

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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ARGUMENTS THAT WERE USED FOR THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC WHEN I PREACHED FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Dan Goddard

Men have long been prone to go beyond the limitations of God's word in their zeal to serve Jehovah. Zeal for God is commendable when it is coupled with a knowledge of God's will; but when one allows his zeal to drive him beyond the confines of Bible teaching, it is catastrophic. As He delivered His law to the Israelites, God said, *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you"* (Deut. 4:2; 12:32). For the Israelites to keep the commandments of Jehovah was for them to observe His word without addition or subtraction. Any other course was to invite the Father's displeasure. That the same principle holds true today is shown in the following instances: 1. Paul's instruction to "learn not to go beyond the things written" (1 Cor. 4:6).

2. Peter's admonition to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11).

3. John's warning that those who go onward and abide not in the teachings of Christ "hath not God" (2 John 9).

4. The closing words of the Revelation letter is cited against those who would "add to" or "take away from" the words contained in "the book of this prophecy" (Rev. 22:18).

In view of such perspicuous statements, it would seem that men would see the folly of going beyond God's written word. That they do not is evident in prevalent religious practices. A case in point is the use of instruments of music in worship. Here is a common practice, yet one for which there is not a vestige of scriptural basis. Its existence depends upon going beyond God's commands.

Many advocates of instrumental music, both seeing and readily admitting there is no Bible authority for their practice, seek to justify instrumental music from other viewpoints. Let us notice some of the arguments I used to justify this unscriptural practice.

Argument: It is true that musical instruments in Christian worship are not mentioned in the Bible, but neither are church buildings, pews, lights, and many other things — things which we all readily accept.

Answer: Here is a failure to distinguish between worship and the place of worship. God has specified acts of worship, but not the place; yet a place of worship is essential in keeping God's command to assemble. Whether it is under an oak tree or in a building equipped with pews, lights, baptistery, etc., the place of worship is authorized in the com-

mand to assemble (Matt. 18:20; Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25). Authority for a church house can also be found in other scriptures, but there is no such scriptures covering instrumental music in worship.

Argument: But you have Sunday School. The Bible does not mention this. How can you accept this, but condemn instrumental music?

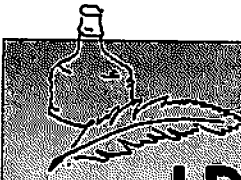
Answer: Christ said teach, but He did not specify how (Matt. 28:19; John 4:45). Methods of teaching are left to human judgment. Sunday School or Bible Class (as we prefer to call it) is only a means of teaching. Instrumental music is not a method of doing anything God has commanded. Surely, no one will say it is a means of singing.

Argument: You do not object to the piano in the home. How can you use it at home, but not in the church?

Answer: If one is worshiping, it is just as wrong for him to use the instrument at home in private as it is in the assembly. Anything that is morally right is permissible for the home, but only that which is commanded by God can be used in worship.

Argument: But all Christian life is worship. When you use the instru-

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Instrumental Music...



Editorial...

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET AROUND THE WORD OF GOD

Garland M. Robinson

It amazes me how some act as though certain statements and verses of the Bible do not exist. You would think we were searching for the passage that says "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" or that oft quoted verse that says "cleanliness is next to godliness." These sayings are not found in the Bible even though some think they are.

On the other hand, there are many verses and statements in the Bible that are ignored and passed over by many. Even when they are pointed out to those who ignore them, they always have some "supposedly" clever excuse as to why they don't really mean what they say. I want to examine some of the many passages that are ignored and/or brushed away by the liberal and digressive minded.

I don't know how to get around plain and forthright passages in the Bible. I simply have to take them at face value. When we rightly divide the Word, we must obey God's commands. However, many try to "get around" plain and straightforward Scriptures.

I don't know how to get around Acts 2:38. When those who were convicted of their sins on the day of Pentecost cried out and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Heaven's answer was "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The answer is clear and precise. In order for one to have forgiveness of sins he must REPENT and be BAPTIZED. However, a growing number of those who are removing themselves from the "old paths" are now saying that water baptism is not necessarily essential for salvation. They want to include many oth-

ers who are sincere and zealous in their supposed work for the Lord. These "would be" somewhats want to make the way of salvation wider than the Lord made it. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again...born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,5). Unless one is born of water, the water of baptism, he CANNOT enter the kingdom (church) of God.

