

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP (Part 2) Rex A. Turner, Sr.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE USE OF THE INSTRUMENT

The Restoration Movement which got underway in the beginning of the nineteenth century was an effort to restore New Testament Christianity to its rightful place. It was an effort to find a basis of unity and oneness for all believers.

Stone and the Campbells, together with the others of the Restoration Movement, took the Bible, and the Bible alone as their guide—their only standard or authority in religion. They adopted for their motto the statement: “We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is silent.” Following this motto in their efforts to restore the primitive practice of the apostolic church, a great and fast growing brotherhood worshipped for more than fifty years without the use of the instrument.

The instrument was first introduced in the church in Midway, Kentucky, in about 1858, and it was introduced again in 1867—this time in the church at Cleveland, Ohio. The instrument was not used prevalently until after 1867, but wherever it was introduced, strife, bitterness, and division followed.

Since the introduction of the instrument, those responsible for its introduction and use have made from

time to time certain arguments in defense of the use of the instrument in worship. A review of the major arguments that have been made and are being made is in order.

Argument Based On Silence Of Scriptures

One of the first arguments that was made in defense of the use of the instrument in worship was based on the silence of the Scriptures. To illustrate, H. T. Anderson, in a discussion on instrumental music with Robert Richardson through the columns of the Christian Standard, wrote:

I am no advocate for instrumental music in churches. But the Doctor with his legalism cannot legislate it out of the churches. I might easily say to him, where there is no law, there is no transgression. There is no law against instrumental music in churches; therefore, those who use it are not transgressors.

As will be observed from this quotation, no claim was made from the Scriptures for the use of the instrument in worship. The only claim was that the instrument is not condemned in the Scriptures. The argument was and is based solely on the silence of the Scriptures.

In reply to this argument, some questions are in order. Would the advocates of the instrument allow the burning of incense in the worship? It is not condemned by the Scriptures. Would those advocates allow the setting of beans, potatoes, milk, and meat on the Lord’s Table to be eaten in conjunction with the partaking of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine? Such is not condemned in the Scriptures in specific terms. Would the advocates

IN THIS ISSUE.....

MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS ... (PART 2) – REX A. TURNER, SR.	1
LET GOD DO THE CLAPPING – BOBBY DUNCAN	6
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TRUTH – ROY J. HEARN	7

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**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
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allow the counting of beads as one of the acts of worship? This is not condemned in the Scriptures.

When a pharmacist fills a prescription, does he compound any drugs, chemicals, or properties which he may choose so long as such is not specifically prohibited, or does he compound only those drugs, chemicals, and properties which are specifically indicated? Without doubt the question carries its own answer.

The Hebrew writer made an argument—two in fact—from the silence of the Scriptures, but his conclusion was just the opposite of the conclusion of H. A. Anderson’s argument from the silence of the Scriptures. The Hebrew writer said:

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man has given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood (Heb. 7:12-14).

Moses had specifically said that the tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe. No other tribe—including Judah—was specified as pertaining to priests and the priesthood. The fact that Moses was silent—had spoken nothing—as pertaining to priests from the tribe of Judah meant that no person from Judah could serve or be a priest under the Mosaic priesthood. The silence of Moses relative to priests from tribes other than Levi eliminated all other tribes from contributing some of their own men to serve as priests under that Mosaic priesthood.

The conclusion of this whole matter is that in the area of specifics, the silence of the Scriptures is a limiting factor which allows only for that which is expressly set forth in the specific. Anderson’s argument based on the silence of the Scriptures can never justify, therefore, the use of the instrument in Christian worship.

Argument Based On Law Of Expediency

Another argument that was made—a corollary to the first—in the defense of the use of the instrument was based on the law of expediency. W. K. Pendleton, writing in the *Millennial Harbinger*, 1864, on the subject, “Pew-Renting and Organ Music,” said:

With respect to instrumental music, I presume that no one at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history will pretend to claim for its introduction in the church any pretense of primitive authority or warrant ... there are many things established and right, in the practical affairs of the church in this 19th century, that was not

introduced in the days, nor by the authority of the apostles—questions of mere expediency, that involve neither moral nor spiritual principle or teaching. ... We have no evidence that in the apostolic days, the disciples owned houses, such as we call churches, at all.

