

Lecture 9- Historical Overview of Worship (II): Reformation

Since the modulation of our voices at a suitable rhythm is capable of unlocking our hearts and stirring our emotions, God thus also wills that we shall lift up our hearts to Him in singing...However, our voice and the melody in and of themselves are not pleasing to God; rather it is the motion of the heart relative to the spiritual matters which we express before the Lord in singing which pleases Him. Both the voice and the melody are means to bring us into a spiritual frame and to lift up our hearts heavenward – as well as the hearts of those who hear us.

Wilhelmus à Brakel, Christian's Reasonable Service (Netherlands, 1700), vol.4, p.31.

Key Concepts

- Zwinglian worship
- Bucer's view of worship
- Calvin's view of worship

Lecture Objectives

- Continue historical overview of the development of worship, covering the Reformers
- Discuss Calvin's view of liturgy, worship, and singing

Preliminary Questions

- How can one evaluate music to be used in worship from music to be used in private? Should there be a difference between public worship music and private worship music?
- In light of Zwingli's view, in what ways do you think private prayer or worship and public prayer or worship should be distinguished (if at all)?

Historical Overview of Worship (II): Reformation

I. The Reformation Attempt to Purify Worship

- A. Lutheran and Anglican attempt to have the proper fixed form
- B. Radical Reformation attempt for Spirit-led worship without form
- C. Presbyterian and Reformed attempt for fixed elements with freedom

II. Worship and the Reformation

- A. The context of Roman Catholic abuses of worship
- B. The desire to return worship to the congregation
- C. The role of biblical worship in reforming the church
 1. Preaching of the true Gospel
 2. Congregational participation
 3. Right administration of the sacraments
 4. Worship transforms lives to live for God's glory in everything

III. Zwingli in Zurich, Switzerland

“Luther recovered congregational singing, Zwingli denied it, and Calvin restricted it...”

Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: The Church and Music* (Fortress, 1998), 141.

- A. Zwingli believed worship and prayer were the same
 1. Therefore should be done in private (Mt. 6:7)
 2. Leaves little room for public worship yet Zwingli believed public worship part of “visible church”
 3. Therefore public worship as much silent hearing and meditating on the Word as possible
- B. No congregational singing
- C. Preacher alone said Lord's Prayer and Creed

D. Worship was instructional - cognitively remembering the work of Christ

IV. Bucer in Strasbourg, Germany

- A. More balanced liturgy with congregational participation
- B. Weekly Lord's Supper as fellowship meal
- C. Lively singing of psalms and hymns: Between Luther and Calvin

V. John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland

see Charles Garside, Jr., "The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536-1543", *American Philosophical Society*, Volume 69

- A. Geneva had no music in worship (Zwingli's influence)
- B. Calvin's 1537 "Proposal for Worship"
 - "It is a thing very expedient for the edification of the church to sing some psalms in the form of public prayers through which one may pray to God or sing his praise so that the hearts of all might be moved and incited to form like prayers and to render like praises and thanks to God with similar affection." Calvin
- C. Banished to Strasbourg in 1538
- D. Return to Geneva in 1541 with singing
 - 1. Power of song to enflame heart to praise
 - 2. Singing of psalms, 10 commandments, Apostle's Creed, and Simeon's song
 - 3. Calvin's viewed this as part of "new song" from Psalm 98
 - 4. Gifted poets put psalms to western meter
 - 5. Gifted musicians put psalms to music
 - Capture emotion of psalm content in musical expression
- E. Calvin's desire to have music for the church
 - 1. Must be weighty and majestic and not light or frivolous
 - 2. Power of music had to be restrained in corporate worship
 - a. Metrical psalms (almost exclusively)
 - b. Monophonic line (unison or octaves)
 - c. No instruments
 - d. No choirs (except children leading unison singing)
 - 3. Music at table in homes different from corporate worship
- F. Utilization of children to teach congregation
- G. Deep emotion in the context of Word-centered worship

"Those who were present at it (Calvin's worship at Geneva) have told us that often they could not keep back tears of emotion and joy. Singings and prayers, adoration and edification, confession and absolution of sins, acts ritualistic and spontaneous - all the essential elements of worship were there; and what is not less important, they were combined into an organism that though very simple, was yet both supple and strong."

William Maxwell quote of Doumergue (Concerning Worship, 27)

H. Lord's Supper

- 1. Desired weekly
- 2. Singing of psalms during celebration of the sacrament

I. "Richness of past and freshness of present"

VI. Diversity of Application

- A. From culture to culture
- B. From generation to generation

Conclusion

- A. Psalm 30:1-12 Planning based on sermon information

1. Title: “From Mourning to Dancing: Life in the Gospel”
 2. Fallen condition focus: “We do far less weeping and far less rejoicing than the Gospel of Christ calls us to ...”
 3. Proposition: The movement of the Gospel initially and throughout our lives is from mourning to dancing
 4. Outline of sermon
 - I. “Devastated Sinners Rescued by Grace” – verses 1-5
 - II. “Rescued Sinners Quickly Forget Grace” – verses 6-10
 - III. “God of Grace Turns our Mourning into Dancing” – verses 11-12
- B. Discussed worship planning