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Co-Editor's Column
SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES (II)
 Garland Elkins



Rehashed Arguments Of The Christian Church

Our brother begins at the same place and attempts to prove his point in exactly the same way as the Christian Church (digressive) preachers have always done. Hear him: "But what say the scriptures: Romans 4:15 clearly sustains our position: 'for where no law is, there is no transgression.' Romans 5:13 also reinforces our reasoning: 'but sin is not imputed when there is no law.'" He concludes by saying, "These are clear and true principles, for one cannot violate a law that doesn't exist."

For over half a century, this writer has been hearing Christian Church preachers make the above arguments, and for the same length of time we have refuted them. It should be pointed out that error is no less error because it is taught by one of our brethren. The only difference is the degree of harm. When one of our brethren teaches error, as opposed to someone not in fellowship with the church advocating it, our brother can injure many more people.

It should be pointed out that there is a law of worship set out in the New Testament (John 4:24). God is the object of our worship. We must "worship him in spirit" (in the right manner), "and in truth." The truth is the law--the Word of God--"Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). If a man does not abide in what Jesus set out as requirements for true worship, he does not have God. If someone teaches something that was not taught by Christ, he is not teaching what God teaches, and he cannot be encouraged, nor extended a hand of fellowship (2 John 9-11).

We must have the right attitude in worship to God, but it is impossible to have a good attitude and at the same time to engage in wrong action. When we worship God, there are certain acts God has commanded. He has not left us free to do as we please. I can give book, chapter, and verse for every act that I ask men to submit to in becoming Christians. They are to hear the word of the gospel and believe it (Acts 15:7-9), repent (Acts 17:30), confess that Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10), and be baptized for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). I can give scripture for every act we practice in worship to God. In performing an act, there is that which Paul calls an expedient. He said, "All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all

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"HOW CAN I HELP TRAIN PREACHERS?"



From The Director
JOB, WHO WAS TRIED AS GOLD (III)

HOW WAS JOB TRIED IN THE FIRE? (Continued from last month.)

Fifth, Job was having to endure terrible, horrible torture. His pain existed for perhaps a year. "So am I made to possess months of misery, And wearisome nights are appointed to me" (7:3). His flesh was full of boils; when one began to scab over, another would break out adjacent to it. "My flesh is clothed with worms (maggots) and clods of dust (ashes, dirt, etc.)! My skin closeth up, and breaketh out afresh" (7:5). He was constantly trying to soothe the itching (2:8), he suffered great depression (3:24-25), his face was red from crying (16:16), he was but skin and bones (19:20), his unbearable pain (30:17) would not cease even long enough to allow him to swallow (3:24; 7:19), he ran a constant fever (30:30), and he was scared nearly to death with nightmares (7:14-15). Does anyone doubt that Satan inflicted Job to the very limit of what was permitted by God? Evidently, only God's providence kept him alive!

Sixth, Job suffered the urging of his wife that he "renounce God and die" (2:9). One should remember that she *also* had lost seven sons and three daughters, as well as an immense amount of wealth, as did her husband. And--her beloved husband was undergoing indescribable physical pain in addition to everything else. BUT, that should *not* have provoked her suggestion to abandon his integrity, curse God, and die [The author feels that this was an urging for Job to commit suicide. Satan was speaking through Job's wife; she willingly became his instrument of temptation. He was, by God, forbidden to kill Job, but if he could through Job's wife convince him to curse God and take his own life, he would accomplish the same purpose. No wonder Satan spared the life of Job's wife; he would use her!]. One must be very careful in times of grief, disappointment, and suffering, lest Satan gain an advantage. One must *never* underestimate his enemy, Satan. How sad! At the very time when Job needed comfort and unwavering, loving support from his dear companion, he is faced with still another trial. She was acting very foolish!

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Send Men To MSOP. There are many good, faithful, dedicated brothers who are looking for the way to prepare themselves to preach, or who are wondering if they have what it takes to preach. Point them in our direction. Give them information about the School (we will be happy to send brochures and catalogs to you, or to them). Inform us of their contact information, and we will be glad to get in touch with them. Encourage them to visit MSOP. We will meet with them, show them around the campus, and allow them to sit in on classes. Your recommendation may be just what they need to get them on the road to a lifetime of preaching the soul-saving gospel of Christ. Instead of lamenting sin in the world, and the shortage of preachers, send men to MSOP.

Support Men at MSOP. Men who sacrifice by leaving homes, families, and jobs--because they have committed themselves to two years of intensive, college level instruction in the Word of God, and in how to preach it with effectiveness--deserve your support (1 Tim. 5:18). With an increase in the number of students MSOP trains, comes an increase in the amount of support needed to provide living expenses for students. These men need your help, and they are worthy; thus, they look to you, trusting in God, and depending upon the generous help which faithful, loving brethren, who have the vision to see the real need for gospel preachers today, and in the future, will provide.