In short, Pendleton claimed no apostolic authority for the use of the instrument, but rather he based his defense of its use on the grounds of expediency and as the use of the instrument's being equivalent to a church's holding or owning a building for worship. To Pendleton and those of this persuasion, the instrument was an aid to the worship—an expedient. Isaac Errett, editor of the *Christian Standard* held that the instrument was an expedient, but he labeled it “an unnecessary expedient”—as an opinion, being neither right nor wrong in itself.

A reply to this argument on expediency necessarily calls for a definition and understanding of what constitutes a lawful expediency. Though the term, “expedient,” has come to have a connotation of derogatory implication, its original meaning may be defined as “apt and suitable to the end in view, hence advantageous.” Expediency has to do with the manner, time, means and circumstances connected with the doing of a thing that has been demanded or authorized by the Scriptures.

An expedient is a help or an aid, but the fact is that nothing is expedient which is not first of all lawful. Expediency is not something which falls without the law, but rather it is something that falls within the law. No expediency can be established for an instrument, or any act of worship for that matter, until a law or authorization of it is established, by a direct statement, or an example, or implication.

If God had authorized the use of the instrument, then matters of expediency with respect to it would lie. Those matters of expediency would include the kind of instrument to be used, the price to be paid for it, the determination of who would play it, and the decision as to the time and circumstances that might regulate its performance.

A classic case of expediency is found in Hebrews 10:25, which reads:

Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day drawing nigh.

Here the command is that the saints must assemble. Other passages of Scripture denote that the assembly to which

the Hebrew writer gave commandment was to be held on the first day of the week.

Now, matters of expediency are involved in such a Lord's Day assembly. Some matters of expediency which fall under the demand for the saints to assemble include the where of the assembly, the when or hour for the assembly, and the place of the assembly. Expediency also determines whether the church should own or rent the place for the assembly. Further, expediency determines such matters as the kind of seats to be put in the place for the assembly, the kind or means of heating and cooling that should be provided for the building, and the kind of lighting system and fixtures that should be provided for the building.

A maxim of law is that whatever is necessary in obeying a law is inherent in or implied by the law even though it is not expressed. The law requires the saints to assemble, and the most expedient manner, time, place, and means for the assembly are all implied by the law or command to assemble. There must first be the law, however, before there can be the implied expediency.

Those who have contended that the instrument is an expedient, a help, or aid to the singing have reasoned that the instrument aids the singing in the same way and on the same principle that a cane aids a man when he walks. Now, an aid can never be a coordinate—that is equal in rank—with the thing or person that it is supposed to aid. An aid must always be a subordinate to the person or thing that it aids.

A cane is not coordinate, or equal in rank, with walking—that is, the cane does not do any walking; just so a songbook is not coordinate, or equal in rank, with singing—that is, the songbook does not make any kind of music. The cane and the songbook, therefore, are both aids, or subordinates—the cane does aid walking and the songbook does aid singing. An instrument of music does not, however, sustain the same relationship to singing that a cane sustains to walking, unless the instrument is used in such a way as to make no music, such as the striking of a note to get the pitch to a song. The point of emphasis is that instrumental music and vocal music are coordinate—that is, they are two kinds of music, and they are equal in rank. Just as walking and riding are coordinate, or two ways of travel, just so playing and singing are coordinate, or two ways of making music. How could walking be an aid or help to riding? If a person were commanded to walk, could he ride at the same time? If a person were commanded to walk, could he ride instead? Thus if God commanded Christians to sing, could they play an

instrument at the same time? If God commanded Christians to sing, could they play on an instrument instead? These questions carry their own answer, and the instrument in the worship cannot be justified on the basis of expediency.

Argument Based On Authority Of The Scriptures

In time a third argument, based on the authority of the Scriptures, was made in defense of the instrument. The arguments for the instrument on the basis of the silence of the Scriptures and on the basis of expediency had proven to be rather lame defenses. A stronger defense was needed, and it was diligently thought out by certain leading advocates for the instrument. Thus in the second decade of the twentieth century, O. E. Payne, published a book entitled, *Instrumental Music Is Scriptural*. The intent of the book was to establish by the scholars of the world that the Greek word *psallo* which appears in conjunction with the command to sing means “to play on an instrument.” O. E. Payne said:

With so vast a number uniting their voices as to the meaning of “psallo,” the writer is not doubting that the candid will grant that it refers to the instrument, and that instrumental music in Christian worship is acceptable. The wonder is, whether, with so much conclusive testimony, very many of those who will come to see that they have been mistaken will now declare that instrumental music unavoidably inheres in “psallo,” and that, therefore, to employ it is mandatory.

