

## THE OAKWOOD ROAD

# CONTENDER

"...exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith..."

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### When the Lord Says Nothing

"For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests" (Heb. 7:14).

Moses spake nothing about priests being permitted from the tribe of Judah. God neither allowed it nor prohibited it-He said NOTHING. What do we do about a case like this? When the Bible is silent about a matter, shall we presume to do as we please or shall we shun the muted matter?

An old pantry proverb says "silence gives consent." As a boy, it didn't take many "beltings" to learn that this philosophy isn't always safe to go by. The religious leaders of the world have generally adopted this course however. We are not left to guess about what is right. When God said NOTHING relative to priests from the tribe of Judah, Jesus could have so served in the Temple if he wanted to IF . . . IF . . . the silence of scripture gives consent. But notice Hebrews 8:4; Now if Jesus "were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law." It is clear, then, that

when God specifically mentioned Levi as the priesthood tribe and said NOTHING about others, THEY WERE PROHIBITED FROM SO FUNCTIONING.

It is this "prohibition of silence" that is taught in I Cor. 4:6, where we find, "that . . . ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (ASV). That which is "written", the holy scriptures, PROVIDE EVERYTHING we need for life and godliness "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Pet. 1:3, 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Where the scriptures stop, our practice should stop. We are not allowed to do anything in worship or service to God which He has not called for. We are to do what God TEACHES; not what He has not taught. But, look what man has done:

1. Washing Hands. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for washing hands as a religious act (Mark 7:1-13). It was being done in the absence of any command of God for it. Their error was in directing to God an act which He had not specifically authorized. Such action was going beyond what was written (Deut. 29:29).

2. Burning incense as worship, as the Roman and Anglican priests do. There is nothing morally wrong with burning incense (or washing hands). As a service to God, however, it constitutes "going beyond. what is written."

3. Sprinkling babies, called Christening. Countless babies are sprinkled with water as a religious act each year in spite of the fact that NOT A SINGLE SCRIPTURE CALLS FOR IT.

4. Mechanical instrumental music in worship. God tells us to "sing" in the New Testament, but is silent about instrumental music - just as silent as He was about priests in Judah (Col. 3:16). To teach that such is right is to teach what God has not taught. It is affirming that "silence gives consent," which IS NOT TRUE, as we have seen. Mechanical instruments are not wrong as such, and neither is washing hands, but as service to God they are unauthorized, not permitted, and therefore sinful.

5 Societies, Guilds, Institutions or any other organization other than the local church. The Lord specified only one organization for his saints to function in when doing the work of

### **DAILY BIBLE READING**

April 2	1 Kings 8-10
April 3	1 Kings 11-13
April 4	1 Kings 14-16
April 5	1 Kings 17-19
April 6	1 Kings 20-22
April 7	2 Kings 1-3
April 8	2 Kings 4-6

the Lord, the congregation (Acts 14:23, Phil. 1:1, Rom. 16:16). He is just as SILENT about HUMANLY DEvised ORGANIZATIONS as He was about priests from the tribe of Judah-of which institutions Christ spake nothing concerning their existence. And just as He specified the tribe of Levi, He specified the organization which Spirit guided apostles established - the local congregation. Missionary societies, Orphan Homes, Colleges, and Hospitals are not even faintly hinted at in scripture and thus "beyond that which is written." Some of the benevolent and medical - and educational societies, have their place - just as does washing hands, incense and organs, but their place is not in the church as service to God. When they become "church institutions" doing the churches' work and financed by churches, they are unauthorized, not permitted and sinful. No pantry proverbs or cute sayings can put them in the realm of scriptural approval.

6. Extended oversight of one eldership. God specified the work of elders to "the flock which is among you" (I Pet. 5:1-4, Acts 20:28) . When such supervision is broadened to include region-wide and nationwide programs requiring financing of many churches, it is "going beyond what is written." Scripture mentions NO case of churches pooling their resources under one eldership to do a general work for all.

We must respect what God has said. Let us also respect, just as reverently, what God has NOT said.

-Bill Fling

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