

Chapter II

GREEK LEXICONS

In directing our minds to the character of music which would please God and edify us, we must remember that neither Paul nor James says to "sing" or "play." Paul rather features Christians as adontes and psallontes, while James recommends the action of psallein. "They wrote in the Greek language of nineteen centuries ago. We read and speak twentieth-century English. The question at hand is "what did psallo and psalmos mean in Paul's day?" We must mean by psalm what Paul meant by psalmos; we must also mean by making melody what Paul meant when he said psallontes.

So that we might have a clear and comprehensive view of the history and meaning of this famous word, I would like to appeal to an important and most interesting class of authorities, Greek lexicographers.

A lexicon, simply stated, is a dictionary. And yet it does much more than give definitions. It is also concerned with etymological developments, derivations, component parts of words, and the discussion of synonymous terms. A New Testament lexicon may often give an exegesis of certain passages. Larger lexicons also draw distinctions, if there are any, between classical usage and New Testament usage.

Before I present the evidence contained in Greek lexicons, I would like to quote a statement from M. C. Kurfees. It is found in Chapter II "Psallo as defined by the lexicons."

"A careful survey of the field of evidence furnished by lexicographers of every grade has led the author to the decided conviction that there is not a solitary fact in all history touching the meaning of psallo which, considered in the light of its proper connection and bearing, can be legitimately used to sustain the practice of instrumental music in the worship of God under Christ."⁴

⁴Kurfees, M. C., Instrumental Music in the Worship, 1950. p. 7. Used by permission.

I say with all sincerity and lack of malice that such a statement could only be made by a careful sifting of evidence furnished by lexicographers of every grade. Let the evidence speak for itself.

JOSEPH HENRY THAYER

We will first consider the much discussed lexicon of Grimm & Wilke, which has been translated, revised and enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer. Thayer was professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation of the Divinity School of Harvard University. He is best known as the Secretary of the New Testament Company of translators for the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, 1901. Example 9 is taken from Grimm's lexicon under the discussion of the word psallo.

Example 9

ψάλλω; fut. ψαλώ; (fr. ψάω, to rub, wipe; to handle, touch, [but cf. Curtius p. 730]); a. to pluck off, pull out; ἴθειραν, the hair, Aeschyl. Pers. 1062. b. to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang; τῶν νευρῶν χειρὶ, Eur. Bacch. 784; spec. χόρδην, to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate (Aristot. probl. 19, 23 [p. 219^a, 2]); and absol. to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp, etc.; Aristot. Plut., Arat., (in Plat. Lys. p. 209 b. with καὶ κρούειν τῶ πλήκτρῳ added [but not as explanatory of it; the Schol. ad loc. says ψῆλαι, τὸ ἄνευ πλήκτρον τῶ δακτύλῳ τὰς χορδὰς ἐπαφᾶσθαι]; it is distinguished from κισσάριζεν in Hdt. 1, 155); Sept. for ψῆ; and much oftener for ψῆ; to sing to the music of the harp; in the N. T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song, ἕως v. 18 [R.V., sing praise]; τῶ κυρίου, τῶ δούλω αὐτοῦ, (often so in Sept.), in honor of God, Eph. v. 19 [here A. V., making melody]; Ro. xv. 9; ψαλῶ τῶ πνεύματι, ψαλῶ δὲ καὶ τῶ νοῦ, 'I will sing God's praises indeed with my whole soul stirred and borne away by the Holy Spirit, but I will also follow reason as my guide, so that what I sing may be understood alike by myself and by the listeners', 1 Co. xiv. 15.*

Quoted from J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1886, p. 675.

A great deal of controversy has been raised over Grimm's phrase: "to sing to the music of the harp; in the New Testament to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song. . . ." To those who oppose instrumental accompaniment, this phrase is undeniable evidence that Thayer says musical accompaniment was excluded in the New Testament.

So says M. C. Kurfees: "The Greek lexicon of Thayer which, by the unanimous testimony of modern scholarship, now occupies the very highest place in the field of New Testament lexicography, although especially devoted to New Testament Greek, often gives the classical

meaning of words. . . but when this prince of New Testament Lexicographers comes to the New Testament period, he omits all of these meanings, and limits it to the touching the chords of the human heart, saying that it means, 'IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO SING A HYMN, CELEBRATE THE PRAISES OF GOD IN SONG.'"⁵

It is hard to believe that such a statement could be made after "a careful survey of the evidence." Even casual observation shows that there are at least three major points which are false in that conclusion.

A. This phrase, often ascribed to Thayer is not Thayer's at all but Grimm's. (We will demonstrate this later.)

B. Thayer himself, makes such an interpretation of that phrase wholly untenable and obviously contradictory to his clearly defined definition which we find in his discussion of the synonyms, psalmos, hymnos, and ode.

C. Grimm does not limit his New Testament definition to the touching of the chords of the human heart. Not only does he not limit it to that, HE DOES NOT EVEN MENTION IT under his definition of psallo! Please examine example 9,

Let us examine these points more closely, one at a time.

A. For over fifty years brethren have been quoting Grimm and calling him Thayer! If you will notice under Grimm's discussion of the psalmos, Thayer concluded it by saying, "[Syn, see hymnos, fin]"⁶ [fin, means at, or near the end, T. B.] Example 10 reproduces this discussion of synonyms under hymnos.

Example 10

[Syn. ὕμνος, ψαλμὸς, ψῆ; ψῆ is the generic term; ψαλμὸς and ὕμνος are specific, the former designating a song which took its general character from the O. T. 'Psalms' (although not restricted to them, see 1 Co. xiv. 15, 26), the latter a song of praise. "While the leading idea of ψαλμὸς is a musical accompaniment, and that of ὕμνος, praise to God, ψῆ is the general word for a song, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, whether of praise or on any other subject. Thus it was quite possible for the same song to be at once ψαλμὸς, ὕμνος and ψῆ" (Bp. Lightft. on Col. iii. 16). The words occur together in Col. iii. 16 and Eph. v. 19. See Trench, Syn. § [xxviii].]

⁵Kurfees, pp. 47-48.

⁶Thayer, p. 675.

Quoted from J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1886, pp. 637.

