

Westminster Larger Catechism

Question 109-d

Halifax, 2 May 2010

Introduction:

We move along today to our seventh message on the second commandment.

- We began this study with three sermons on what is required in the second commandment (Q. 108 in the Larger Catechism).
 - In those messages I explained that as the first commandment is concerned with *who* we worship, the second commandment is concerned with *how* we worship.
 - We looked at Deuteronomy 12 where God commands His people to worship Him only as He has commanded,
 - and warned them not to look at how the people around them worshipped their gods so as to imitate them.
 - I called you to learn to love that worship that He has commanded.
 - Then in the second sermon, we looked at the actual elements of worship that God has commanded—preaching of the word, reading of the word, public prayer, the sacraments, the singing of praise, etc.
 - In the third sermon we considered our duty to oppose false worship, and to do our part in removing it if we are in a place of authority.
- In the fourth sermon, we began to look at the things that are prohibited by the second commandment as summarised in Q. 109.
 - In this sermon, we saw that it is not for us to come up with our own ideas about how to worship God—again, we are to limit ourselves to what He has commanded.
 - In the fifth sermon, we saw that the actual uses of images or pictures of God or Christ are not to be used to connect with God in worship or enhance our worship.
 - Even if we claim that we are not actually worshipping the images, but just using them to help us focus, this is precisely what is forbidden.
 - And then last week, in the sixth sermon, we saw that we are not to add superstitious devices to the simple worship that God has given us...
 - This includes those things that we suppose are going to aid us in our worship or bring God and His blessing near to us.
 - They would include things like praying to the saints, the making of holy days that God has not commanded, engaging in certain postures or making certain motions with our hands, setting up symbols to ward off evil spirits or to excite our devotion, singing religious songs that God has not

authorised, burning incense, performing dramas, religious processions, holy clothing, using water from the Jordon River to baptise, use of musical instruments in worship, and all other such things.

- These things are superstitious because the worshippers suppose that by using them they will someone enhance their worship...
 - either pleasing God more or enriching themselves more (securing a blessing for themselves).
- We saw that whether we come up with these devices ourselves or receive them by long standing tradition, they are still not to be used.

- And then we zeroed in on one particular superstitious device that has become very prevalent in our day—the singing of uninspired songs to instrumental accompaniment.
 - Last week, we only looked at the first part of this topic—the use of uninspired songs—and I told you that we would like at the use of musical instruments this week.
 - And so as this is really a continuation of last weeks message, our scripture reading is the same.
 - It is Hebrews 2:10-18.
 - READ> Hebrews 2:10-18.

- Our principle text is verse 12 where we are told that Jesus sings praise to God in the midst of the assembly or church.
 - It is a wonderful thing to see that Jesus, as the head of the church, calls us together and leads us in the singing of praise to God.
 - You will notice at once that this does not say anything about the use of musical instruments or about the singing of uninspired songs or hymns.
 - So why did I select this verse to preach about these things?
 - Precisely because it does not mention the singing of our uninspired songs or the use of musical instruments.
 - That is exactly the point.
 - The NT never calls upon us to play musical instruments in our worship or to compose songs for use in worship.
 - It simply calls us to sing praise to God,
 - And as we have been given a complete book of praises in the Bible that are inspired,
 - we have no warrant for writing additional songs without a clear command from God to do so...
 - And as we are called simply to sing,
 - we have no authorisation to add instruments to singing.

But before we jump into instruments, I want to remind you of a couple of foundational points that we looked at last week.

- First, I want to emphasise again that we are talking about what we do in the ecclesia—the assembly—when we come together as God’s people for the purpose of worship.
 - Outside of the worshipping assembly, it is fine for us to play all sorts of musical instruments and to sing all sorts of songs that we have composed, all to the glory of God.
 - We are talking about what we do when we assemble together according to the command of Christ for public worship.
 - That is when we must be careful not to do anything except what God has given us to do.

- Secondly, I want to emphasise again that this is a matter that we must keep in proper perspective.
 - I showed you that God highly commended many of the kings of Judah for their faithfulness even though they continued to worship at the high places.
 - They had removed the worship of Baal and other false gods, but they allowed the people to worship Jehovah in the places that He had not authorised.
 - This displeased God, but it did not cause him to reject these servants of His who were otherwise faithful to Him.
 - Far be from us to reject those who sing songs and play musical instruments that He has not authorised!
 - He has many faithful servants who do this and it is not for us to reject them.
 - Yet, at the same time, it is only right for us to endeavour to fully follow the LORD and to promote the reformation of worship as we have opportunity.

