

Alexander Campbell: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

(From: MILLENNIAL HARBINGER, September 1851, 581-2)

"INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC is entirely in harmony with the most grateful, solemn and happy feelings of which the human heart is susceptible. Indeed, sacred music upon an instrument, tends, in a very considerable degree, to excite solemn and holy emotions; and we cannot forbear to say, that could the music of our churches be improved--could it be accompanied with an instrument, it would soothe and calm the feelings of the auditors; it would improve the order of the house; it would call into lively action the latent religious emotions of the heart, and add very much to the enjoyment on such occasions.

"Music exerts a mysterious charm upon man--it takes captive the citadel of life--carries him out of himself, and leads him where it will. The shrill fife and the rattling drum, inspire the soldier just about to enter into battle, with a zeal and daring which no hardship can overcome, and no danger intimidate, and causes him to rush headlong into the thickest of the combat, regardless of consequences. If martial music thus inspires the worshippers of Mars, will sacred music do less for the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus--the worshippers of the true and living God? No! It will not. It will inspire them, too, with zeal and courage, and impel them on to resist--not flesh and blood with instruments of death, but principalities and powers--spiritual wickedness in high places, with the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit. G."

The argument drawn from the Psalms in favor of instrumental music, is exceedingly apposite to the Roman Catholic, English Protestant, and Scotch Presbyterian churches, and even to the Methodist communities. Their churches having all the world in them--that is, all the fleshly progeny of all the communicants, and being founded on the Jewish pattern of things--baptism being given to all born into the world of these politico-ecclesiastic communities--I wonder not, then, that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else "hosannahs languish on their tongues, and their devotions die." And that all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste, or relish for their spiritual meditations, consolations and /582/ sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aid, is but natural. Pure water from the flinty rock has no attractions for the mere toper or wine-bibber. A little alcohol, or genuine Cognac brandy, or good old Madeira, is essential to the beverage to make it truly refreshing. So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, 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 spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert.

A.C.
