



The Blue Banner

A Publication of First Presbyterian Church, Rowlett, Texas / Vol 3 #1-2 January-February 1994

Organ Grinding Circa 1849

From the Editor

This issue is devoted to a debate over the use of the organ in the public worship of God, which took place in 1849. It was carried on within the pages of the *Watchman and Observer*, a Presbyterian newspaper published in Richmond, Virginia. Perhaps the most interesting thing about this debate, is the fact that one of the correspondents was a young pastor named Robert L. Dabney. The great Southern Presbyterian theologian wrote again on the subject some forty years later, when he reviewed the book by John L. Girardeau, *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*, Richmond VA: 1888. This review follows the newspaper articles, and presents, I believe, the only two pieces Dabney wrote on the subject. Neither was reprinted in his *Discussions*, and as far as I know have not been formally published anywhere. I have no idea who the correspondents are who wrote the other articles, other than the pseudonyms originally provided (the reader will see we do know who one of the writers was not). Dabney's pseudonym and article are attributed to him in his biography, and other articles under the same name appear in his *Discussions*.

the organ in public worship. H. responds arguing for the organ's aesthetic appeal. The article, *Ancient Church Music*, appeared in the same issue as this second article by H., which appears to have closed the debate.

The debate over organ use raged during the mid and latter part of the nineteenth century. The practice of allowing them won out, and we face the results of that error today. While organs were the new thing last century, today we have dance performances and drama productions. The organ / dance & drama parallel is striking, and it may be we would not be facing the dance/drama question today if our fathers had not folded on the musical instrument question.

The church must return to a consistently held and vigorously applied reformed Regulative Principle of Worship. This is the only guard against adopting practices in the worship of God which seem right in the eyes of men, but are unacceptable to God. (I refer the reader to the previous issue of *The Blue Banner* where the arguments against musical instruments are discussed.)

CONTENTS

- Organs [Against], Simplex, page 1
- Organs [For], H., page 2
- Organs [Against], Inquirer, page 3
- Letter to the Editor, by Moses D. Hoge, page 4
- Organs [Against], Robert L. Dabney, page 4
- Organs [Against], Rusticus, page 8
- Organs, Once More [For], H., page 9
- Ancient Church Music, page 11
- Review, Robert L. Dabney, page 12

ORGANS

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
December 7, 1848, Volume IV, No. 17.

There are few organs in the Presbyterian Churches of the United States. And the number can not be increased without a contest. Many of the more thoughtful and prayerful members in every congregation will oppose their introduction with firmness, or submit to with regret. And their introduction will be retarded by every improper use of them in churches that are furnished. The common-place argument in favor of organs, is that they are an elegant accompaniment, and an aid in singing the praises of God in the great congregation. But when serious Christians observe that the praise of God is delayed, by the preludes and interludes fully as long a time as the praises themselves occupy, they will suspect that the instrument was introduced for other purposes than to aid devotion. And especially when they hear a tune (stolen from the opera, perhaps) played on the organ after the benediction is pronounced, on the Sabbath, amidst the under-talk and confusion of a retiring congregation, and without vocal music or any accompanying praises, they will begin to fear that the organ was not intended and is not adapted

The exchange evidently began with the first article reprinted here, but if it was occasioned by anything previously printed in the *WO*, I did not find it. I believe all the articles pertaining to the debate are reprinted here, except perhaps for one by SIMPLEX seemingly referred to by "H." H. is the correspondent arguing for the use of organs in public worship. RUSTICUS and INQUIRER take up scriptural arguments against their use. Dabney, choosing not to reiterate what he felt INQUIRER had covered very well, criticizes the aesthetics of using

to aid devotion. They will gradually come to the conclusion that the organ is, like the dance, not sinful in itself, but so prone to evil that those who desire not to be lead into temptation ought to shun it as they do all dangerous companions. And serious Christians have a right to ask what is a breach of the Sabbath, if this disorderly farewell, after divine service, is not?

A father rises from family worship on Sabbath morn or eve, and as the hum of conversation commences, and the children begin to prattle, he observes his eldest daughter to open the piano, and hears her strike the notes of the latest piece of music. Can he for a moment suppose that it is intended or adapted to aid his devotions just closed? Or could he be charged with being righteous over much if he should remind his daughter that it was the Sabbath? But this breach of the Sabbath is to the other, as a neighborhood wrangle is to a war of nations. And it is a question of no little importance whether these instrumental essays without singing, after the sermon is finished and devotions closed, have not a tendency to dissipate seriousness and counteract the good effects of the word of God.

Simplex

ORGANS

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
January 18, 1849, Volume IV, No. 23.

We have read the communication of SIMPLEX on the above subject. But like all other good things it hath a fault. The fault is, it is good only as far as it goeth. Truly, SIMPLEX taketh us back to the olden times, when "the earth was green," and all things free from the innovations of these latter days. And truly, when "the earth *was* green," in that there was nothing even of the old oaken floor to hide earth's cool beauties -- and where "every one bringeth his own buffalo, or shareth it with his neighbor," or him who sitteth upon the nearest log. But "the light of other days is gone," rather, the light of other days is come. The people dwelleth "in ceiled houses," and have things comfortable for themselves and every thing smileth cheerfully in their homes. And as old earth rolleth round, it cometh into new sunshine and the people see plainer and further, and some are getting more comfortable hearts and understandings. And in their devotion, they read further, even from Psalms to Haggai 1:4. Indeed, we say not, why if we depart from "the upper chamber," simplicity of the early church, and also from the log cabin meeting-houses of the stern war times of the early Puritans, why we may not add to the comfort of the house of God, and make it as delectable as the houses of our homes, in this age of progressive comfort. True, the organ is not a necessary part of the building, nor necessary part of worship. Nor is the carpet or pew. People can bring their own chairs. Nor is the roof a necessary part to some. For many never attend church, save on "sun shining days." Must we therefore have nothing but what is necessary? But the carpet may be too gaudy, the cushions too soft, the paint too pretty, and the organ too loud, too long; and so may be the prayers and preaching. What of that? Shall we abolish them all? Nay verily. Then keep them and command them, and control them. Let the world know, that we can in *our day*, as well as in David's, make "every thing that hath breath," "stringed instruments and organs, praise THE LORD," and not the *organist*.

But my dear sir, as it is said, Dr. Wilson of Philadelphia remarked, I object to the organ, *simply because it has no intellect!* Neither has the human bagpipe in itself considered. Consecrated as the organ is to the church, we have known more intellect and real affectionate purity of thought, expressed by a proper spiritual mind, guiding the instrument for *one minute*, than has been expressed in *ten* by voices, and those not out of tune and pitch, which is often the case. And yet would we highly prize the choir of well-tuned voices. There is something heaven-born in the sound of well-tuned and harmonized voices. They are the instruments of heaven's minstrelsy. The instruments upon which the praises of God and the Lamb, are sung in the spirit land. Could we have a visit from some angel chorister, to direct our singing in the Sabbath service, how gladly would we yield the organ. Not that we love the organ less, but that we love such voices more, they come from nearer the heart. But we think, could we have even such a visitant, we would not need to yield the organ. It would take its proper place, not "as an elegant accompaniment," as SIMPLEX condemns it; but as an additional voice of harmony, as well as melody, which would speak the devotion of the whole, as well as the voice does the devotion of the one. Then would we feel that it is "the spirit that quickeneth." Then would we know what powers there are latent in the church, to be made subservient and tributary to the glory of God and the praises of his Sanctuary. We only need proper energy and manhood to arrange and control these appliances, and every thing will only have a tendency to make us "press onward to the mark for the prize."

True, the organ is not a necessary part of the building, nor necessary part of worship. Nor is the carpet or pew. People can bring their own chairs. Nor is the roof a necessary part to some. For many never attend church, save on "sun shining days." Must we therefore have nothing but what is necessary?

SIMPLEX has evidently not heard from some of our large cities, within the past few months, or else he would not have written: "There are few organs in the Presbyterian churches, and the number cannot be increased, etc." As to the abuses mentioned, we have no time to mourn plaintively over them; but to correct them immediately, finally and efficiently. In this matter, "SIMPLEX" has gone far enough. He should have told how to correct. A child may destroy what a giant's strength, physical or intellectual, may be demanded to erect. Let us have a building out of debt, a perfect offering, a full consecration to our Father, and then answer whether we may not add an organ, rightly used -- consecrated to God, with the motto on its front in gold, and the hearts of its voices in spirit, HALLELUJAH, by interpretation, "praise the Lord," and sing the praises of the Lord, and the songs of David and of Israel, with increased devotion and correctness in our music, and no impeachment of our orthodoxy.

H.

ORGANS

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
February 1, 1849, Volume IV, No. 25.

Mr. Editor: I have read the articles on organs in your paper with some attention, because of the interest I take in the subject, and my desire for information. I am fond of the music of the organ; listen to its magnificent melody with great delight, when played by the hand of a master; and am not prepared to say, that I would object to its introduction into a church over which I had any control. But I have some scruples on the subject, which I wish to propose to your correspondent H., for solution, and which, if he can fully resolve, my mind will be relieved. My object is not controversy, but satisfaction.

