The Cambridge Dictionary defines the noun “silence” as “a state of refusing to talk about something or answer questions or a state of not communicating.” The Oxford Dictionary also defines “silence” as “The avoidance of mentioning or discussing something.” One of the controversies that has raged in the world of “Christendom” for centuries is the matter of whether or not the “silence” of the Scriptures must be respected or ignored. Some allege that whatever is not expressly forbidden is allowed in religious practice; others contend that anything not authorized is not permitted.

The dispute surfaced early in the post-apostolic age. Tertullian (ca. A.D. 150-222) spoke of those who contended that “the thing which is not forbidden is freely permitted.” He replied: “I should rather say that what has not been freely allowed is forbidden” (1995, 94).

During the early Reformation period, Martin Luther (1483-1546) taught that “whatever is without the word of God is, by that very fact, against God.” He frequently appealed to Deuteronomy 4:2: “You shall not add to word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” But he gradually modified his view. In later years, Luther changed his view, stating, “What is not against Scripture is for Scripture, and Scripture for it. The Swiss, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) taught that practices “not enjoined or taught in the New Testament should be unconditionally rejected.” Yet not even he grasped the full implication in this maxim, for he sanctioned infant baptism—which is neither enjoined nor taught in the New Testament.

Civilization has made many think that they have to speak for the bible because trends are changing. Well! they are mistaken to say the bible must be adjusted to meet the modern standards. God is all knowing (Psalms 139:1-2; Romans 10:33-35). He knows the future. So if we are bringing up issues and we tend to say we are in a modern world, but do you care to know that God knew about the future? His written future must be held to in sanctity in this era as well. Friend, we just have to remain silent! Else, we are trying to speak for God. Which we cannot. Why do we want to add our words to the Bible? Have we forgotten the punishment for diluting the word of God?(2John 9;Revelation 22:18-19) We will be denying the unlimited wisdom of God if we say the Bible does not contain everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). All that God expects us to know about Him and His saving power has been reveal to us. Deuteronomy 29:29 “29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.” and He commands us to observe only those things He has revealed to us. Folks, what a simple task God gave us. Just observe my laws. Period! Inferring from Deuteronomy 29:29, if God is silent, then we must be! If He has not reveal to us in his written word about some things, we have to simply do
what he has endorsed for us in His word and be silent after that. All that God wants us
to know is in the Bible. (2Timothy 3:16-17).
If we believe that God’s word is complete then, we need to respect the silence of the
scriptures, I think, we are trying to say we can be in a position to counsel (advice)
God. (Romans 10:33-35) Which can never be!

1Peter 4:11-“11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking
the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the
strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through
Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Christians are to speak the utterances of God every time (now and in the future)
and remain quiet where God is silent.
For us to be able to make sound judgement, as to what is relevant for Christian faith and
practice when the bible is silent. Let us consider some instances in the Bible when
God was silent.

In The Old Testament
A-Noah’s example
Consider Noah and the ark which he built in preparation for the flood.
“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and
shall cover it inside and out with pitch.” (Genesis 6:14). I don’t know how many
different varieties of trees there were on the earth at that time, but I
suspect there were several. Notice that God did not say, “gopher wood,” and
then go on to say, “But do not use apple tree wood, birch, cottonwood,
dogwood, elm, fig, hickory,” and infinitum. If Mrs. Noah had insisted on
paneling the master bedroom with golden oak, could Noah have reasoned
that since God was silent about golden oak, it would be OK to use it? You
know the answer.

B-The strange fire incident
Nadab and Abihu were sons of Aaron, the first Hebrew high priest. When they
employed “strange fire” (i.e., fire not taken from the altar of sacrifice; cf. Leviticus
16:12) they were destroyed by God. What was their crime? The inspired text states
that they offered “that which [God] had not commanded them” (Leviticus 10:1), or, to
express it in another way: “[T]hey offered unauthorized fire before the Lord” (NIV;
emphasis added).

C-The ark of the covenant.
One of the sacred items of the tabernacle system was the Ark of the Covenant. The
Mosaic Law specified: “Jehovah set aside the tribe of Levi, to bear the Ark of the
Covenant” (Deuteronomy 10:8). The Levites were thus authorized to transport the
ark. There was no specific prohibition regarding the other tribes; the law was simply
silent as to their privilege of transporting the holy vessel. Was that silence prohibitive?
Yes it was, for a parallel passage explicitly states: “None ought to carry the ark of
God but the Levites, for them Jehovah has chosen to carry the ark” (1 Chronicles
15:2; emphasis added). When the Levites were specifically authorized to bear the ark,
in the absence of supplementary authority that clearly implied that “none else” should
function in that capacity. Silence excluded!
Furthermore, the Levites were to bear that ark by poles, which were passed through
rings on the side of the golden box (Exodus 25:12-14). David, however, had borne the
ark on a “new cart” (2 Samuel 6:3). Was such a sin, inasmuch as the law was silent
respecting the matter of carts? Israel’s great king clarified this matter when he later
confessed: “[W]e sought [God] not according to the ordinance” (1 Chronicles 15:13),
or, “in the prescribed way” (NIV). Other Old Testament evidences can be sought in Genesis 4 (Cain’s syndrome), prohibition of adultery (Exodus 20:2-3; Jeremiah 7:3; Jeremiah 7:31), Moses' striking of the rock, Numbers 20

In The New Testament
A-GOING BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN
Paul forewarned the Christians in Corinth not to learn beyond the things written in the Bible 1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.”

To “go beyond” is to enter the realm of silence, which was not to be done. 2 John 9: “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.” There is an objective body of truth designated “the teaching of Christ.” To step beyond it—either into that which is specifically forbidden, or into the unauthorized realm of silence—is to transgress the will of God. There has been considerable technical discussion over the grammar of this passage. Some have contended that the verse addresses only the nature of Jesus, but not peripheral matters of doctrine. The fact is, one of the most ludicrous positions that one can entertain is to allege that one must accept the New Testament teaching about Christ, but he may, with impunity, ignore the instruction that is from the Lord! The silence principle is quite valid, and a repudiation of it leads to abject apostasy.

B-WILL WORSHIP. In Paul’s letter to the saints at Colossae, he condemned the practice of “will-worship,” a disposition which is “after the precepts and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:22-23).

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words defines will-worship as “voluntarily adopted worship, whether unbidden or forbidden.” Doing that which is forbidden is clearly understood, but if “unbidden” does not refer to that which is unauthorized, or about which the Bible is “silent,” then what else could it mean? Thayer’s Lexicon defines this as “worship which one devises and prescribes for himself.” “Here is the issue: if one may, with divine approval, operate in the realm of silence, why can’t he ‘devise and prescribe for himself’ whatever pleases him? And yet, it is this very thing being censured.”

There is but one hope of maintaining the purity of Christianity, as that system existed under the leadership of inspired apostles. We must plead that men remain within the guidelines of New Testament authority. That can be done only when the principle of the silence of the Scriptures is revered. If Christians can only follow the written words of the bible, we will just be Christians and nothing more or less.

“A divine warrant is necessary for every element of doctrine, government, and worship in the church; that is, whatsoever in these spheres is not commanded in the Scriptures, either expressly or by good and necessary consequence from their statements is forbidden.” (John L. Girardeau, professor at Columbia Seminary, South Carolina in the 1880’s). Let us speak only when God speaks. Thank you.

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