operose and theatrical music; such a confused, disorderly chattering of some words, as I hardly think was ever heard in any of the Grecian or Roman theatres. The church rings with the noise of trumpets, pipes and dulcimers; and human voices strive to bear their part with them. Men run to church as to a theatre, to have their ears tickled. And for this end organ-makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste all their time in learning these whining tones. —**Erasmus** (classical scholar and humanist), *In Novum Testamentum Anno-tationes* (1522).

But the promise made, that “Wheresoever two or three be gathered together in my name, there shall I be in the midst of them,” condemneth all such as condemneth the congregation gathered in his name. But mark well the word “gathered;” I mean not to hear piping, singing, or playing; nor to patter upon beads, or books whereof they have no understanding; not to commit idolatry, honoring that for God which is no God indeed. For with such will I neither join myself in common prayer, nor in receiving external sacraments; for in so doing I should affirm their superstition and abominable idolatry, which I, by God’s grace, never will do, neither counsel others to do, to the end. —**John Knox** (Reformer, Scotland), *A Declaration of the True Nature and Object of Prayer* (1554).

It would be nothing but mimicry if we followed David today in singing with cymbals, flutes, tambourines and psalteries. In fact, the papists were seriously deceived in their desire to worship God with their pompous inclusion of organs, trumpets, oboes and similar instruments. That has only served to amuse the people in their vanity, and to turn them away from the true institution which God has ordained. In a word, the musical instruments were in the same class as sacrifices, candelabra, lamps and similar things. Those who take this approach are reverting to a sort of Jewishness, as if they wanted to mingle the Law and the Gospel, and thus bury our Lord Jesus Christ. When we are told that David sang with a musical instrument, let us carefully remember that we are not to make a rule of it. Rather, we are to recognise today that we must sing the praises of God in simplicity, since the shadows of the Law are past, and since in our Lord Jesus Christ we have the truth and embodiment of all these things which were given to the ancient

fathers in the time of their ignorance or smallness of faith. —**John Calvin** (Reformer, Geneva), *Sermons on Second Samuel* (1562).

VI. That the use of organs be removed [i.e., discarded].—From the list of demands presented by the English Puritans to the Convocation of 1563.

That they would endeavor to obtain of the magistrate the laying aside of organs, and the singing with them in the churches, even out of the time of worship, either before or after sermons. —**The Synod of Holland and Zeeland** (1594).

Exhorting the people only to rejoice in praising God, he maketh mention of those instruments which by Gods commandment were appointed in the old Law, but under Christ the use thereof is abolished in the Church. —**Marginal Notes on Psalm 150 in the Geneva Bible** [compiled by various Reformed/Puritan contributors; the notes went through several revisions] (1599).

The eleventh fault they finde, is, for that wee use no Organs in our Churches. [C]ommonly we doe therefore not use them: whilst we finde more hindrance to proceed thereof then profit, by the worship of God: and also in this case we desire to remaine by the simplicity of the Apostolicall Churches, which neither had nor used any such things in their congregations. —**A Full Declaration of the Faith and Ceremonies Professed in the Dominions of the Most Illustrious and Noble Prince Fredericke, V. Prince Elector Palatine** (1614).

In the Christian church the mind must be incited to spiritual joy, not by pipes and trumpets and timbrels, with which God formerly indulged his ancient people on account of the hardness of their hearts, but by psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. —**David Paraeus** (professor/theologian, University of Heidelberg), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* (1618).

The PASTOR loveth no music in the house of God but such as edifieth, and stoppeth his ears at instrumental music, as serving for the pedagogy of the untoward Jews under the law, and being figurative of that spiritual joy whereunto our hearts should be opened under the gospel.

The PRELATE loveth carnal and curious singing to the ear, more than the spiritual melody of the gospel, and therefore would have antiphony and organs in the cathedral kirks, upon no greater reason than other shadows of the law of Moses; or lesser instruments, as lutes, citherns, or pipes, might be used in other kirks. —**David Calderwood** (minister and church historian, Church of Scotland), *The Pastor and the Prelate or Reformation and Conformity Shortly Compared* (1628).

The first question was, If the Primitive Church had such chaunting Idol-service, as is in our Cathedrall Churches? The Rejoynder after some words spent about *singing*, (about which he bringeth not the least resemblance of that in question, untill the fourth age after Christ) excepteth first, that *Organall musicke was gods ordinance in the old Testament, and that not significant, or typicall; and therefore is sinfully called Idol-service.* 2. *That all men whose hearts are not averse, by distraction, stupidity, or prejudice, feele such musicke to worke much upon their affections.* To this I say 1. That his denying of Organall musicke to have beene *significant or typicall*, is without reason, and against the current of our Divines; taken (as it may seeme) out of *Bellarmino (de missa. Lib. 2. Cap. 15.)* who useth this evasion against those words of *P. Martyr: Musicall organs perteyne to the Jewish Ceremonie, and agree no more to us, than Circumcision.*

So that we may neglect it, and take him as saying, that nothing which was ordained in the old Testament (no not sacrificing beasts) is now an Idol-service. 2. For that, and the other, both together, it is fit the Rejoynder should be put in minde how many, and what kinde of men, he accuseth of *distraction, stupidity or prejudice!* —**William Ames** (English Puritan), *A Fresh Suit Against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship* (1633).