Before stating these scruples however, I cannot forbear saying, that there is often a tone of flippancy used in meeting objections to the use of organs, that is not only offensive to a serious mind, but in itself highly discourteous. There are such objections in the minds of grave, judicious, and experienced Christians; who if they are not trained to the latest fashions in things social and ecclesiastical, are at least entitled, in virtue of their age, their good sense, and their piety, to a respectful hearing. It seems often to be taken for granted, that such objections are sufficiently answered, by a complacent smile at old-fashioned bigotry; an equivocal joke about psalm-singing that grates horrible discord to ears polite; and a clinching allusion to log churches, with earthen floors and clap-board benches, as the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the objection to organs. Now, although I do not class myself with the opponents of the use of organs, yet I do protest against the assumption that this opposition is simply ridiculous, and only deserves to be laughed at. If these scruples are only those of weaker brethren, it will take less trouble to answer, than to ridicule them, all things considered.

I will now propose some of my difficulties in the earnest hope, that they may be fairly met and removed.

1. For what purpose is the organ used? Your correspondent H., furnishes the answer: "to praise the Lord;" "to speak the devotion of the whole, etc.;" in a word as a part of the worship of God. This places it in broad distinction from the building, seats, cushions, etc., which we use when we are worshipping. Surely the sophism that confounds these is too shallow to impose on your intelligent correspondent, if he will look at it for a moment. We do not worship God *with* our buildings, pews, etc., any more than with our coats and cloaks; we worship God *in* them. -- They are no part of the worship, but only the conveniences by which we engage in that worship, just as we use our voices and attitudes to express devotional feeling. H. does not scruple to say that he will praise the Lord with the organ; but he would think it worse than nonsense, to say, that he would praise the Lord with carpets, cushions and paint. The distinction is so obvious that it needs no further illustration.

The organ being used, in worshipping God, my difficulty is this. The second command, according to an exposition that H. will admit to be both true and authoritative, forbids "the worshipping of God by images, or *any other way not appointed in His word*." If you refer to the Psalms, I grant that it was appointed by God as a part of the temple service, but by what

right do you take one part and reject the rest? -- And if you base your right on this appointment, by what authority do you change the instruments? The temple music was not made by organs, but by trumpets, etc., according to the specific appointment of God. (See 2 Chron. 29:25, and parallel passages.) But if you adopt its music, why reject its vestments? Why its form of worship? Why its gradations of officers?

It is well known to every scholar that in the prelatist controversy, it is an essential, if not a vital point in the argument, whether the N. T. Church is modeled after the temple or synagogue pattern. We affirm, on what we regard impregnable grounds, the latter; prelatists the former. It is not pretended that instrumental music was used in the synagogue service. By what right then do we engraft it from the temple service if that is laid aside? Were I a prelatist or a papist, the difficulty would vanish, for my model would be the temple service; but being a Presbyterian, I want to know on what clear ground of right I am warranted to make this addition to the worship of God, which will not warrant another man to introduce responses, liturgical forms, vestments, pictures, images, incense, and thus step by step all the forms of Popery? I want a principle which when fairly and logically applied will admit the one and exclude the others. I want it shown that the organ is "appointed" to praise the Lord, as the human voice is, in the commands to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs;" and if it is not, by what authority we use it, that will vindicate us from a violation of [the] second command, and from worshipping God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; and what reason can we show for this, that the prelatist cannot show for his use of other additions of worship, that to him are fully as significant and valuable?

For what purpose is the organ used? Your correspondent H., furnishes the answer: "to praise the Lord;" "to speak the devotion of the whole, etc.;" in a word as a part of the worship of God. This places it in broad distinction from the building, seats, cushions, etc., which we use when we are worshipping. Surely the sophism that confounds these is too shallow to impose on your intelligent correspondent, if he will look at it for a moment. We do not worship God with our buildings, pews, etc., any more than with our coats and cloaks; we worship God in them.

2. I have another difficulty arising from the history of their introduction.

H. refers to Ps. 150:4, as though the "organs" there mentioned were the same instruments now in use. But he surely cannot have confounded the "*ugab*" of Scripture, the simple Pandean pipe of the ancients, with the magnificent instrument now called an organ. They had a principle in common, just as a

tea-kettle and a steam engine have; but they differ just as widely.

The organ of modern times was not known in the church until the dark ages. Even Bellarmine finds no earlier use of it than by Pope Vitelhanus A.D 660, or as others reckon A.D. 820: and Thomas Aquinas A.D 1250, argues against its use as unscriptural and wrong, showing that at that date the use was not general. Every scholar knows their introduction met with earnest protests from the first names in the church, owing to the reasons, the warrant, and the tendency of their use. Now is it wise for us to adopt a custom introduced in this manner? Is it safe? Will God bless it?

3. I have another difficulty as to their tendency.

Passing over their expense, which is an item worth remembering when a world is dying for want of the means of grace and suggests the query whether that can be an authorized part of God's worship, which only the rich can enjoy; is not their tendency to prevent congregational singing? If it be said that choirs have at least to a smaller extent, the same tendency, I ask will two wrongs make a right, or the fact that one thing has a smaller tendency to evil, warrant us to introduce another that has a greater?

These are a few of the difficulties honestly felt in this matter, which, if fairly removed, on grounds that are safe and scriptural, no one will listen to the swelling notes of the organ in the worship of God with more pleasure than an

Inquirer.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
February 22, 1849, Volume IV, No. 28.

Mr. Editor: -- Some weeks ago an article over the signature H., appeared in your paper on the subject of Church organs, which led to a discussion not yet ended. I understand that its authorship has been generally attributed to me. This is incorrect. For reasons which I need not mention, I do not wish to be regarded as the author of the communication signed H.

Very truly yours,
Moses D. Hoge

ORGANS

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
February 22, 1849, Volume IV, No. 28.

Mr. Editor.—I have been pleased to see in your paper, some discussion on the use of organs in church-music. This subject cannot be regarded as one, affecting the fundamentals of religious truth; but it has its importance, especially as a *symptom* of the spiritual state and opinions of our churches. And it is well that the views of Presbyterians should be digested and settled on some rational principles, before the silent tide of Fashion has swept them all into an imitation of a thing alien to their institutions.

It has always been common among the advocates of this Popish mode of worship, to meet the objections of simple

minded Protestants to the organ, with the retort that their scruples were the relics of fanatical prejudice, and rustic ignorance. Such objections have been treated almost with levity and ridicule, as if they were contrary to taste, refinement and light, although the reading world knows, that they decided the minds of the wisest and most learned Reformers; the fathers of Protestantism. The sensible and just remarks of "*Inquirer*," in a late number of your paper, under the modest form of doubts, have presented objections to the organ, too solid, too rational, and pious to be thus lightly treated. They cannot fail of having some effect on every evangelical mind. It is not my purpose to attempt to do again, what *Inquirer* has done so well, by stating the scriptural and historical objections to the use of this instruments, in Protestant worship. But my object is to vindicate the great body of the Protestant church, and the Fathers of Protestantism, from the charge of ill taste, rudeness and blind prejudice, in their opposition. It is not strange that men, such as the present advocates of the organ in Presbyterian churches in America, should bring such a charge against such men; many of them educated amidst the richest specimens of the fine arts in the old world, their youth imbued with the spirit of a gorgeous and poetic age? Is it not rather queer, that the ephemeral aristocracy of our trading towns, whose high life took its rise between the stilts of the plough, or behind the tradesman's counter, only a generation or two back, who perhaps, never saw or heard an instrument that deserved to be called *an organ*, and whose taste would not suffice to distinguish a painting of the greatest masters, from the efforts of our peripatetic portrait-takers in these backwoods, or to discern between the eccentric voluntaries of one of our boarding-school misses, elevated into a temporary organist, and a symphony of Handel, should be charging *rusticity* on such men as the Reformers and founders of Protestant churches. Men educated amidst the splendors of the fine arts, in the Augustan age of Popery, and accomplished with all the polite learning of their age? My purpose is to retort the charge of bad taste on the advocates of organs, and to show that their introduction into Protestant worship is incongruous with its spirit, and contrary to the true principles of musical science, and musical taste.

The music of an organ may be appropriate to Popish worship, and may be in good taste in a Popish cathedral; and yet may be in wretchedly ill taste, when applied to Protestant worship. — All will admit, that to imitate *blindly*, the fashions of the higher classes, without regard to those considerations of fitness, which render them appropriate and tasteful in those whom we follow, is the plainest mark of false taste and vulgarity. For example; we may be informed that Queen Victoria wears, with her evening dress, the thinnest slippers of white Satin. The young miss who should therefore conclude, that *her feet* would be appropriately arrayed in similar shoes, for a ride on horseback, through our country mud, to one of our country churches, would display a ludicrous instance of false taste. We may be told that Prince Albert sports no boots but those radiant with patent varnish, in St. James' Park. To adopt a similar article for hunting or walking boots, to traverse the mud of Virginia, would be a piece of vulgar imitation, unworthy of any one, above the sable *beaux*, who, in the streets of Richmond, so successfully ape, and even out-do, the distinguishing characteristics of the "*Distingues*."

Now these are just illustrations of the false taste shown by the Protestant church, when she apes Popery, in the use of the organ. The instrument is appropriate to the spirit of papal worship; but there is an essential difference between that worship and ours, which makes our blind use of their favorite instrument, a most unfortunate instance of vulgar imitation. Popish worship is addressed to the senses, and the imagination through the senses. According to the Papists' own theory of his worship, the mass is a grand Action. It is all in an unknown tongue; but this matters not: he asserts that even though there were not an articulate word pronounced in any language, the solemn drama would convey its instructions to the heart, through the genuflections, the pantomime, the adoration of the priests, and the varying harmonies of the music. Their theory of church music is just the same. The hymns are in an unknown language: if the worshipper heard every syllable articulated, he would not understand the ideas that are sung, nor does it matter that he should. The sentiment of devotion is conveyed sufficiently, by the character of the music.