- And now I want to review what we saw last week about the singing of uninspired songs.
 - And let me clarify what I mean by “uninspired songs.”
 - I once had a gentleman complain to me that he felt that many of the writers of the great hymns of the church were inspired.
 - But I am making the distinction between that which is inspired in the sense of being the Word of God rather than the word of man—

- that which is contained in the Holy Scripture and so given to us as the very Word of God by men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit such that their words are the perfect expression of God's will and without error of any kind.
 - I am also suggesting that ideally, we should limit ourselves only to those songs that are contained in the collection of songs that God has given to us in Bible—the psalms.
- The whole argument for singing only psalms in public worship is very simple.
 - It boils down the fact that God, who commands us to sing praises to Him, has also given us a collection of inspired praises right in our Bibles.
 - The inescapable conclusion is that the songs of praise He has in mind must be the ones He has given us.
 - If you come to work for me and I give you a list of written directions and tell you that I want you to follow the directions,
 - what would I think of you if you began to write your own directions and then told me that you were following the directions—it was just not the ones that I had given you...
 - And then if you pressed the point, saying that I did not tell you to follow the directions I had given you...
 - I only told you to follow the directions—and that the ones you had written didn't really change anything—they were just easier to understand.
 - So it is that when the Apostles call us to sing praises, or to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in the church,
 - and when there is a whole collection of songs in our Bibles, some of which are called psalms, some hymns, and some spiritual songs,
 - how is it that we can justify composing more psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to use in our worship?
 - Has God anywhere commanded us to compose other songs and add to the collection He has given us?
 - And if not, what authority do we have to take such a great matter into our own hands?
 - Would it be any different if we began to write our own scriptures when God has given us a complete compendium of revelation?
- I went on to mention that there are some very sorry consequences that have been the result of the church's use of uninspired songs.

- First, that our songs have distorted our praises so that we praise God for the things we like about Him best and neglect those aspects of Him that we do not find as pleasing.
 - In particular this is seen in the nearly complete absence of the praise of God's judgement and wrath that is so much a part of the inspired songs.
 - The result has been that the modern church is embarrassed about Hell and judgement and even about the true meaning of the cross as the place where God's wrath was poured out on Christ because of our sins.
 - Even otherwise faithful men are starting to question the doctrine of eternal punishment and are bewildered at explaining human suffering in the world today as an expression of the wrath and curse of God.

- And all the while in singing these songs, we are guilty of misrepresenting our glorious God...
 - In the time when our very purpose is to praise Him!
 - Here we are coming before Him with our adoration and misrepresenting Him!
 - This is one of the reasons why it is so necessary to sing songs that are inspired rather than songs that contain men's views of God.
 - He has given us words with which to praise Him, and we have substituted our own words in place of these!

- I mentioned to you that some people object that the Psalms are not sufficient because they were written before the coming of Christ,
 - but this objection stems from a grossly distorted understanding of the Psalms.
 - The fact is that one of the main reasons we don't understand the Psalms very well is because we do not sing them.
 - The Psalms are full of Jesus Christ.

- Now that Jesus has come into the world and completed His work on the cross,
 - these marvellous songs are opened up to us in a most marvellous way...
 - Paul says that the veil is taken away in Christ when we read the Old Testament.
 - The least in the kingdom of Christ is able to understand them better than the greatest of the Old Testament prophets—even than those who wrote them!
 - We do not need new songs now that Jesus has come because we have a new understanding of the Psalms now that He has come.

So the conclusion is that we have no authorisation for adding uninspired songs to the book of inspired praises that God has provided for us in the Bible.

- Now we want to move on to consider the use of instruments in the worship of the church.
 - Once again, please know that I am talking about the use of musical instruments when the church is assembled together as the church (the ekklesia) for the purpose of worship.
 - We are not talking about the use of instruments in other contexts.
 - We may use them for recreation, for relaxation, for therapy, for victory celebrations, for military purposes, for celebrations and for a whole host of other uses, and all of them should be for the glory of God.
 - Psalm 150 speaks about praising God with instruments that were used (in the time that it was written) for some of these various purposes...
 - The focus of this Psalm is that everything we do is to be done to the glory of God, with thanksgiving to Him.
 - And that is still as valid as it ever was.

I. But I want you to see that God has not authorised the use of musical instruments in the public worship of the New Testament.