I have Thayer's lexicon open before me. According to the title page, it is Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti, (i. e. "key to the N. T.), translated, revised and enlarged. On page six of the preface, Thayer tells how he reproduced Grimm's work in its integrity, and introduced his own additions "in such form as should render it distinguishable at once from Professor Grimm's work. (See in the list of "Explanations and Abbreviations" given below.)"⁷

On page xviii, under "Explanations and Abbreviations," I read, "Square brackets have been used to mark additions by the American Editor."⁸ THAYER WAS THE AMERICAN EDITOR. The phrase at the conclusion of the discussion of psalmos telling us to look under hymnos for a distinction of the synonymous terms, was THAYER'S REMARK. In Example 10 we will find THAYER'S definition of psalmos. Notice the square brackets in example 10. Thus it is, that in Example 10 we find what the "prince of New Testament lexicographers" and Secretary of the New Testament Company for the American Standard Bible, has to say about psalmos.

B. Now that we've discovered where to find what Thayer has to say on the subject, let's notice what he does say. Please observe that he calls psalmos and hymnos specific and ode, generic, or general. He then quotes from Bishop Lightfoot to clarify what he means. Lightfoot calls the "leading idea" of psalmos, musical accompaniment, and that of hymnos, praise to God. Then he concludes by saying that ode is the general term for song whether accompanied or unaccompanied, whether of praise or on any other subject.

Thayer could not have made it much clearer. He has made it so clear in fact, that prejudice and bias have caused many to grope about in an effort to discredit or destroy confidence in its accuracy and authenticity. The most common form of discreditation comes when it is asserted that Thayer is merely quoting from Lightfoot. Thus, Lightfoot's testimony is dismissed with a wave of the hand, just as though he did not amount to anything! Let us take note of two points along that line:

1. Thayer was quoting Lightfoot to clarify and emphasize his definition--not to muddle or contradict it! If he did not agree with Lightfoot he would not have quoted him, or he would have made some comment to the effect that his was a different opinion. But this is not

⁷ Thayer, p. vi.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. xviii.

the case. Rather he makes a transition from his own statement right into the quotation from Lightfoot, not meaning to fog the picture but to make the distinction between the words stand out more clearly.

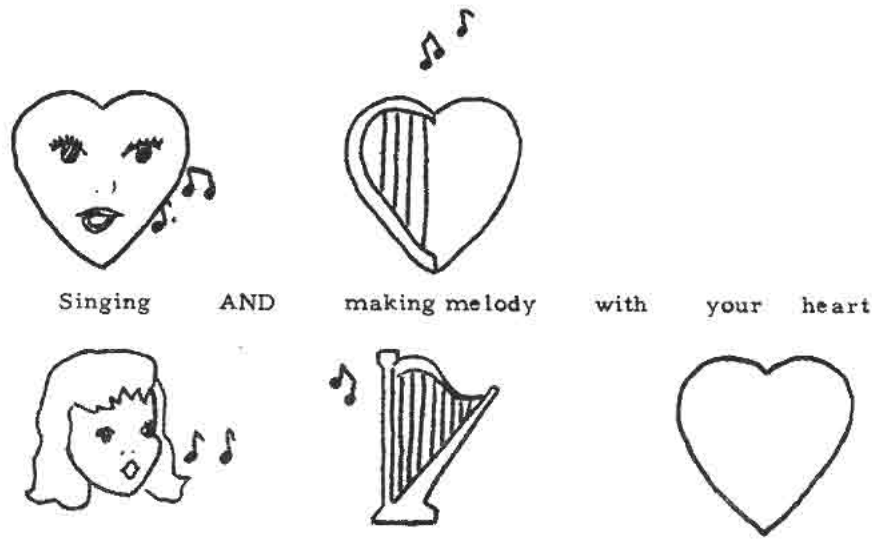
2. Thayer, who was a more competent judge than we, put a very high estimate on Lightfoot. In his preface, p. 6, he speaks of some improvements he had made in Grimm's work. He tells of availing himself of some of the best English and American commentaries (Lightfoot, Ellicott, etc.). Notice that Lightfoot heads the list. The Encyclopedia Americana (1940) says, Vol. 3, p. 637, that Lightfoot's commentaries and Apostolic Fathers formed the apex of British Biblical scholarship. The New Standard Encyclopedia says, "Bishop Lightfoot was a Biblical and classical scholar of the first rank; was especially accomplished in Greek but he was also well versed in English literature, history and philosophy. HE WAS AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE BODY OF SCHOLARS WHO REVISED THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT."⁹ When Thayer quotes Lightfoot he quotes another reviser, one whose authority is no less than his own.

C. Another "straw" that is grasped is one that I have previously mentioned. It is claimed that Thayer limits the New Testament definition to "touching the chords of the heart." Kurfees gets this idea from Example 9. Please examine Example 9. First of all, remember, this is Grimm talking and not Thayer. Secondly, please observe that he does not limit the New Testament definition to "touching the chords of the human heart." And most significantly, GRIMM DOES NOT EVEN MENTION IT AS A POSSIBILITY MUCH LESS LIMITING IT TO THAT!

In trying to avoid the force of Lightfoot's definition some have said that even Thayer and Lightfoot had in mind an accompaniment by the heart, thus ruling out a mechanical instrument. This assumption is based upon Ephesians 5:19 (Example 2) where we have "...singing (adontes) and making melody (psallontes) with your heart..." There are several points to notice which make this idea of the heart being the musical instrument a mistaken conclusion.

1. "With your heart" is a modifier. It obviously modifies both singing and making melody. Therefore if making melody is inward -- 'in the heart: -- then our singing should be, too.

⁹ Krewson, Percy E., Facts About Instrumental Music, 1945, p. 15.



This point is illustrated by the above drawing. Notice that we have only two choices grammatically. The passage either means "singing and making melody with your heart" (the heart doing the singing and making melody); or it means "singing and making melody with your heart" (offering praise with all three). If we contend that the making of melody is in the heart, then we treat "and" as a coordinate conjunction and must treat both its sides equally, making the singing also take place in the heart. This obviously is not so. The construction is "copulative" or a connection of items in a series. Singing is done with the normal instrument, the voice. Making melody is done by the normal playing of an instrument, and these are joined by the whole heart in praise to God. Either these three offer praise to God or there is only one instrument which both sings and plays--the heart.