It is impossible to “psallen” without a musical instrument. ... henceforth we must unite in agreeing that if we forgo musical instruments, we cannot conform to the divine injunction to “psallen.”

This new defense for the use of the instrument in worship led to the historical debate in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1923, between Ira M. Boswell and N. B. Hardeman. Boswell affirmed the proposition: “Instrumental music in church worship is scriptural.” In his affirmation of the subject, Boswell emphasized the point that words do not lose entirely their original or primary meaning. He then showed that the primary meaning of the word *psallo* was “to touch, pull, twitch, to pluck, to twang: to play (i.e. a stringed instrument) with the finger (i.e. instead of with plectrum); to sing to a harp.”

To what was no doubt the surprise and chagrin of Boswell, Hardeman in his first reply not only agreed but also emphasized the fact that an instrument inheres in the word *psallo*, but he then proceeded to show that Paul

defined the instrument—and that the instrument defined by Paul is the human heart. Hardeman said:

I want to state to you candidly, I believe that it is impossible to worship God acceptably unless there be the accompaniment of the vocal expression with that instrument described in God’s book—namely, the making of melody or the striking on the strings or playing upon the chords of the human heart.

Now, one has but to weigh Paul’s statement in Ephesians 5:19 in order to see the correctness of Hardeman’s statement. The passage reads:

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody (*psalming* or *psallontes*) with your heart to the Lord.

Paul did not command the Ephesians to “psallo” or pull the hunters bow, nor did he command them to “psallo” or pluck the carpenter’s line, nor did he command them to “psallo” or pluck the strings of a harp or strike the chords of an organ. Paul did command the Ephesians to sing and “psallo” or pluck, or make melody **“with your heart unto the Lord.”**

The word *psallo* does not indicate a particular instrument. “Psalloing” is a thing that is done on an instrument, whether the instrument be a bow, a carpenter’s string, a harp, or a human heart. The word *psallo* occurs in Ephesians 5:19, in Romans 15:9, in 1 Corinthians 14:15, and in James 5:13. In Ephesians it is translated **“make melody;”** in Romans it is translated *“sing;”* in 1 Corinthians it is translated **“sing,”** both times; and in James it is translated “sing praises.”

Thus, as has already been indicated, the term “psallo” retains the figurative idea of an instrument in the New Testament but the instrument is the human heart rather than a mechanical instrument. The New Testament’s use of “psallo” is analogous to its use of the word *circumcision*. The Hebrew males were under obligation to be circumcised in the flesh, but true Christians today are circumcised in the heart (Rom. 8:25-29). In short, then, the instrument in the New Testament passages relating to “psalloing” is the human heart.

A very pertinent point just here is that if a mechanical instrument inheres in the “psallo” of the five passages to which reference is made, then only a reader of the original Greek would learn that fact. Both the *King James Version* and the *American Standard Version*—versions produced by one hundred and forty-eight of the ripest scholars of the world—translated “psallo” to “make melody” and to “sing.” Must men learn Greek to know the will of God?

Can they not rely on the English Bible? The truth is that the argument for the instrument based on the authority of the Scriptures forces the person making the argument to repudiate the work of the translators of both the *King James Version* and the *American Standard Version*. The instrument of music is just not authorized in the New Testament Scriptures.

Argument Based On Want Of Authority For Congregational Singing

A fourth argument that has been made of late in defense of the use of the instrument is based on the want of authority for congregational singing in the appointed assemblies. The late Dr. R. M. Bell, longtime and capable President of Johnson Bible College, in a tract entitled, *What Is Worship?*, wrote:

If the assemblies ever employed music, vocal or instrumental, it is never mentioned. We are told that the 3,000 who were converted by the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem, **“continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”** (Acts 2:42). No music of any kind is mentioned. Singing is mentioned seven times in Acts and the Epistles, but in each case the reference is to a solo or duet, which has no connection whatever with a congregational singing commanded, mentioned or inferred.