[C]ertainly the singing of Davids psalmes was an acceptable worship of God, not only in his owne, but in succeeding times. As in Solomon's time 2 *Chron.* 5.13. in Jehosaphats time 2 *Chron.* 20.21. in Ezra his time *Ezra* 3.10,11. And the text is evident in Hezekiahs time they are commanded to sing praise in the words of David and Asaph, 2 *Chron.* 29.30 which one place may serve to reesolve two of the questions (the first and the last) at once, for this commandement was it ceremoniall or morall? Some things in it indeed were ceremoniall, as their musicall instruments &c but what ceremony was there in singing praise with the words of David and Asaph? What if David was a type of Christ, was Asaph also? Was everything of David typicall? Are his words (which are morall, universall, and perpetuall authority in all nations and ages) are they typicall? What type can be imagined in making use of his songs to praise the Lord? If they were typicall because the ceremony of musicall instruments was joined with them, then their prayers were also typicall, because they had that ceremony of incense admixt with them: but we know that prayer then was a morall duty, notwithstanding the incense; and soe singing those psalmes notwithstanding their musicall instruments. —**Richard Mather** (New England Puritan), Preface to *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* [*i.e.* the Bay Psalm Book] (1640).

The Jewish Church, not as it was a church but as it was Jewish, had an High Priest, typifying our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. As it was Jewish, it had musicians to play upon harps, psalteries, cymbals and other musical instruments in the temple. —**George Gillespie** (minister, Church of Scotland; Westminster divine), *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland* (1641).

[W]e cannot but admire the good hand of GOD in the great things done here already, particularly; That the Covenant (the Foundation of the whole Work) is taken; Prelacie and the whole train thereof, extirpated; The Service-Book in many places forsaken, plain and powerful preaching set up; Many Colledges in *Cambridge* provided with such Ministers, as are most zealous of the best Reformation; Altars removed; The Communion in some places given at the Table sitting; The great Organs at *Pauls* and of *Peters* in *Westminster* taken down; Images and many other monuments of Idolatry defaced and abolished. —**John Maitland, Alexander Henderson, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie and George Gillespie** (the Scottish delegates to the Westminster Assembly), *The Letter from the Commissioners at London to the General Assembly* (1644).

We were greatly refreshed to hear by Letters from our Commissioners there with you of the great good things the Lord hath wrought among you and for you many corruptions, as Altars, Images, and other Monuments of Idolatry and Superstition removed the great Organs at *Pauls* and *Peters* taken down. —**General Assembly of the Church of Scotland** (in an official letter to the Church of England), *The General Assemblies Answer to the right Reverend the Assembly of Divines in the Kirk of England* (1644).

But it hath been often said, *Take away the Common Prayer Book, take away our Religion*. Nay, our Religion is in the Bible, there is our God, and our Christ, and our Faith, and our Creed in all points. The whole Bible was Paul's belief; there are the Psalms of David, and his Prayers, and the Lord's Prayer, and other prayers, by which we may learn to pray. We have still the Lord's Songs, the Songs of Zion, sung by many with grace in their hearts, *making melody to the Lord*, though without organs. There we have all the commandments. —**Samuel Gibson** (minister, Church of England; Westminster divine), *The Ruin of the Authors and Fomentors of Civil Wars* (1645).

God's spirit worketh not with Ceremonies, and so they are as the offering of Swine's blood, and the slaying of a man; and so Abomination to God, Isa. 66:1,2. The holy spirit is merited to us by Christ, Joh. 16:14. He shall receive of mine, and shew unto you: But who can say that the grace of joy in the holy Ghost, wrought by the droning of Organs, and the holinesse taught by the Surplice, is a work of the spirit merited by Christ as our High Priest? □ Now Altars, Organs, Jewish Ephods, or Surplice, Masse-cloaths, and Romish Crossing, bowing to Altars, Images, are badges of Jewish and Popish Religion. —**Samuel Rutherford** (minister and professor, Church of Scotland; Westminster divine), *The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication* (1646).

Singing with Instruments was typical, and so a ceremonial worship and therefore is ceased. — **John Cotton** (minister, New England Puritan), *Singing of Psalmes a Gospel-Ordinance* (1647).

Albeit the typical ceremonies of musical instruments in God's public worship, belonging to the pedagogy of the church, in her minority before Christ, be now abolished with the rest of the ceremonies; yet the moral duties shadowed forth by them, are still to be studied, because this duty of praising God, and praising him with all our mind, strength, and soul, is moral, whereunto we are perpetually obliged. —**David Dickson** (minister, Church of Scotland), *Explications of the Psalms* (1655).

He tells us next, that *there is no warrant in the New Covenant for Organs* (which I plead not for, nor for any such instrument). —**John Brown**, of Wamphray (minister, Church of Scotland/exiled to Rotterdam during the Restoration), *Quakerisme: The Path-way to Paganisme* (1678).

The praisers, who were of the sons of men, are described (1.) as having harps; (2.) golden vials: in allusion to the Levitical service in the temple, where they had musical instruments, and incense in bowls or vials, which, Zech. 14:20, are called "the bowls of the altar." Not that musical instruments are to be in the worship of God now, neither incense; which, as it was the type of prayer and praises, Ps. 141:2, "Let my prayer come up before thee as incense;" so those harps were of that "spiritual melody," as the Apostle calls it, which we make in our hearts to God, even of "spiritual songs," Eph. 5:19. —**Thomas Goodwin** (minister, Independent Puritan; president Magdalen College, Oxford; Westminster divine), *An Exposition of the Revelation* (1683).

As for church music, for organs, and the like, those primitive ages were wholly ignorant of them; for it cannot rationally be conceived, that in those days of continual persecution or violence, they could either use or preserve them; all that they looked after was, to sing in "rhyme, metre, tune,

and concert,” to offer up unto God the praises of their voices, lips, and mouths, which Clemens Alexandrinus thinks was emblemized or shadowed forth by those musical instruments mentioned in Psalm 150, where, saith he, “we are commanded to praise God on the psaltery, that is, on the tongue, because the tongue is the psaltery of the Lord; and to praise him on the harp, by which we must understand the mouth; and to praise him on the loud sounding cymbals, by which the tongue is to be understood, which sounds or speaks through the knocking or coition of the lips.” —**Peter King** (Lord High Chancellor of England; member, Church of England), *An Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship, of the Primitive Church* (1691).