2. Let us examine Lightfoot's testimony. He has a commentary on the book of Colossians. This is the one from which Thayer quotes in Example 10. Speaking of psalmos, hymnos and ode, he says, "They are correctly defined by Gregory Nyssen."¹⁰ Then he gives Gregory's definitions. The one concerning psalmos is as follows, "Psalmos is the musical melody through the organ."¹¹ A mechanical instrument of music! After giving Gregory's definitions, Lightfoot then launches into his famous statement which we have reproduced in Example 10.

¹⁰Lightfoot, Commentary on Colossians, Zondervan Pub. Co., 1961 (1879), Grand Rapids, Michigan; McMillian & Co., pp. 223-226.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 223-226.

Gregory had in mind a mechanical instrument of music. So did Lightfoot when he quoted Gregory, and so did Thayer when he quoted Lightfoot. The chain of evidence to find what Thayer meant goes from Gregory of Nyssa (370 A.D.), to Lightfoot (1884 A.D.), to Thayer (1886 A.D.)!

3. Try inserting the words "by the heart" with Lightfoot's definition and see if it makes sense. "While the leading idea of psalmos is a musical accompaniment (by the heart), and that of hymnos praise to God, ode is the general word for a song, whether accompanied (by the heart)... " According to Lightfoot, the psalms must be accompanied while the hymns could be unaccompanied. In Matthew 26:30, we read that Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn. Was it a song unaccompanied by the heart? Acts 16:25 says that Paul and Silas sang hymns. Was this also unaccompanied by the heart? God answers this "heartless" song! Who would make Thayer and Lightfoot say a hymn (song of praise) could be accompanied or unaccompanied by the heart?

4. Here is another test. In Lightfoot's comments he also says, "The third word odais [dative plural of ode T. B.] gathers up the other two, and extends the precept to all forms of song, with the limitation however, that they must be spiritual."¹² COULD SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME HOW A SONG COULD BE SPIRITUAL, AND YET BE UNACCOMPANIED BY THE HEART? Lightfoot says it can be accompanied or unaccompanied!

5. Before demonstrating the meaning of the phrase "with the heart," I would like to answer one more objection which is in close connection with the previous. In search for something that might indicate that Lightfoot meant to exclude mechanical instruments, he is quoted from his commentary on Colossians: "Teach and admonish one another with psalms, and hymns of praise, with spiritual songs of all kinds. Only let them be pervaded with grace from heaven. Sing to God in your hearts and not with lips only."¹³ The words "with lips only" are asserted to indicate that the singing was all unaccompanied. Lightfoot would certainly appear to be contradictory in the light of what he has given as the definition of psalmos from Gregory, if this is what he meant.

The explanation is simple. All singing is with the lips, whether accompanied or unaccompanied. If people do not put their hearts into their singing, it can truly be said of them that their singing is with "lips only." In a tract published by professors of George Pepperdine College I read on pages 38-39, "Unaccompanied singing, especially congregational singing, is less likely to fall into the category of meaningless

¹³Lightfoot, Commentary on Colossians, 1879, pp. 221-222.

lip service than is any other form of worship music."¹⁴ But Lightfoot is warning that we should take care not to allow our singing "whether accompanied" to be "with your lips only."

6. Now we will give some consideration to the meaning of the phrase "with the heart." We will notice two or three points of evidence to demonstrate what it does mean.

(a) H. C. G. Moule, of Cambridge University, makes this comment on Ephesians 5:19: "'Making melody'--literally, playing instruments. This seems to assume the use of the lute or flute on such occasions. 'In your heart'. Both voice and instruments are literal and external, but the USE of them both was to be spiritual, and so 'in the heart.' No other use of either, in and for worship, can be truly according to the will of God (John 4:24)."¹⁵ So we can see that this phrase has no reference to the use of or non-use of, an instrument. It merely defines the attitude we should have in singing, whether accompanied or unaccompanied. We will notice in Example 11 that this also is the judgment of the Committee for the Revised Standard Version.

(b) Example 11

National Council of the Churches of Christ
in the United States of America

DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
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March 16, 1962

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Vice Chairman

Mr. Tom Burgess
8624 N. E. Glisan
Portland, Oregon

Dear Mr. Burgess:

The question which you raise concerning Ephesians 5:19 is one which has been addressed to me before. I asked Professor James Moffatt to answer the first inquiry I received on the subject and I have in my files a copy of what he wrote in response to the question. I am asking my secretary to transcribe it as follows:

¹⁴Krewson, Percy E., Facts About Instrumental Music, 1945, p. 16.

¹⁵H. C. G. Moule; Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1910; Ephesians 5:19; page 137.

Psallo, as a verb, literally means to twang or strike strings of a musical instrument like a harp or lyre. Originally in (a) Paganism and (b) Hebrew Greek, like the LXX version of the Old Testament, used for (1) song of praise to the gods or God, (2) with musical accompaniment as in Psalm 18:49 quoted in Romans 15:9.

There is no reason to suppose that the early Christians did not in this ordinary sense praise God aloud in a song set to a musical accompaniment.

Thus in 1 Corinthians 14:26 "a psalm" does not mean an O.T. psalm but a new song of praise to the Lord, though not in Colossians 3:16 -- Ephesians 5:19. We might think of some early Christians specially gifted like Mr. Sankey, not only to sing other people hymns but to improvise tunes of his own. The parallel is fair.

In James 5:13 the same meaning applies "sing praise" -- what the Germans call a Lobgesang.

It was a spiritual exercise (1 Corinthians 14:15) therefore for individuals and for public worship, so important that Paul mentions it first (1 Corinthians 14:26), for primitive Christianity came into the world singing for joy to God. In my translation, I deliberately left "psalms" as the literal rendering in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, because the elaborate description there seemed to cover O.T. psalms as "spiritual songs and solos."

I think this statement by Professor Moffatt expresses the general judgment of our Committee. Ephesians 5:19 does not refer to a silent inward melody of the heart as might be judged from the translation in the King James Version: "making melody in your heart to the Lord." The American Standard Version sought to clear this up by translating it: "making melody with your heart to the Lord." The Revised Standard Version has sought to make it yet clearer by translating the passage: "making melody to the Lord with all your heart."