But the theory of Protestant religious music is, or ought to be, essentially different. We appeal to the understanding and to those intelligent emotions, which are produced by the understanding on the heart. We sing articulate, intelligent words, in a familiar language, conveying to every hearer, instructive ideas and elevating sentiments. The *articulation* of words sung, is the very essence and soul of our musical worship. We recognize the music only as an accessory, to aid in impressing the ideas it accompanies; for we do not believe there is any more religion in the sensations of melody and harmony, separately considered, than in the posture of the declaimer. We conceive that it is only by accompanying intelligent religious ideas, that they can produce any religious effect. The scripture represents religious music as the vehicle of religious instruction, and imply the necessity of distinct articulation. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will *sing with the understanding* also, else when thou shall bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen at they giving of thanks — seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest:" 1st Corinthians 14; 15 and 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, *teaching and admonishing* one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs" — Col. 3:16. These passages fully sustain the assertion that religious music, to be scriptural, *must contain intelligible articulate words*, conveying some pious instruction or emotion.

[W]e assert that this essential difference between the theory and spirit of Popish church music and Protestant, makes the organ an unfit and ill-judged accompaniment for our vocal religious songs: although it is appropriate and well chosen for the purpose of Papists.

Now then, we assert that this essential difference between the theory and spirit of Popish church music and Protestant, makes the organ an unfit and ill-judged accompaniment for our vocal religious songs: although it is appropriate and well chosen

for the purpose of Papists. — Those who advocate the use of the organ must submit to the charge of blind, unscientific imitation; or they must adopt the kind of music which Rome uses, appealing only to the ear, inarticulate, and un instructive, and utterly foreign to the intention of the scriptures. The latter thing is, indeed, partly done, in practice, in all Protestant churches, where this instrument is used.

Those who advocate the use of the organ must submit to the charge of blind, unscientific imitation; or they must adopt the kind of music which Rome uses, appealing only to the ear, inarticulate, and un instructive, and utterly foreign to the intention of the scriptures. The latter thing is, indeed, partly done, in practice, in all Protestant churches, where this instrument is used.

To evince the justice of the charge of false taste, just made, it remains to point out, in what respects, the organ is inconsistent with the spirit and character of scriptural church music. And first; none who are familiar with the use of the organ, can be so hardy as to deny, that it is *unfavorable to distinct articulation*, which is the very essential of religious music. It is the most overpowering of all accompaniments to vocal music, and most effectually obliterates the distinctions of articulate sound. For himself the writer would affirm that he never, in a single instance, heard an organ used, when he could catch a single connected sentiment of what was sung, except so far as reading of the hymn before the singing, assisted his memory. And it may be fearlessly asserted, that the use of an organ utterly disappoints that, which is the grand purpose of religious music, the comprehension of the sentences sung, with the majority of hearers. Is not this a fatal objection to its use, with any man who values sense more than sound, the kernel more than the shell?

Second: The organ is *incapable of accentuation*. The alternate notes played upon it cannot receive any variety of *ictus* or force, as should be the case in all music. The rhythm of English poetry depends entirely on the occurrence of accented and unaccented syllables, in a certain order. In reading it, the emphasis, or ictus of the voice must fall on the alternate syllables, intended to receive it. To neglect this rule, and to pronounce the syllables indiscriminately with equal force, would convert the most spirited lines of Scott or Burns, into an intolerable drawl. Now, this rhythm is equally essential in poetry, when sung. The alternate *notes*, corresponding with the accented syllables of the metre, must receive a heavier or stronger tone. To neglect this, in singing, is as insufferable to a cultivated musical ear, as the neglect of the accentuation in reading poetry, would be to the elocutionists. These are assertions which no man can dare to dispute, without condemning himself, as the crudest of sciolists in musical knowledge. And it is equally undeniable, that the organ is utterly incapable of giving any expression to this *ictus* or accent;

for the plain reason, that the force of the tone depends on the operations of the bellows-blower, or the character of the *stop* used, and not on the force of the performer's touch upon the key. Hence the music of an organ, although it may have a certain kind of solemnity, can never be spirited. It is only rescued from the character of drawling, by the power and fullness of its tones. To use it as an accompaniment to vocal music, is *death* to the spirit and expression of the poetry which is sung.

Third: The organ, like all other instruments with fixed stops to mark off the tones of the scale, gives those tones inaccurately; and when used along with that perfect instrument of God's own make, the human voice, must fail in producing a perfect accord, and perfect harmonies. This will be confirmed by any scientific organist.

The long drawn peals of harmony which proceed from this instrument echoing through lofty arches, and the fullness and volume of its sound, may render it suitable to the purpose of Popish ecclesiastical theatricals. But we assert, for the reasons above, that it is utterly unsuited, ill judged, and in ill taste, as an accompaniment for vocal music, intended to be articulate, and expressive of intelligible ideas. We assert it purely on principles of musical taste, apart from historical or theological objections. We retort the charge of rusticity on the advocates of organs in Protestant worship, and assert that this application of this accompaniment, regardless of the difference of circumstances, and the natural incongruities of the things, is the true breach of enlightened taste, and the true exhibition of prejudice.

The modern Opera is more of an Action and a Pantomime, than the religious music of Protestants was intended to be; though less so than the Mass. — The plot of the play is exhibited, partly by scenery and pantomimes, and partly by words set to music and sung articulately. Its nature is, therefore, not so totally foreign to that of the organ, as the nature of Protestant sacred music which depends wholly on articulation to convey its sentiments. And yet, although I would not claim as much familiarity with the theatricals as some of the admirers of organs in churches, I feel authorized to assert, that such a thing as an organ in the orchestra of an Opera, is never heard of; and that its introduction would be regarded by the whole musical world, as a ludicrous anomaly.

There is a fact in the musical world, to which we can appeal for practical confirmation of the principles of taste laid down. The modern Opera is more of an Action and a Pantomime, than the religious music of Protestants was intended to be; though less so than the Mass. — The plot of the play is exhibited, partly by scenery and pantomimes, and partly by words set to music and sung articulately. Its nature is,

therefore, not so totally foreign to that of the organ, as the nature of Protestant sacred music which depends wholly on articulation to convey its sentiments. And yet, although I would not claim as much familiarity with the theatricals as some of the admirers of organs in churches, I feel authorized to assert, that such a thing as an organ in the orchestra of an Opera, is never heard of; and that its introduction would be regarded by the whole musical world, as a ludicrous anomaly. All men of taste would feel, that the character of the instrument is unsuitable to the expression, emphasis, and flexibility of articulate, vocal music. The same principles of taste should expel it from our churches.

The manner in which this instrument is almost universally used in our Protestant churches, makes it doubly grievous to devotional feeling, and offensive to good taste. The organs obtained are frequently of inferior construction; and are out of tune, and ill-played. The volume of sound is often utterly disproportioned to the number of voices. Sometimes we see a little, feeble, starveling choir, to which the "accompaniment" has proved almost a fatal incubus, with a dozen voices, and an organ pouring forth tones strong enough to guide a thousand singers. In this connection, it may be remarked, that the use of organs in the Protestant churches of Holland, and in other places in Europe, where the congregational singing is noted as very fine, is no precedent whatever for the manner in which they are used in this country. There, the spirit of the people is generally imbued with a taste for music. All sing; and where a thousand voices are united in a song of praise, the peculiar faults of the instrument are hidden in the vast volume of sound; and its leading chords subserve some slightly useful purpose, in keeping the air up to the proper pitch. But in a church where the vocal music is confined to thirty or forty voices, the organ is dominant, and all its vices becomes glaring.

The testimony of all concurs in proving, that the use of organs in this country is unfavorable to congregational singing. Unless their introduction can be guarded from this ill effect, more effectually than it has hitherto, let them be kept out forever. Another effect equally general, is to render the choir weak and remiss. Not only do we never see spirited congregational singing in this part of the country in churches where there are organs, we do not often find, in such churches, good choir singing. And surely, it is no slight objection, that an inexperienced private individual must be employed as organist, or some teacher of music, or theatrical musician must be hired. And thus one of the most solemn parts of the worship of a spiritual God, is committed chiefly to the guidance of a professional hireling, commonly a wicked man!

One of the most outrageous sins against good taste and devotional feeling committed by these windy machines, consists of the preludes and symphonies, with which they usually introduce and intersperse the praise of God. These seem to be thrown in, by some arithmetical or mechanical rule, between every two verses, in utter disregard of taste and sense. The nature of scriptural singing should teach us, that there should be nothing of the sort. The only use of the musical sounds, is to accompany and enforce the words expressing pious sentiments. What religious use or sense is there then, in that part of the music which is accompanied by no words? None. It has no business in the church. Just as reasonably might the preacher preface each impressive paragraph with a minute or two of

pantomimic gesture. And then, the symphonies are thrown in blindly, after every verse, whether the sentiment of the poetry justifies any pause or not. It may be, that the burning thoughts of the hymn would hurry the devout soul along, without pause, from verse to verse. It may be that the end of a verse leaves a sentence unfinished, the nominative in the former verse waiting for its verb in the latter. Good taste and good sense would dictate, that an unbroken tide of song should bear the wrapt soul along to the climax of the sentiment, before it is required to pause. But no: the glowing thought must hang in it mid flight, or the widowed subject must stand bereaved of its predicate, until the "Performer" has had time to distinguish himself to his hearts content in a "voluntary." But the most nauseating thing about the whole exhibition, is to see performers presuming to detain a whole congregation, with their "extemporized voluntaries," when their inventive talent does not extend far enough to justify them in undertaking an original nursery song, and their operative skill does not suffice to perform the air of a common hymn, with sufficient fluency and spirit. — The manner in which these wondrous performances are thrown off, would seem to indicate, sometimes, that they are intended to realize the description of the great English poet of

Notes with many a winding bout
 Of linked sweetness, long drawn out,
 With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
 The melting voice through mazes running,
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony.