I. The instrumental musick used in the old church of Israel was an institution of God: it was (2 Chron. 29:25) the commandment of the Lord “by the prophets.” And the instruments are called “God’s instruments,” (1 Chron. 16:42), and “instruments of the Lord,” (2 Chron. 7:6). Now, there is not one word of institution in the *New Testament* for instrumental musick in the worship of God. And because the holy God rejects all He does not command in His worship, He now therefore in effect says unto us, “I will not hear the melody of thy Organs.” But on the other side, the rule given doth abundantly intimate that no *voice* is now to be heard in the church, but what is significant and edifying, by signification; which the voice of *instruments* is not.

II. Tho’ instrumental musick were admitted and appointed in the worship of God under the *Old Testament*, yet we do not find it practised in the *synagogue* of the Jews, but only in the *temple*. It thence appears to have been a part of the ceremonial pedagogy, which is now abolished; nor can any say it was a part of *moral* worship. And whereas the common usage hath now confined instrumental musick to *cathedrals*, it seems therein too much to *Judaize*; which to do is a part of the Anti-Christian apostacy, as well as to *Paganize*.

III. In our asserting a matter of the *Old Testament* to have been *typical*, ’tis not needful that we be always able to particularize any *future mysteries* of the *New Testament* therein referred unto; *truths* which were then of a *present* consideration, were sometimes represented in the types then used among the people of God, which helps to understand the case of instrumental musick.

IV. Instrumental musick in the worship of God is but a very late invention and corruption in the church of the *New Testament*. The writings that go under the name of Justin Martyr deny it and decry it. Chrysostom speaks meanly of it. Even Aquinas himself, about 400 years ago, determines against it, as *Jewish* and *carnal*. Bellarmine himself confesses that it was but late received in the church.

V. If we admit instrumental musick in the worship of God, how can we resist the imposition of all the *instruments* used among the ancient Jews?—yea, *dancing* as well as *playing*, and several other Judaic actions? or, how can we decline a whole *rabble* of church-officers, necessary to be introduced for instrumental musick, whereof our Lord Jesus Christ hath left us no manner of direction? —**Cotton Mather** (minister, New England Puritan), *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702).

[C]ertainly a man must be blind, who does not see, that trumpets, harps, and such like musical instruments, belonged to the pomp and ceremony of the *Jewish* worship. Now all these thing are abrogated, together with the law that appointed the worship; unless any of them appear afresh injoined by some particular command. —**James Peirce** (minister, English nonconformist/Presbyterian), *A Vindication of the Dissenters* (1718).

It is objected that those arguments which have been taken from the practice of the Old Testament church, to prove singing an ordinance, may, with equal justice, be alleged to prove the use of instrumental music in religious worship; since we very often read of their praising God with ‘the sound of the trumpet, psaltery, harp, organ,’ and other musical instruments. This is the principle argument brought for the use of musical instruments by those who defend it and conclude it an help to devotion. But, though we often read of music being used in singing the praises of God under the Old Testament; yet if what has been said concerning its being a type of that spiritual joy which attends our praising God for the privilege of that redemption which Christ has purchased, the objection will appear to have no weight, the type being now abolished, together with the ceremonial law. Besides, though we read of the use of music in the temple-service, yet it does not sufficiently appear that it was ever used in the Jewish synagogues; the mode of worship observed in which more resembled that which is at present performed by us in our public assemblies. But what may sufficiently determine this matter, is that we have no precept nor precedent for it in the New Testament, either from the practice of Christ, or his apostles. Some, indeed, allege that the absence of any such precept or precedent overthrows the ordinance of singing, and pretend that this ought to be no more used by us than the harp, organ, or other musical instruments. But it might as well be objected that, because incense, which was used under the ceremonial law, together with prayer in the temple, is not now to be offered by us, prayer ought to be laid aside; which is, as all own, a duty founded on the moral law. —**Thomas Ridgeley** (minister, English nonconformist), *A Body of Divinity: Wherein the Doctrines of the Christian Religion are Explained and Defended, Being the Substance of Several Lectures Upon the Assembly’s Larger Catechism* (1731-32).

No such things in Christ’s service, by his appointment, as liturgies, litanies, church music, organs, flutes, violins, singing of prayers, anthems, or collects; no burning incense, odours, tapers, and candles upon altars; no cringings, crossings, kneelings at altars, bowing to the east; but praying in the spirit, and praising in the spirit, receiving the Lord’s supper, the bread and the wine, according to his institution, without any of their pagan and papal inventions and superstitions. —**Thomas DeLaune** (English nonconformist/Baptist), *A Plea for the Non-Conformists* (1733).

Q. Is there any other sin forbidden in the second command, besides idolatry, or the worshipping of God by images?

A. Yes; namely the sin of superstition or will-worship.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Men’s presuming to worship God by means of their own devising, adding human inventions to God’s institutions, or contriving other ways to serve and worship God than what he hath appointed or warranted in his word.

Q. Who are guilty of this sin?

A. All these who add new sacraments to the two of Christ’s institution, or these who add the sign of the cross to baptism, the posture of kneeling to the Lord’s supper, the keeping of holy-days to the Lord’s day, playing with organs to the singing of the voice, reading of a book to prayer; or who erect altars, pictures or crosses in places of worship, and bow unto them, or bow to the east, and at the name of Jesus, and the like. All these are superstitious inventions in God’s worship, and human additions to God’s institutions, without any warrant in his word, and therefore against



the second command. —**John Willison** (minister, Church of Scotland), *An Example of Plain Catechising, Upon the Assembly's Shorter Catechism* (1737).

*Q.* May we not use harps, organs, and other musical instruments in praising God? *A.* No, for these, though used in the temple services, were not used in the Jewish synagogues, nor in the New-Testament worship, nor are suited to the spiritual nature of it, John 4:23,24. —**John Brown**, of Haddington (minister and professor, Associate [Burgher] Church of Scotland), *A Help for the Ignorant; or An Essay, Towards an Easy, Plain, Practical, and Extensive Explication of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism* (1758).