Support MSOP. Forty years of faithful service have shown the School to be worthy of your support. Your contributions have been a vital part of the School's training of men to preach (cf. Phi. 1:3-5). MSOP does not seek, nor would it accept, governmental support. It charges no tuition, or fees. As a part of the Bible teaching program of the Forest Hill Church of Christ, MSOP is supported by the Forest Hill church, and by faithful brethren who are convinced of the continuing need to train men to preach the Gospel of Christ. Your donations to MSOP are fully tax deductible, and will help save precious souls. Now is the time to begin supporting the training of men to preach if you have not, in the past, done so--or, to continue, and even increase your support if you have been helping in this worthy effort.

Pray For MSOP. We trust our God hears and answers the prayers of the faithful (Jam. 5:16). He has commanded us to come before him with our petitions, and He has promised to bless us with what we need, especially in our service to Him (Mat. 7:7). Pray that God will bless us with men who are committed to spending the rest of their lives in preaching the Word. Pray that our Creator and Sustainer will provide us the means to continue in this good work as long as the earth shall stand. Pray that our Heavenly Father will bless our efforts with much success--not for our glory, but for His. Together, we can train men to preach. *Bobby Liddell*

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Seventh, Job was bitterly, vindictively, hatefully, and falsely accused by his three "friends," Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. How true is the statement, "With certain friends, you do not need enemies." Job's friends, evidently long, close acquaintances, heard that Job had been sick. "They made an appointment together to come to bemoan him and to comfort him" (2:11). They meant well. They were so touched by his condition, as they finally were able to recognize Job sitting in the garbage dump, that they said not a word unto him for seven days (2:12-13); they loudly wailed and wept for Job and waited for the one in mourning to break the silence.

The friends [after Job cried out in pain wishing that he had never been born and then that he could die, having been born (3:1-23)] gave three rounds of speeches, with Job giving reply to each speech. Eliphaz spoke first, likely being the oldest, followed by Bildad and Zophar. Their thesis was this: all suffering comes as punishment for sin. Job is suffering. Therefore, Job is a sinner. Of course, this was still another trial of Job--falsely accused by even those who claim to be his friends. How many have been the times that a person is treated "well" and "gloated over" by a "friend," but if he crosses him, or disagrees with his pet hobby, he becomes counted immediately as an enemy, and comes under the supposed friend's vicious attacks! Satan uses just such people, as he did Job's friends. They were "forgers of lies" (13:4).

You and I know that Job was suffering because of his righteousness, as did Abel, as did Christ, and as have countless others (1 Pet. 4:15-16). However, Job did not know that Satan had hidden his ugly claw, desiring that Job blame God--not Satan. He might, under those circumstances, blame God, Satan thought. In fact, Job does not learn throughout the whole book that Satan is involved.

The ruthlessness of the friends' false accusations intensified as their speeches continued (chapters 4-25; each of the friends spoke three times except Zophar, who "ran out of soap" after his second speech). They made such false charges as: no one "ever perished, being innocent" (4:7); God does not trust even the righteous angels, much less man (4:18-21); God was trying to chastise Job (5:17-21); Job's children had been killed because of their sins (8:4); Job's sacrifices for his children had no efficacy; no suffering results where there is no sin (8:8-13); Job had trusted in his riches (8:15); Job was godless (8:13); Job mocked God (11:3); Job claimed sinless perfection (11:4); Job "stretched out his hand against God" (15:25), being lifted up with pride; Job was a hypocrite (15:31); Job had gotten his substance by robbing the poor and widow (20:18-19); he had refused to help the starving widow and orphan--his wickedness was "great" (22:5-10); no man could be righteous before God (25:4-6); et al.

The friends were so absolutely certain that their "theology" was going to be "right" and that Job was going by them to be convicted of being a grievous sinner that they would not allow the "truth" and "facts" to interfere with their theory, and would not allow logical reasoning to upset their "theology." When we, dear reader, have to abandon logical reasoning [note the word *logikos*, "reasonable service" in Romans 12:1] and "invent" supposed "evidence" to support our prejudices, attitudes, and positions in our relationships with God and with others, we are building on the sands of destruction (Mat. 7:24-27). And, very often, one who is so prejudiced against others, and so insistent of his own unsubstantiated viewpoint, has problems in his own relationship with God. How many times does one see the friends of Job humbly calling upon God in prayer? Not even once! In fact, God called them into account, saying to Eliphaz, "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right..." (42:7). Yes, the friends could have been of such comfort to Job, but they were as a deceitful brook and a dried up oasis in the presence of a poor dying, thirsty soul (6:14-23). They would treat an atheist better than they treated their own brother Job! How often is this true in our families--and even in the church! They needed to repent.

Eighth, Job thought that God had abandoned him and was even trying to kill him. Satan destroyed Job in such way as to leave the impression [he hoped] that Job would think that God did the

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things edify" (1 Corinthians 10:23). Expedient means that which expedites the required act. We cannot expedite an unauthorized act (such as instrumental music), for there is absolutely no authority to use mechanical instruments in the worship of the church. Before one could logically and scripturally discuss expediting the use of instrumental music in New Testament worship, he would be required to find the authorization for its use. This no man can do!