Water baptism is clearly FOR the forgiveness of sins and without the forgiveness of sins, no one can be saved. Saul of Tarsus was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Water baptism puts one INTO Christ (Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 3:27). Water baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21). It is the defining moment that one leaves the world of sin and is translated INTO the body of the saved, the Lord's church (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:13). There is no salvation outside the Lord's church (body) (Eph. 5:23).

I don't know how to get around Ephesians 5:11. This verse reads, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." There are two basic elements to this verse: 1) we must not fellowship those who are involved in works of darkness and 2) we must also reprove those who are involved in works of darkness. A work of darkness is anything that is not a work of light or truth. It is speaking of one that is not walking in the light of the Gospel and is contrary to the Gospel.

So many today ignore this verse and fellowship any and everybody. Such is seen in the Nashville Jubilee, Tulsa Workshop, Winterfest, Youth in Action and on and on.

This verse also enjoins upon the

faithful to not only have no fellowship with those who are involved in works of darkness, but also to actively oppose them. The word "reprove" means to: "convict, confute, expose, find fault with, chide, admonish." What would the Lord have to say to make men believe he means what he says? It can't be any clearer than what is said in this verse. But, who among the liberal minded even knows this verse exists? Have they never read it? Do they not believe it applies to them? What evidence can they provide to show they are obeying this verse? Some believe the only ones this might possibly apply to are those who oppose and expose the liberals. They will fellowship and hold hands with everyone but those who believe and practice this verse!

I don't know how to get around 2 John 9-11. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11). These verses are also very clear and precise.

Anyone who transgresses, violates and disobeys the doctrine of Christ (all that he teaches in his word) does not have God. That is, they do not enjoy the approval and fellowship of God. If, however, one continues to live by and obey the doctrine of the Lord, he stands in God's approval and has fellowship with him.

Those who are not obeying the doctrine of the Lord must not be fellowshiped. We must not bid them godspeed. We must not wish them well and pray they prosper because they are enemies of the Lord (Phil. 3:18). Those who would wish them well are counted as a partaker of their evil deeds. Even though I am not guilty of teaching false doctrine and disobeying the commands of the Lord, if I fellowship those who do, I'm counted as guilty as the one who teaches error. This is very serious!

I don't know how to get around Romans 16:17-18. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye

have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

The word "mark" means to "look at, observe, fix one's eyes upon, direct one's attention to." The word is used in both a good and bad sense. That is, we may direct our attention to one that is doing good so that we may imitate their good and noble example (cf. Phil. 3:17); or, we may direct our attention to one that is doing evil so that we may not imitate their bad and despicable example (Rom. 16:17-18).

In the situation described in Romans 16:17, it is used in the case of fixing our attention upon those who are causing division and offences contrary to the doctrine of the Lord. The reason for doing so is that we may avoid them. The word avoid means "to turn aside, to turn away from, to shun - have no fellowship with."

There are many today who are to be marked and avoided because they are teaching and living contrary to the faith once delivered (Jude 3). But, instead of "marking and avoiding," the "woods" are full of those who appreciate and uphold those who are causing division and offences contrary to the doctrine. These folks fellowship everyone except the faithful who are holding to the "old paths." It ought to also be noted here that even though one may not intend to cause division in the church, his false doctrine splits and divides just the same. He may have the best of intentions, but because his doctrine is not in accordance with the truth of the Gospel, he is a divider and troubler.

I don't know how to get around Jude 3. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Again, like the other passages mentioned above, this one also is ignored by those who are progressive in leaving the "strait and narrow." Never will you see liberals "contending for the faith." Such is unbecoming to them. They much prefer to join hands with the enemies of the Lord than to

meet them head-on with a "thus saith the Lord."

The word contend means to "struggle in behalf of." Faithful saints struggle in behalf of the faith, the Gospel, the doctrine of the Lord. The faith is the truth by which men are made free from their sins (John 8:32). It is that which is obeyed in order to have forgiveness of sins (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5). The "faith" can be turned away from (Acts 13:8). We are to continue in the "faith" (Acts 14:22) and can be established in the "faith" (Acts 16:5). The "faith" is what we preach (Acts 24:24).