But their afflicted hearers doubtless found about as much resemblance between their effusions and the conceptions of a true master, as you, Mr. Editor, would discover between the eccentric bombast of an Arkansas stump orator, and the speeches of Demosthenes. Long may it be, ere I am again subjected to such inflictions. Give me rather, for ever more, the hearty singing of the whole congregation, uniting their voices in some of those solemn strains, sung by sainted parents over our cradles, and linked with all the sweet and solemn recollections of the dreamy past! When all together rise up, "making melody in their hearts unto God," and mingling their voices in one tide of expressive, living, gushing melody, how does the delicious horror send the blood thrilling through the heart? How does the billowy harmony bear the enraptured soul towards heaven? Such were the strains with which the Presbyterian church in our land honored God in earlier days. Such was the songs that swept on the wailing winds, over the moors of Scotland, when the purest of God's people there, braved death to worship him. Such were the strains with which the Republicans of England shook the hearts of their foes, when they drew nigh to the battle, with "the high praises of God in their mouths, and a two edged sword in their hands," to execute vengeance upon the heath and judgments upon the people." Such we believe were the songs of praise sent up to God from that upper chamber, where the primitive church met to worship. — And wherever they shall be heard, they will elevate the devout, convince the sinful, and make the careless solemn, more effectually than any of the borrowed artifices of a worldly church.

If we are authorized to add to God's worship, forms purely of human device, in order to make it more palatable to sinners, to what corruptions shall we not give entrance? The Popish church of South America attracts multitudes of worshippers, by gross theatrical representations. According to this mode of operations, which has introduced organs into our churches, a Presbyterian Church in South American might find it necessary to imitate idolatrous Papists, and convert God's house into a play-house.

There is one fact connected with the introduction of organs into those of our churches which have adopted them, which is exceedingly distressful. It is *the reason* which we always hear assigned, among other reasons, for their introduction, and which we believe has been in every case the most operative one. It is always urged: "*we must have an organ to keep pace with other churches in attracting a congregation, and in retaining the young and thoughtless.*" Has it come then to this, that the chaste spouse of Christ is reduced to borrow the meretricious adornment of the "scarlet whore," in order to catch the unholy admiration of the ungodly? Not thus did the Apostles devise to bring sinners to the church. They were taught to go after them, into the highways and hedges, with the wooings of mercy and love; to allure them by the beauty of holiness; to urge them by the terrors of the law. If we are authorized to add to God's worship, forms purely of human device, in order to make it more palatable to sinners, to what corruptions shall we not give entrance? The Popish church of South America attracts multitudes of worshippers, by gross theatrical representations. According to this mode of operations, which has introduced organs into our churches, a Presbyterian Church in South American might find it necessary to imitate idolatrous Papists, and convert God's house into a play-house. An excuse which will justify such an enormity as this under different circumstances, is surely no valid excuse for any thing. We believe that all such artifices, of human device, to catch popularity, are inconsistent with the genius of the Presbyterian Church, derogatory of her honor, and blasting to her interests. It was her glory and her strength, that she aimed to commend herself by her firm devotion to truth, by the purity of her discipline, the pre-eminence of her ministry, and the justice of her polity. If she will cleave to these traits and rest upon them in humble faith in her divine Head, she will prosper. But when once she descends from the high vantage ground of intellectual, theological, and moral superiority, to chaffer [barter] for popularity by human devices, and doubtful arts, her *prestige* will be gone. Other churches are better adapted to win in *that* race, and will surely outrun her.

Chorepiscopus. [Robert L. Dabney]

ORGANS

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
March 1, 1849, Volume IV, No. 29.

Mr. Editor — I see a disposition manifested by some of your correspondents, to discuss the propriety of introducing the use of organs into the public worship of God. I am well aware that this has long been a controverted subject, and that much has been, and can be said on both sides of the question. Probably it would be impossible, at this time, for any one, however gifted, to bring forward arguments that would fully satisfy and harmonize the contending parties. Some advocate the use of organs, as a mere matter of taste: — their principal object is to gratify a musical ear with its grand and solemn tones. — Others regard the organ as an innocent accompaniment, and an important auxiliary to the human voice, when the high praises of God are sounded in his sanctuary; and in support of their opinion, they appeal to the use of instrumental music, in the worship of God, under the old dispensation. On the other hand, some are opposed to the use of organs, from strong and deep rooted prejudices, arising from the fact, that they were first introduced into the worship of God, under the Christian dispensation, by the idolatrous church of Rome, and for centuries, have been considered almost an essential appendage to the rites and ceremonies of that church. — They look upon them much in the same light as they do the use of images, relics, &c. There is another class, who are opposed to the use of organs, because they *sincerely believe*, that that worship is most acceptable to God, and most profitable to man, which flows from a broken and contrite heart, unaccompanied by any of those contrivances of art, which are calculated merely to divert and gratify the senses, whilst they disturb the sweet serenity of the soul, and interrupt its communion with God.

It is not my design, Mr. Editor, to argue either side of the question, as it regards the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of using organs in the worship of God: — my object is, to make a few remarks, with respect to the expediency of using them. Things may be lawful, and yet not expedient; — and therefore, under certain circumstances, cannot be innocently used.

It is not my design, Mr. Editor, to argue either side of the question, as it regards the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of using organs in the worship of God: — my object is, to make a few remarks, with respect to the *expediency* of using them. Things may be lawful, and yet not expedient; — and therefore, under certain circumstances, cannot be innocently used.

In the first place, I think it would be highly *inexpedient* to introduce an organ into any church, where a portion, — even a small minority of its devout members, were decidedly opposed

to it. This, I think, would be in direct violation of the spirit of the gospel, as manifested by the apostle Paul, when he said, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth. When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. There are some persons; and they are often among the most devout and spiritual minded members of the church, who are so opposed, and conscientiously opposed, to the use of organs, that they cannot worship with edification and comfort, in any church, where an organ is used. You may call it weakness, if you will, but it is the same kind of weakness as that which actuated the Waldenses, the Reformers, the Puritans, and the Fathers of the Scottish church, when they defended and maintained the truth, at the expense of their lives, and everything that they held dear on earth. Much that is called weakness, and superstition, at the present day, constitutes the very essence of that worship, which is most pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

Again, I would say, that it was highly *inexpedient* to introduce an organ into a church, that is heavily encumbered with debt. "Be just before you are generous," may be a maxim of worldly origin, but it is in strict accordance with the spirit of the gospel. As organ music is *non essential* to the acceptable worship of God, I think it would be highly improper for any congregation, already burdened with debt, to increase their indebtedness, by the expense of an organ. Some, to whom they are indebted, might need that money, to procure the necessaries of life, for their suffering families. Nothing, perhaps more completely cripples the energies of a church, and hinders its prosperity, than to be saddled with a heavy debt. Whatever, therefore, unnecessarily tends to increase that burden, tends to destroy the salutary influence of that church, and even to jeopardize its existence. Again, I would say, that it is *inexpedient* for ANY church, to incur the expense of an organ, whilst the wants of the church, and of the world, are so many, and so pressing. The most zealous advocates for the use of organs, do not pretend that they are required by any direct, or implied command of God: — so that if there is no impropriety in using them, there is no criminality in dispensing with them. It is under this view of the subject that I say, that it is *inexpedient*, at the present time, for ANY church to incur the expense of an organ. I will give some of my reason, and let the candid reader judge what I say.

1st: There is no city in the United States (and it is in cities, that organs are chiefly used), which does not contain many families of virtuous and respectable character, who, after all the efforts that they can make, are in want, not only of the comforts, but often, even of the necessaries of life. Rather than expose themselves to the cold charities, and insolent rebukes of an unfeeling world, they often pine away in silence and solitude, and sink to the grave, unnoticed, and uncared for. I do not suppose that many in our land of plenty, die of actual starvation; but I have not doubt, that the want of those things which are needful in a delicate state of health, and a chilling sense of neglect, which withers the soul, often hurries to the grave persons of sensitive minds, who felt that they had a *claim* upon their fellow men and fellow Christians, for a little portion of that abundance, with which God had blessed them. Mr. Editor, there is a great deal of that charity in the world (and I fear some in the church too), that most readily says, "Depart in peace and be ye warmed, and be ye filled:" — but how few are there of

those to whom God has given an abundant store, that seek out the abodes of poverty and sorrow, — administer with their own hands to the wants of necessitous, and by words of kindness and sympathy, call down on their heads the blessings of those who are ready to perish. Alas! there are those in our wealthy churches, who feel that it is a great condescension, almost a degradation, to notice, and speak kindly to a poor brother or sister. As a matter of *expediency*, would it not be infinitely better, to give a little of our abundance, to cheer the hearts of the poor and needy, — the suffering members of Christ's body, — than to expend it for an organ, to discourse sweet music to our ears, but which will not give bread to the hungry, or comfort to the afflicted! Our Savior has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" "*Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of my brethren, ye did it not to me.*"

Now I would ask (and I wish every Christian would ask himself, as in the presence of God, and at the judgment seat of Christ), whether ANY church has money to spend upon an organ, when almost every society, and institution, that is laboring for the conversion of the world, is either embarrassed with debt, or has its operations contracted, and crippled to a great extent, for want of funds.