Dr. Bell also observed in his tract that worship is not singing, or preaching, or praying, or partaking of the Lord’s Supper, or giving. In defining worship, Dr. Bell said:

Worship is not an act, but an emotion. It is not something that you do with your hands or your mouth, but something you feel in your heart. Worship is not objective but subjective. It is something that takes place on the inside of the worshipper.

The pertinent aspect of Dr. Bell’s reasoning on worship turns on his defense for the use of an instrument in the worship. His reasoning is that the instrument in the assembly is not authorized; but likewise, congregational singing in the assembly is not authorized either: therefore, the instrument has as much place in the assembly as singing has in the assembly. The logical conclusion to Dr. Bell’s reasoning would be that two unauthorized “acts” in the assembly of the saints would make each of those “acts” scriptural.

With respect to Dr. Bell’s strictures on worship, he was absolutely wrong when he said that worship is just an emotion. Worship is “honor, reverence, and homage, in thoughts, feelings and in acts, paid by man to Deity.”

Worship is a thing that must be paid. It is not just a subjective or inward feeling. Worship demands expression, and it requires action.

With respect to Dr. Bell’s strictures on congregational singing, he was also absolutely wrong when he said that congregational singing is nowhere mentioned in the New Testament. Dr. Bell is correct when he states that the word *singing* does not appear in Acts 2:42. This passage reads:

They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles teaching and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

This passage of Scripture is unquestionably a summary statement of the scheme of worship set by divine guidance for the church for all times.

This scheme of worship is stated in broad terms—apostles doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Luke does not record whether the prayers were prayers of thanksgiving, or prayers of petition, or prayers of praise. The term “prayers” is, therefore, all inclusive. The term “prayers” embraced all kind of prayers. The term, “breaking of bread,” did not exclude the drinking of the fruit of the vine. Rather the term “breaking of bread” embraced the eating of the unleavened bread and the drinking of the fruit of the vine. The term “fellowship” is also a broad or general term. It applies generally to all joint participation in the worship. A specific aspect of the term—the contribution—is set forth in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. As is the case of the other terms of the stated order of worship, the term “apostles’ doctrine” is also a broad term. It includes all methods of and means of setting forth the teaching of the apostles—whether by informing, exhorting, reproving, or singing.

Now, by the very nature of things singing is covered by the broad term of “apostles’ doctrine” as well as in the broad terms of “fellowship” and “prayers.” Paul wrote the Colossian Church:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God (Col. 3:16).

The emphasis here is that singing is a form—a means—of teaching and admonishing. In short, it is a vital part of continuing in the apostles’ doctrine.

As for the specific mention of congregational singing, one instance is to be found in Colossians 3:16. In this passage, Paul instructs:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

The words “teaching and admonishing one another” necessarily implies an assembly. In the absence of an assembly, how could disciples by means of singing teach and admonish one another? Each person assembled is required by this passage to participate in the singing.

Another passage which makes specific mention of congregational singing is Ephesians 5:19. The reading is: **“speaking one to another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”** Here again an assembly of brethren is necessarily contemplated. How could brethren speak to one another in song if they were not assembled? Would anyone contend that this means that some sister in Christ should or could step out the back door and sing an admonition to a sister across the fence and that the sister across the fence should then respond by singing an admonition to her? To say the least of matters, this is not the usual procedure when women communicate across the fence! How, in such a case, would the men sing to one another? In this tractor age, there is little opportunity for a man to sing a song of admonition to a brother across the

field and then for that brother to sing an admonishing response.

The truth of the whole matter is that congregational singing is authorized. The New Testament Scriptures speak for themselves. The instrument cannot be justified on the basis that congregational singing is not authorized, the instrument is not authorized either, and that, therefore, both are scriptural or allowed. Such reasoning is like a poison. It will bring on spiritual death.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the question is: Shall Christians go by the authority of the Holy Scriptures in worship, or shall they presume to worship God in whatever way and by whatever means as they may personally be pleased to do? The principle involved is deeper than the use of the instrument in the worship. The principle involves an attitude toward the Bible, itself. It involves the matter of whether or not the Bible is the inerrant word of God. It involves respect for God, himself. It is a question of whether or not man shall be governed by what God says, or shall every man do that which is right in his own eyes.