To "earnestly contend for the faith" involves an intense effort to hold to the Gospel by which men are saved (1 Cor. 15:1-4). It means we

labor to maintain its purity and clarity. It means we oppose anything and everything that would pervert it, including those, who by their word and action, adulterate it. Paul said that those who leave the faith (the gospel) have cut themselves off from God (Gal. 1:6-9). Any who do not oppose and expose (earnestly contend for the faith) error and those teaching it are not obeying Jude 3. You won't find any Jubilee supporters following this verse!

Many more passages could be listed here. But even one is too many to ignore. Such brings the wrath of God. I don't want that to happen to me and I don't want that to happen to you. Don't ignore or seek to get around these verses.

Instrumental Music...

(Continued from page 1)

ment at home, you are actually worshipping. When you refuse to use it in the assembly, you are being inconsistent.

Answer: All Christian life is service, but not all Christian life is worship. Everything that one does is to be in harmony with God's will, but not every act is an act of worship. God's word is comprehensive, governing both our every day activities and our activities in worship. The use of "worship" in the Bible indicates that it has reference to special acts of homage. The Apostle John fell down before the angel of God in a definite act "to worship." The angel reproved him and instructed him to "worship God" (Rev. 22:8,9). This act should have been directed to God, not the angel. One is hard pressed indeed when he bases his case on such an obvious assumption.

Argument: We use the instrument as an aid to singing.

Answer: Instrumental music is more than an aid. It is an addition to God's plan. Illustration: God specified gopher wood as the material out of which the ark was to be made. Suppose Noah had used cedar or pine. Such would have been a violation of God's plan. Now if God had commanded the ark to be made of wood, there would have been no violation. But He specified gopher wood. This excluded all other kinds. God has specified the kind of music

to be used in worship. Instrumental music is another kind. To use it is to despise the plan of God.

Argument: I see no harm in it and I am going to use instruments of music regardless of what the Bible says or does not say.

Answer: You may not see any harm in it. But, this does not mean God does not see harm in it. Remember, our worship is to please God, not ourselves (Col. 3:17).

Let us sing, making melody with our hearts to the Lord, as God commands (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Let us refuse to go beyond that which is written.

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BE NOT DECEIVED

Roger D. Campbell

To the church in Corinth the apostle Paul wrote, "Let no man deceive himself" (1 Cor. 3:18). That is a direct command of the living God. For one to deceive himself means that he causes himself to think that something is true, when in reality, it is not that way at all. Are we deceiving ourselves? The Lord's exhortation to each of us is, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). It is necessary for each of us to daily evaluate ourselves, and be honest with what we see in our lives. Let us consider some New Testament warnings about deceiving ourselves, and see what lessons we can learn from them. We will look at them in the order they appear in the Russian Bible.

1) **James 1:22** — "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Remember, this was written to Christians. A child of God deceives himself when he hears the word of the Lord but does not obey it. Is hearing necessary? Of course, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). But, just hearing alone is of no value. We have known of people who regularly attended the services of the church for twenty years or more, but never became Christians. They constantly heard the word, but never obeyed it. Do you remember Jesus' illustration about a wise man who built a house? The Master said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24,25). The wise man is not one who hears only, but who first hears, and then goes and does what the Lord says. Brothers and sisters, knowing the will of God is important (John 8:32), but knowledge will not help save our soul if we do not apply what we know by obeying the Lord! Jesus is the author of salvation only

"unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

2) **James 1:26** — "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." A Christian's service to the Lord is in vain if he does not control his tongue! That is a serious warning, and in this we must not deceive ourselves. One might have excellent conduct, attend every service of the church, and be zealous in doing good works, yet his religion is in vain if he does not control his speech. A Christian who denies this only deceives himself. Yes, one's tongue might cause him to lose his soul! The Lord Jesus said, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37). Therefore, we must strive with all diligence to control our tongue, and that begins by first controlling our heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34).