With high regard, and with hearty appreciation of your interest, I am,

Sincerely yours,

L. Wright

The Standard Bible Committee is in charge of the text of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, published 1946-52

(c) Luther A. Weigle is the chairman of the committee for the Revised Standard Version. In another statement made by Mr. Weigle he sheds some more light on the subject. "The rendering adopted by the Revised Standard Version is justified by the Greek text of Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and the Chester Beatty Papyri. The construction is parallel to that in I Corinthians 14:15, where the King James Version itself uses the translation 'I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also'."¹⁶

There are two important items to extract from Mr. Weigle's statement:

(1) He makes reference to the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Codices -- which are among "the oldest and most valuable manuscripts."¹⁷ He also mentions the Chester Beatty Papyri which is described as "the greatest discovery of new Biblical manuscripts, at least since the Freer collection, and possibly since the Codex Sinaiticus, was made."¹⁸ All three of these valuable documents, which are heavily depended upon by translators, have the rendering in Ephesians 5:19 simply te kardia ("with the heart" leaving out the preposition en).

(2) Another important factor we obtain from this statement is that this construction is parallel to the passage in I Corinthians 14:15 where it has to pneumatē (with the spirit) and is even translated thus by the King James Translation. Non-instrument advocates never contend that this verse refers to singing that is done "with the spirit" meaning that the spirit is the voice and is doing the singing! On the same basis, as Mr. Weigle of the Revised Standard Version contends, neither should anyone force an interpretation of the phrase "with the heart" which would make the heart the instrument and/or the item doing the playing!

(d) Professor George Alder of San Jose Bible College adds this observation to the phrase te kardia: "Three kinds of songs are enjoined in Ephesians 5:19: "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." Two kinds of music making are prescribed: "singing; and "making melody:" "Making melody" is the translation of the verb psallo and the participle is in the plural. "Singing" is similarly the present active participle of ado. Since the participles are plural but the word "heart" in "with your heart to the Lord" is singular, it is obvious that the heart is not the instru-

¹⁶Haddow, Bob, Instrumental Music Can Be Justified, 1958, p. 3. Used by permission.

¹⁷Miller, H. S., General Biblical Introduction, 1954, p. 191. Used by permission.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 200.

ment upon which the melody is made, else we would have "hearts" the plural to agree with the plural subject described in the participles. . . . The phrase "with your heart" is adverbial. A simple and clear rendering would be "heartily."

It can best be summed up by saying that in accordance with the definitions of the words, the construction of the grammar and the context of the passage, te kardia, is most clearly and accurately translated "with your heart," meaning "making melody with all your heart," as Mr. Weigle put it. This is also in accordance with the understanding of Professor Gingrich who, along with Arndt, translated one of the most recent and scholarly lexicons. He says, "I agree also that 'heartily' is very good for Ephesians 5:19."¹⁹

Just as I Corinthians obviously means that we are to sing (audibly) with the spirit, so Ephesians 5:19 means that we are to be singing (audibly) and making melody (literally--"playing instruments"--H. G. G. Moule) with our hearts, meaning heartily. As Mr. Weigle puts it, "This was not meant to be a silent inward melody of the heart." Nor should it mean, as some say, "...strumming on the chords of your heart."

D. I would like to consider one more problem. One of the favorite arguments is that lexicographers such as Grimm admit that the word psallo earlier meant to pluck or pull, then it meant to sing to the accompaniment of the plucked instrument, and then in the New Testament it meant to sing songs of praise to God. This magic phrase, "in the New Testament," is taken to indicate a change of meaning according to non-instrument interpretation of the lexicons.

Brother Larry Jonas made this observation: "The answer to this is a bit embarrassing to non-instrument brethren and I hope none who have used this reasoning to me will think I am attacking their intelligence; for I know they are only repeating what has been told them in good faith. Grimm has a standard procedure for indicating a difference of meaning of a Greek word. He begins each different definition of the same word with a new number such as 1, 2, 3, and 4. If there is within one of these different definitions some shade of difference, he further divides the one definition down into shades of its meaning by the use of letters such as a, b, c, and d. Grimm does not use the phrase in the New Testament to indicate a change from the basic meaning; he uses numbers to indicate this change. He does not use in the New Testament to indicate a different shade of meaning; he uses a letter for this. Under psallo he has just two letters, a and b. A stands for the shade of meaning "to pluck or pull." B stands in front of all the forms of instrumental

¹⁹Haddow, p. 2.

accompaniment. It is under this b shade that the use in the New Testament is found. These words indicate that the New Testament use agrees with b.

"Each lexicon has its own system to indicate a change of meaning. W. E. Vine uses numbers to indicate each different Greek word translated the same way in our English Bible. Within each of these numbers that have different meanings he uses a letter to precede each change so no reader should mistake when a change in meaning is intended. Yet, in spite of this care of the Lexicons, non-instrument brethren have discarded the number and letter system of the authors, and have imposed their own indication of change of meaning, the phrase in the New Testament. This little observation on how a lexicon shows a change of meaning will remove much of the innocent misuse of authorities now being done by non-instrument brothers."

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

At this time I am compelled to bring to our attention a man who, technically speaking, is not classified as a lexicographer. This is because he has not chosen to write on all the words and their various forms in the New Testament, but has chosen rather to limit his work to the distinctions between a number of synonyms in the New Testament.

His book is an outgrowth of special lectures on the comparative value of words in the New Testament which he delivered as Professor of Divinity at King's College, London.

It was not by accident that I found this man and his book. Nor was it after carefully "sifting" through the evidence. He came to light as a direct result of J. H. Thayer, whom we have just discussed. Thayer wanted us to have some more valuable and helpful information and so in Example 10 the very last thing he says is, "See Trench, lxxviii." So we turned to paragraph seventy-eight, page two hundred ninety-six in Trench. Example 12 reproduces what we found there.

Example 12

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or whether he traced these lines for himself with a perfect accuracy. Still each must have had a meaning which belonged to it more, and by a better right, than it belonged to either of the others; and this it may be possible to seize, even while it is quite impossible with perfect strictness to distribute under these three heads Christian poetry as it existed in the Apostolic age. ἄσμα, it may be here observed, a word of not unfrequent occurrence in the Septuagint, does not occur in the N. T.