No suitable endeavours are used to prevent the growth of atheism, idolatry and superstition: and though prelacy, as well as popery, is growing apace in the lands, and organs publicly used in that superstitious worship; yet no testimony is given against them, but new modes introduced into the worship of God, for carnal ends, as a gradual advance toward that superstition. —**The Reformed Presbytery** (Old Dissenters/Cameronians/Covenanters), *Act, Declaration, and Testimony, for the Whole of our Covenanted Reformation, as Attained to, and Established in, Britain and Ireland, Particularly Betwixt the Years 1638 and 1649, Inclusive* (1761).

We find no footsteps of using musical *instruments* in singing God's praise, in the New Testament. The use of musical instruments in the worship of God is but a modern invention. Their warmest advocates cannot pretend to find them in the Christian church before the year 660. —**Archibald Hall** (minister, Associate [Anti-Burgher] Church of Scotland), *Gospel-Worship. Being an Attempt to Exhibit a Scriptural View of the Nature, Obligations, Manner, and Ordinances, of the Worship of God, in the New Testament* (1770).

The simplicity and spirituality of gospel-worship is further depraved, by what is called *antiphonal singing*; by chanting of prayers, and instrumental music. —**Adam Gib** (minister, Associate [Anti-Burgher] Church of Scotland), *The Present Truth: A Display of the Secession Testimony* (1774).

We wish not to be rigorous or uncandid: but when we see Christians deceived through the subtleties and devices of satan, turned aside from their duty, and cheated out of their privileges; why should we be silent? The use of the organ and other instruments of music in the Jewish church, was agreeable enough to a worldly sanctuary, and the pomp of ceremonial worship; but does not accord so well with the spiritual nature of the New Testament. —**Associate Reformed Synod** (merger of some Associate Presbyterians and Reformed Presbyterians, in 1782), *A Draught of an Overture, Prepared and Published by a Committee of the Associate Reformed Synod, for the Purpose of Illustrating and Defending the Doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith, According to an Appointment of Said Synod* (1787).

As the use of musical instruments, in public worship, has no sanction in the New Testament, nor in the practice of the Christian church for several hundred years after its erection, it shall not be introduced, under any form, into any of the churches. —**The Associate Reformed Synod**, *The Government, Discipline, and Worship, of the Associate Reformed Church in North America*. (1799).

[The Church of England] makes it imperative for her ministers to conduct worship of God in fantastic garments (one of which, the *surplice*, was originally worn by the *Pagan* priests, and introduced into the Church of Rome by Pope Adrian, in 796) and within consecrated walls—she has even encumbered the ordinance of marriage with absurd rites—employs instrumental music in the worship of God—uses vain repetitions and unmeaning responses in some of her most solemn devotional exercises—and, not farther to enumerate, she has appointed upwards of one hundred and fifty *holidays* to be annually observed.

Such is the specimen of the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, and we object to them *in toto*, as superstitious and unscriptural, as wantonly violating Christian liberty, and as involving the observers of them in the guilt of symbolizing with idolaters. —**Thomas Neilson** (minister, Reformed Presbyterian Church, Scotland), “Evils, Constitutional and Practical, of the Prelatic Establishment of the British Empire,” in *Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation* (1841).

The opinions expressed above, on the subject of instrumental music, are adverse, as is well known, to those which have prevailed, and continue to prevail in the Presbyterian church. As a calm and guarded vindication of the practice which we would by no means be understood to recommend, we have given place to expressions from which our readers, no less than ourselves, may choose to dissent. —**Charles Hodge** (professor, Princeton Theological Seminary; editor *Biblical Repertory* [later *Princeton Review*]), footnote to an article entitled “Church Music” by Francis A. Ewing which appeared in the *Biblical Repertory* (1843).

So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church services, I think with Mr. G— that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, to all spiritual-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert. —**Alexander Campbell** (minister and co-founder of the Christian Church [*i.e.* Campbellites]), in *The Millennial Harbinger* (1851).

But the grand objection to the use of instrumental music, in the manner herein objected to, is that it is contrary to the express will of God, as shown by his positive institutions for his own praise. [A]bove all instruments the organ is liable to this great objection, to wit, that it has been, more than all others united, the great engine in corrupting the public praise of God, and has been, for centuries together, one of the peculiar devices of the Papists to seduce mankind into attendance upon their superstitious and idolatrous worship. [F]or many years I have refused even to be present, much less to preach in any Presbyterian church, where musical instruments were used—except they were silenced when I officiated.—**Robert J. Breckinridge** (minister, Presbyterian Church, US [Southern]/professor, Danville Theological Seminary), “Protest Against the Use of Instrumental Music in the Stated Worship of God on the Lord’s Day,” in *The Presbyterian Herald* (1851).

While many who employ [the organ] consider themselves the very champions of Protestantism, it will be long, long indeed, before they uproot Popery by this regulator of choirs; and while nothing has ever proved more annoying to Papists than the singing of Psalms in a congregational manner, the playing of all the heretical organs in Christendom causes to them comparatively little sorrow.

On the contrary, the cross surmounting a Protestant meeting house, and the swelling tones of the organ within, give to her sons the hope that “holy mother” may yet receive these errorists, who are, at least, so far rejoicing under her shadow, and becoming familiar with her “image and superscription.” —**Alexander Blaikie** (minister, Associate Reformed Church/later United Presbyterian Church), *The Philosophy of Sectarianism* (1854).

The outward forms of religion became gradually more and more imposing. From the ancient temples the incense and many ancient customs of heathenism were transferred to the churches. By the use of tapers and perpetual lamps, the solemnity of nocturnal festivals was combined with the light of day. Soon after, in face of continual opposition to all instrumental music, the organ, was brought to Italy from Greece. —**Karl Hase** (professor of theology, Jena, Germany), *A History of the Christian Church* (1855).