3) **1 John 1:8** — "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Again, this is written to Christians. All men have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and one who is in Christ, though he is no longer a servant of sin (Rom. 6:16), does commit sin. One who denies this fact is deceiving himself, and that is the very thing the Holy Spirit told us not to do. One deceives himself if he thinks he can walk in darkness and have fellowship with God, for such is not possible (1 John 1:5,6). He who denies that he sins can never receive forgiveness from God. Yes, there are many Christians who have wonderful conduct, but even the most godly person sometimes sins, and when this happens, he must confess his sins in order to have God cleanse him from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

4) **1 Cor. 3:18,19** — "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own

craftiness." One deceives himself if he thinks he can be wise without God, or if he thinks that if he has the wisdom of this world, then that means something to God. The wisdom of this world is in conflict with the wisdom of God, "For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). Jehovah is the source of true wisdom, so any philosophy of life that is not based upon Him and His will can only be foolishness, though in the eyes of many such worldly philosophies may appear to be wisdom. It is the Scriptures that can make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). The following is still great advice: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

5) **1 Cor. 6:9,10** — "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Unrighteous people are those who do unrighteousness, and "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17). Thus, all the things that Paul lists are sinful, and like it or not, those who participate in the affairs listed (and who do not repent of such) cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Who says so? The Lord! Since this passage was written to Christians who were already in the kingdom or church, we understand the Holy Spirit's message to them to mean that those Christians who continue to commit such sins cannot go to heaven. Yes, we understand that many in society participate in or approve of the activities that Paul listed (at least they are not vocally against them), but the Lord shows us that participation in such activities will cause a person to lose his soul! That is serious, and one who denies this fact is only deceiving himself.

6) **1 Cor. 15:33** — "Be not deceived; evil communications cor-

rupt good manners.” Oh, if the Lord could get all of us to open our eyes to this truth! Some seem to think there is no such thing as evil companionship, or that every association is safe. It is not so! God exhorts us, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness”* (2 Cor. 6:14). In every age men have learned that evil associations corrupt good manners, but unfortunately many learned this important truth only after they had been influenced to do evil. Eve was corrupted by Satan (Gen. 3). Samson was influenced to sin by evil associations with Gentile women (Judges 16). Solomon was corrupted by his association with foreign wives (1 Kings 11). The list could go on and on. The choice is ours: either be the friends of God or the friends of the world, but we cannot be both at the same time, for *“the friendship of the world is enmity with God”* (James 4:4). Instead of participating in or approving of sinful activities, we are commanded, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Eph. 5:11). Young people especially are often strongly tempted to be involved in close associations with those who do evil. Those Christians who are in such close associations with the doers of evil deceive themselves if they think they can play

with fire and not get burned. Read again 1 Corinthians 15:33, then discuss its message with those who have been in Christ a long time, and listen carefully when they tell you how they have seen members of the church become unfaithful or lukewarm due to their evil associations.

7) Gal. 6:3 — *“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”* This statement was made in a context in which the Holy Spirit was showing that we must bear one another’s burdens (6:2), and at the same time prove our own work (6:4). How should a child of God look at himself? He must love himself (Rom. 13:9), yet he must not *“think of himself more highly than he ought to think”* (Rom. 12:3). If one has a talent to do something, let him not deny it, but at the same time, let him not boast about it. Remember, even if one does his master’s will, he is still an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10). By our own power, without Jesus Christ, we are nothing. NOTHING! He who denies this deceives himself. Let us remember Paul’s admission: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am”* (1 Cor. 15:10).

8) Gal. 6:7 — *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* Yes, on the one hand every person has the right to choose what he wants to do. But, on the other hand

each of us must face the consequences of our action. God gives us the freedom to make choices, but He certainly does not approve of every decision we make. One who thinks he can live however he wants to live, and God is somehow obligated to accept him, is truly deceiving himself, *“for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* In the natural world, we reap what we sow (Gen. 1:11). So it is in the spiritual realm: *“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”* (Gal. 6:8). That is not our opinion, that is what the God of heaven, the judge of all, says about it. He who lives by the lust of the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21), but he who lives by the Spirit’s teaching, the gospel of Christ, shall inherit life eternal (John 5:29). The choice is ours. We can either live with Christ, which means living by His will, or we can live against His will and without Him (Matt. 12:30). However, let us not deceive ourselves. Where we will spend eternity will be determined by our decision to either sow to the Spirit or to the flesh. May God help all of us to heed His warning, *“Be not deceived.”*

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WHERE THE BIBLE IS SILENT, ARE WE FREE TO ACT?

