

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## WHEN THE LORD SAYS NOTHING

By Donald Townsley

Most religious people labor under the false impression that a thing in religion is not wrong if the Lord has not specifically said in so many words that it is wrong. When you question many practices in religion, the reply often comes back, “But where did God say not to do it?” It is this attitude on the part of religious people that causes them to see nothing wrong in many of their practices that are foreign to New Testament authority. They seem to have the impression that the silence of the scriptures gives them license to practice anything that is not specifically forbidden! This attitude makes what God **did not say** more important than what He **did say** and opens the floodgate for many unscriptural practices! This is a misunderstanding of how God authorizes what He wants done.

The Hebrew writer makes an argument on the silence of the scripture to show that when nothing is spoken by God on a subject, that silence prohibits the practice. Let us now notice the argument in Hebrews 7:14: ***“For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.”*** Moses neither specifically allowed it, nor specifically prohibited it – he spake **nothing** about it. The argument is that since he spake nothing about those from the tribe of Judah serving as priests, they were prohibited from serving by the silence of God. This is a principle that at one time most all of God’s people understood, but it is not understood anymore by many of His people (and by many who call themselves gospel preachers)! The result of not understanding the principle has brought many innovations in the church today!

### PASSAGES THAT TEACH WE MUST NOT GO BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN:

1. 1 Corinthians 4:6 - ***“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”***

2. 1 Peter 4:11 - ***“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...”***

3. 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.”***

4. 2 Corinthians 5:7 - ***“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”***

5. Revelation 22:18-19 - ***“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”***

6. Deuteronomy 4:2 - ***“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”***

### TO GO BEYOND WHAT GOD HAS AUTHORIZED IS NOT INNOCENT IN NATURE, BUT A PRESUMPTUOUS SIN!

David of old said in Psalms 19:13, ***“Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then I shall be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”*** Nadab and

Abihu were devoured by fire that went out from the Lord because they offered **“strange fire”** before the Lord **“which he commanded them not”** (Lev. 10:1). They **presumed** upon the silence of the scripture. God had specified that the fire to be used was to come from the **“coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord”** (Lev. 16:12), but they offered fire which the Lord **“commanded them not”** (Lev. 10:1) and lost their lives!

## **MODERN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES THAT ARE PROHIBITED BY THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES**

**People who practice sprinkling and pouring for baptism.** The Bible does not say “thou shalt not sprinkle and thou shalt not pour for baptism,” but the very silence of the scriptures **prohibits** these practices. The New Testament authorizes people to be immersed or buried in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 8:38-39). When God authorizes what He wants, this **excludes** everything else!

When the New Testament teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), this excludes **being baptized because one is already saved.**

Christ authorized unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine in the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16), and this **excluded** meat, buttermilk, pie, and anything else anyone might desire to include.

**Church-sponsored recreation** is prohibited by the silence of the scriptures! The local church is only authorized to preach the gospel to the lost (1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 28:19), edify the saved (Matt. 28:20; Eph. 4:11-12), and to help its own in need (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 2:44-45). The scriptures are silent about the church doing anything else. Therefore, the church cannot have a ball team because God says nothing about the church going into the recreation business. Church recreation is prohibited by the silence of the scriptures! God **did tell us** where eating and drinking was to take place in the life of a Christian. He tells us, through Paul, that this is to be done **at home** – **“What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not”** (1 Cor. 11:22). The Methodists have as much authority for the sprinkling as brethren do for their recreation – they both came in at the same door!

The **playing of musical instruments** in worship is excluded because God says nothing concerning using them in worship to Him. God tells us to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

**“Brotherhood elderships”** (the sponsoring church arrangement) are prohibited by the silence of the scriptures! The local church is authorized (Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23), but the Bible is silent concerning the “sponsoring church.” God specified the jurisdiction of elders (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:18).

**Chorus (or choir) singing** in the assembly (for entertainment or any other purpose) is prohibited by the silence of the scripture. Singing in worship has two divine purposes: (1) Praise and thanksgiving to God (Heb. 13:15; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; Jas. 5:13); and (2) To teach and admonish one another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). This **excludes** singing for any other purpose. **All Christians** are to sing in worship to God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). This **excludes** choir singing!

The New Testament teaches that there is but one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4; Eph. 1:22-23). This **excludes** and prohibits all other churches.

Let us all learn this lesson well – that **when God says nothing, man must not act!** The **silence of God is as binding as His word** (Rev. 22:18-19)! – **Great Plainness of Speech—Articles.** ■

**“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. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”** (Matt. 7:21-23).

**Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM**

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