

Hymnspiration

Why We Sing What We Sing!



A Brief Study of the Music of the Bible Believing Christian

Part Two – True Praise

Pastor's Edition

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True Praise

Christians Must Worship the Lord Rightly
1Corinthians 14:15

I. Doctrinal Content is the Most Important aspect of what we sing (Col 3:16; Jude 1:3)

- A. Words matter the most! The message sung, the person being sung to (are you sure to whom you sing?), the way it is sung is conveying a message – the question is, “It is right?”
- B. The rage amongst modern Christians to have “new” music comes from an uncontrolled desire to feed the pop (the “now”) appetite.
- C. While there is nothing innately wrong with new or contemporary expressions (as long as they are “acceptable to God”) there is nothing wrong with older expressions and ways of singing either.
- D. But the old ways are usually better than the new ways!
- E. Let’s look at the Content of OLD versus NEW songs:



1. “**Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise.**” Walter Smith, 1876

Immortal, Invisible, God only wise

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
 In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
 Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
 Almighty, victorious, Thy great Name we praise.

Un-resting, un-hasting, and silent as light,
 Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
 Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above
 Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;
 In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
 We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
 And wither and perish—but naught changeth Thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
 Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
 But of all Thy rich graces this grace, Lord, impart
 Take the veil from our faces, the vile from our heart.

All laud we would render; O help us to see
 'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee,
 And so let Thy glory, Almighty, impart,
 Through Christ in His story, Thy Christ to the heart.

2. Perhaps it escapes the minds of contemporary congregations to sing Isaac Watts’ great text, “**I Sing the Mighty Power of God,**” which he wrote in 1715 to teach his church’s children the doctrines of God’s creation and sustenance.



I Sing the Mighty Power of God

I sing the mighty power of God, that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God’s command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord, who filled the earth with food,
Who formed the creatures through the Word, and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where’er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky.

There’s not a plant or flower below, but makes Thy glories known,
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care;
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God art present there.

3. Most Hymns require a level of commitment that modern songs don’t. You have to concentrate to truly comprehend the theology of the above songs.
4. Is it really a fair trade to have a congregation sing a popular chorus, “**El Shaddai**,” (1982) the Hebrew names of God (which most singers could not define scripturally) set to a tune which trivializes its text, when God’s people could sing well-connected thoughts carefully crafted to convey great spiritual truth? Perhaps it is merely a reflection of the state of much preaching, which caters to the currently perceived needs of people at the expense of sound doctrine.
5. It is melodic but brings in a heavy drum-beat



F. Christian Music Must have a Right Message

(Romans 3:4; Titus 1:2). What are the characteristics of a Right message?

1. Must be Biblical to be Christian – not just “about Jesus” but things that are true and match the Bible explicitly
2. Must be Different, Peculiar to be Christian (1Pet 2:9) – to sing the same songs or use the same music styles of the world, and just re-label them “Christian” is evil and deceptive
 - a. Can you really read a Christian Horoscope?
 - b. Can you really be a Christian Distiller?
 - c. Can you really be a Christian Pornographer?
 - d. Can you really be a Christian Liar?
 - e. Can you really be a Christian Murderer?
 - f. Can you really sing Christian Rock Music?

Chorus

*El Shaddai, El Shaddai,
El-Elyon na Adonia,
Age to age You're still the same,
By the power of the name.
El Shaddai, El Shaddai,
Erkamka na Adonia,
We will praise and lift You high,
El Shaddai.*

Through your love and through the ram,
You saved the son of Abraham;
Through the power of your hand,
Turned the sea into dry land.
To the outcast on her knees,
You were the God who really sees,
And by Your might,
You set Your children free.
To Chorus

Through the years You've made it clear,
That the time of Christ was near,
Though the people couldn't see
What Messiah ought to be.
Though Your Word contained the plan,
They just could not understand
Your most awesome work was done
Through the frailty of Your Son.
To Chorus Twice

3. Must be Clear – not Vague

- a. The message in Christian music should be clear, not vague, or unclear. Christian music should praise one Lord and — the listener should clearly understand the message.
- b. The apostle Paul didn't try to "trick" anybody, he wanted to make sure he was understood:

- 1) Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great PLAINNESS of speech: 2 Cor. 3:12
- 2) And my speech and my preaching was NOT with ENTICING words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 1 Cor. 2:4
- 3) And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with ENTICING words. Colossians 2:4

- c. Look how CLEAR these songs praise the Lord. And literally thousands of examples could be given:

- 1) "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine" by Fanny Crosby
- 2) "My Jesus I Love Thee" by Adoniram Gordon
- 3) "Victory in Jesus" by E.M. Bartlett
- 4) "Jesus Is All the World to Me" by Will Thompson
- 5) "Jesus Is the Sweetest Name I Know" by Lela Long
- 6) "Jesus Lover of My Soul" by Charles Wesley

- d. Most of CCM music is vague, or it is sung in a "worldly-hip-hop-cool-lingo".