James Fisher

Where the Bible is silent, are we free to act? There are many who say yes, but let us examine a few scriptures that teach otherwise.

Peter declares that, *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”* (2 Peter 1:3). Paul teaches that these “all things” will be found written in the “holy scrip-

tures” by which *“the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). These two verses makes it simple, if it’s not found in the holy Scriptures, then it does not apply “unto life and godliness,” in which case, “who needs it? — it’s not authorized.” This alone should answer the question, but for those who need more proof, turn to 2 John 9, *“Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ,*

hath not God, he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). We can see there is quite a contrast between those who abide in the doctrine and those who don’t. I believe all will agree that it is a most serious thing to transgress “the doctrine of Christ.” Just where do we find “the doctrine of Christ?” Certainly not in the Old Testament. *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”*

(John 1:17). The doctrine of Christ is found in the New Testament, not the Old (2 Cor. 3:6).

Some suppose that if the New Testament does not specifically say that we cannot do a thing, then why not do it? If there is no command saying otherwise, why not? Oh, but there is such a command. If an act is not authorized in the "doctrine of Christ," then 2 John 9 says you cannot do it. And, if you do, then you are not abiding in "the doctrine of Christ" and therefore you transgress the law which is a sin (1 John 3:4). Remember, those who transgress "the doctrine of Christ" are without God.

These are some hard sayings and more serious words are not to be found. To be without God is to be lost. Yet there are many professing Christians who are more attentive and concerned with the fine print on their bank accounts and insurance policies than they are with their eternal life insurance with God. While the New Testament does not specifically say that I cannot use instruments of music in worship, call the preacher Reverend, beat my wife or pray directly to Jesus, it certainly teaches these things are not permissible by the process of elimination. Did God have to say to Noah, do not use oak or pine in building the ark? No, He only had to say "gofer wood" and all other types were eliminated. There is a lesson here for all of us. That which is not found in the "doctrine of Christ" is not the doctrine of Christ, but has been added by men. *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men"* (Matt. 15:9).

We read in 1 Corinthians 4:6, *"Now these things brethren I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us you might learn not to go beyond the things which are written..."* (ASV). Jesus has a warning for those who take liberty with His word. *"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). Over in Revelation 20:12, *"...The books were opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books."* It is explicitly stated: 1) Do not go beyond what is written, 2) It is the word that Christ spake that will judge us in the last day. 3) The dead are going to be judged by what is written. If this is the case, and inspiration says it is, then we should never concern ourselves with that which is not written.

We can all agree that Jesus wrote "on the ground" (John 8:6). However, we cannot agree on what he wrote on the ground for the simple reason that the Bible is silent concerning it. Therefore, let us stay with that which we can agree on, that which is written. Jesus used, "It is written" three times to defeat Satan (Matt. 4:4,7,10) and asks in Luke 10:26, *"How readest thou?"* Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 4:10 to, *"Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, continue in them, for in doing so thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."*

Doctrine is a "big deal" if you want to go to heaven someday. Only "the doctrine of Christ" is acceptable unto Christ (Eph. 5:10). The above scriptures prove this to be true. If you have been taught any other doc-

trine (2 John 10) then you have been deceived (Rom. 16:17-18). Unless the Lord teaches it, they labor in vain who practice it. *"If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing..."* (1 Tim. 6:3,4). Let's take the guess work out and let us take Peter's advice and speak where the Bible speaks and keep our mouths shut where the Bible is silent (1 Peter 4:11). Only by following this God given rule (Deut. 12:32) can one be speaking "the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

Bible silence is not a green light for anyone to make his own decisions as to what is or what is not pleasing to the Lord. Paul writes that one is made "wise unto salvation" by "the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15) and "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth..." (1 Cor. 2:13). The Bible is absolutely clear on this one point, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14:12) because God says *"my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord"* (Isa. 55:8).

One can know "the will of Lord" (Eph. 5:17). Jesus tells us how this is accomplished, *"search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me"* (John 5:39). The question still needs asking, *"Nevertheless, what saith the scriptures"* (Gal. 4:30).

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WHERE IS THE CONSISTENCY?

