

A Bit of Methodist History Concerning Instrumental Music

Robert F. Turner, *Plain Talk*, Vol. 7, Number 4

[**Note:** Many of our readers are probably aware that instrumental music was not used in the worship of the first century church. In fact, instruments were not introduced into the Roman Catholic Church until more than 600 years after time of Christ. The Greek Orthodox Church has been very slow to allow them. Most of the major Protestant churches began without them. Robert Turner makes an interesting observation along these lines in the following article.]

While in Bangor, Maine, in bro. Ralph Smart's study, I had opportunity to examine a book called: HYMN STUDIES -ANNOTATED METHODIST HYMNAL by Charles S. Nutter, Tilton, New Hampshire; Feb. 15, 1884. On page 18 of this book there was hymn no. 27, "Praise The Lord." We give the first and fourth stanzas:

1. "Praise the Lord! his glories show, Saints within his courts
below, Angels round his throne above, All that see and share his
love.
4. Strings and voices, hands and hearts In the concert bear your
parts; All that breathe, your Lord adore, Praise him, praise him
evermore! Henry F. Lyte, Alt."

What interested us particularly was the comment which followed the above hymn. Mr. Nutter, author of this Methodist Hymnal, said: "The fourth stanza would not have been admitted into any hymn book by the early Methodist. Instruments of music in the church, and especially those with strings" were an abomination to them.

"Dr. Adam Clarke [noted Methodist commentator] said, 'Music as a science I admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor.'

"John Wesley ["founder" of Methodism] said, 'I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.'"

Readers of church history are familiar with these "quotes" - but in a Methodist Hymnal??? Hummmmm!!