- 1) Rather than "Jesus", they will say "he", "you", "I", etc.
- 2) CCMers want to appeal to the world (to sell records and make money!) so they use "double-speak" tactics. They won't come right out and say what it means — but they'll usually put in enough "double-speak" "hidden agenda" to "sell" it to Christians.
- 3) Stan Moser, former head of Word Records and CEO of Star Song Records, was one of the pioneers and most important executives in CCM. And after 26 years in CCM, in November 1995, walked away from CCM. In an article in Christianity Today, titled "We Have Created a Monster" about CCM, Mr. Moser freely admits: **"But to be candid, I look at the majority of [Contemporary Christian] music I hear today and think it's virtually meaningless."** (Christianity Today, "We Have Created a Monster", May 20, 1996 p. 27)

G. Christian Music Must Emphasize the Message, NOT the Music!

1. This is where we are at today – it is the MUSIC that sells the records
2. People go for the MUSIC, not the message
3. That's why "christians" put "jesus"-lyrics to worldly songs – to sell them to Christians
4. The music of a Christian, a Church, a choir MUST put the word of Christ at the top
5. Mr. Stan Moser goes on to say: "There is a growing chasm between CCM and the church – between what's actually happening in the real world of ministry, or even in the music ministry of the church, and what we're doing in CCM. In fact, I would probably be more inclined to call the industry 'commercial Christian music,' rather than 'contemporary Christian music.'" (Christianity Today, "We Have Created a Monster", May 20, 1996 p. 27)

II. Our Emotions Must be Linked to Truth, not Feelings (1Cor 14:15; 3Jn 1:4; John 4:23,24)

- A. It is NOT natural for a Christian to reject worldly music – the flesh of the Christian will ALWAYS enjoy it. Left to ourselves, we do NOT seek after God – we need a PREACHER (Rom 3:10,11; 10:13-15). A preacher tells people what is wrong and how to get right!
- B. The world, the flesh and the devil cannot compete with the TRUTH, so they work on an emotional level with people – that is where most music is today – only at the emotional level – what “feels” good, what comes “naturally” – it is of the FLESH and is demonic, even if it seems so harmless.
- C. Why should a Christian worship, praise, and sing unto God?
1. Because they FEEL like it, or are paid to do it, or because everyone else is doing it?
 2. Or, is it...
 - a. Because HE is good
 - b. Because His mercy endureth forever
 - c. Because HE is worthy
- D. Why does the world sing?
1. Mainly because the MUSIC sounds great
 2. Mainly because the way it makes you feel
 3. Mainly because it is so popular with everyone else



III. Contemporary Christian Music Emphasizes The Wrong Things:

- A. Choruses instead of Entire Hymns
- B. Emotional Music instead of Spiritual Music
- C. *Physically* pleasing entertainment instead of God-honouring music
- D. How serious is all this? Just see what happens to most any church that removes their drums, and worship singers, and started back to leading their people in singing all the verses of hymns! Most of the people attending will leave – because they came their for the MUSIC, and would not accept any change in THAT area of their life!!!

IV. Summary - God’s Kind of Music – Here is the Test of Proper Music

A. The Right Order.

1. Singers FIRST, Percussion LAST. Psa 68:25 *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*
2. The timbrels accented the other instruments – they did NOT dominate like they do today



B. The Right Focus – three-fold focus of Christian music

1. Worship of God – pleasing God, not ourselves
2. Edifying of Christians – others first, but also edifying ourselves when discouraged
3. Winning the Lost

C. The Right Words – Biblical words (Psalm 19:14) – sober words, yet thrilling words!

D. The Right Attitude – caution, conservative, not open-ended acceptance of anything goes!

1. All throughout history, Bible believers have been “slow” to accept things new or different (Gal 1:6-8)
2. It has been the CARNAL Christians who jump at the chance to have something new (2Cor 11:3,4)
3. We as Bible believers draw the line on music that has any of the following things:
 - a. A dominate beat – usually using drums or other percussion instrument
 - b. Un-Scriptural words
 - c. Sensual, (fleshly, carnal) instead of spiritual air
4. Sometimes reasoning based on scripture is how we determine things. God doesn't give us an itemized list of everything that is considered "worldly", we have to use reason based on scripture.

- a. When 99% of all hymns and music considered godly through the centuries (ie. classical, marches, patriotic) has a straight 1-3 beat, and 95% of the rest of the music in the world has a 2-4 beat with syncopation, offbeat, and backbeat, it shouldn't be too hard to figure which is godly and which is worldly.
- b. When a certain beat interrupts bodily functions, causes plants to die, and causes mice to kill each other, that should be something even a blind man can see.

E. **The Right Fruit** – righteous, godly living (Titus 2:12), not selfish (Rom 15:1)

V. Hymns to Know

A. **And Can It Be**, by Charles Wesley, 1738

The hymn "And can it be that I should gain?" (always a favourite of mine) is packed with imaginative power, painting a forceful picture of the Passion, but at the same time calling on scripture for many of its allusions.



In all, this hymn contains no fewer than eleven references to the New Testament.

