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RESTORING BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

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INTRODUCTION

If we speak of “restoring” Biblical authority we are implying that there are individuals and institutions that presently do not understand nor practice Biblical authority as a part of their religious belief and practice. Of course there are many people who simply do not accept the Bible as God’s Word. As New Testament Christians our obligation is to try to convince them that the Bible is truly Almighty God’s communication to mankind to lead us to salvation through Jesus Christ. However, there are multitudes that state that they accept the Bible as God’s Word but they do not know how to determine how the Bible authorizes them to believe and live their lives. There are many degrees to which people would subscribe authority in the Scriptures, but nothing less than a total acceptance of Biblical authority is pleasing to God (1 Pet. 4:11; Jude 3).

Some religious people have a sincere desire to know God’s Will and follow that in their lives, but they do not know how the Bible authorizes and consequently believe and practice religious error in some ways. It is our responsibility as New Testament Christians to understand how the Bible authorizes in order to live in harmony with the Scriptures and to teach others how to do so. There is also a great number of people who claim to believe the Bible is God’s Word but they have no idea of what Bible authority is or how it applies to them. A strange and sad incident from a television talk

show illustrates the unfortunate confusion of too many. In a discussion on whether or not the Bible is God's Word one excited woman rose to make a comment and shouted, "I believe that the Bible is God's Word but I'm not going to let that affect the way I live my life!" Her statement is a mass of confusion and contradiction. There are many who might never say what this woman proudly exclaimed whose lives are lived in the same fashion. No matter what the degree of confusion or lack of understanding about Biblical authority, our role as Christians is to help people understand the common sense method of interpreting the Scriptures from God.

HERMENEUTICS

Hermeneutics (*her-meh-NEW-ticks*) is simply the science or art of proper interpretation. Everyone interprets what they experience through their senses. In particular we are discussing the written Word of God. When one gives an unpopular teaching on a Bible theme it is not uncommon for someone to say, "That is just your interpretation." My response to that is, "Yes, that **is** my interpretation. If you do not agree please show me where I am in error. What is wrong with my interpretation? Tell me what your interpretation is and if I disagree please allow me to show you why I believe you are incorrect." Then we can have a discussion why we believe as we do. A proper approach to hermeneutics will make the truth plain to the honest person who seeks the truth (John 7:17; Luke 8:15). We cannot fully discuss hermeneutics in this lesson but the points presented on understanding Biblical authority are the only way to properly understand what God's Word requires of you. These are matters that pertain to every Christian, not just to those who preach.

AUTHORITY IS THE REAL ISSUE

The loss of respect for Biblical authority is the reason for the development of the hundreds of religious groups that identify themselves as “Christian” but teach doctrines that contradict the Scriptures on multitudes of topics such as salvation, worship, the church, the nature and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, Christ’s second coming, judgment, eternity and many other things. Only a restoration of respect for Biblical authority can bring about change to the religious division that exists among those who identify themselves as belonging to Christ. The dictionary defines “authority” as the “power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior” (*Merriam—Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 82). A standard Greek—English dictionary gives the following definition of “authority” as used in the New Testament.

1. *exousia* (ἐξουσία, 1849) denotes “authority” (from the impersonal verb *exesti*, “it is lawful”). From the meaning of “leave or permission,” or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of “the ability or strength with which one is endued,” then to that of the “power of authority,” the right to exercise power, e.g., Matt. 9:6; 21:23; 2 Cor. 10:8; or “the power of rule or government,” the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others, e.g., Matt. 28:18; John 17:2; Jude 25; Rev. 12:10; 17:13 (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, 45).

The authority of God’s Word signifies the power or right to command and to expect the intended audience to obey. We cannot treat the matter lightly when the Almighty Creator has communicated His Will to us. Colossians 3:17 is often stated as showing “the authority principle” of the Scriptures. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” To do something “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do it by His authority.

To illustrate, consider two examples in the area of worship. Cain and Abel both sought to worship God; Cain with the fruit of his agricultural farming and Abel with sacrifices from his flocks (Gen. 4:3-7). God accepted Abel's offerings but rejected Cain's. Was this a trifle; a small matter? No, not to God, nor to Abel or Cain. This shows that not all worship is acceptable to God. The only way to worship God acceptably is to worship as He has authorized in his Word.

