

Did The Restoration Movement Invent a Hermeneutic?

2026 Exploring Current Issues Conference

Introduction: Our title question involves a word many cannot define. Others do not realize its origin. Michael Gorman's book, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, offers a simple explanation of the word "hermeneutic": "The technical term for such a basic interpretive perspective or posture is hermeneutic, a word derived from the name of the Greek god Hermes (the Roman god Mercury), the messenger or interpreter of the other gods" (p. 155). This word refers to the "science of interpretation."

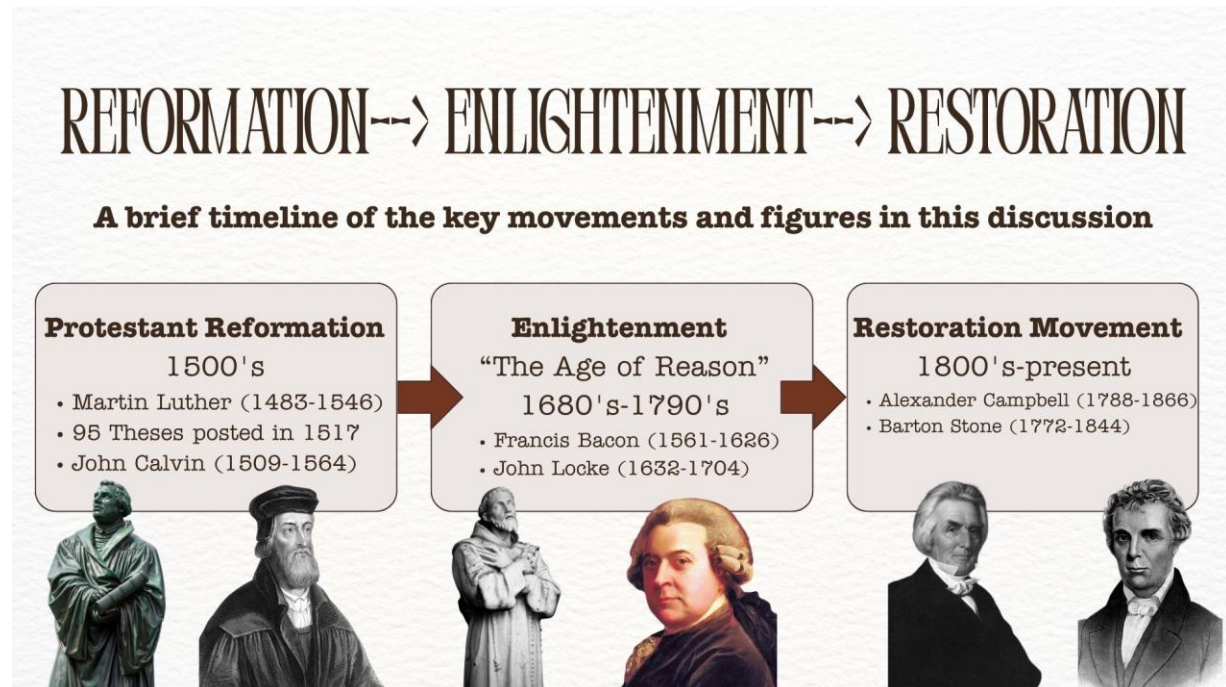
My assignment for today: "A common criticism is that the traditional interpretive model—often summarized as command, example, and necessary inference—was borrowed from the philosophy of the Enlightenment, particularly the empirical reasoning associated with figures like Francis Bacon. Josh will demonstrate that while some terminology may reflect the intellectual language of the 19th century, the underlying concepts are simply descriptions of how communication works. Commands, examples, and necessary conclusions are not philosophical inventions—they are the normal ways language conveys meaning, and they are used throughout Scripture itself."

Just a couple of notes on the assignment: first, while the "traditional interpretive model" for most of us here may be an inductive reasoning approach using CENI as a general framework, some of the quotes below will indicate this was not every restorer's "traditional interpretive model." So, "tradition" has its variants.