A. The New Testament is silent about the use of musical instruments in NT Worship.

1. We are commanded to sing praise God, but we are no where commanded to accompany our singing with musical instruments.
 - Nor is there a single example given to us of the use of musical instruments in the worship of the New Testament Church.
 - There are several places where we are told to sing, but never are we told to play any kind of musical instrument.
2. Sometimes, people will mention the use of instruments in Revelation,
 - but the book of Revelation is not an example of New Testament worship.
 - It is a vision of heaven, and there are all sorts of symbols used—there is a temple, there is the burning of incense, and all sorts of other imagery.
 - These are not things that are to be used in New Testament worship just because they are mentioned in a New Testament book.
 - The Book of Revelation is not given to us as a pattern for public worship in the New Testament Assembly.

TRANS> So we must recognise that the New Testament does not give us any warrant for using musical instruments in public worship.

3. It should also be noted that there are a couple of places in the New Testament where we are told how we are to present our praises to God...
 - And in such passages you would expect that if we are to present our praises to the accompaniment of instruments, we would be told to do so,
 - but instead we are told what to do instead of instrumental praise...
 - This is especially the case in the first passage we will look at.
- a. The first such passage is Ephesians 5:19:
 - Eph 5:19: speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
 - 1) This is something we are to do in the Christian assembly.
 - The phrase “speaking (lalew in the original) to one another” is explained as “singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord”
 - In other words, the manner of our speaking is to be singing and making melody in our hearts.
 - This is something we are supposed to do in the assembly,
 - We are not being commanded to go around singing little ditties to each other the way it is done in a musical (like My Fair Lady).
 - 2) But what does this description: “singing and making melody in our hearts” tell us to do?
 - This is very interesting pair of words.
 - *Singing* (ad-o) means simply to sing praise and of course this is to be done with the audible voice—
 - it is a speaking to one another by means of singing...
 - but *making melody* is to be done *in your heart*...
 - the word *making melody* translates a word that means to pluck or twang as you do a stringed instrument...
 - But this, you are told is to be done *in your heart*.
 - This is directly calling us away from the use of musical instruments.
 - All the plucking is now to be done in our hearts, not with our hands playing stringed instruments as the Levites did in the temple under the Old Covenant.
 - Instead of accompanying our singing with instruments, we are to concentrate on engaging our hearts in our singing.

- Need I point out that this is a very difficult thing for us to do!
- So often when we sing praises, the heart is not making melody with the lips!

TRANS> Now lets look at the second verse that speaks about way we are to present our singing to God.

b. The second is Hebrews 13:15:

- Heb 13:15: Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.
 - The sacrifice of praise is described not as the playing of musical instruments, but as “the fruit of our lips, giving thanks.”
 - Once again, the call is for simple singing.
- It is important to see the context of this verse as well...
 - In verse 9-11, the author is making a contrast between the OT worship and the OT altar that was concerned with foods and such things...
 - Now that Jesus has been offered, we no longer have all that is associated with the tabernacle.
 - We have simple singing, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name rather than elaborate rituals.

TRANS> So these verses, by their omission of the use of instruments and by their suggestion of the use of the voice alone,

- indicate that God has appointed plain singing for us.
- However, someone might cogently argue that as singing is continued from the OT, why not singing with instruments?
 - Why not just carry over the use of instruments from the OT?

B. We may not carry over instruments from the OT because they were appointed to accompany the offering of sacrifices at the temple.

- and we don't engage in OT sacrificial worship any more.
1. In other words, instruments were part of the ceremonial worship of the OT that has been replaced under the NT.
 - In moment, I will show you that instruments were part of the worship of the temple, but first,

- a. I want to remind you that OT worship has been replaced by NT worship now that Jesus has come.
- Hebrews 10 make it crystal clear that the Old Testament worship of the sacrifices and all that is associated with them is finished!
 - Hebrews 10:1 shows that OT ceremonial worship was only a provisional picture of what Christ would do, it calls it a:
 - “shadow of the good things to come and not the very image of the things.”
 - The OT ceremonies were shadows, Jesus and the gospel is the thing itself that the ceremonies were shadows of.
 - We are not to use shadows not that we have the real thing.
 - Hebrews shows us that Jesus came to do the will of God that was only shadowed in the OT service. When He said:
 - “I have come to do your will O God,”
 - “He takes away the first that He may establish the second...”
 - He takes away the old way of worship and gives us a new way.
 - No longer do we approach by the blood of bulls of goats, but by the blood of Jesus Christ that has been offered for us on the cross.
 - Hebrews explains that by Jesus’ one sacrifice, sins are actually remitted and concludes in verse 18:
 - “Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”
 - Now that Jesus has been crucified for sin, there is to be no more offering of sacrifices at the temple (or any where else).
 - And because there is no more offering, there is no more of all the worship that was associated with those Levitical offerings.
 - Now since there is this new and living way,
 - The priests are no longer needed,
 - neither is the altar or the incense or the showbread or the musical instruments to accompany the offering of the sacrifices.
 - These are all priestly functions and they have all ceased.
 - Hebrews 13 explains what our NT sacrifices are to consist in:
 - Heb 13:15-16: Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