We must keep in mind that just because someone argues that something is an aid does not prove that it is to be used in New Testament worship. Before an aid can be used in worship, it must be lawful! (See 1 Corinthians 10:23). There are two kinds of commands in the Bible--generic and specific. In the generic command, there is requirement without any specification as to how it is to be done. Jesus said, "Go into all the world." He did not specify how to go. I may walk, ride, or fly, but that is within the purview of the command. He made no restrictions about going. He simply said, "Go."

In regard to teaching he said, "Go teach." He did not say write only; he said, "Teach." When I teach, whether I write or speak, I am within the purview of the command. Teaching authorizes a radio or television program. Teaching the truth on such programs does not produce another act--another gospel. Teaching is authorized, but when the truth is taught in love (Mark 16:15-16; Ephesians 4:15), using radio and television stations to expedite such, one is within the purview of the command.

If God had commanded Noah simply to build the ark out of wood, then he could have used oak, hickory, walnut, gopher, or any other kind of wood. However, when God specified the type of wood to be used, gopher, all other types of wood were forbidden. When God specifies, he forbids, he excludes. Gopher wood was the only wood authorized by God for Noah to use. Even so, the command to sing excludes the use of an instrument in New Testament worship.

We understand this principle of authority in our actions from day to day. If I requested, "Bring me a vehicle in which I can ride," then one could bring any type vehicle. However, if I said "Bring me an automobile in which to ride," that would eliminate an airplane, ship, and any and all other type vehicles in which I might ride. When I say, "Bring me an automobile in which to ride," then any color, make, and style would be authorized. However, if I specify "Bring me a black 2005 four-door Impala Chevrolet," then one is authorized only to bring an automobile matching that description. Any other automobile would be a violation of the authority that was given.

One must have authority for what he practices in religious worship (Colossians 3:17). It is easy to find authority in the scriptures for singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12), but there is absolutely no authority whatsoever for using an instrument in Christian worship. Thus, instrumental music is sinful, because it is unauthorized. Therefore, it is not necessary to find a passage which explicitly says, "Thou shalt not have instrumental music in Christian worship," because God has specified singing, and that makes instrumental music implicitly forbidden because it is unauthorized.

Conclusion

The following conclusions are irresistible.

1. Since the command is to sing, and the Bible does not authorize elsewhere the use of instrumental music in Christian worship, then to be faithful to God, one must sing, and must not use instrumental music in Christian worship.

2. When one uses an instrument of music (which is an addition, not an aid as some erroneously contend), he has gone beyond biblical authority, and to do so is sin (2 John 9-11).

3. Those who practice the use of instrumental music in Christian worship should "repent and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance" (Acts 26:20). *Garland Elkins*

destroying. It was the "fire of God" [lightning] which fell from heaven and destroyed the sheep, and "a great wind from the wilderness" which killed his sons and daughters. Job knew that Jehovah had given; he also thought that Jehovah had taken back (1:21). [Note: Job throughout the whole sequence of events never realized that Satan had brought destruction upon him, not God. The writer holds the studied conviction that Job himself wrote the book which bears his name, which means that God later revealed the background events to his destruction to him.]

Wishing to die, Job thought that God had hedged him in, not permitting him to die though he suffered so much (3:23). [Satan accused God of hedging him in with prosperity, Job with suffering.] The friends did not help Job's misconception, as they were "soul winners," insisting that God was punishing him for his great transgressions, chastising him so he would repent. Of course, Job maintained constantly that he had not committed such grievous sin as to bring such destruction upon himself. Even Elihu, the young man who was sitting patiently while the "old" men of "wisdom" spoke, but who finally was about to burst to speak, accused Job of having great transgression, "Who drinketh up scoffing like water, Who goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, And walketh with wicked men" (34:6-8). God had rendered unto Job what he deserved, Elihu affirmed (34:10-11).

Poor Job thought that God was shooting him with poison arrows (6:4), harassing him constantly (7:11-12), inflicting "wounds without cause" (9:17), killing him (13:15), hiding His face and counting Job as an enemy (13:24), giving him a "body slam" by the neck (16:12), walling him up and depriving him of his "glory" and "crown" (19:9), persecuting him (19:22), not allowing Job to have a day in court to defend his innocence (24:1), and depriving the righteous of blessings while blessing the wicked with long life and great prosperity (21:7-13). [Indeed, he never questioned but what the wicked would receive eventual destruction, but his question was, Why do the wicked prosper in life, and yet the righteous suffer much and die young (as in the case of Job)?]

Finally, Job in desperation challenged God to a debate, as it were. Having listed a broad range of things he had done which were righteous and a broad range of things he had refrained from doing which were wicked, Job said to the Lord, "Oh that I had one to hear me! (Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me) And that I had the indictment which mine adversary hath written!" (31:35). In other words, Job was clearing his name and declaring his innocence. Having "signed his affirmation," he calls upon the Lord to negate it. He knew nothing else to do. *Curtis A. Cates*

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