Let the Papists, who believe in temples, priests and sacrifices, stick to their organs; let not the freemen of the Lord, who have boldness to enter into the holiest of all through the blood of the Son of God, who has passed into the heavens, borrow their pitiful machinery. We prefer the synagogue to the temple. —**Thomas E. Peck** (minister, Presbyterian Church, US [Southern]/professor, Union Theological Seminary), “General Principles Touching the Worship of God,” in *The Presbyterian Critic* (1855).

As the use of musical instruments in the worship of the New Testament Church has no sanction in the Bible, they shall not be introduced, in any form, in any of our congregations. —**United Presbyterian Church of North America**, from “Singing of Praise” in *The Directory for Worship* (1858).

Staunch old Baptists in former times would as soon have tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries, and yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them, and their successors in church management, with nothing like the jars and difficulties which arose of old concerning the bass viol and smaller instruments of music. —**David Benedict** (historian, Baptist), *Fifty Years Among the Baptists* (1859).

In the church, as well as in the synagogue, the whole congregation joined in the singing; but instrumental music was never brought into requisition. The early Christians believed that the organs of the human voice are the most appropriate vehicles for giving utterance to the feelings of devotion; and viewing the lute and the harp as the carnal ordinances of a superannuated dispensation, they rejected their aid in the service of the sanctuary. Long after this period one of the most eminent of the ancient fathers describes the music of flutes, sackbuts, and psalteries of the temple worship as only befitting the childhood of the Church. —**W. D. Killen** (minister, Irish Presbyterian Church), *The Ancient Church: Its History, Doctrine, Worship, and Constitution, Traced for the First Three Hundred Years* (1859).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Killen also wrote, “Singing in which none but the Levites were permitted to unite, and which was accompanied by instrumental music, constituted a prominent part of the temple service. The singers occupied an elevated platform adjoining the court of the priests; and it is somewhat doubtful whether, in that position, they were distinctly heard by the majority of the worshipers within the sacred precincts. As the sacrifices, offerings and other observation of the temple, as well as the priests, the vestments, and even the building itself, had an emblematic meaning, it would appear that the singing, intermingled with the music of various instruments of sound, was also typical and ceremonial. It seems to have indicated that the tongue of man cannot sufficiently express the praise of the King

Lowell Mason [noted 19<sup>th</sup>-century hymn writer and worship leader in Alexander's congregation for four years] said to me t'other day: "I have been an organist all my life; yet if a congregation should say to me, 'Shall we have an organ?' I should scarcely dare to reply 'Yes.'" —**James W. Alexander** (minister, Presbyterian Church, USA), "Letter to John Hall, dated New York, May, 1854," in *Forty Years' Familiar Letters of James W. Alexander, D.D.* (1860).

It is notorious that the Reformed Church of Scotland rejected the use of *Instrumental music* in its worship; and if some encroachments were made upon this principle during the Episcopal period, they were clearly the result of compulsion, and contrary to the preferences of the body of the people. [David] Calderwood connects the first introduction of organs into Scotland with the reign of King James I. During the period of about 130 years which preceded the Reformation it is not likely, considering the poverty of the country and the turbulent course of the national history, that these instruments had ever been very generally diffused; and this may assist in explaining the fact that the Reformers seem to have experienced little difficulty in setting them aside. In adopting this course they were doubtless moved, partly by the conviction that it was in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament and the spirit of the Christian dispensation, and partly by the revulsion arising from the glaring abuses prevalent in Popish worship. Similar views were entertained by a large party in England. As early as 1536 a protestation to the king, by the clergy of the Lower House, in the province of Canterbury, styles "the playing at the Organes a foolish vanitie." Several subsequent attempts to effect their removal are recorded, one of which failed in the Lower House of Convocation only by a single vote. And so late as 1586 a pamphlet, representing the sentiments of the puritans, proposes, "that all Cathedral Churches may be put down where the service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs, singing, ringing, and trowling of psalms from one side of the choir to another, imitating the fashion and manner of Antichrist the Pope, that man of sin," &c. —**Neil Livingston** (minister, Free Church of Scotland), *The Scottish Metrical Psalter of A.D. 1635* (1864).

Our modern advocates for instrumental music in God's worship, to be consistent, must associate with the "harps," the "incense-cups" and the "golden altar:" for all belonged alike to the service of the temple. —**David Steele** (minister, Reformed Presbyterian Church, Covenanted), *Notes on the Apocalypse* (1870).

In the same name and by the same authority, that of the Lord Christ, I debar ministerially all impenitent violators of the second commandment; all who, while they professedly worship the true God, do not recognize and act upon the principle that God alone has the right to prescribe the institutes of his own worship...who worship God by proxy, with choirs<sup>3</sup> and organs. All so

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Eternal, and that all things, animate and inanimate, owe Him a revenue of glory. The worship of the synagogue was more simple. Its officers had, indeed, trumpets and cornets, with which they published their sentences of excommunications, and announced the new year, the fasts and the Sabbath, but they did not introduce instruments into their congregational services. The early Christians followed the example of the synagogue; and when they celebrated the praise of God "in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," their melody was "the fruit of the lips." For many centuries after this period, the use of instrumental music was unknown in the Church" (pp. 216-217).

<sup>3</sup> A study of God's word reveals that the only choirs (i.e., people set apart to sing during the worship service) that existed in the Bible were composed of Levites (cf. 1 Chron. 9:33; 15:16; 2 Chron. 5:11-13; 29:28-30; 33:15). "Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses, according to your divisions, following the written instruction of David King of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy place according to the

sinning and not repenting, are forbidden to approach the table of the Lord. —**S. Bowden** (minister, Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America), “Debarring and Inviting Service,” in *Memorial Volume. Covenant Renovation by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America. Published by Order of the Synod* (1872).

