

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP
OF THE CHURCH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649614547

Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church by John L. Girardeau

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THE CHURCH.

BY

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RICHMOND, VA.:

WHITNEY & SHEPHERSON, PRINTERS, 1001 MAIN STREET.

1888.

PREFACE.

THE following treatise owes its origin to a desire expressed by members of the last Senior Class in Columbia Theological Seminary to hear a discussion of the question whether instrumental music may be legitimately used in the public worship of the Church. Possessed of deep convictions on that subject, the writer could not refuse compliance with such a request, and accordingly delivered a course of lectures to the class. A dear Christian friend, who heard one of these lectures preached as a sermon, suggested the propriety of their being published, and being aware that the writer was not encumbered with a superfluity of this world's goods, generously tendered the means to render the suggestion practical. Although cautioned that she might make a useless pecuniary sacrifice, as the current of the Church's views is now set in a direction opposed to the doctrine of the treatise, she insisted upon executing her intention, on the ground that she would contribute to erect a testimony to the truth. Hence the appearance of this little book before the public.

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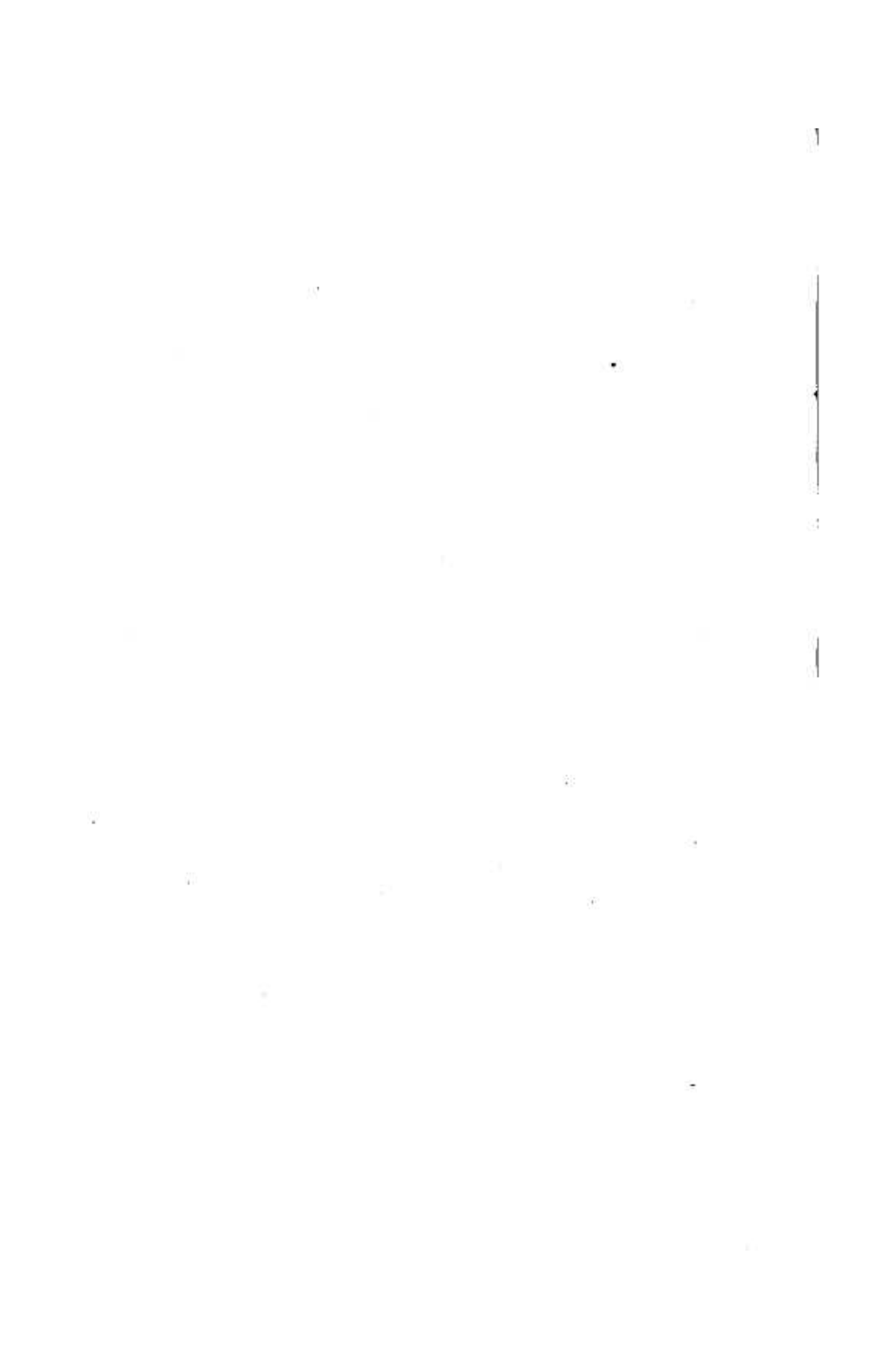
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It will, no doubt, be said that the attempt to prove the unjustifiable employment of instrumental music in the public worship of the Church is schismatical, since the practice is now well-nigh universal; that it is trivial, inasmuch as it concerns a mere circumstantial in the services of religion; and that it is useless, as the tendency which is resisted is invincible, and is destined to triumph throughout Protestant Christendom. To all this one answer alone is offered, and it is sufficient, namely: that the attempt is grounded in truth. It involves a contest for a mighty and all-comprehending principle, by opposing one of the special forms in which it is now commonly transcended and violated. It is that principle, emphasized in the following remarks as scriptural and regulative, that lends importance to the discussion, and redeems it from the reproach of being narrow and trifling.

The argument is commended to the consideration of any of God's people into whose hands it may fall; but it is especially addressed to Presbyterians, to whose venerable standards, as well as directly to the Scriptures, the appeal for proof is taken. They are entreated to read it, and to render judgment according to the evidence submitted. May that Almighty Spirit, whose illumination our divine Lord and Saviour promised to his followers, guide each reader to the truth!

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
THE QUESTION STATED,	9
I. GENERAL ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE,	9
II. ARGUMENT FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT,	27
III. ARGUMENT FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT,	80
IV. ARGUMENT FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN STANDARDS,	123
V. HISTORICAL ARGUMENT,	155
VI. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CON- SIDERED,	180
VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS,	200



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In the discussion of the question, Whether the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church is permissible or not, it must be premised:

First, that the question *is not* in regard to private or family worship, or to that of social gatherings which are not ecclesiastical in their nature, nor with reference to the utility or tastefulness of instrumental music, nor in relation to the abuse to which it may be liable; but,

Secondly, the question *is* precisely, Is the use of instrumental music in the public worship of the church *justifiable*? The design of this discussion is, with the help of the divine Spirit, to prove the negative.

I.

THE GENERAL ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE.

Attention, at the outset, is invoked to the considerations which serve to establish the following controlling principle: A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements, *is forbidden*.