

Would you argue that His silence does not sanction it and that you would have to have His Word to authorize the use of any other kinds of wood? Shouldn't it follow then that the silence of the New Testament does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments in New Testament worship?

WASN'T GOD SILENT ABOUT THE KIND OF FIRE USED BY NADAB AND ABIHU? *"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon and offered strange fire before the Lord which he commanded them not"* (Lev. 10:1). What did they do? They did something God had not commanded. They used a kind of fire about which God was silent. Did His silence give sanction to what they did? If such were sanctioned, why were they punished for such? Would God by His silence sanction a practice, and then punish those for doing what He sanctioned? You and I know better. We wouldn't dare argue that His silence gave sanction to what they did but we do have to admit that God was indeed silent about the kind of fire they did use.

WASN'T GOD SILENT ABOUT THE NEED OF GENTILES TO BE CIRCUMCISED TO BE SAVED UNDER THE GOSPEL? Does Silence Give Sanction? Do you remember those who went from Jerusalem to Antioch saying such was the case (Acts 15:1-2)? Do you recall that the apostles and elders met in Jerusalem about this question? Do you remember that they sent an epistle back to Antioch and other places saying, "We gave no such commandment" (Acts 15:24)? They were silent concerning the necessity for Gentiles to be circumcised. To add such to God's requirement for salvation was equal to the invasion of God's silence. This would constitute an addition and perversion. For men to add the mechanical instrument to N.T. worship is no less an invasion of God's silence.

WASN'T GOD SILENT ABOUT WASHING HANDS BEFORE EATING? Some would add such and seek to have the Lord endorse it, but to no avail (Matt. 15:1-9). Jesus showed such to be nothing more than a human tradition. It has its origin with men and not with God. God was silent concerning such and Jesus did not accept that as authorization to bind such on His disciples.

WASN'T GOD SILENT CONCERNING ONE SERVING AS A PRIEST UNDER THE LAW FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH? One has but to read the following, "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:13-14). The Hebrews writer used this as an argument to show that Jesus was of a higher order of priest. Wouldn't you think the overall priesthood would be better by having one perfect priest such as Jesus? Surely we would, but such wouldn't authorize invading God's silence and making Jesus a priest from the wrong tribe. The unanswerable argument is that since nothing was said concerning one from the tribe of Judah serving as priest, then one from Judah was not authorized to serve as a priest.

Then what would it take for one to be authorized? Certainly not silence but rather a statement to that effect. What would it take for the authorization of the mechanical instrument in New Testament worship? Wouldn't it take a supporting statement like we have in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 for singing? You certainly don't have any authorization based on silence. If so, there is absolutely no limit to the additions one can make. No, silence doesn't give sanction and God doesn't need to be treated as an idol that cannot speak. He has told us how to worship and in doing this we have His sanction based on His word.

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Email: the_bible_says@dbqheartlandcoc.org

Heartland church of Christ

3430 Dodge St., Suite 1
Dubuque, Iowa 52003
(563) 588-1974

Evangelist

Michael Demory

Ministers

All members of the church

Schedule of Services

Sunday—9:30am
Wednesday—7:00pm

Evangelistic Efforts

Dubuque Advertiser &
TV Program

"The Bible Says"

Public Access
Cable Channel 16
Mon. & Thurs. @ 8:30pm
Tues. @ 2:30pm
Fri. @ 9:00am

Steps to Salvation

1. Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe (Heb. 11:1,6)
3. Repent (Lk. 13:3)
4. Confess (Matt. 10:32-33)
5. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Remain Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14)

The Way, the Truth and the Life

by T. Pierce Brown

I am impressed because Jesus did not say in John 14:6, "I will show you the way, tell you the truth and give you life," although He properly could have said that.

In saying, "I am" He suggests a distinctive thing about Christianity that gives it power and glory. In contradistinction to other religions, Christianity is not merely or primarily a set of rules or of ethical, moral or spiritual principles. It is a revelation of the nature, love and will of God through a Person. The Law of Moses would have had the same power had it been revealed through Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. The message of Christ would not, for the message and the Messenger are inseparable. The plan and the Planner are one, though we may divide them verbally for purposes of study. That is, the "plan of Salvation" is not simply a set of steps including belief in some facts and going through some ritualistic actions. If it is not related to the Planner in the proper way, it is nothing. Yet, contrary to denominational ideas, the Planner does not save separate from the plan. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16) and obedience to it is a part of the salvation that is offered by the grace of God.