The Judaizers of old, it is true, insisted on circumcision and keeping the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation. The Instrumentalists do not profess to regard the use of an instrument as possessed of such stupendous importance. We certainly owe them no thanks for that. But, short of this, and so far as there is any analogy in the case, it is all the other way from what they appear to conceive. It is they, not we, that are in the place of the Judaizers; and we have the apostle on our side, not they. We are far from regarding the agitation on behalf of instruments in worship of small significance, were it for nothing else than as a sign of the times, an index to the proclivities of the age in which we live. —**Robert Nevin** (minister, Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland), *Instrumental Music in Christian Worship* (1873).

Instrumental music is contrary to the spirit and teachings of the New Testament. “God is a spirit.” They that worship him must do so in spirit and in truth. Paul says, “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.” An instrument has no spirit; it has no understanding. The human voice has conjoined with it both spirit and understanding. God has drawn the line for us when he says, “I will sing with the spirit,” not with the organ. If we may sing with an instrument, then we may pray with an instrument; and those who make the cross and count the beads for prayer are right. If it is right to sing with an instrument, then it is right to pray with an instrument, it is right to preach with an instrument, right to hear and worship God with an instrument, or by proxy. If we commence using machines in the worship of God, we may go forward with our inventive genius, until the whole of worship of God’s house is automatic. And if we insist upon an organ as a help in devotion, we ought not to object to other helps. We ought to follow our argument out to its legitimate conclusion, and have our places of devotion adorned with paintings and drawings of persons and scenes calculated to awaken devotional feelings. We object to the use of instruments in the devotional exercises of God’s house, because it is evidently *will-worship*, which is condemned in the word of God. (Col. 2:23). Any invention or practice, in the worship of God, beyond what he has declared as acceptable to him, is denominated WILL-WORSHIP. Having no foundation in the word of God, it must be based in the will of man, and is, properly, not divine worship, but mere will-worship, for which God does not thank any man. It will be well if we observe what he has *commanded*. —**John V. Potts** (minister, United Brethren Church), *Christian Co-operation in Actual Life; or, “United Brethren in Christ”* (1874).

In the Greek Church the organ never came into use. But after the eighth century it became more and more common in the Latin Church; not, however, without opposition from the side of the monks. Its misuse, however, raised so great an opposition to it that, but for the Emperor

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divisions of the fathers’ houses of your brethren the lay people, and according to the division the father’s house of the Levites. And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their places, according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, the king’s seer” (2 Chron. 35:4-5, 15). Since the use of choirs, like musical instruments, was restricted by God to the Levitical temple worship, their use is clearly inappropriate and unscriptural in Christian worship services. Their use (like that of musical instruments) arose as an aspect of the Judaizing Papal mass with its priestly garments and unauthorized rituals.

Ferdinand, it would probably have been abolished by the Council of Trent. The Reformed Church discarded it; and though the Church of Basel very early reintroduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly, and after long hesitation.

—**Albert Hauck** (professor of theology, Erlangen, Germany), “Organ” in *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology* [i.e., Schaff-Herzog] (1883).

In regard to the musical part of divine worship, this synod [Synod of Drenthe], as also those of 1578 [Dordrecht] and 1581 [Middelburg], inveighed in very strong language against the playing of organs before, during and after service. It was said to minister to superstition, and it was denounced as a Jewish, a heathenish, and a Papistical custom. In 1589, this question gave occasion for a bitter dispute between the ministers and the magistrates of Arnheim. —**Maurice G. Hansen** (minister and historian, Reformed Church in America [Dutch]), *The Reformed Church in the Netherlands. Traced from A.D. 1340 to A.D. 1840* (1884).

The use of organs is ascribed to Pope Vitalian (657-672). Constantine Copronymos sent an organ with other presents to King Pepin of France in 767. The attitude of the churches towards the organ varies. It shared to some extent the fate of images, except that it never was an object of worship. The Greek church disapproves the use of organs. The Latin church introduced it pretty generally, but not without the protest of eminent men, so that even in the Council of Trent a motion was made, though not carried, to prohibit the organ at least in the mass. The Lutheran church retained, the Calvinistic churches rejected it, especially in Switzerland and Scotland; but in recent times the opposition has largely ceased. —**Philip Schaff** (professor, Union Theological Seminary, New York; Presbyterian Church, USA), *History of the Christian Church* (1885).

It is heresy in the sphere of worship.

It is almost inconceivable that the majority of the officers and members of the Presbyterian Church can have abandoned the consecrated principle that a divine warrant is needed for every element which enters into the worship of God’s house. Were that so, open apostasy in the department of worship would be acknowledged. But of what avail is a professed acceptance of the principle, if its application be refused? How it happens that this principle, which was construed by the Presbyterian reformers and the framers of the Westminster standards as excluding instrumental music from public worship, and was so applied by the Presbyterian Church almost universally for centuries after the Reformation, is now interpreted in such a way as to admit this Popish innovation into the once simple and evangelical services of that church, defies comprehension except upon one supposition. It is, that the Presbyterian Church is slackening her grasp upon her ancient testimonies, broadening her practice in conformity with the demands of worldly taste, and is therefore more and more treading the path of defection from the scriptural principles which she professes.

The ministers who are opposed to the unscriptural movement are, many of them at least, indisposed to throw themselves into opposition to its onward rush. They are unwilling to make an issue with their people upon this question. They are reluctant to characterize the employment of instrumental music in public worship as a sin. But a sin it is, if there be any force in the argument which opposes it. The people ought to be taught that in using it they rebel against the law of Christ, their King. —**John L. Girardeau** (minister, Presbyterian Church, US

[Southern]/professor, Columbia Theological Seminary), *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (1888).

That a denomination, professing like ours to be anti-prelatic and anti-ritualistic, should throw down the bulwarks of their argument against these errors by this recent innovation appears little short of lunacy. Prelatists undertake every step of the argument which these Presbyterians use for their organs, and advance them in a parallel manner to defend the re-introduction of the Passover or Easter, of Whitsuntide, of human priests and priestly vestments, and of chrism, into the gospel church. —**Robert L. Dabney** (minister, Presbyterian Church, US [Southern]/professor, Union Theological Seminary, Virginia), “Review of Girardeau’s ‘Instrumental Music in Public Worship,’” in *The Presbyterian Quarterly* (1888).