2nd. Again, I would say, that it was *inexpedient* for ANY church, to go to the expense of an organ, whilst the wants of the church, at large, are so numerous, and so urgent. Christians are the representatives of Christ upon earth, and to the church he has committed the glorious work of sending the gospel to every member of the human family. Every church, and every member of the church, is solemnly bound, according to their ability, to aid in carrying forward the great work for which the Savior died. It was for that purpose that Christ redeemed them with his blood; and when they entered into covenant with him they solemnly consecrated, not only themselves, but all that they possessed, to be used for the glory of God, and the building up of Christ's kingdom in the world. Now I would ask (and I wish every Christian would ask himself, as in the presence of God, and at the judgment seat of Christ), whether ANY church has money to spend upon an organ, when almost every society, and institution, that is laboring for the conversion of the world, is either embarrassed with debt, or has its operations contracted, and crippled to a great extent, for want of funds. Where is the society that is doing one half the good that it might do, if it had funds to carry out its designs? And from whom are the funds to come, if not from those who are the consecrated stewards of God, and who have called heaven and earth to witness that they love God, and his cause, above every thing else? How rapidly would the gospel spread through the world, if every professed follower of Christ, was as zealous in promoting the interests and spread of his kingdom, as they often are in promoting the temporal interests and welfare of their families. If all the money that is *extravagantly* expended in erecting splendid

churches, and furnishing them with costly organs, was expended in furnishing the Bible, and sending the gospel, to the destitute, both in Christian and heathen lands, — how much good might be done; — how many souls might be saved; — how soon would the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

I hope, Mr. Editor, that neither you, or your readers, will for one moment suppose that I am an enemy to neat and convenient houses of worship. — or that I have no relish for the songs of Zion, when set to notes of the most exquisite sweetness. But I have long been of opinion, that a vast amount of money was needlessly expended, to say the least, upon elegant churches, and fine organs, that ought to have been cast into the treasury of the Lord, and used for the spread of the gospel, and the salvation of souls. I do not believe that a soul was ever converted by gazing at the superb magnificence of a church, or by listening to the lofty and thrilling notes of an organ.

Rusticus

ORGANS, ONCE MORE
From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
March 15, 1849, Volume IV, No. 31.

Mentaigne asserts that oracles ceased at the birth of Christ. Others say they did not. We are inclined to think they never were "ceaseable" at all, inasmuch as they never have been demonstrated to have been anything else than exceedingly intangible and deceptive. Notwithstanding in certain seclusions, they are supposed yet to exist. If any Oracle does exist at this late period, it must be of the Jovian character, as upon the authority of Montfaucon and others. Cleveland tells us that this gave forth its voice from "a forest of oaks, *one* of which was called the divine or prophetic oak, though *all the trees* were said to be endued with the spirit." "This, of course, is mere fable," says the historian, meaning, perhaps, that they never were truly oracular, tangible, and infallible. But whether oracles exist since the commencement of the Christian era, we will leave to the exquisitely informed in those matters. For if they do exist, the subject of heterodoxy, of instrumental accompaniments, and particularly of the organ in Church music, is palpably not susceptible at present of oracular disposal. The very complimentary reply of "SIMPLEX" has included everything that I think can be opposed on reasonable grounds, especially in so short a paragraph. We thought enough had been said. — But our friend "*Chorepiscopus*" has sent a streak of one of his "delicious horrors" through us, and we are thereby worked up into a fever of reply. We of the musical taste are, by our later friend, fairly up as a spectacle unto all the world, not excluding the ladies. We are strung up without a chance to kick — not even permitted to die prettily like the dolphin — we are "tasteless, without refinement, and light." We may, therefore, hang up "our harp upon the willows" forthwith, and permanently, as we shall never gain be marketable. Nay, through our "Popery" our very "spirituality" is impugned, and we are wound up in our winding sheet as of the "ephemeral aristocracy" of the city, &c. and sentence of death is very summarily pronounced, dead — dead. But stop — hold,

my brother C. We are certainly a little inclined to life, and by no means deceased. Though your stroke had something of destruction in intent, it had nothing of it in reality, save what Shakespeare said of murder, "*it speaketh with a most miraculous organ!*" But we are not ready to be decapitated as suddenly as "C." desires, or by the method.

It is a little too late for any one to charge those who are not disposed to reject instrumental aids in the choir, as "wanting in judgment," "deficient in taste," "worldly minded," &c. For these charges will apply to large numbers through the land, in our cities and country, of undoubted judgment and information, "taste" and "spirituality," to the personal knowledge not only of "H." but of "C." We would, therefore whisper to "C.," if we could, let your oraculum come forth a little more on the "dulciano," rather than so much of the "reed" stop — a little more of the "B. flat," brother "C.," and we will manage the "C sharp" much more musically. My brother "C." styles himself "*Chorepiscopus.*" According to Mosheim, then, he is neither independent of city nor country. A little here and a little there, in his visits. — Better then, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all the ladies, if not with "all men." For our "boarding school Misses" will to all intents assume different names as well as places at some future period associated with co-ordinate influences. You may find in some Chorepiscopal visit that you have misjudged their abilities, when left to what you are pleased to style their "eccentric voluntaries," they may perform a sentiment upon their vocal organs which "C." will be the last to confound with a "symphony from Handel." The time has been when the subject might have been frowned and satirized out of defense. It cannot be so now. The "Old Dominion" must not be pronounced "The Whole Dominion," and therefore if organs are not considered in taste here, it is not logical to suppose that "there are few in the church," and that "the number cannot and will not be increased." The very church in Philadelphia whose Pastor, some years since, objected to an organ, now makes use of two, one in the church, the other in the Lecture Room. One of the finest organs in that city has been lately introduced into the choir of our Reverend and excellent brother, C.C.C. [Cornelius C. Cuyler], and "H." but lately joined with more than a thousand in the most perfect and devotional harmony applied to the Psalms of David, as read by a Father in the school of the Prophets, at Princeton. In New York, Brooklyn, and other places, the same "taste" and spirit exist to as great a degree, if not greater. Those acquainted with the last few years of our history, will certainly see that a great change is steadily perfecting our church music. We are sustained by testimony sufficient to enable us to know that in more than one place as perfect harmony is to be found in connection with the Presbyterian Churches of our country, under the direction of the Hastings, Mason, Howe, and others, as may be found in the musical world, and this excellence is almost invariably connected with the organ, or some instrument. But why refer to the finest music, and to the intelligent and largest communities? Simply to remind my brother "C." of the work he has cut out for himself, and that as to "taste, refinement," &c., there is a little "of the same sort left" somewhere else than in one place, and in the vicinity of "the oaks." We cannot be too summary, therefore, when we consign "C." to settle the question with them as to musical taste, and with all the world with them.

As to the intrinsic fitness of the organ to church music, we have a word. It is in answer to the objections of "inability to vary the force of the tone," and the "inaccuracy of tone." Few instruments are made, and none is, perhaps, without that means which enables the performer to correct the former objection. This very essential part of the organ, "C." has failed to recognize in his description of the organ. The purest sounds may on the largest instruments be made to melt away as if uttered by the softest breath, yet perfect in its richness and purity, and then to revive with all the modulation, intonation, and promptness necessary. The writer has listened to performers in this country, as well as in Europe, under whose skill the organ, for all orchestral purposes, was just as capable of accentuation and variation of volume as the voices of the choir, with all the superior softness and richness that wins you, despite your criticism. In this power of variation and modulation, it stands unequaled by the piano or any other instrument. Nor is it only the organ at Freyburg, which Lowell Mason describes as absolutely imitating the human voice itself with such precision as to convey the impression of a choir of perfect voices. "H." and many others have heard executions upon the organ, in the Grand Statuary Room at the Coliseum, London, by which one of no extraordinary musical taste could decide what temper of mind the player wished to describe, and the performer could designate the sentiment of certain pieces of sculpture with such excellence, that numbers and even youth will distinguish the statue or group with ease. To the accomplishment of this, something is needed decidedly different from the "long drawn" inexpressiveness of intelligible ideas, which "C." has associated with the instrument, and something else than the musical abilities of "C's" "bellows blower."

As to the objection on the ground of "inaccuracy of tone," I must consign "C." to the musical mercies of our "Boarding School Misses" who can answer the objection with sufficient correctness.

The truth is, though "C." may be correct in reference to the "ephemeral aristocracy of the city," and its pedigree "from the plough stilts," about the latter of which he may know considerably, yet with all courtesy we suggest a mistake in his idea of the taste of cities and capable and willing churches, that leads them to add anything lawfully to improve the sanctuary comforts and attractions. One thing is true: The subject is before the public generally, and is gaining favor, and if it is unlawful, it certainly is both illogical and in vain to reason against it either on mistaken premises or from abuse of the thing. Upon the whole, we cannot condemn the process against opposition adopted by a certain ancient General. His vessel was in rapid and joyous pursuit of the object just ahead. The soothsayer was very important and busy in consulting the omen birds below, as if the whole victory depended upon his manipulations with these sacred pullets. "Sir," said the haruspex, suddenly appearing on deck, "Sir, we must stop, the birds won't eat; something is the matter." — "Bring them up, let's see them" said the General. "They won't eat, eh?" "No sir," was the reply. Kicking cage and all overboard, "Let them drink then," said the General. They pursued their course, and won the race.