The Psalms of the O. T. remarkably enough have no single, well recognized, universally accepted name by which they are designated in the Hebrew Scriptures (Dellitsch, *Comm. üb. den Psalter*, vol. ii. p. 371; Herzog, *Real-Encyclop.* vol. xii. p. 260). They first obtained such in the Septuagint. Ψαλμός, from ψάω, properly a touching, and then a touching of the harp or other stringed instruments with the finger or with the plectrum (ψαλμοὶ τάξων, Euripides, Ion, 174; cf. Bacch. 740, are the twangings of the bowstrings), was next the instrument itself, and last of all the song sung with this musical accompaniment. It is in this latest stage of its meaning that we find the word adopted in the Septuagint; and to this agree the ecclesiastical definitions of it; thus in the Lexicon ascribed to Cyril of Alexandria: λόγος μουσικός, ὅταν εὐρύθμως κατὰ τοὺς ἁρμονικοὺς λόγους τὰ ὄργανον κρούηται: cf. Clement of Alexandria (Pædag. ii. 4): ὁ ψαλμός, ἑμμελής ἐστιν εὐλογία καὶ σάφρων: and Basil the Great, who brings out with still greater emphasis what differences the 'psalm' and the ode or 'spiritual song' (Hom. in Ps. 44): ᾠδὴ γάρ ἐστι, καὶ οὐχὶ ψαλμός, διότι γυμνῆ φωνῇ, μὴ συνηχοῦντος αὐτῇ τοῦ ὄργανου, μετ' ἑμμελοῦς τῆς ἐκφωνήσεως, παρεδίδοτο: compare in Psal. xxix. 1; to which Gregory of Nyssa, in Psal. c. 3, agrees. In all probability the ψαλμοὶ of Ephes. v. 19, Col. iii. 16, are the inspired psalms of the Hebrew Canon. The word certainly designates these on all other occasions when it

Quoted from Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, 1953, p. 296.

If every particle of doubt has not already been removed as to what Thayer meant by psalmos Trench does that, and does it conclusively.

As all lexicographers have done, Trench traces the history of the word to psao, which meant to touch, then to the touching of the harp or other stringed instruments, from there to the instrument itself, AND, LAST OF ALL, THE SONG SUNG WITH THIS MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT!

He adds that it was in this latest stage of its meaning that we find the word adopted in the Septuagint, (NOTE: It is at this point that the non-instrument advocates claim that the evolutionary change of psalmos began to shift its meaning from musical accompaniment to vocal only) but please note his concluding statement, "AND TO THIS AGREE THE ECCLESIASTICAL DEFINITIONS OF IT!"

His meaning is clear. Ecclesiastical is from the Greek *ekklesia*, from which we get our word "church." Thus ecclesiastical means, "pertaining to the church." These leaders in the early church fully agreed with this latest stage of its meaning "THE SONG SUNG WITH MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT."

Trench amply proves this point by making reference to four outstanding Church fathers who make use of the word *psalmos* in this manner. His quotations are from Cyril of Alexandria (died A. D. 444), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-217), Basil the Great (A.D. 329-379) and Gregory of Nyssa (died A.D. 395).

It would prove to be helpful as well as enlightening at this point to translate the definitions of these men to whom Trench refers:

Lexicon ascribed to Cyril of Alexandria (444 A. D.): (*psalmos*): "A musical composition, as when the instrument is rhythmically played according to the harmonic scale."

Clement of Alexandria (Paedag. ii, 4): "The psalm is a melodious and sober blessing."

Basil the Great (Hom. in Ps. 44): "For it is a song and not a psalm, because it is rendered with musical expression, by the voice alone, without the accompaniment of the instrument."

Basil (Hom. in Ps. 29:1): "The psalm is a musical discourse when it is played rhythmically on the instrument with harmonic sounds."

Gregory of Nyssa in Ps. c.3 (this is not 100:3, but chapter three on the headings on the psalms): "A psalm is singing which is effected with the aid of instrumental music."

We have an unbroken and harmonious chain from the Septuagint to the New Testament period, the Church fathers, Trench and Thayer!

LIDDELL & SCOTT

Example 13 is the statement of Henry George Liddell and George Scott. It is taken from the Greek-English lexicon produced by these two reputable British lexicographers. Please notice that they, too, come to the same conclusion as do Trench, Lightfoot and Thayer, "...*psalmos* was LATER (LXX., N.T.) a song sung to the harp."

Example 13

ψάλλ-μα, ατος, τό, *psalm* played on a stringed instrument, AP11.34 (Phil.), Max.Tyr.37.4. — μί[ω, sing psalms, and -μοστής, ον, δ, *psalmist*, Glass. — μός, ο, *twitching or twanging with the fingers*, ψάλλει τόνον E.Lom173 (lyr.); τρέφει ψάλλον [τοξέουσα] Id. HF1064 (lyr.). II. mostly of musical strings, κρηπίδων ψάλλοις κρέον δυνον Telest.5, cf. Diog.Trag.1.9, Aret.CA1.1. 2. *the sound of the cithara or harp*, Pl.Fr.125, cf. Phryn.Trag.11; ψαλιός δ' ἀλαλάζει A.Fr.57.7 (anap.); there were contests in τὸ ψάλλειν, Michel808.10 (Chios, ii b. c.), 913.6 (Teos, ii b. c.). 3. *later, song sung to the harp, psalm*, LXX 2 Kt.23.1, al., Ep.Eph.5:19; βιβλίον ψαλιών Eo.Luc.20.42.

Quoted from H. G. Liddell and G. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1958, p. 2018. Used by permission of Clarendon Press.

EDWARD ROBINSON

Example 13A is taken from the lexicon by Edward Robinson. Robinson published this particular version in 1836.