In case that needs clarification, I will put it this way: The act of baptism, without the act of loving submission to the Savior as Lord, is without significance or value. The Lord's Supper, taken without the realization of its purpose and meaning, is of no value. To

think of either of them as a mere ritual, by which Divine favor or power is conferred, is vain and idolatrous. There is little doubt that there are those connected with the Lord's church who have viewed them in that fashion.

"I Am the Way"

If there is anything that should be obvious to those who think, it is the fact that the formation of character and great social changes that affect and effect the destiny of man are not mere philosophical abstractions, but the transformation of truths into living, breathing, active lives. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14). Then and only then did it have the power to transform mankind and save us. So "I am the way" means more than that Jesus revealed to the intellect of man information about how to act. Until Jesus becomes a living person to whom you respond, for whom you feel love and respect, through whom you approach God, and around whom your motive, purpose and actions revolve, you cannot come to God. The life of Christ must be reproduced in the body of a Christian (2 Cor. 4:10), not merely the mechanical techniques of going through some actions.

A "way" connects us with something that is otherwise distant or inaccessible. Man has wandered away from God and Christ provided the means of return. A "way" makes movement in a specific direction possible. One

may wander around in the woods, but if he is on the "way" to somewhere, then he is on the way from somewhere. Christ is the way from the guilt, consequences and power of sin, to a life of peace, fellowship with God and eternal life. Men of all ages, nations and religions have sought to rid themselves of guilt by all sorts of methods. They have tried to be good by their own power. Even when they have attained some form of it in the present, it is no help to get rid of the bad of the past.

"The Way" is a plain way. Jesus said in John 7:17, "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." A person, who picks up the word of God without bias or prejudice and simply wants to do what God has said to do, can scarcely fail to find "The way" without expert help. One who wants to find exceptions, or a way out of doing what God wants can usually find someone to "doctor it up" for him until it becomes palatable.

"The Way" is a way of faith. Every step of the way depends on what Jesus has authorized; not on what we may feel or think might be "just as good." If there is on lesson that is written plainly, both in the Bible and in our own experience, it is that any blessing that is obtained by faith must be by a demonstrated faith. There are no exceptions to that, of which I am aware. Noah was saved by faith when he demonstrated his faith by building the ark. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down when they were compassed about for seven days, in demonstration of that faith (Heb. 11:30). The blind man was cured by faith when he demonstrated his faith by washing in the pool of Siloam (Jn. 9:7).

"I Am the Truth"

It may be significant that when Jesus said, "I am the truth," He place it between "The Way" and "The Life." Even if we cannot find significance in that, we do know that without "The Way" there is no going to God, without "The Truth" there is no knowing God. It may be well to concern ourselves with the question Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:38, "What is Truth?" If we define it philosophically, we may say that truth is the agreement between the internal idea and an external thing. We may say that truth is an accurate representation of reality. Whatever definition we use, it supposes a relationship between a thing and an expression about that thing. If Jesus had said, "I speak truth," that would have been accurate and good. If he had said, "I am true," that might have been even better. He said, "I am the truth," which is even more meaningful, in light of the above definitions.

Jesus is the truth about man: When the expression "son of man" is used of Jesus, it suggests an interesting universality that is not true of any other. As the truth about man, he represents not only what man is, but also what man may be. When we measure ourselves by any other standard, we may make a passing grade or even be outstanding. When we are measured by Jesus' standard, we feel a sense of shame, frustration or disgust. But marvel of marvels! When we continue to look, we discover that by the transforming power of Christ we may experience a metamorphosis (Rom. 12:2). The ugly cater-

pillar is turned into a beautiful butterfly!

Without Christ it is even sometimes difficult to return good for good. In Him, we can return good for evil. Without Christ it is difficult enough to love some friends. In Him, it is possible to love our enemies. So the initial humbling of self, the shattering of our ego, the frustration that comes when we compare ourselves with the perfect standard, now usually disappears or may be mingled with joy over the realization that we can become partakers of the divine nature! (2 Pet. 1:4). So we can see that Christ is "The Truth" about what man is and about what man was created to be.

Jesus is "The Truth" about God: In the past, certain men had told others about the nature and will of God. Only in Christ could the power, wisdom, justice, mercy and love of God be properly seen and appreciated. This was what Jesus was telling Thomas and Philip when He said: "If ye had known me, ye should have known My Father also" (Jn. 14:7), and "He that had seen Me hath seen the Father" (vs. 9).