Jimmie B. Hill

Suppose the preacher where you worship were to stand in the pulpit and ask, *"Do faithful believers who were baptized only as infants stand in eternal jeopardy? Are those who have committed their lives in faithful service to Jesus Christ, but who have never been taught the need for water baptism, spiritually lost? Can it be that those*

who see baptism as a matter of obedience, but not of salvation, are risking God's judgment?" Would you not wonder where he was going with such statements? Suppose he went on to say, *"The thought of condemning to hell the vast majority of believers throughout the Christian centuries is one of the most compelling reasons for the recent moratorium on*

any serious discussion of baptism. For if any clear conclusions are drawn — beyond a weak 'each in his own heart, each in his own way' — then we are inexorably drawn into the judgmental abyss." After hearing that, would you not at least question his understanding of baptism, obedience and salvation?

Suppose he then went on to say,

"Is it not enough to leave the judgment to God? After all, it is God 'who will judge the living and the dead' (2 Tim. 4:1). I, for one, want no part of that responsibility, and even cringe at what Paul suggests when he asks: 'Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?' (1 Cor. 6:2)." "None of us can presume to know about the eternal destiny of anyone, on the basis of any question of doctrine — be it predestination, charismatic gifts, the washing of feet, or even baptism. All we can do is give our best efforts to knowing God's will, as revealed in His written Word." Such statements as these would surely suggest that the speaker is an agnostic with no logical understanding of what Jesus meant when He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).

Then suppose the preacher where you worship went on to say, "Are unbaptized believers destined to hell? Are those who have received only infant baptism in eternal jeopardy? Only God knows. On one level, these are questions we have no right to ask. As seen in this study, there is an abundance of scriptural language that, on its face, regards baptism as an essential part of our turning to God. Nevertheless, I would hope that God might apply the "common law marriage" approach for those who have lived a lifetime of service in His name without having participated in the wedding ceremony of baptism."

How long would the preacher where you worship continue to preach there? He would not even be allowed to finish his sermon in a sound and faithful congregation.

The above quotations are not

*from a denomination preacher. They are from a book entitled **Baptism, The Believers Wedding Ceremony** by F. LaGard Smith. Brother Smith, by implication, is teaching that God may save some under the New Testament dispensation without their being baptized for the remission of sins.*

While many in the Lord's church would oppose such blatant and false teaching (and rightly so), they would at the same time use and support brother Smith (and others of his ilk) in Gospel meetings, lectureships, youth programs, and other church programs and this in spite of passages like 2 John 9-11, Ephesians 5:11-13, et.al. Where is the consistency?

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LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY '98 SUMMER SERIES FEATURES FALSE TEACHER

Toney L. Smith

Ireceived a brochure advertising the 1998 DLU Summer Series and I could not help but be disheartened when I saw the names of some of their speakers. For example, one of these was **Joe Beam**, about whom much has been written concerning his apostasy. Generally, these articles state that Beam is teaching false doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit's work in today's world. Also, I have recently listened to a series of lessons presented by Beam at the 1996 Nashville Jubilee. He clearly is one of the "change agents" who is seeking to move the church of Christ away from its firm foundation. He strongly denies that he is Pentecostal, but his position clearly overrides his denial.

Notice some of his positions concerning the Holy Spirit. He said, "Some people will never be free of sinful addictions in their lives without God's **intervention**." Beam stated that the Holy Spirit works in three avenues: through the Word, through spiritual wisdom, and in what he called awakenings or promptings. It is in this latter cate-

gory his Pentecostalism is exposed. Notice these examples that were given:

1. In counseling a young couple, Beam stated he asked God to let him know when either lied. After some time in the counseling session, he stopped the young man and told him that God had just told him that he had lied!

2. On another occasion, he claimed he was led by the Spirit to a home where he surmised that the man was having an affair, without any evidence to sustain his allegation.

3. He said a prisoner's soul was saved because God led him to a trash can where someone had discarded some Bible material.

4. He alleged a Texas preacher was able to keep a man from committing murder because God sent him to stop the would-be killer.

5. Once, he asked God to speak to him. He turned on the radio and pushed buttons until a woman came on singing a song that related directly to him.

6. He stated that sometimes he

listens to his speeches and hears himself saying things that he never knew before.

7. He saw a denominational program on television concerning a man who had not been able to speak above a whisper for ten years and God miraculously restored his voice. He then affirmed that God cannot be put in a box and that His fellowship extends beyond the church of Christ.