Example 13A

Ψάλλω, ἢ ψάλλω, (ψάω,) to touch, to twitch, to pluck, e. g. the hair or beard, ψάλλει τὸν ἄνθρωπον Aeschyl.Pers.1062. Suid. ψαλλομένη' αἰλλομένη. Espoc. a string, to twang, e. g. a carpenter's line in order to make a mark, Phil. Thess. Ep. 15; the string of a bow, τόνου νεράν ψάλλειν Eurip. Bacch. 784; and so βίβλος ἐκ νεράς ψάλλειν Anthol. Gr. II. p. 210; of a stringed instrument of music, Aristot. Probl. χορδὴν ψάλλειν to touch or strike the chords; Anacr. Fr. 16. 3. ed. Fisch. ψάλλοι περικίθα. Hence oftenest absol. ψάλλειν, to touch the lyre or other stringed instrument, to strike up, to play, Jos. Ant. 11. 3. 9. Plut. Pericl. 1. Luc. Parasit. 17 οὔτε γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἐν ζωῆς αὐλοῦ, οὔτε ψάλλειν ἐν νεύματι. More general than κινεῖσθαι and distinguished from it, Hdoi. 1. 155. Dion. Halic. de Comp. Verbor. 25. penult. p. 39. 43. ed. Sylburg. So Sept. ψάλλειν ἐν χορδῇ for ψαλμῶν; 1 Sam. 16: 23. 18: 10. 19: 9. — In Sept. and N. T. to sing, to chant, pp. as accompanying stringed instruments; absol. James 5: 13. c. dat. pers. to or in honour of whom, Rom. 15: 9 τῷ ὀνόματι σου ψάλλω. Eph. 5: 19 ψάλλοιτε ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ. So c. dat. of manner, 1 Cor. 14: 15 bis, ψάλλω τῷ πνεύματι . . . τῷ κυρίῳ. Sept. oft. c. dat. pers. for τῷ κυρίῳ; Judg. 5: 3. 2 Sam. 22: 50. Ps. 9: 3. 18: 60. 30: 5. 47: 7. — Psalt. Sal. 3: 2 ἔμῳ ψάλλειν τῷ θεῷ.

Ψαλιός, οῦ, ὅ, (ψάλλω,) a touching, twang, e. g. of a bowstring, τοξοῦ Eurip. Ion. 173 or 175; of stringed instruments, a playing, music, Anthol. Gr. II. p. 73, 74. IV. p. 257; *tone, melody, measure*, as played, ψαλιός τῆς οἰκίας Pind. Fr. epinic. 4. T. III. p. 17. Heyne. In later usage, *song*, pp. as accompanying stringed instruments, Jos. Ant. 6. 11. 3 τῷ ψαλιῷ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄξιόν. ib. 7. 4. 2. Plut. Alex. M. 67 μοῦσα σφίγγων καὶ αὐλοῦ, εἰδὲς τι καὶ ψαλιῶ. ib. Pomp. 2. — In N. T. a psalm, a song, in praise of God. a) genr. 1 Cor. 14: 26 ἐκαστος ἕμῳ ψαλιῶν. Eph. 5: 19 ψαλιῶν καὶ ἑμῶν; καὶ ὁδοὶς πνευματικῆς. Col. 3: 16. So Sept. for τῷ κυρίῳ Ps. 95: 2. ᾄδοντες in superscript. Ps. 3, 4, 5, sq. — Psalt. Sal. 15: 5 ψαλιῶν καὶ αὐλοῦ. b) spec. of the Psalms, the book of Psalms, as a part of the O. T. Luke 20: 42. 24: 44. Acts 1: 20. So Acts 1: 23 ἐν τῷ ψαλιῷ τῷ δευτέρῳ. Comp. in Hicophanis. a. β, and Νόμος α. β.

Quoted from Edward Robinson, *Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1836, p. 904.

Thus we see Robinson harmonizes exactly with Thayer and the other lexicographers when he concludes that psallo in the Septuagint and the NEW TESTAMENT means "to sing, to chant, properly [suitably, fitly, rightly, Webster] as accompanying stringed instruments."

JOHN PARKHURST

Parkhurst defines as follows: "psallo, 1. To touch, touch lightly, or perhaps to cause to quaver by touching. 2. To touch the strings of a musical instrument with the finger or plectrum, and so cause them to sound or quaver. So musicians who play upon an instrument are said chordas psalleni, to touch the strings, or simply psallein. And because stringed instruments were commonly used both by Believers and Heathens in singing praises to their respective Gods, hence 3. To sing, sing praises or psalms to God, whether with or without instruments. Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Jas. 5:13.

"Psalmos, 1. a touching or playing upon a musical instrument. 2. A psalm, a sacred song or poem, properly such an one as is sung to stringed instruments. See Luke 20:42; I Cor. 14:26a"²¹

These last four lexicographers, Liddell, Scott, Robinson, and Parkhurst; so clearly exonerate psalmos from the charge of having an evolutionary change to "vocal only," that non-instrumental advocates have discredited them.

With a simple gesture Kurfees sweeps all four aside under the illusion that they were being influenced by theological bias. It is interesting to note in the paragraph immediately following his charge of their bias that Kurfees praises J. H. Thayer for his complete lack of bias in defining psalmos. I quote, "This conclusion finds strong confirmation in the fact that Joseph Henry Thayer, the author of the New Testament lexicon, which, by the unanimous decision of present-day scholarship, stands not only at the head, but far above all other authorities in the special field of New Testament lexicography, was a Congregationalist; but, nevertheless, refused, as some others failed to do, to be influenced by the theological considerations, and so put down, in his now famous lexicon, a faithful record of the true meaning of both these words."²²

²¹Kurfees, p. 70.

²²Kurfees, p. 70.

Kurfees was, and many instrument opponents still are, under the false impression that Thayer was in harmony with them. This has happened, because for fifty years they have continually confused Grimm with Thayer and Thayer with Grimm. I wonder if they had really known Thayer's position, which is obvious in Example 10, if, maybe he, too, would have been cast aside as one being under the influence of theological bias? NO DOUBT!

Thayer, Trench, Lightfoot, Liddell, Scott, Robinson, Parkhurst (and, as we shall soon see, Moulton and Milligan, Arndt and Gingrich, and Abbot-Smith) all agree that psalmos is a song with musical accompaniment. But many (including M. C. Kurfees) have viewed the evidence like the mother who saw the army unit marching and, came to the conclusion, "Everyone is out of step but my son, John!"