This is much the course with this question. It is organ, or no organ; whilst many are rapidly in pursuit of their introduction, and they are undoubtedly becoming more general.

The taste for excellent music is everywhere improving, and anything to aid is in requisition. If we have nothing of greater weight than "sacred pullets" to oppose, and they won't eat, they will be kicked overboard to drink. In the mean time, there will be no wholesome, commanding influence over what might be made most efficiently subservient to the interest of the Church. We fear no evil to the spirituality of Zion from the proper encouragement of every thing that has a lawful tendency to make its heights more attractive, its praises more general, and to turn the current of interest and love into the church we love and honor. One of our most efficient brethren, and one whose labor have been eminently blessed to our churches and his own this winter, finds no decrease of success in the use of an organ in his Church, and one in his study, nor in stately encouraging the use of the instrument and rules of music in the family according to the spirit of the Directory of Worship, "that we may praise God in a becoming manner with our voices, as well as our hearts." We need more of the earnestness of soul that makes every thing tributary to the great end, as Dr. Johnson says of Dr. Watts, "Whatever he took in hand, was, by his incessant sollicitude for souls, converted to theology," and with Dr. Miller, that every plan and object may "point directly to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the temporal and eternal welfare of men, as their grand centre." We have no arms, no means to spar. Every nerve must be braced to the onset, every winning influence made tributary. The country, as well as the city, and especially great cities are prolific in death, and the snares and fascinations of the tempter would deceive "the very elect." But then worldlings will frequent the sanctuary. Let them come, we will meet them with the truth, omnipotent to change and save them. — But they will come for curiosity along. Let them come. Many came for no better reasons beneath the teachings of the Head of the Church, when *He* was on earth, and they are now joining the anthems of Heaven. But some will only listen to the music. Let them listen. The music of a Savior's love should be sweeter, for it turned anew the harps of Heaven, and they will stand a fairer chance with being charmed by it with *us* than amid the Latin orgies of *Rome*, to which many are hastening for this reason alone. No, we must make every thing bend to the great end, everything "*pro ecclesia Dei*," everything "*for the Church of God*," nothing for error and Satan but sin and death — all things for the Savior and heaven.

H.

ANCIENT CHURCH MUSIC.

From the *Watchman And Observer*, Richmond VA
March 15, 1849, Volume IV, No. 31.

That *singing* constituted a part of the worship in the primitive Christian, as in the Jewish Church, admits not of a doubt. But question, perhaps more curious than useful, has arisen as to what is implied in *singing* "the Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs" to which an Apostle refers; or in the early Christians being accustomed, according to Pliny the younger, to *sing* a song to Christ as unto God. — [*Carmen Christo quasi Deo canere Solitos.*] But singing even in its crudest state, implies some modulation of the voice — some set time or

measure — to distinguish it from reading or speaking, and also as being susceptible of the harmonious union of a number of voices expressing the same sentiment and the same emotions — accompanied or not by instruments in aid of the voice, and to heighten the effect. There is reason, however, to believe that the singing even in the Temple service, and in the earlier Christian congregations, was very unlike that to which we are now accustomed. We have before us an old volume containing the Posthumous Essays of the learned John Gregory, chaplain of Christ's church, Oxford, published in 1683, in one of which, speaking of the early music in the Christian church, he says:

"About that time, it was *amans*, and *clamans*. It had more of the devotion than the voice, sent up with heart enough but for the harmony, much after the rate of their other accommodations; from the simplicity whereof, as unequal time took off, so it added to the grace and glory of it. The church music had these degrees to rise by. The first and rude performance was done *plano cantu*, by plain song — as the Psalms are most ordinarily read in Cathedrals, or, at the best, but as they are to be sung in parochial churches, where though sometimes the noise may seem to pretend to a dash and sprinkling of art, 'tis most commonly (and 'tis well if it be no worse) but all in the same time. From plain song they got to *discant*, and first of all to *contrapunctum simpler*, a simple kind of counterpoint, and then music was in parts; They sung not all the same time, but by way of consonancy; Yet so as the music answered note for note; as it there stood a minim or semibrief in the upper part, there stood another against it in the lower and inner part; so that this music needed no bars. To this the rare, but intemperate invention of the masters hath added the *contrapunctum figuratum*, consisting of Feuges, or maintaining of points, alteration of the keys, &c."

The *planus cantus*, or plain song, appears to have been used in the original recitation of the Nicene creed, when according to Berno it was ordered to be "*decantari*" and with "*alta voce*," and by a canon of the third council of Toledo, it was ordered that it should be *passim clara voce decantatum, secundum formam ecclesiarum Orientalium* — every where sung with a clear voice according to the form of the Oriental churches.

The question in dispute between our correspondents as to the propriety or impropriety of using the organ in the worship of the sanctuary, we shall leave with them — contenting ourselves merely with such historical notices of its introduction and use as are not ordinarily accessible. From the writings of Aquinas, who was born in 1221, it would appear that in this time no kind of instrumental music was used in the Western churches. His language is, "*Ecclesia nostra non assumit instrumenta musica sicut citharas et Psalteria in divinas laudes, ne videatur judaizare.*" Our church does not employ instrumental music, as harps and psalteries in the divine praise, lest it should seem to judaize. But Durandus mentions them as having been introduced before the close of that century. — Aymon, however, asserts that organs were introduced into France in the reign of Lewis the Godly, or about 400 years earlier than the days of Aquinas. But Marianus Scotus, Martin Polonus, Platina, the annals of France, Aventine and the Pontifical itself, as quoted by Gregory, all agree, that the first organ that was ever seen in the West was sent over into France to King Pepin from the Greek Emperor, Constantinus Copronymus, about the year 766.

— *Res adhuc Germanis et Gallis incognita (says Aventine) instrumentum musicae maximum, Organum appellant, cicutis ex albo plumbo compactum est simul et follibus inflatur, et manuum pedumque digitis pulsatur.* From this description it appears that it was an instrument of the largest kind, with pipes, and with bellows and played with the hands and feet, as are the parlor organs of the present time. But there is no evidence, so far as we can learn, that the organ, though thus early introduced, was used in the worship of God, till after the time of Aquinas. From Zonarus (tom 8, p. 127) it appears that the Greek Emperor Michael had an organ of gold, "which was not used to put the church in tune, but to cast a glory upon the court, and to draw foreign admiration upon the Emperor." Gregory also says that he had himself occasion to show an Armenian priest who was on a visit to Oxford, the organ in the Chapel there, and he was entirely ignorant both of its name and use, and yet had lived for fourteen years under two patriarchs, Constantinople and Alexandria — and hence he concluded that they were not then in use in the Oriental churches.

No one will contend that the *organs* mentioned in the Old Testament bear even a remote resemblance to the instrument which is now called an organ. The organ of Jubal mentioned in Genesis iv: 21, was probably a pipe made of brass or iron. The organ of Job xxi: 12, and xxx: 31 was most likely the psaltery, a musical instrument of a triangular form. And the organs of David, Psalm cl: 4, whatever may have been their form were no doubt very simple instruments, which none in our day, were they to see them, would think of calling them organs. So that the organ, in something of the form which it now bears as an accompaniment of sacred music, had its origin in the dark ages.

REVIEW
Dr. Girardeau's "Instrumental Music in Public Worship."

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH. *By John L. Girardeau, D. D., LL.D., Professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, South Carolina.* Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson. 1888. *The Presbyterian Quarterly*, July 1889.

The author in his eloquent conclusion anticipates that some will meet his arguments with sneers rather than serious discussion, which he proposes to endure with Christian composure. It is a reproach to our church, which fills us with grief, to find this prediction fulfilled in some quarters. Surely persons calling themselves Presbyterians should remember that the truths they profess to hold sacred have usually been in small minorities sneered at by the arrogant majorities. So it was in the days of the Reformers, of Athanasius, of the Apostles, and of Jesus himself.

The resort to this species of reply appears the more ill-considered, when we remember that Dr. Girardeau is supporting the identical position held by all the early fathers, by all the Presbyterian reformers, by a Chalmers, a Mason, a Breckinridge, a Thornwell, and by a Spurgeon. Why is not the position as respectable in our author as in all this noble galaxy of true Presbyterians? Will the innovators claim that all these great men are so inferior to themselves? The ideal seems to be that the opposition of all these great men to organs arose simply out of their ignorant old-fogyism and lack of culture; while our

advocacy of the change is the result of our superior intelligence, learning and refinement. The ignorance of this overweening conceit makes it simply vulgar. These great men surpassed all who have succeeded them in elegant classical scholarship, in logical ability, and in theological learning. Their deprecators should know that they surpassed them just as far in all elegant culture. The era of the Reformation was the Augustan age of church art in architecture, painting and music. These reformed divines were graduates of the first Universities, most of them gentlemen by birth, many of them noblemen, denizens of courts, of elegant accomplishments and manners, not a few of them exquisite poets and musicians. But they unanimously rejected the Popish Church music; not because they were fusty old pedants without taste, but because a refined taste concurred with their learning and logic to condemn it.

Dr. Girardeau has defended the old usage of our church with a moral courage, loyalty to truth, clearness of reasoning and wealth of learning which should make every true Presbyterian proud of him, whether he adopts his conclusions or not. The framework of his arguments is this: it begins with that vital truth which no Presbyterian can discard without a square desertion of our principles. The man who contests this first premise had better set out at once for Rome: God is to be worshipped only in the ways appointed in his word. Every act of public cultus not positively enjoined by him is thereby forbidden.