- This is singing of praise without instruments and the bringing of financial offerings.
 - Central to all NT worship is the proclamation or declaration of what Jesus has done for us by word and sacrament!
 - Jesus has commanded that the gospel be preached in the all the earth, and that disciples be taught to observe all things which He has commanded.
 - He has commanded us also to come to His table until He returns that we might show forth His death until He comes.
 - This is only to be done in conjunction with the preaching of the word to declare what He has done.
 - And, as we saw in Hebrews 2, He sings praise in the midst of the assembly with us.
2. But now I must show you that the use of instruments in the OT was indeed part of the priestly worship...
- that it is part of the “package” of OT ceremonial worship that is passed away.
 - a. The thing that makes this clear is the fact that instruments were commanded to be played by the Levites.
 - Just as it was wrong for anyone who was not a Levite to offer sacrifices or to burn incense, so it was wrong for them to play instruments.
 - It was only at God’s command that instruments were played, and it was only the Levites who were commanded to play them.
- 1) The Lord was very careful to reveal the work of the Levites to David.
- In other words, the function of the priests and Levites was carefully prescribed by the LORD right down to the details of what instruments were to played, when they were to be played, and by whom.
 - None of this was left up to the will of man.
 - We don’t have all this detailed information (nor do we need it today), but we do have revelation to tell us that revelation was given right down to the details.
 - Turn to 1 Chron 28:11-13 and you can see that God revealed all the details of what the Levites were to do.
 - 1 Chron 28:11-13: Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; also for the division of the priests and

the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD.

- And now if you will turn on over to 1 Chron 28:19, David explains that all this was given to him by direct revelation from God.
 - 1 Chron 28:19: "All *this*," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing, by *His* hand upon me [a reference to divine inspiration], all the works of these plans."
- 2) And now I want you to see that the playing of instruments was a part of the work that was expressly commanded to be done by the Levites.
 - It was a priestly work right along with the offering of sacrifices that was part of the temple service of the OT.
 - Turn to 2 Chronicles 29:25-28 and you can see that this is so.
 - 2 Chron 29:25-28: And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus *was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah commanded *them* to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD *also* began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished.
 - If you study the OT, you see that in public worship, the Levites are the ones who play the instruments.
 - In victory celebrations, the women played tambourines, and for entertainment or relaxation, musical instruments were played by all sorts of persons,
 - but in the public worship of God, it was the Levites alone who played instruments in connection with the sacrifices at the temple.
- b. It is for this reason that the church fathers uniformly spoke against the use of instruments in NT worship...
 - They said, "instruments pertain to the temple."
- 1) In the second century, Clement of Alexandria said,
 - The one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honour God, is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute.
- 2) Eusebius, the church historian, who wrote in the fourth century said:

- “Of old at the time those of the circumcision were worshiping with symbols and types it was not inappropriate to send up hymns to God with the *psalterion* and *kithara* and to do this on Sabbath days (breaking the rest and transgressing the law concerning the Sabbath). But we in an inward manner keep the part of the Jew, according to the saying of the apostle...(Romans 2:28f.). We render our hymn with a living *psalterion* and a living *kithara*, with spiritual songs. The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety, we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms.”
- 3) John Chrysostom of the Greek church in the fourth century said,
 - It was only permitted to the Jews as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now, instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal.... Instruments appertain not to Christians.
 - 4) Even as late as the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas still spoke of it as the general practice of the church to use no instruments. He said,
 - It was only permitted to the Jews as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now, instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal.... Instruments appertain not to Christians.
 - 5) Baptist historian David Benedict wrote, in 1859:
 - Staunch old Baptists in former times would as soon have tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries, and yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them, and their successors in church management,
 - 6) Interestingly, in 1799, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America stated in their book of Government, Discipline & Worship:
 - As the use of musical instruments, in public worship, has no sanction in the New Testament, nor in the practice of the Christian church for several hundred years after its erection, it shall not be introduced, under any form, into any of the churches.
 - 7) This was in fact the universal consent and practice of the church until the seventh century when musical instruments were first introduced,
 - and then not without much opposition.
 - The reason they were opposed was because God did not authorise them for New Testament worship.
- c. The Jews also have been consistent with this understanding.
- They never used instruments in the synagogue because they were for the Levites to play at the temple, not in the local synagogue.