Some have objected to the quotation we gave from Edward Robinson. On Page 30 in the Clubb-Boles debate, H. Boles quotes Edward Robinson as follows: "Robinson. This is a New Testament lexicon, giving FIRST the classical meaning and THEN the New Testament meaning. 'Psallo, in the New Testament, TO SING and construed with a dative, TO SING IN HONOR or IN PRAISE OF ANYONE, TO SING PRAISES TO, TO CELEBRATE IN SONG (Rom. 15:9; Eph. 5:19; Jas. 5:13; I Cor. 14:26). Psalmos, in New Testament and ODE, song, and spoken of odes in praise of God, a PSALM. (Greek and English Lexicon of New Testament, 1825)."²³

I quoted from Robinson's 1836 lexicon. How do we account for the apparent difference in these two lexicons by the same man?

There are only two reasonable possibilities. One is this: He used the word sing in a general sense in the lexicon of 1825. Then, in 1836, he got a little more specific and told how the singing was done i. e. . "properly, as accompanying stringed instruments."

Or, another possibility is that in 1825 he really did believe that psallo meant to 'sing only'; but his 11 years of study after that, convinced him of his mistake, and he made his correction in the lexicon of 1836. Either explanation is fatal to the claims of those who oppose the instrument.^{23a}

MOULTON & MILLIGAN

Example 14 is a photocopy from The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament authored by Moulton and Milligan.

²³Clubb, M. D., Boles, H. Leo, Clubb-Boles Debate, p. 30. 1927.

^{23a} See Appendix III, page 145

Example 14

ψάλλω,
properly = "play on a harp," but in the NT, as in Jas 5¹², = "sing a hymn": cf. *Syll* 523 (= 578)¹⁸ (ii/b.c.) εἰδάξεν . . . κιθαρῆεν ἢ ψάλλειν, *Palaia-Lexicon* p. 14²²
ἤρξατο ψάλλειν τὴν τρίτην [ἄραν, and Menander 'Επειρία, 260 ἔψαλλον κόραις. See *s.v.* ψαλμός. MGr ψάλλω, ψάλω, "sing."

ψαλμός,
"psalm" or "song," sung to a harp accompaniment; see *Syll* 524 (= 959)¹⁹ (ii/A.D.), where κιθαρῆισμός and ψαλμός are distinguished, the former, according to the editor, being "de eo qui plectro utitur," the latter "de eo qui ipsis digitis chordas pulsat." See also Preuschen-Bauer *Wörterb.* *s.v.*

Quoted from J. H. Moulton & G. M. Milligan; Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1959, page 697. Used by permission of Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

ABBOT-SMITH

Example 15

ψάλλω, [in LXX chiefly for $\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\omega$ pi. (Jg 5⁹, Ps 7¹⁷, al.), also for $\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\omega$ pi. (1 Ki 16¹⁶, al.);] 1. to pull, twitch, twang (as a bowstring, etc.; Æsch., Eur., al.), hence, 2. absol. (a) to play a stringed instrument with the fingers (Hdt., Plat., al.); (b) later, to sing to a harp, sing psalms (LXX); in NT, to sing a hymn, sing praise: Ja 5¹²; o. dat. pers., Ro 15⁹ (LXX), Eph 5¹⁹; dat. instr., 1 Co 14¹⁵.†

ψαλμός, -ός, ὁ (< ψάλλω), [in LXX chiefly for $\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$;] 1. a striking, twitching with the fingers (Eur., al.), hence, a striking of musical strings (Æsch., al.), and hence in later writers, 2. a sacred song sung to musical accompaniment, a psalm (LXX): 1 Co 14²⁶, Eph 5¹⁹, Col 3¹⁶; of OT psalms, Lk 24⁴⁴, Ac 13³²; βιβλος ψαλμῶν, Lk 20⁴², Ac 1²⁶.†

SYN.: *v.s.* ὕμνος.

Quoted from G. Abbot-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, Edinburgh, England, 1921, page 487.

There has been an attempt, by some, to categorize both of these lexicons of Moulton-Milligan and Abbot-Smith, as ones saying that psallo means sing "only." This not only would breed disharmony and disagreement between lexicons, but such an interpretation would make these lexicographers contradict themselves when they define psalmos. Both of them explicitly call psalmos "a song sung to musical (harp) accompaniment."

The noun psalmos and the verb psallo both come from the verb psao. They are different forms of the same word. In fact, Moulton and Milligan bid us in their discussion of psallo to "See *s.v.* psalmos."

They want us to look under psalmos for a further discussion; one that may shed some light on the definition psallo. Indeed it does! There are two things to notice in Example 14. First, under the word psalmos, it is defined as, "psalm or song, sung to harp accompaniment." Second, Moulton and Milligan give evidence from an inscription dated in the Second Century A. D. that this was still its meaning then.

We have seen that complete investigation of Moulton & Milligan has brought out clearly that they included instrumental accompaniment in their definition of psalmos. Now let's examine G. Abbot-Smith carefully. Notice at the end of his definition of psalmos he says, "SYN.: *v.s.* hymnos" Example 15A is a photocopy of Abbot-Smith's comments concerning the synonyms under hymnos. Please note that psalmos is distinguished from ode and hymnos as being "that which is sung to a musical accompaniment."

Example 15A

SYN.: ψαλμός, that which is sung to a musical accompaniment; ὕμνος, the generic term for song (cf. Tr., *Syn.*, § lxxviii; Lft. on Col 3¹⁶).

Quoted from G. Abbot-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, Edinburgh, England, 1921, page 456.

This demonstrates clearly that there is no contradiction between these lexicons and the ones already referred to, and that Moulton and Milligan and Abbot-Smith do not contradict themselves. The only reason it appears this way IS BECAUSE BRETHERN KEEP INSERTING THE WORD "ONLY" OR "UNACCOMPANIED" whenever they find the word sing! If sing is taken in the general sense of singing "accompanied or unaccompanied," then there is no contradiction and no misunderstanding and confusion.