It is difficult to comprehend how a "Christian University" could promote and endorse such. It is clear that the administrators of this school no longer desire to make any real distinction between truth and error. We are to "*mark and avoid*" false teachers and those who promote such (Rom. 16:17).

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see there are still congregations that still stand by God's Word" ...**Debbie Drake, LaRue, OH.** "Please add us to your mailing list. God bless you for your steadfast stand for truth" ...**M/M James Foster, Muscle Shoals, AL.** "I have just recently found a copy of your September 1998 issue of *Seek The Old Paths*. I enjoyed reading the sound articles very much. Please add me to your mailing list to receive future issues of your publication. And please accept the enclosed check as a donation to continue your good work there" ...**Steve Harbison, Ottawa, KS.** "Please add us to the mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. I have heard that it is an excellent publication" ...**Larry Gill, Trent, TX.** "I, by chance, have seen some of your bulletins and would like to receive it on a regular basis. I appreciate your stand for the truth. I have stood with you and the Bible position for 57 years of preaching. Thanks and God bless" ...**Bob Hawkins, Clovis, NM.** "Thanks so much for sending me *S.T.O.P.* I enjoy your paper very much. I really do like the way you always stand for the truth. Keep up the good work" ...**Edna Barnes, Crossville, TN.** "While attending a lectureship I picked up a copy of *Seek The Old Paths*. I liked very much what I read. Please add me to your mailing list" ...**Ernest W. Meador, Lafayette, TN.** "How it is possible for you to call such humble, Spirit-filled men as Randy Harris and Joe Beam false teachers is beyond our understanding. You've spent time and effort biting and devouring these brethren, while on the other hand, Mr. Harris and Mr. Beam are using their gifts to advance our understanding of the Word and enhance our personal relationship with our God. We find your paper to be unduly negative, whereas the Bible instructs us to think on things that are true, noble, pure, and lovely (Phil. 4:8). Please remove us from your mailing list" ...**Mark & Annette Warren, Fabius, NY.** [Editor's note: the problem with the foregoing is that man's "think so" has overridden God's "say so." The question is, how does "God" view these things, not what do "I" think about them? I may think someone is Spirit-filled and humble, but what counts is what God says, not what I think or feel. We know what God says and thinks of false doctrine and false practice because He has told us. If God is to be taken at His Word (and He is), then we cannot have fellowship with such men and practices and are even commanded to expose them for what they truly are (Eph. 5:11), for they "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18). They are to be marked and avoided. I may not want to do that, but regardless, I must yield my will to God's will. I'm sure many people thought the 450 prophets of Baal were sincere, humble and Spirit-filled, but they were sincerely and humbly wrong and devil-filled. They were killed because of their false teaching and practice. Elijah stood alone against them and prevailed in the end because he did God's will (1 Kings 18).] "Recently, I had the opportunity to read your paper and certainly enjoyed it. Please put my name on your mailing list" ...**Jim Young, Meridian, MS.** "I want you to know how much I appreciate you sending me *Seek The Old Paths* all these years. I love reading it and commend you for standing up for the Truth. Please keep on, as we all must do!" ...**Helen McCasland, Savannah, TN.** "As I do not have brother Marvin Weir's address at Rowlett, TX, may I use this medium to tell him and anyone else who will listen that he is absolutely on target in the "Mailbag" of the November issue. Indeed, it is nothing less than "...the rape of the Lord's church and His word..." If they would get back to teaching New Testament Christianity in their Bible courses, there would be a little less need for such informative periodicals as *S.T.O.P.* I commend you, brother Weir, for the fortitude to stand in the gap for what is right and scriptural (Ezek. 13:5; 22:30)" ...**Martin Bedford, Tucson, AZ.** "Please remove our address from your *Seek The Old Paths* mailing list. Thank you" ...**Belvedere Church of Christ, Jackson, MS.** "I would like to get on your mailing list to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. Also, please put my son on your mailing list. Thank you, and keep up the good work. You have a very good and informative newsletter" ...**Belva Cowan, Red Boiling Springs, TN.** "Please remove our name from your mailing list" ...**Terry and Janice Rast, Pearl, MS.** "Please remove me from your mailing list" ...**Nicholas McGee, Killen, AL.** "We enjoy

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