

“Charles Wesley on The Dangers of Contemporary ‘Christian’ Music” ~ Joel Taylor

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) is well known as a minister, poet and hymn writer. Even in his time, he was well aware of the dangers of music that was ‘fleshly.’ There is much in the lyrics of one hymn he wrote, which the Church, particularly young people who profess Christ, would do well to study and heed. Take this stanza from Wesley’s hymn, **Jesus, Thou Soul of All Our Joys**:

*Still let us on our guard be found,
And watch against the power of sound
With sacred jealousy;
Lest haply sense should damp our zeal,
And music’s charms bewitch and steal
Our hearts away from Thee.*

These days, the visible Church seemingly has no interest in guarding against the dangers and “the power of sound.” No, the popular argument is that the lyrics are what truly matter, and while doctrine is of the utmost import, deliberate arousal of the flesh through ‘holy’ hip-hop (an oxymoron), or any type of contemporary ‘Christian’ music is, as Wesley notes so well, a danger to all Christians who subject themselves to such.

It is a danger because it encourages us to let down our guard against worldliness; it dampens our jealousy for the name and honor of God; it is a danger because, being yet imperfect, it subjects our hearts and minds to wander away from things holy and good to fleshly desires which the world so eagerly approves.

The sound of music does indeed matter, it is not neutral. The beat and rhythm so many young Christians long for in popular ‘Christian’ artists can bewitch and steal our hearts” away from our Lord, and deceive those who think they are saved when they are not. It promotes counterfeit worship, idolatry and dulls the Christian’s sense of discernment.

Read the full lyrics to Jesus, Thou Soul of All Our Joys. May we all be on our guard against the power of sound!

Jesus, Thou soul of all our joys,
For Whom we now lift up our voice,
And all our strength exert;
Vouchsafe the grace we humbly claim,
Compose into a thankful frame,
And tune Thy people's heart.

While in the heavenly work we join,
Thy glory be our whole design,
Thy glory, not our own:
Still let us keep our end in view,
And still the pleasing task pursue,
To please our God alone. The secret pride, the subtle sin,
O let it never more steal in,
To offend Thy glorious eyes,
To desecrate our hallowed strain,
And make our solemn service vain,
And mar our sacrifice! To magnify Thy awful Name,
To spread the honors of the Lamb,
Let us our voices raise;
Our souls' and bodies' powers unite,
Regardless of our own delight,
And dead to human praise. Still let us on our guard be found,
And watch against the power of sound
With sacred jealousy;
Lest haply sense should damp our zeal,
And music's charms bewitch and steal
Our hearts away from Thee. That hurrying strife far oft remove,
That noisy burst of selfish love,
Which swells the formal song;
The joy from out our hearts arise,
And speak and sparkle in our eyes,
And vibrate on our tongue. Thee let us praise, our common Lord,
And sweetly join with one accord
Thy goodness to proclaim:
Jesus, Thyself in us reveal,
And all our faculties shall feel
Thy harmonizing Name. With calmly reverential joy,

*O let us all our lives employ
In setting forth Thy love;
And raise in death our triumph higher,
And sing with all the heavenly choir,
That endless song above*