The same principle is demonstrated in the example of Nadab and Abihu, sons of the high priest Aaron (Lev. 10:1-3). These men offered incense to God, which He had commanded (Exo. 30:7-8); but the fire they used to burn the incense was not from the proper place (Lev. 16:12) and thus was "profane," or unauthorized (cf. NIV, Lev. 10:1). The incense was commanded, but the type of fire they offered to burn the incense "he [God] commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1). Was it a trifle that Cain offered a sacrifice other than what God had commanded (cf. Heb. 11:4; Rom. 10:17)? Was it a small matter to God that Nadab and Abihu offered incense burned with fire He had not commanded? Ask those three men! Moses, in speaking to Aaron about the matter of those who came near to worship God, said, "This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace" (Lev. 10:3). Neither Cain nor Aaron's two sons honored God when they changed His authorized worship by putting their own choices before God's.

It is easy to dismiss a matter by saying it is a trifle, but the introduction of mechanical instruments of music into the worship of the NT church has created serious divisions that continue to this day. Is dividing the Lord's church a trifle? Christ prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their

word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21; cf. 1 Cor.1:10). Truth does not fear an honest investigation. We plead with all who have shown disdain for God’s authority to search the Scriptures and accept those things it teaches as truth (Acts 17:11). Only those who worship by God’s authority can give a ready defense for what they believe and practice about the type of music God accepts in worship to Him under Christ’s law (1 Pet. 3:15).

AUTHORITY IS THE KEY TO PLEASING GOD

The two examples used above, plus others we will mention later, show that we do not have the right to decide for ourselves the avenues we will use in worshiping God. What we do in worship must be authorized by God. Actually, we contend that the use of instrumental music in worship to God in this Christian age is sinful and but one example of a faulty approach as to how the Bible authorizes. This same faulty approach leads to additional errors in worship and other areas of our relationship to God. Note that this study will focus on the subject of using instrumental music in New Testament worship as a primary example of disregarding the authority of Scripture. The same guidelines for establishing God’s authority can be used in all other areas of Christian duty.

In considering the question of authority we will ask **how the Bible authorizes** us to act, not just in worship but in other areas of our lives. We will also discuss **the relationship between the Testaments**, considering if Old Testament worship is carried over to the New Testament. Additionally, we will look at the place of **additions** to authorized worship versus **aids** that assist in the performance of specific commands.

HOW THE BIBLE AUTHORIZES

The Bible teaches or instructs us to act in worship (or other areas of obedience) by means of direct statements, approved actions and implication. These three avenues of God's communication are called by many as (1) commands, (2) examples and (3) necessary inferences, but the first mentioned designations above are better descriptions of these aspects regarding how God communicates to us in Scripture.

Direct statements. At times the Bible authorizes us to act by means of direct statements. A direct statement may be a *declarative sentence* such as Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." A direct statement may be a *command* such as Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, 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." A declarative statement may be a *conditional* such as the "If—then" statement of Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Roy Deaver, in his excellent book lists eleven types of declarative statements that teach or authorize (*Ascertaining Bible Authority, 59-60*). Accordingly, it is not sufficient to say that the Scriptures authorize by commands and ignore the rest of the declarative statements God has made in His Word. (Much of the material in this lesson and much more on Biblical authority can be found in Deaver's book.)

Approved accounts of action. Not every account of an action (example) performed in the New Testament is binding upon Christians. Obviously, the deceit and

lying done by Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10 is not an action **approved** for imitation by Christians. The Apostle Peter's prejudicial hypocrisy is another example not approved by God (Gal. 2:11-14). Even approved accounts of action can be required or optional. One must first determine if an account of action is approved or condemned, then decide from the total Biblical teaching on the matters involved whether the actions are binding or optional. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together" (Acts 20:7-8). This account of action tells us of the time and place the disciples in Troas met to "break bread," which, in a religious context, is a reference to partaking of the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-17). The **time** is significant because the first day of the week refers to the Lord's Day (cf. Rev. 1:10). The first day of the week was the Lord's Day because He was raised from the dead on that day (Mark 16:1, 9), thus it became particularly the Lord's Day (cf. Rom. 1:4). This was the day Christians assembled for worship and the only day designated for partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 11:23-26, 33). The **time** observed becomes a required account of action because there is simply **no authority** to assemble as a body of Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper at any other time. If this is not so, what other time is authorized in God's Word?