- For 1800 years, there were no instruments in the synagogue for this reason (1810 in Germany), however in recent years, some of the non-orthodox Jews have allowed instruments—
 - not for any biblical reason, but simply because they want them.

- 3. Now I want to show you an example from scripture that shows God's disapproval of those who were not Levites playing musical instruments.
 - a. Please turn to 1 Chron 13 and see what happened when the proper order was not followed.
 - 1 Chron 13:1-14: Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites who are in their cities and their common-lands, that they may gather together to us; and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul."
 - No problem as this point. David's desire is a good desire
 - 1 Chron 13:4-8: Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim. And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells between the cherubim, where His name is proclaimed. So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.
 - Notice here that two things are out of order—
 - first, that they are carrying the ark on a cart—it was supposed to be carried on poles.
 - secondly, that everyone is playing music—this was the job of the Levites.
 - Now look at what happened.
 - 1 Chron 13:9: And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. And David became angry because of the LORD'S outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza to this day. David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?" So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.
 - You see that there were very serious consequences here!

TRANS> Many people think that the problem here only had to do with the fact that Uzza touched the ark, but that is not true.

- It is true that the Lord did not break out in anger until it was touched, but the LORD was displeased because the proper order was not followed in the whole affair!

- b. In 1 Chron 15 David explains that the problem was that the proper order was not followed.
 - 1 Chron 15:1-4: David built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. Then David said, "No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever." And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. Then David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites:
 - You see here that David points out that the transporting of the ark was a Levitical function.
 - He goes on to explain why this is important. Look at verse 11:
 - 1 Chron 15:11- And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. He said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it. For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."
 - The main problem was that the proper order was not followed and that the Levites did not do the work.
 - Remember what we saw—that all Israel was playing the music...
 - Now everything is done by them—including the playing of the instruments:
 - 1 Chron 15:14-16: So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD. Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.
 - Do you see the connection?
 - The Levites alone played instruments because the playing of instruments was associated with the work of the temple.
 - This is why we do not play instruments.
 - We no longer worship under the Old Covenant ordinances, but now we worship in a new and living way.

C. Let no one think that we lose something by not having instruments.

1. It is true that the playing of music can be very beautiful, and much of the OT worship was beautiful.
 - It is also true that instruments can very much arouse our feelings.
 - But New Testament worship is better because Christ is more clearly set forth.
 - There is less adornment because now He is so clearly revealed to us in the gospel—
 - the good news of His finished work for us on the cross!
 - We see what God has done for our salvation, and we are able to draw near with confidence in our worship.
 - No longer do we come to models and rituals and shadows, but we come into the holy presence of our God through the name of Jesus.

2. The Lord knew how best to set forth Christ to the people of the Old Covenant—with all the ceremonies...
 - And He knows best how to set forth Christ to us now—in the simplicity of NT worship.
 - We must not try to dress up or embellish what God has given us, but we must rather focus our attention on Jesus Christ who is revealed to us.
 - When we lose sight of Him, we want to add other things.
 - History has certainly proven again and again that the more we add our innovations, the more Christ is forgotten.
 - There are churches filled with elaborate ceremonies in which very little is known about Christ.
 - Instead of preaching, there are all sorts of performances—
 - whether by priests with long robes and paper hats mumbling around an altar...
 - or by a worship team with trumpets and electric guitars and tambourines followed by a dramatic presentation of the story of the good Samaritan...
 - or by a professional symphony with a beautifully robed choir and majestic pipe organ followed by a homily on positive thinking or some other nonsense...
 - or by a fat lady up front singing the old gospel favourites to the accompaniment of a warbly organ or a lively piano followed by a sermon with an altar call at the end...

- God is not pleased with unauthorised worship!
 - It is not for us to decide by which of these methods we are to come before Him.
 - We are to come in the simplicity that He has appointed, rejoicing in Christ.
3. But let me close with a warning!
- Neither is our Lord pleased with authorised worship from a cold and hypocritical heart!
 - Never think that just because we attempt to worship God according to His commandments when so many others don't that we are righteous on account of that!
 - The whole purpose of authorised worship is to more clearly set forth Christ!
 - In fact, it is far worse to use the proper order along with self-righteousness than it is to worship at the high places and have a heart loyal to God.
 - Let us remember that our whole purpose in worship is to approach God in Jesus Christ!
 - If you understand that, there is no room for pride!
 - The whole message is that we are not accepted because of our performance, but because of His!
 - Our goal is to behold Him and to declare Him and to delight in Him from earth while the Father delights in Him in Heaven.
 - We do not meet God in our acts of worship,
 - but we meet Him as we behold Christ in worship.