

Music in the Home: Hymns Attacked/Defended Pt. 2

Hymns Attacked: “Many of the hymns started as bar songs; no different from the songs of today.”

Hymns Defended: Matthew 11:19 “The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”

When we are convicted of sin, we are tempted to imply the one convicting us is somehow guilty of sin. It is an attempt to throw the blame off us onto something or someone else somehow annulling the penalty of sin on us! The Pharisees' sins were brought to light by Jesus so they would try to cast shade on His spotless testimony by presenting Him as gluttonous and a winebibber. **When the modern music is brought to light for what it really is today, many who like it try to cast shade on the older, spiritual hymns of the past. The hymns are told to have a past of gluttony and winebibbery in bars.** Such statements couldn't be further from the truth.

Grab a hymnbook. At the very top of a hymn, of course, you will find the title. On the left, you will see who wrote the words and on the right, you can find who wrote the music. Sometimes, the original music was actually a common tune of the time. “How Great Thou Art” was written to a common Swedish melody. The music of “How Firm a Foundation” is that of an American melody; so is “O How I Love Jesus”. A common Irish melody called “Slane” is the music for “Be Thou My Vision”. “What Child Is This?” was combined with the famous “Greensleeves” tune. Actually, a number of the Christmas carols were written to common tunes of the day. The reason for this is simple. People did not have the modern conveniences of today with printing, mass distribution, internet, not to mention finances. Tunes were carried throughout the working masses by “word of mouth” and words were changed according to whomever was singing. “Yankee Doodle” is a popular representation of common tunes being continually applied to different texts. Our Christian fore-fathers saw the excellent potential of combining the seed of God's Word to the wind of these common tunes. It worked! Before long, people all over the world were singing godly, spiritual words to the common tunes which have stuck even to this day in our hymnbooks. Of course, the common tunes would be sung in the bars, but that does not mean the tunes originated in the bars.

Also, Jesus revealed in our text that “wisdom is justified of her children.” **Look at the offspring associated with the old hymns of the faith and compare those to the children of CCM and Southern Gospel. You will quickly and easily see where wisdom resides.** The old hymns and the hymnwriters are not “just like” CCM and Southern Gospel music and their performers. They are worlds apart, and only a backslidden heart trying to defend itself from its sin like the Pharisees of old would even attempt at combining the two.