The **place** (the upper room) is also a detail of this account of action, but there is no spiritual significance attached to the specific place where Christians are to assemble for worship either here or elsewhere in Scripture. In fact, in John 4:20-24 the Lord said that the location for assembled worship to God, which was restricted in Judaism to

Jerusalem, would not be characteristic of the new covenant. Neither the city of Troas nor the location of the upper room are mandatory places where Christians must assemble for worship, but they are optional—that is, Christians certainly may assemble for worship in Troas or an upper room, but we are not restricted to those places detailed in this example.

Implication. This channel of authority has frequently been called “necessary inference.” However, when we look at the matter from what the Bible teaches we note that the Bible implies and that we, the student, draw necessary inferences from what the Scriptures imply. This seems to be a more proper way to express this means by which the Bible authorizes.

There are two basic ways in which matters are communicated to us by God or man. **Explicit teaching** is when something is stated in an outright and plain manner. For example, I might say, “My pet is a white dog.” I have **explicitly** made known that: (1) I have a pet; (2) that my pet is a dog; and (3) that my pet dog is white. Those three points are explicitly taught. An example of an explicit Bible statement would be, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:24).

Implicit teaching is when something is implied without being stated in an outright manner. Implicit means “capable of being understood from something else though unexpressed” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 624). Is it possible for me to communicate to you that I have a pet white dog without actually saying so outright? Indeed, it is possible. Suppose we go to an animal shelter to find my lost pet. Upon arriving we find a black dog, a yellow cat and a white dog. If I said, “One of those three pets belongs to me, but my pet is neither black nor yellow in color,” would you have any

trouble determining that my pet was the white dog? I did not say so outright, but **I have implied it** and **you should infer** from what I did say that my pet is a white dog. If it is true that one of the three pets is mine, and if it is equally true that my pet is neither black nor yellow in color, then the only possible conclusion is that my pet is the white dog.

When we reason properly upon the statements of Scripture to determine what is implied along with the explicit statements, then we have the totality of God's teaching on any given topic. Of course, we can only draw conclusions that are warranted, based on the evidence given. It must be recognized that things that are implied by the Scriptures are just as authoritative as express statements. The psalmist said, "The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever" (Psa. 119:160, ASV). The word "sum" refers to adding all up that God says on any given topic. Only then do we have the whole truth. One example of a biblical implication is the teaching that the church of Christ and the kingdom of Christ are the same institution, even though the New Testament nowhere says explicitly, "The church is the same institution as the kingdom." This is taught implicitly in Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." See also Luke 22:14-30 with First Corinthians 10 & 11; and Acts 2:47 with Colossians 1:13.

There is need for caution in claiming implication from the Scriptures as authority for a particular teaching. We must not infer that the Scriptures imply something when they do not. For example, those who practice infant baptism often state

that household baptisms imply that infants were baptized (cf. Acts 16:15, 33 et al.). However, remember that implication insists that a thing is so even though it is not specifically stated. In the places where household conversions are mentioned, it is not a necessary inference that the Scriptures imply infants were baptized. **First**, not all households had children, and one must **assume** that those households mentioned as converting to Christ did have. **Second**, if one assumes there were children, one would have to make the **further assumption** that there were infants among them. **Third**, the very nature of New Testament baptism implies that those who are proper candidates for baptism must be old enough to express personal faith in Christ (Mark 16:16) and to repent of personal sins in His Name (Acts 2:38; 10:43; 11:18) before qualifying for baptism. This proper implication, based on these Scriptures and others, negates any claimed implication that household baptisms included infants. Likewise, **one must not assume** that instruments of music are implied in certain Biblical passages regarding New Testament worship.

GENERIC AND SPECIFIC AUTHORITY

Generic Authority. A generic (general) statement authorizes doing a certain thing without giving specific direction on how to accomplish it. For example, the Great Commission of the Lord in Matthew 28:19 gives the generic commands: “go...teach.” The instruction to “go” commands an action without giving all the specifics involved. The “going” part of the command can be obeyed by using our feet or riding as means of going. The methods of transportation are not specified in this verse. Other passages may impact a command by specifying ways of fulfilling the command, but that is not the case in the matter of “going.” “Teach” (KJV) is perhaps better translated “make

disciples” (NKJV et al.), but disciples are made by teaching. This teaching is not specified as to method, such as visual aids, tracts, worksheets, literature, blackboards, power point, etc., but the content is restricted to the specific things Christ commanded the apostles (Mat. 28:20), which is the gospel in Mark 16:15. If we use the aids mentioned above, we are still only teaching—doing the thing commanded.