—Deceased

[edited & adapted]

Article taken from Rex A. Turner’s book, *Fundamentals Of The Faith*, 1972

LET GOD DO THE CLAPPING

Bobby Duncan

From time to time a question arises concerning the practice of clapping during our worship periods to show our approval of something said or done. This practice is, generally speaking, relatively new among churches of Christ. That fact within itself does not make the practice either right or wrong. Neither does the fact that it is a practice borrowed by our denominational neighbors from the entertainment industry, and then by churches of Christ from our denominational neighbors. The rightness or wrongness of an act is determined, not by its antiquity or its novelty, nor by who has or has not made it a practice, but by whether or not it is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament.

Clapping during worship fits into the agenda of those who are trying to change the church. Some of them have made it plain that worship must be changed to make it more appealing to the worshipper. Calvin Warpula wrote, “I also believe we should let individuals and congregations use the musical format they like without judging them.”

Rubel Shelly said, “The inspiring event we call worship in traditional churches has to give way to the

exhilarating experience of God that exhibits and nourishes life in the worshippers.” He also said in the same speech, “the church has got to change. If it doesn’t change, my kids are not going to stay with it.”

These statements suggest that worship must please the worshipper. They ignore the fact that worship is designed to honor God. When the design of worship is to entertain the worshipper, we expect those being entertained to show their approval by clapping.

There is the same authority for clapping in Christian worship as there is for playing a piano or organ. It is doing something for which there is no divine authority. Furthermore, those among our brethren who first started clapping in worship are the same ones who have stretched the tent of fellowship over the denominational world, and who will not say those who use the instrument in worship sin in so doing. While clapping has now caught on with some who are otherwise, it should be remembered that hand clapping in worship was originally borrowed from the denominations by some who believe those in denominations have God’s approval.

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Who is being applauded when there is hand clapping in worship? Are those who clap their hands doing so to honor God? If so, they are seeking to honor God in some way He has not authorized instead of how He has directed. **“God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”** (John 4:24).

If hand clapping is something of value in our worship, then why didn't God prescribe it? Could it be that those who initiated this practice think they have thought of something God overlooked? Or, did God simply not know of its great value? Brethren with such wisdom would do well to read First Corinthians 3:18-20:

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. And, again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Those really interested in the peace and harmony of the church will not insist on clapping in worship. They themselves will agree that clapping is not necessary in order to have scriptural worship. They will acknowledge also that clapping is not an act God has prescribed.

Therefore, they must confess they can worship scripturally and conscientiously without applauding. In love for those who conscientiously oppose it, and in the interest of peace and harmony, it should be omitted.

Occasionally one will be heard to say that hand clapping is no different from saying, “Amen.” But there is one slight difference: saying, “Amen,” is authorized in scripture.

Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? (1 Cor. 14:16).

Where is the verse which mentions clapping hands in worship?

I would emphasize that I am not one who is opposed to change, provided the change is in harmony with the will of God, and provided the change will be an improvement. However, if we are to improve our worship, it will not be by adding other acts, but by improving the worshippers.

If there is to be an applause in connection with our worship, let it be by God: He is the only audience. All of us are participants.

—Deceased

ATTITUDES TOWARD TRUTH

Roy J. Hearn

Pilate asked Jesus: **“What is truth?”** God's word is truth—it came by Christ (John 1:17; 17:17). The law of God was given to Christ who in turn delegated the Holy Spirit to reveal it through the apostles (John 16:12-15; 17:8). God's word is indestructible (Mat. 24:35). One may oppose truth, but cannot deny it. Regardless of all the opposition to it and perverting of it, truth remains truth and all must stand or fall by it (2 Cor. 13:8). Our reception of any truth depends on our attitude toward it. If we are seeking to please ourselves, only such truth as suits us will be accepted. Improper attitudes, refusal to accept and abide by truth, hinders, even prevents, salvation for those who do so.

