**Pilgrims & Puritans**

The Bay Book of Psalms was the product of the early Pilgrims and Puritans. By 1640, within a mere 20 years of landing at Plymouth Rock, they had printed 1700 copies in Cambridge, MA. This is the first book printed and written/translated in America. In 2013 one was sold for over 14 million dollars. There are eleven “Bay Book of Psalms”, still extant from that original edition. There was a second edition and 3rd edition, etc. but the most valuable is the first edition. But what is special about a first edition? (More about this later).

Evidently, these early Puritans were really good singers. They wanted a song book, made from the book of Psalms. They wanted a very accurate translation from the Hebrew, and about 25 American ministers finished the book. The second thing they wanted, in what would become the “Bay Book of Psalms”, is that the lyrics be set in meter poetry. So they could sing the Psalms. They printed enough for each family to have about 2 copies. They were puritans, they sang without instruments. They also didn’t have choirs or solo’s, but congregational singing as pure as the New Testament. One of the two New Testament verses printed on the front page is, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16). Since the Puritans were seeking pure worship in church, they were seeking to be the original church. The original church is like a first edition. The New Testament Church never used an instrument because the command was to sing. So sing they did. The second verse on page one is, “Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.” (James 5:13). The Puritans knew that the Old Testament commanded the use of instrumental music as it also commands incense, sacrificing on altars, etc.

Over 14 million dollars is a high value placed upon a first edition (first book printed in America, the Bible book of Psalms!). But more valuable is the first edition of the church itself, as found in the pages of the New Testament. We are still seeking to be that original, first edition church. We worship like they did in singing (Col.3:16). We worship like they did in having the Lord’s Supper (Mat. 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, etc.). We are seeking to love one another as that first edition church did too! We may be failing at times, but we are not seeking originality, but the original. As God designed it from eternity (Ephesians 3:10-11), and Jesus built it (Matthew 16:18). God is honored when we seek his original ideas, words, and not our own.

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