If God had said, “Make music to me in New Testament worship,” that would be a generic command that would authorize playing instruments, singing, or a combination of the two. Whatever was necessary in order to make music, instrumental or vocal, would be authorized by the generic command, unless other teaching prohibited or restricted such acts. However, in New Testament teaching God did not give a generic command to “make music” in worship to Him; He specifically said to sing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). We are to make the melody in our hearts by singing, not by playing mechanical instruments of music.

Specific Authority. A specific statement authorizes more exactly what is to be done, and logically one cannot do what is specified by performing a different act. For example, in Exodus 12 God told each family in Israel to “sacrifice a **lamb**.” The type of sacrifice was specific—a lamb. The Israelites could not obey that command by sacrificing a different animal such as a cow. When God makes it specific we cannot change it. The **kind** of animal was specified. The same principle can be demonstrated by the action of baptism. Since the Greek word *baptisma* means immersion, one cannot be baptized by having water poured or sprinkled over one’s head. Doing these other actions changes the act required by the command to baptize or be baptized (Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

The Law of Exclusion. When God is specific about the type of music (singing) He requires in worship to Him in the New Testament period, He excludes (prohibits) all other types of music (such as instrumental music), unless there are other statements elsewhere that authorize their use. This is an important principle to recognize since it illustrates that God's silence is authoritative in the matter of restricting what we are permitted to do. For example, many of those in favor of using mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship say, "God did not say not to use instruments in New Testament worship," or, "They were used in the Old Testament worship and God did not say not to use them in New Testament worship."

We understand the principle of authority and exclusion in everyday life, but many reject or ignore it in our relationships to God. Suppose you contracted with a painter to paint your house. You tell him that you want your house painted white and you then leave on a two week vacation. When you return you find your house painted white—but it is also painted blue, red, yellow and green. When you call the painter to object to what he has done he says, "Well, yes, you said to paint your house white, but you didn't say not to paint it blue, red, yellow and green too. I like the multi-colored look." What would you say? You would say, "I said I wanted my house painted white. That is the only color I authorized. When I said 'white' that excluded all other colors!" You would also feel very insulted that your painter ignored your stated desire and did what he wanted to do with your property—and you would be justified in feeling that way. Are we to show less respect for God's word and what He specifies in worship to Him?

Notice two biblical examples regarding this matter of specifics and the law of exclusion. Second Chronicles 26:1-15 tells of a good king in Judah named Uzziah. Of him it was said, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did" (verse 4). Such language was not used of many kings in Judah, but Uzziah's attitude toward doing God's will changed. Note verses 16-21 of this same chapter:

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD HIS God, and went into the temple of the LORD TO burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD GOD. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

When God specified that the sons of Aaron were to be those who burned incense (Exod. 30:7-8), that excluded those from other tribes. Uzziah, of Judah, was not authorized. Could Uzziah have said to God, "Lord, You did not say that kings could not burn incense"? The Lord's response would have been, "Once I specified who was to burn incense, I did not have to go down the line and name everyone who was not authorized. I excluded all others when I specified the sons of Aaron." In like manner,

since God has specified singing as the type of music in NT worship and there is no other teaching authorizing mechanical instruments, it is excluded.

A second example in Hebrews 7:11-14 is even more impressive.

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 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 Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

Again, it is clear that God specified the sons of Aaron of the tribe of Levi to be priests (Exod. 28). God did not name all the other tribes, saying, “No one from Reuben may be a priest, no one from Simeon may be a priest, no one from Judah may be a priest,” etc. God said all He needed to say when He specified that priests were to be from the tribe of Levi! The Hebrews writer pointed this out, stating, “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Juda, **of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood**” (Heb. 7:14). In like manner, God said to “sing” in our NT worship to Him (cf. Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:14; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; 13:15; Jas. 5:13), specifying the type of music He approves, and **He has spoken nothing concerning the use of instrumental music in NT worship**, thereby excluding it as surely as He excluded the tribe of Judah from the priesthood.

THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM HAS BEEN SUPERCEDED

We are not saying that the Old Testament is of no value, for we have illustrated its value in many Scriptures in this lecture (cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11). However, the worship of God through Christ has replaced the Old Testament worship of God through the Law of Moses.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Col. 2:13-17).