God's truth revealed in the Bible is indestructible. The New Testament of Christ is now law to man. God's spiritual law is just as binding and unchangeable as the laws of nature. Consider:

1. The value and importance of truth. Christ said: **“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32). If truth makes us free from sin, error does not. All forms of doctrine not found in the New

Testament are not truth, therefore, cannot make free. The names, doctrines and institutions of men are not truth, therefore those following them are not free from sin: but are in rebellion to God (1 Sam. 15:22-23; Mat. 15:8-13). The New Testament is our complete and infallible guide (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It furnishes all we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Therefore, we plead with our religious friends to test all doctrines by God's word (2 John 4:10), for God only accepts one divine truth (Gal. 1:6.9).

2. Should not be offended at truth. God's word represents Him. The word was given by the apostles (John 16:12-15). To reject the Word as given by the apostles in the New Testament is to reject the Holy Spirit, Christ and God (Mat. 10:40). Christ was hated because He taught the truth, and that truth condemned the sin and false doctrines of His day (John 8:32-46). When we present the truth from His word exactly as He gave it, and men hate us and the word we teach, they are not hating us, but Christ. One cannot accept Christ, and be a true believer in Him without accepting all His word.

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The apostle Paul prophesied that some would turn from the faith and follow false teachers (1Tim. 4:1-2). We have false teachers today with consciences so hardened, the truth has no effect upon them. Paul told Timothy to preach the “**word**,” but some would not endure sound doctrine, but turned aside to fables (2 Tim. 4:3).

This is true now. Some preachers never touch the Bible when preaching. It’s all about what “I believe,” and from there it leads to the sick-bed, then the death-bed, morgue, and finally graveyard. These are fables, and Paul commands to warn honest souls against them. Only truth can make one free, not “experiences” or fables—let us adhere to truth.

To be offended at and to reject truth is to be offended at and reject Christ (John 12:48). We are going to be judged by Christ’s word. All shall give account as to how they have handled it. Knowing that all shall be judged by the Bible, it is imperative that all live by it to the saving of their souls. Paul says: “**Am I therefore become you enemy, because I tell you the truth**” (Gal. 4:16)?

3. We should love truth—it is equal to loving God. We have learned that God’s word is truth (John 17:17). Christ said: “**If ye love me, keep my commandments**” (John 14:15). “**This is the love of God, that we keep his commandment**” (1 John 5:3). Therefore, to love God is to obey Him. If one refuses or neglects to obey Christ, he does not love Christ. He only promises to save the obedient (Heb. 5:9). Obedience to God’s word determines our being acceptable to Him (Acts 10:34-35). We must love the truth to be saved (2 The. 2:10-12). If one persists in following a course of his own, and not authorized by Jehovah, God will not only allow him to go his way, but will send delusions to help him on his way to destruction. If one is determined to seek truth and obey regardless, God will help him find it and save his soul.

The wayside hearer is the one whose heart is hardened against the truth and will not receive it (Mat. 13:14-15). Friends, harden not your hearts as the old-time Jews did and were not allowed to enter the promised land. If you do, you will not enter the home of the soul. The Jews were rejected because they followed their own doctrines instead of God’s truth (Rom. 10:1-3).

4. We must receive the truth with unprejudiced minds. God’s word is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). Hearts of men are represented by the soil. The one who will not open his heart to truth is the wayside hearer. He allows Satan to turn him from the truth (Mat. 13:19). The good ground hearer is the one who hears, receives the truth (seed) into his heart (soil) and keeps it and brings forth fruit. Open the door of your heart (Rev. 23:23). It may be costly, even to separation from family and friends, but the sacrifice must be made if necessary, to be saved (Luke 14:26-28). Hold to the truth and be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

5. Must believe and obey the truth. Belief alone is insufficient. The devils believed and trembled, but were not saved (Jam. 2:19). Some believed in Christ, but were afraid to confess him (John 12:42-43), therefore, were denied by Christ (Mat. 10:83). Faith only does not save, but faith that leads to obedience does (Jam. 1:22; 2:24). One is purified when he obeys the truth (1 Pet. 1:22). Moses believed in God; but, he was not allowed to enter the promised land because of disobedience (Num. 20:10-12). Thus, we see believe is used in two senses: to give mental assent to God’s existence, and in the fullest sense—obey God. The latter saves, the former does not.

CONCLUSION

In order to be saved one must obey God’s truth (2 The. 1:7-9). Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade me to obey Him (2 Cor. 5:11). Believe, repent, confess, and be baptized today.

—Deceased