Dr. Girardeau has defended the old usage of our church with a moral courage, loyalty to truth, clearness of reasoning and wealth of learning which should make every true Presbyterian proud of him, whether he adopts his conclusions or not. The framework of his arguments is this: it begins with that vital truth which no Presbyterian can discard without a square desertion of our principles. The man who contests this first premise had better set out at once for Rome: God is to be worshipped only in the ways appointed in his word. Every act of public cultus not positively enjoined by him is thereby forbidden. Christ and his apostles ordained the musical worship of the New Dispensation without any sort of musical instrument, enjoining only the singing with the voice of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Hence such instruments are excluded from Christian worship. Such has been the creed of all churches, and in all ages, except of the Popish communion after it had reached the nadir of its corruption at the end of the thirteenth century, and of its prelatial imitators. But the pretext is raised that instrumental music was authorized by Scripture in the Old Testament. This evasion Dr. Girardeau ruins by showing that God set up in the Hebrew Church two distinct forms of worship; the one moral, didactic, spiritual and universal, and therefore perpetual in all places and ages — that

of the synagogues; the other peculiar, local, typical, foreshadowing in outward forms the more spiritual dispensation, and therefore destined to be utterly abrogated by Christ's coming. Now we find instrumental music, like human priests and their vestments, show-bread, incense, and bloody sacrifice, absolutely limited to this local and temporary worship. But the Christian churches were modeled upon the synagogues and inherited their form of government and worship because it was permanently didactic, moral and spiritual, and included nothing typical. This reply is impregnably fortified by the word of God himself: that when the Antitype has come the types must be abolished. For as the temple-priests and animal sacrifices typified Christ and his sacrifice on Calvary, so the musical instruments of David in the temple-service only typified the joy of the Holy Ghost in his pentecostal effusions.

Hence when the advocates of innovation quote such words as those of the Psalmist, "Praise the Lord with the harp," etc., these shallow reasoners are reminded that the same sort of plea would draw back human priests and bloody sacrifices into our Christian churches. For these Psalms exclaim with the same emphasis, "Bind your sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."

Hence when the advocates of innovation quote such words as those of the Psalmist, "Praise the Lord with the harp," etc., these shallow reasoners are reminded that the same sort of plea would draw back human priests and bloody sacrifices into our Christian churches. For these Psalms exclaim with the same emphasis, "Bind your sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." Why do not our Christian æsthetics feel equally authorized and bound to build altars in front of their pulpits, and to drag the struggling lambs up their nicely carpeted aisles, and have their throats cut there for the edification of the refined audience? "Oh, the sacrifices, being types and peculiar to the temple service, were necessarily abolished by the coming of the Antitype." Very good. So were the horns, cymbals, harps and organs only peculiar to the temple-service, a part of its types, and so necessarily abolished when the temple was removed.

If any addition can be made to this perfectly compact argument, it is contained in this suggestion of an undoubted historical truth: that the temple-worship had a national theocratic quality about it, which cannot now be realized in Christ's purely spiritual kingdom. Israel was both a commonwealth and a church. Her political government was a theocracy. Her human king was the viceroy representing on earth her true sovereign, God. Hence, in the special acts of worship in the temple, in which the high priest, Messiah's type, and the king, God's viceroy, combined, they represented the State Church, the collective nation in a national act of homage. This species of worship could not lawfully exist except at one place; only one set of officials could celebrate it. It was representatively the nation's act. It is to be noted that, when at

last musical instruments were attached to those national acts of homage to Israel's political king, Jehovah, it was not by the authority or intervention of the high priest, the religious head of the nation, but by that of the political viceroy. David's horns, harps and organs were therefore the appointed instruments of the national acts of homage to Jehovah. The church now is not a nation, but purely a spiritual kingdom, which is not of this world. Hence there is no longer room in her worship for the horns, harps and organs, any more than for swords and stonings in her government, or human kings and high priests in her institutions.

Let the true inference from this partial use of instruments of music in the typical, national worship be fairly and perspicuously stated. It is but this: since God saw fit to ordain such an adjunct to divine worship for a special object, it proves the use of it not to be sin per se, like lying or theft, for a holy God would not ordain an unholy expedient for any object, however temporary. The same argument shows that incense, show-bread and bloody sacrifices in worship cannot be sin per se. But how far short is this admission from justifying the use of any of them in worship now? Just here is the pitiable confusion of thought. It is not enough for the advocate of a given member of the church's cultus to show that it is not essentially criminal. He must show that God ordained it positively for our dispensation.

Dr. Girardeau's opponents stubbornly forget that the burden of proof rests on them; he is not bound to prove that these instruments are per se criminal or that they are mischievous or dangerous, although he is abundantly able to prove the latter. It is they who must prove affirmatively that God has appointed and required their use in his New Testament worship, or they are transgressors. Doubtless the objection in every opponent's mind is this: That, after all, Dr. Girardeau is making a conscientious point on too trivial and non-essential a matter. I am not surprised to meet this impression in the popular mind, aware as I am that this age of universal education is really a very ignorant one. But it is a matter of grief to find ministers so oblivious of the first lessons of their church history. They seem totally blind to the historical fact that it was just thus every damnable corruption which has cursed the church took its beginning; in the addition to the modes of worship ordained by Christ for the New dispensation, of human devices, which seemed ever so pretty and appropriate, made by the best of men and women and ministers with the very best of motives, and borrowed mostly from the temple cultus of the Jews. Thus came vestments, pictures in churches, incense, the observances of the martyrs' anniversary days — in a word, that whole apparatus of will-worship and superstition which bloomed into popery and idolatry. "Why, all these pretty inventions were innocent. The very best of people used them. They were so appropriate, so æsthetic! Where could the harm be?" History answers the question: They disobeyed God and introduced popery, — a result quite unforeseen by the good souls who began the mischief! Yes, but those who have begun the parallel mischief in our Presbyterian Church cannot plead the same excuse, for they are forewarned by a tremendous history, and prefer Mrs. Grundy's taste to the convincing light of experience. [Mrs. Grundy, The surname of an imaginary personage who is

proverbially referred to as a personification of the tyranny of social opinion in matters of conventional propriety. OED]

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 organ, 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.

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 organ, 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. "God's appointment of them in the Old Dispensation proves them to be innocent. Christians have a right to add to the cultus ordained for the New Testament whatever they think appropriate, provided it is innocent; and especially are such additions lawful if borrowed from the Old Dispensation." I should like to see the Presbyterian who has refuted Dr. Girardeau in argument meet a prelatist, who justifies these other additions by that Presbyterian's own logic. Would not his consistency be something like that pictured by the old proverb of "Satan reproving sin"? Again, if the New Testament church has priests, these priests must have sacrifice. Thus, consistency will finally lead that Presbyterian to the real corporeal presence and the mass.

To rebut further the charge that Dr. Girardeau is stickling for an unimportant point, I shall now proceed to assert the prudential and the doctrino-psychological arguments against the present organ worship.

Ist. Sound prudence and discretion decide against it. The money cost of these instruments, with the damaging debts incurred for them, is a sufficient objection. The money they cost, if expended in mission work, would do infinitely more good to souls and honor to God. In our poor church, how many congregations are there which are today mocking Dr. Craig with a merely nominal contribution to missions on the plea of an organ debt of \$1,800 to \$3,600! This latter says it is able to spare \$3,600 for a Christian's use (or does it propose to cheat the organ builder?). I ask solemnly, Is it right to expend so much of God's money, which is needed to rescue perishing souls, upon an object merely non-essential, at best only a luxury? Does the Christian conscience, in measuring the worth of souls and God's glory, deliberately prefer the little to the much?

Again, instruments in churches are integral parts of a system which is fruitful of choir quarrels and church feuds.

How many pastoral relations have they helped to disrupt? They tend usually to choke congregational singing, and thus to rob the body of God's people of their God-given right to praise him in his sanctuary. They almost always help to foster anti-scriptural styles of church music, debauching to the taste, and obstructive, instead of assisting, to true devotional feelings. Whereas the advocates of organs usually defend them on grounds of musical culture and æsthetic refinement, I now attack them on those very grounds. I assert that the organ is peculiarly inimical to lyrical taste, good music, and every result which a cultivated taste pursues, apart from conscientious regard for God. The instrument, by its very structure, is incapable of adaptation to the true purposes of lyrical music. It cannot have any arsis or thesis, any rhythm or expression of emphasis, such as the pulsatile instruments have. Its tones are too loud, brassy and dominant; all syllabication is drowned. Thus the church music is degraded from that didactic, lyrical eloquence, which is its scriptural conception, to those senseless sounds expressly condemned by the apostle in 1 Corinthians 12-14. In truth, the selection of this particular instrument as the preferred accompaniment of our lyrical worship betrays artistic ignorance in Protestants, or else a species of superfluity of naughtiness in choosing precisely the instrument specially suited to popish worship.

It so happens that the artistic world has an amusement — the Italian opera — whose aim is very non-religious indeed, but whose art-theory and method are precisely the same with those of scriptural church music. Both are strictly lyrical. The whole conception in each is this: to use articulate, rational words and sentences as vehicles for intelligible thoughts, by which the sentiments are to be affected, and to give them the aid of metre, rhythm and musical sounds to make the thoughts impressive. Therefore, all the world's artists select, for the opera-orchestras, only the pulsatile and chiefly the stringed instruments.