"I Am the Life"

The Lord also made this claim. Since I am writing this article in a motel room, without access to a dictionary or any reference works, I will simply give my own definition of "life." It is the quality of a thing that gives it a consciousness of, or sensitivity to, reality. To the extent that a person or thing does not have that, it is dead. If one is spiritually dead, he is not conscious of real values. Ephesians 2:1 says, "And you did He make alive when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins." Jesus said, "I am come that ye may have life and may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). It is my judgment that Jesus is talking about the fact that as we make Christ more and more the center of our lives, there will be a keener consciousness of all things that make life worthwhile, joyous and abundant.

There are those who seem to think they have done something worthwhile if they seek to find the way to Christ, the truth about Christ and the life commended by Christ. That might be better than nothing, but simply learning the way to Christ without letting Christ be the Way you live, is not good enough. Knowing the truth about Christ and knowing Christ who is the truth are different concepts in the New Testament. An atheist might learn the truths about Christ but, in the Bible sense, he does not know Christ, who is the Truth. Even having the lifestyle commended by Christ, that is, living a noble, sacrificial life is not sufficient. "Though we give all our goods to feed the poor and though we give our body to be burned" (1 Cor. 13:3), it profits us nothing, if we do not have the "life of Jesus manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11). When the Bible speaks of the life of Jesus in this way, it does not have reference to outward acts that seem similar to what Jesus might have done. It has reference to our actions that we do because of our connection with and submission to Christ.

Let us try to make the matter more clear. Even before a person becomes a Christian, he may do many good things.

He may even be baptized in obedience to his mother, his "pastor" or his church. If that act is not properly connected with Christ, it lacks validity. After a person becomes a Christian, he may go through the act of taking the Lord's Supper, or do any number of things that may appear to men to be obedience to the Lord. It is not necessarily so. Taking what is called the "Lord's Supper" may be eating and drinking damnation to himself (1 Cor. 11:29), if it is not done with the proper relationship to and attitude toward Christ.

Conclusion

We have not even "touched the hem of the garment" in what is involved in Christ being "The Way, the Truth and the Life." Still, if you see a little more clearly the following facts, this article will have been worth something. Even living in a way similar to Christ, admitting the truth of the facts about Christ and living a life that outwardly conforms to what Christ commands is not sufficient. We must always remember that "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5) is not satisfactory to please the Lord.



Does Silence Give Sanction?

By Winfred Clark

It is a matter of verbal conjecture on the part of many that God's silence on a subject of human preference makes such allowable. Such is advocated by those who presume to use mechanical instruments in New Testament worship. It is assumed that since there is no declared prohibition against it such is then allowed. It seems the battles of the past fought in this same arena must again occur. The same questions need to be asked again. The same simple lessons must be learned again.

WASN'T GOD SILENT ABOUT ALL OTHER WOOD EXCEPT GOPHER IN BUILDING THE ARK? Such seems to be a foolish question to those who read Genesis 6:14. In fact, as you read this verse, and others related to the ark, you would affirm the silence of God on all other kinds of wood to be used in the ark. This would be a good place to show His silence. Would you at the same time argue that His silence would give sanction to the use of any other kind of wood? Would you even care to assume that His silence gave sanction to the use of any other kind of wood? If you did, on what basis would you oppose it?

Remember in Prayer

Special Prayers

- Russell Bender
- Brethren & others in Haiti
- New evangelism efforts
- Jo Gordon—eye surgery
- Sarah Harvey
- Naida Williamson—broken hip
- Julie Bender—Cellulitis
- Brother Prasad (India)- is facing many trials
- Brother Odom (Abilene)—COPD
- Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
- Cody Ledesma—Drug Rehab
- Eric Boor—blood disease
- Lyra Grochmal (7 yrs)—spine cancer
- Melissa McClish—Depression
- Lilly Rucker and family—
- Rockfalls church of Christ
- Platteville church of Christ
- TV Program & Advertiser Ads
- State of our Nation
- The closing of Planned Parenthood
- The church
- The erring & the Lost

Evangelizing the World

- Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
- Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
- Brian Sherrell—LaCrosse, Wisc.
- Bernie Guzman—Philippines
- Fred Rhodes—Newton, Iowa
- Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
- James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
- Derrick Brown —Jamaica
- Gary Workman—Ukraine
- Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
- G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
- John O'Neal—India & Ghana
- Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
- Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan

Military

- Chip O'Neal—Afghanistan
- Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
- Michael Chlamon—Ft. Drum, NY
- Daniel Heflin—Ft. Drum, NY
- Jason Cunningham—Stateside
- Jon McCain—Basic Training
- Military families who are coping while loved ones in harms way