And Can It Be

And can it be that I should gain
 An interest in the Savior's blood?
 Died He for me, who caused His pain—
 For me, who Him to death pursued?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
 Amazing love! How can it be,
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above
 So free, so infinite His grace—
 Emptied Himself of all but love,
 And bled for Adam's helpless race:
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
 For O my God, it found out me!
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
 For O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
 Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
 Alive in Him, my living Head,
 And clothed in righteousness divine,
 Bold I approach the eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.
 Bold I approach the eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

B. Arise My Soul, by Charles Wesley, 1742

1. No story of a hymn can be more sweet and precious than its basis in scripture. Charles Wesley shows his profound knowledge of scripture in the Biblical references that flowed out through his hymns. Here is the scriptural story behind one his great hymns.

Arise, my soul, arise,
Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

Shake off thy guilty fears;
Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

The Saviour's sacrifice
1 Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

In my behalf appears;
Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Before the throne my Surety stands, Before the throne my Surety stands,
Revelation 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
Hebrews 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

My name is written on His hands;
Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

He ever lives above, For me to intercede,
Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

His all redeeming love,
John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

His precious blood to plead;
1 Peter 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

His blood atoned for all our race, His blood atoned for all our race,
Romans 5:11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.
1 Timothy 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

And sprinkles now the throne of grace.
Hebrews 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.
Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Five dreadful wounds He bears,
John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Received on Calvary;
Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

They pour effectual prayers, They strongly plead for me:
Lamentations 3:58 O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry, "Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do....
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"
Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.
Now I am reconciled;

Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

God's pardoning voice I hear;

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

He owns me for His child;

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

I can no longer fear;

Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

With confidence I now draw nigh, With confidence I now draw nigh,

Ephesians 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Hebrews 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

And, "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

C. **It is Well With My Soul**, by Horatio Spafford, 1873

The author of this hymn was a layman, a lawyer and professor of medical jurisprudence from Chicago who maintained a close friendship with D.L.



Moody and other Christian leaders. During the 1871 Chicago Fire, Spafford lost all of his real estate holdings. The year before his son had died. In order to assist Moody in a Great Britain campaign, Spafford planned to travel there with his wife and four daughters. Due to business commitments, he was unable to travel with his family, but planned to join them within a few days. On November 22, 1873 two ships collided; Mrs. Spafford was rescued, but their four daughters were lost. While Horatio Spafford sailed to join his grieving wife, it is believed that he penned the words to this hymn, including the words, "When sorrows like sea billows roll..." In the face of overwhelming tragedies, he was able to declare, "It is well with my soul."

It is Well With My Soul

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Refrain

*It is well, with my soul,
It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

To Refrain

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

To Refrain

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

To Refrain

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh trump of the angel! Oh voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

To Refrain

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

To Refrain

D. Jesus Loves Me.

1. Words by Anna B. Warner, 1820-1915
2. Music by William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868
3. Without doubt the hymn that has influenced children for Christ more than any other is this simply stated one, written in 1860 by Anna Bartlett Warner. Miss Warner wrote this text in collaboration with her sister Susan as a part of one of the best-selling novels of that day, a novel written by Susan entitled Say and Seal. Today few remember the plot of that novel, which stirred the hearts of many readers. But the simple poem spoken by one of the characters, Mr. Linden, as he comforts Johnny Fax, a dying child, still remains the favorite hymn of children around the world to this day.



4. The popularity of "Jesus Loves Me" soon spread quickly beyond the boundaries of our own land. Numerous stories are told by missionaries of the universal appeal this hymn text has had with children in every culture. It is often one of the first hymns taught new converts in foreign lands. The hymn has even been appropriated by other religious sects; missionaries have reported that they have heard groups in Buddhist Temples singing, "Yes, Buddha loves me, Yes, Buddha loves me..."
5. Dr. William B. Bradbury, the composer of the music for the text, was one of the important contributors to the development of early gospel hymnody in this country. He was born in York, Maine, on October 6, 1816. As a young man he moved to Boston, Massachusetts. Bradbury served as choir director and organist in several large Baptist churches in the East, where he became especially noted for his work with children. Among the highlights of his career were his annual Musical Festivals, where more than one thousand children would gather, all dressed alike, and sing many of his own compositions. Soon Bradbury gave himself exclusively to the teaching, writing and publishing of a great volume of music. From 1841 until his death in 1868, he was involved with the publishing of fifty-nine collections of sacred and secular music. Bradbury composed the music for "Jesus Loves Me" in 1861 especially for Anna Warner's text and personally added the chorus to the four stanzas.
6. Other hymns by William B. Bradbury include "He Leadeth Me", "Just As I Am", "Depth of Mercy", "Even Me", "Sweet Hour of Prayer", and "The Solid Rock".

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak but He is strong.

Chorus

*Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me,
the Bible tells me so.*

Jesus loves me! He who died,
Heaven's gates to open wide;
He will wash away my sin.
Let His little child come in.

Jesus loves me! He will stay
Close beside me all the way;
If I love Him, when I die
He will take me home on high.

VI. Next Week – Claiming the Higher Ground

- A. The Science of Music
- B. The Power of Music
- C. The Way to Take Back the High Ground in Music