Its use in the worship of God is not opposed on the ground that there is no taste for the music itself. The bewitching strains of the organ, piano, violin, etc., are equally as pleasing and attractive to many of its opponents as they are to any who advocate its use. Why, then, oppose it? Simply because God has not appointed it in His worship, but has appointed music of another kind. God has no more plainly said, eat bread on the Lord’s table than He has said use vocal music in the worship. In Eph. 5:19, Paul says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”; and Col. 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God”; and Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn at the institution of the Lord’s Supper, Matt. 26:30. Hence, by both precept and example, vocal music is appointed in the worship of God. But it is claimed that the Lord has not forbidden instrumental music. Neither has He forbidden meat on the Lord’s table, except by telling us to eat something else; and in the same way He has forbidden instrumental music by telling us to use another kind. —**M. C. Kurfees** (minister and professor, Church of Christ), *Walk by Faith: Origin of Instrumental Music in Christian Worship* (1894).

With the temple service the use of instruments seems to have ceased. We think of Christ and His disciples as singing without instruments in the upper-room at Jerusalem. We think of Paul and Silas as praising God with unaided voices in the inner prison. The revival of their use in the primitive Church, it could easily be shown, was coincident with the general decline in spirituality, and an exaltation of the human in matters pertaining to religion. —**S. G. Shaw** (minister, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America), “The Praise-Service of the Church,” in *First International Convention of Reformed Presbyterian Churches* (1896).

John 4:24: “God [is] a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.” See also Phil. 3:3; Gal. 3:3,9; Col. 2:8,20-23. This is the great rubric given by the Lord Himself. Worship acceptable to Almighty God is to be rendered solely in a genuine *spiritual manner*. With these Scriptures before us, it might be well to enquire where we can find Scriptural use for organs, choirs, anthems, and the various decorations so much in vogue at the present time. Instrumental music is *nowhere alluded to* in the New Testament as any help whatever to public worship, neither is it mentioned as being used in the first three centuries of the Christian era. —**William Sykes** (Vicar, Church of England; first president of the Sovereign Grace Union), *The Salt of the Covenant* (1908).

Gradually he [Simon Sulzer] introduced more and more of Lutheranism into Basle. Thus he introduced lay-baptism, a distinctively Lutheran custom and not at all Reformed. He also introduced communion of the sick, which many of the Reformed, especially in Switzerland, opposed at that time. On Palm Sunday, 1558, he introduced four-part music in the cathedral at Passion week and had the organ played, assisted by flute and kettle-drum. All this was regarded with suspicion by the Reformed. For, although Basle, had kept up singing since the reformation, four-part music instead of singing in one part was an innovation, as was the use of the organ, which had been closed up to that time. —**James I. Good** (minister and professor, Reformed Church [German], US), *History of the Swiss Reformed Church Since the Reformation* (1913).

The question of instrumental music had little impact during [John] Wesley's life. In the open air meetings the great volume of sound would have drowned out any accompaniment, as it often drowned out the voices of those sent to break up the meetings. And in none of the chapels were the circumstances of the people such as to make likely any proposal to install an organ. The bass-viol seems to have been first introduced, as a support to the leader's voice. The clarionet and other instruments followed, as was the custom in the parish churches also. Not more than three chapels introduced the organ while Wesley lived. The Minutes of 1796 prohibit organs until proposed by the Conference. The Minutes of 1808 show that some had already been introduced, but consent is refused to the erection of any more. The introduction of an organ in Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, produced bitter controversy and a secession of "Protestant Methodists," whose protest was against instrumental music. —**Louis F. Benson** (hymn-writer and historian of hymnody; member, Presbyterian Church, USA), *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (1915).

The use of instrumental music is a corruption of the spiritual worship of the New Testament. It is not enough to say that it is out of harmony with it. It is a positive hindrance, and destroys its purity. —**R. J. George** (minister and professor, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America), *Lectures in Pastoral Theology: The Covenanter Vision* (1917).

The introduction of the organ and other musical instruments have been attended with agitation and often much opposition. —**Willis S. McNeese** (minister and stated clerk, Presbytery of Butler, Presbyterian Church, USA), *History of Butler Presbytery* (1923).

My contention is, based upon God's declaration, that we are to sing, and accompany that with an instrument, but the instrument is mentioned in the Bible. Paul says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns," singing and "psalting" in the heart, or with the heart, and thereby mentions the definite, precise, and specific instrument that shall accompany the same. Let us not only sing by vocal expression, but let us accompany that, not, as did the heathen, upon mechanical instruments, but let us accompany that singing with melody, striking the strings—metaphorically, if you please—of the heart. That is the idea, as taught in the book of God. —**N. B. Hardeman** (minister, Church of Christ), *Boswell-Hardeman Discussion on Instrumental Music in the Worship* (1924).

The Free Presbyterian Church rejects also the use of instrumental music in divine worship. —**Committee of the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church** (separated from the Free Church of Scotland, in 1893), *History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1893-1933)* (1933).



With the whole Eastern Church barring the church organ, the Church of Rome officially reflecting on its abuse, Luther only lukewarm to it, Calvin objecting to it and many good Anglican dignitaries doing the same, it will be seen that at this period the instrument was under a cloud. —**Percy A. Scholes** (scholar and author), *The Puritans and Music* (1934).

We are commanded to use the Psalms in worship, but we have no command to use instruments of music in the New Testament Church. Instruments of music formed a part of the typical and ceremonial worship of the temple, which was fulfilled and abolished by the coming of Christ. — **Walter McCarroll** (minister, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America), *What We Believe* (1942).

The New Testament does not command the use of instruments in worship. It does command the use of the voice. “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” Heb. 13:15. It would seem that the Apostle thought it was necessary to define what he meant by “the sacrifice of praise to God,” for he said, by way of explanation, “that is, the fruit of our lips.”