The system under Moses was but a shadow prefiguring the New Testament system of Christ (Heb. 9:1-10). Jesus “abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph. 2:15).

Those who seek justification from the Old Testament are serving a law no longer effective and are fallen from grace (Gal. 3:25; 5:4). Such persons are duty bound to keep the whole Old Testament law if they try to keep a part of it (Gal. 5:1-2; Jas. 2:10). There are benefits to be derived from all of God’s word, but the Psalms are not our authority for worship under Christ. They are part of the Law (cf. John 10:34 with Psa. 82:6). God took mechanical instruments of music out of the worship when He took away the old law. Christ did take them out of acceptable worship to God when He established His own system of worship in His New Testament church.

If one contends that Christ never specifically said He took instruments out of the worship, we respond that He never specifically said He removed many things found in Old Testament worship but rejected by many who contend for instrumental music today. Where did Jesus specifically mention taking away the burning of incense (Exo. 30), infant membership (Gen. 17:9-14), tithing (Lev. 27:30-33), special priestly clothing (Exo. 28) and many other items? Are we therefore authorized to use these things? If one

contends for instrumental music by saying God put it in and Christ never took it out, how can that person reject these other things? Through whatever “crack in the door” one brings mechanical instruments of music from the Old Testament into the worship of the New Testament church, another can bring in a multitude of other unauthorized practices and impose them on the church.

THE USE OF EXPEDIENCES

Sometimes proponents of instrumental music in New Testament worship state that it is merely an “expediency” or an “aid” to the command by God to “sing” in musical worship to Him in the New Testament.

Expediency can be defined as “that which is advantageous or advisable under the circumstances; that which facilitates the motion or progress of a piece of business.” In common words an expediency is that which helps carry out a command or duty smoothly and completely. For example, baptisteries are expedients to the command to be baptized; so are baptismal garments, towels, wader boots, etc. One could be baptized in a creek, river, lake or any pool of water large enough to immerse someone, but at times it is not as convenient (or even difficult at times) to baptize using those means. However, one could easily be baptized in a natural water source and do so in one’s own clothing and drip-dry or air-dry. Expedients or aids like those just named above merely help facilitate the doing of a command or duty; they do not change the nature of a command. To illustrate, shoes or a cane are aids or expedients to walking. They simply assist the walking process without changing walking into some other type of action. A bicycle is not an aid or expedient to walking; it is a means of **riding**. Riding is a different action than walking. You may still be using your feet and legs, but you

have changed the action from walking to riding. Walk is a specific way of going; riding is a different specific way of going. If God commanded us to **go** to town we could go by walking or riding. If God commands us to **walk** to town we cannot fulfill that command by riding.

In the same manner, we cannot obey God's command for us to sing to Him in New Testament worship by adding or substituting a different action—the playing of mechanical instruments of music. We have added or substituted another element (action) to what was required—singing. Remember our earlier study of the worship experiences of Cain and Abel and Nadab and Abihu? We have no authority to add, substitute or modify what God has commanded in our worship to Him. To do so presumes our authority that exceeds God's!

We previously noted that there are two types of music, vocal (singing) and instrumental. Singing is authorized by God for New Testament worship, mechanical instruments are not. When we add the instrument we introduce a parallel or coordinate element into the worship. When we sing with the mechanical instrument we may still be singing, but we have added playing—an unauthorized kind of music. It thereby becomes not an aid but an unauthorized addition.

Consider the Lord's Supper as an additional example to help you understand the differences between aids and additions. In partaking of the Lord's Supper we are told to partake of the unleavened bread in remembrance of Christ's body given for us on the cross, and we drink the fruit of the vine in remembrance of Christ's blood which was shed for us on that cross (Mat. 26:26-29; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). **Authorized aids** in partaking of these elements of remembrance could be: the use of a common

cup or individual cups for distributing the fruit of the vine, a plate or plates upon which to serve the unleavened bread and a table to hold these items of remembrance before and after their distribution to the assembly. In using these items one is still doing nothing more or less than remembering the body and blood of our Lord given for our redemption upon the cross. These are merely expediciencies that facilitate the observance of the commands and duties relative to observing the Lord's Supper.