This is the meaning given to us by the English dictionaries when they defined our word psalm. They defined it as: "to sing a sacred song or poem." Yet they replied in their letters that "this was never intended to exclude musical accompaniment." (See Example 3). Furthermore, "they remain 'psalms' in any event, whether accompanied or unaccompanied." (See Example 4). Finally, "In the Oxford English Dictionary, it would appear that throughout the history of the word, it has been used in connection with singing and musical instruments." (See Example 5).

Is it disharmony, contradictions and confusion between lexicons that have blurred the picture? No, I fear rather that it is disharmony and contradictions between the lexicons and the preconceived ideas of some brethren, that has fogged the issue! As we continue our study, may we have the integrity to examine the evidence as it unfolds, not as we feel it should unfold, and, above all, not as we have already concluded it has unfolded.

Our next witness is one of the newest lexicons in print. It comes to us highly praised and recommended from all sources. It has been appropriately termed, "a scholarly supplement to Thayer." The work on this volume was completed by Arndt & Gingrich in 1952. Example 16 reproduces their comments on psallo and psalmos. This lexicon is a translation of Bauer's.

Example 16

ψάλλω fut. ψάλλω (Aeschyl. +; inser. LXX; Jos. Ant. 11, 67; 12, 349) in our lit., in accordance w. OT usage, *sing (to the accompaniment of a harp)*, sing praise w. dat. of the one for whom the praise is intended τῷ ὀνόματι σου ψάλλω Ro 15: 9 (Ps 17: 50[18: 49]). τῷ κυρίῳ Eph 5: 19; in this pass. a second dat. is added τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν in your heart(s). ψ. τῷ πνεύματι and in contrast to that ψ. τῷ νοῦ *sing praise in spiritual ecstasy and in full possession of one's mental faculties* 1 Cor 14: 15. Abs. *sing praise* Js 5: 13. M-M.*

ψαλμός, οἶ, ὁ (Pind., Aeschyl. +; inser.; PGM 3, 290; LXX; Jos. Ant. 6, 214; 7, 80; 9, 35; loanw. in rabb.) in our lit. only *song of praise, psalm*, in accordance w. OT usage.

1. of the OT Psalms ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσεως καὶ τ. προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς Lk 24: 44. ἐν βιβλίῳ ψαλμῶν 20: 42; Ac 1: 20. ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ τῷ δευτέρῳ 13: 33 (D. Or ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ ψ.).

2. of Christian songs of praise 1 Cor 14: 26.

Quoted from W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich; A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957; page 899. Used by permission.

We need to note two or three items of interest from Example 16.

A. Arndt & Gingrich define psallo as, "...sing (to the accompaniment of a harp)."

B. Reference is made, both under psallo and psalmos, to the works of Josephus. Josephus was a Jewish historian contemporaneous with the Apostles. He wrote about 75 A.D. Under psallo, Arndt & Gingrich refer us to his book on the Antiquities of the Jews, 12, 349. Under psalmos, we are bidden to look in The Antiquities of the Jews, 6, 214. It is sufficient to say here that both passages make use of the word in direct connection with musical instruments! In a forthcoming chapter we will reproduce these passages along with those from other contemporaneous writers of the early centuries to show beyond question that musical instruments were commonly associated with the definition of psallo and psalmos.

C. Another interesting feature concerning the thoughts of Arndt & Gingrich on the meaning of these words is represented for us in Example 17. This is a letter I received from F. W. Gingrich. It is in answer to my question: "It has been claimed by some that the Greek word psallo and the corresponding noun psalmos, in their evolution had entirely lost the meaning of instrumental accompaniment in the New Testament times. Is this true?"

Example 17

Apr. 29, 1962

The verb ψάλλω "psallo" originally meant to "pluck" anything, then to play a musical instrument by plucking. It is true that by N.T. times the emphasis had shifted to "sing", with or without instrumental accompaniment. The Liddell-Scott-Jones lexicon of Greek gives the meaning "sing to a harp" for the N.T. passages Eph. 5: 19 and 1 Cor 14: 15. The Moulton and Milligan lexicon gives simply "sing" for the N.T. In our translation of Bauer's lexicon, Mr. Arndt and I gave the meaning as "sing (to the accompaniment of a harp); meaning that the singing could be with or without accompaniment. It seems to me that you cannot exclude the possibility of accompaniment in the N.T. passages, since ψάλλω still means "play on the harp" in Lucian, who wrote in the second century

A.D. I must say that I regard the
controversy over this matter as unimportant.
Sincerely yours,
F. W. Gingrich

Dr. Gingrich notes a definite shifting of the emphasis. BUT THIS SHIFT DID NOT GO SO FAR AS TO EXCLUDE INSTRUMENTAL ACCOMPANIMENT, Instrumental accompaniment is still sustained in the definition of the words! This, Dr. Gingrich points out, should be clear from the fact that it was still used that way in the Second Century A.D., by Lucian. We will make reference to this man in the same chapter that we deal with Josephus.

SOUTER

The last lexicon which we shall consider in this section is A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament, by Alexander Souter. Example 17A is taken from page 286. Alexander Souter is very concise and definite when he defines both psallo and psalmos. "I play on the harp (or other stringed instrument)," is given for psallo. Psalmos is defined as a "psalm, that is a song of praise, etc., to God, with an accompaniment on the harp."

Example 17A

ψάλλω, I play on the harp (or other stringed instrument).
ψαλμός, a psalm, that is a song of praise, &c., to God,
with an accompaniment on the harp.

Quoted from Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament; Oxford, England; Clarendon Press; 1916 page 286.

Suppose we were to place these lexicons in three groups: those that define psallo "to play" or "to sing to musical accompaniment," those that say it means to sing, meaning with or without accompaniment, and those that say "singing only." There would be quite a number in the first two groups. But, strangely enough (in spite of what has been claimed all of these years) none could be found in the group, "sing only"!

This takes on special significance when we remember that it is not we who must prove that instrumental accompaniment was forced into the definition of psallo and psalmos, but our opponents must prove that it was taken out. THIS CANNOT BE SUSTAINED BY THE LEXICOGRAPHERS. Even those, who, like F. W. Gingrich, admit that there has been a shifting of emphasis, will not go so far as to exclude instrumental accompaniment. The force of the lexicons which M. C. Kurfees calls the "voice of scholarship," stands unitedly for songs sung to instrumental accompaniment.