The New Testament Church was patterned after the Synagogue, not after the Temple. Instrumental music was not used in the synagogue services. To this day Orthodox Jews do not use instruments of music in their worship.

—**J. Boyd Tweed** (minister and professor; Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America), *The Communicants' Class* (1942).

Distaste for organs, distaste for hymns, and distaste for part-singing were the typical marks of Calvinist church music. —**Robert M. Stevenson** (professor, University of California), *Patterns of Protestant Church Music* (1953).

We believe in and accept the standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America as being in agreement with and founded upon the Scriptures. In particular we believe in the Reformed faith, emphasizing the sovereignty of Christ, the Presbyterian form of church government, and the New Testament pattern of worship, with its exclusive use of the Psalms, sung a cappella. —**Synod and members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America**, “Covenant of 1954” in *Synod's Memorial Volume of the Covenant of 1954* (1954).

Instrumental music is a hindrance to pure spiritual worship, as its object is to afford a refined sensual enjoyment, pleasure and entertainment. Listening to the skill of the musician and appreciating the creative genius of a composer is certainly not conducive to spiritual worship, as it excites emotions that conflict with the sensitiveness of spiritual mindedness, and is therefore inconsistent with the nature of pure spiritual worship. The ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies of Israel were dispensed with as unsuited to the nature of spiritual worship. —**Arthur Allen** (minister, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia), *Writings and Addresses* (1964).

[T]here is no place in the New Testament which clearly states that the Church had any set order of service, and very little information is supplied to us about the outward forms which were in use. The use of musical instruments is a case in point. While there are allusions made to certain instruments (for example, the harp or lyre, the pipe, the cymbal, the trumpet—and possibly the ‘noisy gong’ of 1 Corinthians 13:1), there is no certainty that any of these were actually used.

The balance of probability is against such use. —**Ralph P. Martin** (professor, Fuller Theological Seminary; Baptist), *Worship in the Early Church* (1964).

Musical instruments were appointed not for the ordinary worship of the Jew, but for the figurative worship of the temple, where the Levitical orchestras accompanied priestly singing. The ordinary worship of the Jew was that of the synagogue, and it was *always* unembellished. In the synagogue where there was congregational singing, there was no musical instrument. Nevertheless, there is a very degraded form of Christianity which has an order of sacrificing priests, altars, incense, elaborate services of music, other features of the temple worship and, as an anomaly, bloodless sacrifices. —**M. C. Ramsay** (minister, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia), *Purity of Worship* (1968).

The priority of the words and the form of rendition ensured that the singing was done without instrumental accompaniment. Indeed, an instrument had no function in these simple chants with their emphasis on the content of praise. There is no certain evidence of the use of instruments in the Christian liturgy until the later Middle Ages. Because of the associations of musical instruments with immorality in the pagan world, the church fathers took a very dim view of them in any setting and allegorized the Old Testament references to instruments in worship. —**Everett Ferguson** (professor, Abilene Christian College), *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries* (1971).

God has not commanded us to use musical instruments in New Testament worship. We have seen that God did not authorize (command) the use of musical instruments until the time of Moses (even if we consider the trumpets used in the Tabernacle to be instruments of music). When they were authorized (commanded) they were clearly a part of the shadowy ceremonial system. And even in the Old Testament period, worship (except that which was performed by the priests and Levites at the Temple in Jerusalem) was commonly offered without musical instruments. Worship in the ancient synagogue was always devoid of such. So was the worship of the early Church. Never in the New Testament do we find mention of their use. What we do find is an abundance of teaching to the effect that the whole system of Tabernacle and Temple worship (shadowy and typical in nature) has been abolished. It follows, therefore, that the use of musical instruments is not authorized in the worship of the Church today. —**G. I. Williamson** (minister, Orthodox Presbyterian Church), “Instrumental Music in Worship: Commanded or Not Commanded?,” in *The Biblical Doctrine of Worship* (1974).

The logical skeleton of the case which is raised against the practice of instrumental music can be stated briefly, as follows:

- (1) Instrumental music considered as an element in religious worship was:
  - (a) instituted by divine commandment;
  - (b) practiced as a branch of Levitical service in tabernacle and temple;
  - (c) performed by the Levitical order exclusively.
- (2) But the distinctive features of the Levitical system, the type giving place in Gospel times to the correlative anti-type, have been abolished.
- (3) Instrumental music, being strictly a part of the self-same system of worship, has also, therefore, now been abolished.

- (4) No New Testament prescription, effectively restoring instrumental music again to the church's worship, can be distinguished.
- (5) The practice has no legitimate place, accordingly, in the worship of the Christian Church.  
—**Hector Cameron** (minister, Free Church of Scotland), “Purity of Worship,” in *Hold Fast Your Confession: Studies in Church Principles* (1978).

The Psalms are to be sung without the accompaniment of instruments, which are not part of the New Testament pattern of worship. Musical instruments were commanded for use with the offering of sacrifices in the Old Testament temple worship. The death of Christ being the perfect and final sacrifice brought an end to this way of worship. There is neither command for nor example of the use of musical instruments in the words or practice of Christ and the apostles. The command of the New Testament is to offer the sacrifice of praise—the fruit of our lips. — **Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America** (Chapter 21; section 6), *The Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America* (1980).

There is no warrant for instrumental accompaniment to the singing in New Testament worship. In Hebrews 13:15, Christians are called upon to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” It seems clear that the constitution and form of worship of the New Testament Church were patterned after the Synagogue which did not have instrumental music and not after the Temple, which did as part of its sacrificial ritual (2 Chron. 29:27-30). If we are to follow the pattern of worship of the New Testament Church, which is our standard, our praise in worship will consist of psalms sung without instrumental accompaniment. —**Reformed Presbyterian Synod (of Ireland)**, *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland* (1990).

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