However, anything that adds to, detracts from or modifies the elements of remembrance (fruit of the vine and unleavened bread) become **unauthorized additions**. Suppose that someone said, "You know, the unleavened bread is rather tasteless. It would aid us greatly in partaking of that element of remembrance if we spread some jelly or peanut butter on it." This would be an unauthorized action by adding another element to the fruit of the vine and the unleavened bread. Those who desire the spread on the bread might call it an "aid" but in truth it is an addition, wholly unauthorized by God's word. The table, cups and plates mentioned in the previous paragraph are all **subordinate** to the elements of remembrance given by Scripture. The addition of jelly or peanut butter is introducing elements that are **coordinate** to the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. Authorized aids or expedients are always subordinate, since coordinate elements (something of the same order, rank or power) always add to or change the nature of the specifically authorized action. Remember our previous discussion on using a cane as an aid to walking versus riding a bicycle. A bicycle is coordinate with walking and it changes the way of "going" from walking to riding.

In the same way mechanical instruments of music are not an aid or expedient to singing since it adds a different and coordinate kind of music to what is commanded—singing. Legitimate authorized aids to singing would be the use of songbooks, having an authorized song leader, four part harmony, etc.; for in utilizing these aids one is still doing nothing more than singing.

When discussing Bible authority and expediency one must realize that expediencies are authorized only in areas that are governed by New Testament teaching by direct statements, approved examples and implication. Where there is no law established by these means there can be no authorized expedients or aids. Robert Richardson, a gospel preacher in the Restoration Movement stated the matter as follows:

As it regards the use of musical instruments in church worship, the case is wholly different. This can never be a question of expediency, for the simple reason there is no law prescribing or authorizing it. If it were said anywhere in the New Testament that Christians should use instruments, then it would become a question of expediency what kind of instrument was to be used, whether an organ or melodeon, the “loud-sounding cymbals,” or the “light guitar;” whether it should cost \$50 or \$500 or \$1,000, and what circumstances should regulate the performance...My position was simply that, as expediency has to do with the manner, times, means and circumstances connected with the doing of things, no question of expediency can rightfully arise until it is *first* proved that the things themselves are *lawful* and proper to be done. I feared, and my fears have been fully confirmed by some who have written since on the subject, that expediency was supposed to occupy a wide sphere *beyond* the boundaries of law, and, in its jurisdiction, to be quite independent of law. My view is, that with us, it can have no place at all until law has first authorized something to be done, and that, therefore, its exercise must be restricted within the limits of some law, or rule of life and action (West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 2, 90-91).

J. W. Briney, at a time when he opposed the introduction of instruments into the NT worship said:

Expediency cannot be allowed to affect the character of a divine ordinance. Whatever adds to, subtracts from, or in any way modifies a divine ordinance, affects its character. Such are the principles that must regulate the work of expediency in the kingdom of God (*Ibid.*).

As stated earlier, the use of mechanical instruments in New Testament worship is a symptom of a much larger problem, that is, how to determine when we have Bible authority. We must know when we have authority to act in worship, doing the Lord's work and living the Christian life from the teaching of the Bible. The use of mechanical instruments in worship has simply afforded us an excellent means of illustrating the real problem and an opportunity of correcting this abuse in New Testament worship.

CONCLUSION

If we have any hope of restoring Biblical authority to the broad spectrum of what is called Christianity we must be militant and kind in teaching the principles set forth in this lesson, all the while "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

The majority of the Lord's church have lost our willingness to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV). Unlike the apostle Paul too few are "set for the defence of the gospel" (Phi. 1:16, ASV). We must rally and boldly proclaim the truths of God's Word and the common sense principles by

which it can be understood and respected. Most of those we try to reach with these truths will not appreciate our efforts and we will again be labeled, like we were in the Restoration Movement, as radical, arrogant, uneducated, intolerant bigots who believe we are the only ones who know how to please God. Still, as the Lord taught in the Parable of the Sower, there are some good and honest hearts who will listen and hold fast to His Word and bring forth fruit to His glory (Mat. 13:23; Luke 8:15). Our late Brother Richard Curry, one of the great teachers at the Memphis School of Preaching years ago used to tell his students, “Men, the Lord doesn’t require us to be successful but to be faithful.” Fellow Christians, whatever the consequences, let us be faithful in our practice of restoring of Biblical authority.

Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat.7:21). Today, as when Jesus spoke these words, many are calling Him “Lord” but are failing to do God’s will. God help us teach them how to restore Biblical authority.

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