

## MUSIC IN WORSHIP

From its very beginning, the church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47) has been a singing church. Singing has always been a part of the worship which God's children have directed toward Him. In their singing Christians praise God and declare their love for and devotion to Him who created the world and all that is therein. The earliest non-Biblical account of the worship of Christians is found in a letter by Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, to the Roman emperor Trajan. Seeking advice on how to deal with Christians, Pliny in his description of their worship said, "they meet at dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as God." Christ and His apostles, before the establishment of the church, engaged in singing. After the institution of the Lord's supper Matthew wrote, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30).

### THE NEW TESTAMENT INSTRUCTS US TO SING

It is interesting to note that every passage of scripture concerning music in the worship of the church specifies singing.

1. Romans 15:9, "Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles, And SING unto thy name."
2. I Corinthians 14:15, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will SING with the spirit, and I will SING with the under-

standing also."

3. Ephesians 5:19, "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING and making melody with your heart to the Lord."
4. Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, SINGING with grace in your hearts unto God."
5. Hebrews 2:12, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, In the midst of the congregation will I SING thy praise."
6. Hebrews 13:15, "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." (Singing and praying are the fruit of the lips). When cheerful, the Christian is to sing (James 5:13), and when Paul and Silas were in prison they sang hymns of praise to God (Acts 16:25). Too few realize that singing is a means of teaching.

### THE PURPOSES OF SINGING

In singing praises to God the Christian,

1. "Speaks one to another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Ephesians

5:19).

2. "Makes melody with the heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).
3. "Giving thanks always for all things" (Ephesians 5:20).
4. "Teach one another" (Colossians 3:16).
5. "Admonish one another" (Colossians 3:16).
6. "Praise God" (Hebrews 2:12).
7. "Make confession" (Hebrews 13:15).

### THE AUTHORITY OF GOD

When the creature (man) worships the creator (God), he must realize that *how* he worships depends on God's desire, not on his. Traditions, what have been done for hundreds of years, have nothing to do with acceptable worship (Proverbs 14:12 - "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."). Personal opinion, "I like it" or "I don't see anything wrong with it," is not authority for what we do in worship. Many who worship God today do not realize that how we worship involves the authority of God. Paul admonishes Christians, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17). All is to be done in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ. We are to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Worship in spirit (from the heart) and in truth (according to the Bible, which is God's word). John states, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17), and Jesus taught, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Bible is God's standard for all that pertains to life and godliness (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3; II