An organ has never been seen in a theater in Europe; only those instruments are admitted which can express arsis and thesis. I presume the proposal to introduce an organ into the Italian opera would be received by every musical artist in Europe as a piece of bad taste, which would produce a guffaw of contempt. This machine, thus fatally unfit for all the true purposes of musical worship and lyrical expression, has, indeed, a special adaptation to the idolatrous purposes of Rome, to which purposes all Protestants profess to be expressly hostile. So that, in selecting so regularly Rome's special instrument of idolatry, these Protestants either countenance their own enemies or betray an artistic ignorance positively vulgar. Consequently, one is not surprised to find this incorrect taste offending every cultivated Christian ear by every imaginable perversity, under the pretext of divine worship. The selections made are the most bizarre and unsuitable. The execution is over-loud, inarticulate, brassy, fitted only "to split the ears of the groundlings, capable, for the most part, of naught but inexplicable noise and dumb shows." The pious taste is outraged by the monopolizing of sacred time, and the indecent thrusting aside of God's holy worship to make room for "solos," which are unfit in composition, and still more so in execution, where the accompaniment is so hopelessly out of relation to the voice that if the one had the small-pox (as apparently it often has St. Vitus' dance) the other would be in no danger of catching the

disease, and the words, probably senseless at best, are so mouthed as to convey no more ideas to the hearers than the noise of Chinese tom-toms. Worshipers of true taste and intelligence, who know what the finest music in Europe really is, are so wearied by these impertinences that they almost shiver at the thought of the infliction. The holy places of our God are practically turned into fifth-rate Sunday theaters.

I shall be reminded that there are some Presbyterian churches with organs where these abuses do not follow. "They need not follow in any." I reply that they are the customary result of the unscriptural plans. If there should be some sedate boys who are allowed to play with fire-arms, but do not shoot their little sisters through the brain, yet that result follows so often as to ground the rule that no parent should allow this species of plaything to his children. The innovation is in itself unhealthy; and hence, when committed to the management of young people, who have but a slim modicum of cultivation, such as prevails in this country at large, has a regular tendency to all these offensive abuses.

2nd. I find a still more serious objection to instrumental music in churches, when I connect the doctrine of God's word concerning worship with the facts of human psychology. Worship must be an act of *personal homage* to God, or it is a hypocrisy and offense. The rule is that we must "glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his." The whole human person, with all its faculties, appropriately takes part in this worship; for they are all redeemed by him and consecrated to him. Hence our voices should, at suitable times, accompany our minds and hearts. Again, all true worship is rational. The truth intelligently known and intelligibly uttered is the only instrument and language of true worship. Hence all social public worship *must be didactic*. The apostle has settled this beyond possible dispute in 1st Corinthians. Speaking in an unknown tongue, when there is not one to interpret, he declares can have no possible religious use, except to be a testimony for converting pagan unbelievers. If none such are present, Paul expressly orders the speaker in unknown tongues *to be silent* in the congregations; and this although the speaker could correctly claim the *afflatus* of the Holy Ghost. This strict prohibition Paul grounds on the fact that such a tongue, even though a miraculous charism, was not an articulate vehicle of sanctifying truth. And, as though he designed to clinch the application of this rule upon these very instruments of music, he selects them as the illustration of what he means. I beg the reader to examine 1 Corinthians 14:7-9.

Once more: man's animal nature is sensitive, through the ear, to certain sensuous, æsthetic impressions from melody, harmony and rhythm. There is, on the one hand, a certain analogy between the sensuous excitements of the acoustic nerves and sensorium and the rational sensibilities of the soul. (It is precisely this psychologic fact which grounds the whole power and pleasure of lyrical compositions.) Now, the critical points are these: That, while these sensuous excitements are purely animal and are no more essentially promotive of faith, holiness, or light in the conscience than the quiver of the fox-hunting horses' ears at the sound of the bugle or the howl of the hound whelp at the sound of his master's piano, sinful men, fallen and blinded, are ever ready to abuse this faint analogy by mistaking the sensuous impressions for, and confounding them with, spiritual affections. Blinded men are ever prone to

imagine that they have religious feelings, because they have sensuous, animal feelings, in accidental juxtaposition with religious places, words, or sights. This the pernicious mistake which has sealed up millions of self-deceived souls for hell.

Rome encourages the delusion continually. She does this with a certain consistency between her policy and her false creed. She holds that, no matter by what motive men are induced to receive her sacraments, these convey saving grace, *ex opere operato*. Hence she consistently seduces men, in every way she can, to receive her sacraments by any spectacular arts or sensuous thrills of harmony. Now, Protestants ought to know that (as the apostle says) there is no more spiritual affection in these excitements of the sensorium than in sounding brass or in tinkling cymbal.

Protestants cannot plead the miserable consistency of Rome in aiding men to befool themselves to their own perdition by these confusions, for they profess to reject all opus operatum effects of sacraments, and to recognize no other instrument of sanctification than the one Christ assigned, THE TRUTH. But these organ-grinding Protestant churches are aiding and encouraging tens of thousands of their members to adopt this pagan mistake. Like the besotted Papist, they are deluded into the fancy that their hearts are better because certain sensuous, animal emotions are aroused by a mechanical machine, in a place called a church, and in a proceeding called worship.

Protestants cannot plead the miserable consistency of Rome in aiding men to befool themselves to their own perdition by these confusions, for they profess to reject all *opus operatum* effects of sacraments, and to recognize no other instrument of sanctification than the one Christ assigned, THE TRUTH. But these organ-grinding Protestant churches are aiding and encouraging tens of thousands of their members to adopt this pagan mistake. Like the besotted Papist, they are deluded into the fancy that their hearts are better because certain sensuous, animal emotions are aroused by a mechanical machine, in a place called a church, and in a proceeding called worship.

Here, then, is the *rationale* of God's policy in limiting his musical worship to melodies of the *human voice*. It is a faculty of the redeemed person, and not the noise of a dead machine. The human voice, while it can produce melodious tones, can also articulate the words which are intelligible vehicles of divine truths. The hymns sung by the human voice can utter didactic truth with the impressiveness of right articulation and emphasis, and thus the pious singers can do what God commands — teach one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. For his Christian church, the non-appointment of mechanical accompaniment *was its prohibition*. Time will prove, we fear by a second corruption of evangelical religion and by the ruin of myriads more of nominally Christian souls, how much wiser is the psychology of the Bible than that of Mrs. Grundy.

The reader has by this time seen that I ascribe this recent departure of our Presbyterian churches from the rule of their fathers in no degree to more liberal views or enlightened spirit. I know, by an intuition which I believe every sensible observer shares, that the innovation is merely the result of an advancing *wave of worldliness* and ritualism in the evangelical bodies. These Christians are not wiser but simply more flesh-pleasing and fashionable. That is exactly the dimension of the strange problem. Other ritualistic adjuncts concur from time to time. Nothing is needed but the lapse of years enough for this drift, of which this music is a part, to send back great masses of our people, a material well prepared for the delusion, into the bosom of Rome and her kindred connections.

This melancholy opinion is combined, in our minds, with a full belief in the piety, good intentions and general soundness of many ministers and laymen who are now aiding the innovations. No doubt the advocates of instrumental music regard this as the sting of Dr. Girardeau's argument, that it seems to claim all the fidelity and piety for the anti-organ party. No doubt many hearts are now exclaiming, "This unjust, and thousands of our saintliest women are in the organ loft; our soundest ministers have organs," etc., etc. All this is perfectly true. It simply means that the best of people err and unintentionally do mischief when they begin to lean to their own understandings. The first organ I ever knew of in a Virginian Presbyterian church was introduced by one of the wisest and most saintly of pastors, a paragon of old school doctrinal rigor. But he avowedly introduced it on an argument

the most unsound and perilous possible for a good man to adopt — that it would be advantageous to prevent his young people from leaving his church to run after the Episcopal organ in the city. Of course such an argument would equally justify every other sensational and spectacular adjunct to God's ordinances, which is not criminal *per se*. Now this father's general soundness prevented his carrying out the pernicious argument to other applications. A very bad organ remained the only unscriptural feature in a church otherwise well-ordered. But after the church authorizes such policy, what guarantee remains that one and another less sound and staid will not carry the improper principle to disastrous results? The conclusion of this matter is, then, that neither the piety nor the good intention of our respectable opponents is disparaged by us; but that the teachers and rulers of our church, learning from the great reformers and the warning lights of church history, should take the safer position alongside of Dr. Girardeau. Their united advice would easily and pleasantly lead back to the Bible ground all the zealous and pious laymen and the saintly ladies who have been misled by fashion and incipient ritualism.

The Blue Banner

The Blue Banner is published by First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas. All material in this issue Copyright © 1993 by *The Blue Banner*.

The Blue Banner

Publication of
First Presbyterian Church Rowlett
P O Box 141084
Dallas, TX 75214

CONTENTS

Organs [Against], Simplex, page 1
Organs [For], H., page 2
Organs [Against], Inquirer, page 3
Letter by Moses D. Hoge, page 4
Organs [Against], R. L. Dabney, page 4
Organs [Against], Rusticus, page 8
Organs, Once More [For], H., page 9
Ancient Church Music, page 11
Review, Robert L. Dabney, page 12

- *Organ Grinding Circa 1849*
A Debate over using Organs in Public Worship from the pages of the Watchman & Observer of 1849.