Secondly, we'll do our best to 1) document this common hermeneutical allegation from various authors, 2) consider a few underlying motives and implications of this allegation, 3) defend CENI as an interpretive pattern, 4) expose some of the illogic of the allegations, 5) identify three lines of argument (communication, Scripture, and history) as a form of rebuttal.

We will begin by documenting the allegation through the words of authors. This allegation often has two key parts. First, there is the accusation itself: CENI or a "blueprint," constitutional, legal, primitivist, Lockean, Baconian, patternist hermeneutic is an Enlightenment era origination. Second, since it is an inferior hermeneutic it must be replaced with another. As Moyer states, "...rejection of authority isn't rejection of all authority whatsoever; it is trading one authority for another, one pattern for another, whether it is his own or another's" (Moyer, Doy. "Bible Authority," *Pursuing the Pattern*, p. 40). With many authors, the CENI hermeneutic seeks to be replaced with what some (John

Mark Hicks in *Searching for the Pattern*, Michael J. Gorman in *Elements of Biblical Exegesis* call a “theological” hermeneutic (Shawn Chancellor’s lecture). So, the two ideas...removing CENI and implementing a “new hermeneutic” are tied together.



Consider Gorman’s contrast of the theological hermeneutic and where he claims the shift in hermeneutical posture took place.

“...the most significant development in academic biblical interpretation in the first years of the twenty-first century has been the meteoric rise in interest in the theological interpretation of Scripture—biblical interpretation that takes the Bible **not just as a historical or literary document**...Theological interpretation is hardly a new phenomenon—it was by most accounts the only way of reading the Bible **before the Enlightenment**...This renaissance can be accounted for by noting a number of factors that converged at about the same time. Among those were widespread **dissatisfaction with** purely historical-critical (diachronic) and even purely socio-rhetorical and **literary (synchronic) approaches to biblical study**; the sense of a new freedom, granted by **postmodernism**, for biblical interpreters to **make their theological interests (as well as other engaged or ideological interests—feminist, liberationist, etc.) explicit**; and the desire among many biblical scholars and systematic theologians to once again place their respective disciplines in conversation with each other...” (Gorman, Michael J. *The Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, 2020, p. 159).

I. The Allegation In Their Own Words

A. Several influential authors have taken up this cause to attack the principles of the Primitivist/Restoration view toward authority as having Enlightenment origin.

1. Allen, C. Leonard and Hughes, Richard T. in *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ*, published in 1988:

i. “While Churches of Christ have firm roots in the Reformed side of the Protestant Reformation, **their roots also reach deeply into the eighteenth century Age of Reason**, sometimes called the Enlightenment” (p. 75).

ii. “...the Enlightenment began as a response to the religious wars of the seventeenth century and an attempt to end the conflicts. If the wars had been fanned by unbridled emotions, **the Enlightenment would focus on reason**. Consequently, the eighteenth century is often called the “Age of Reason” (p. 76).

iii. While several authors argue the “Restoration” hermeneutic is “Lockean,” Allen and Hughes comment: “...the Supernatural Rationalists, most eloquently represented by John Locke...concluded that Christianity is a reasonable faith, especially in its essentials: the Messiahship of Jesus and **obedience to his clear commands**. All other biblical teachings Locke viewed as non-essential issues...He did not urge obedience to the Bible in all its commands and examples. Nor did he urge restoration of the primitive church in all its details” (p. 78, 79). This makes it clear... “reason” is Lockean, but the CENI hermeneutic is not for Locke did not adhere to it!

iv. The work goes on to state, “Locke...reduced Christianity to two essentials only: the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and obedience to all his **clear and evident commands**” (p. 80).

v. “Thomas Campbell...was chronologically **a child of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment**, having been born in 1763...he was a diligent student of Enlightenment thought and especially of John Locke, and was well acquainted with the tradition of reducing religion to essentials upon which all reasonable persons might agree...he naturally employed this tradition which he knew so well...Campbell, however, in The Declaration and Address, identified the essentials of the Christian faith as consisting of whatever God

commanded, “either **in express terms**, or **by approved precedent**...Campbell merged the restoration philosophy he has inherited from the Reformed and Puritan traditions with the Enlightenment approach he had inherited from the Age of Reason” (p. 82).

vi. “...the Enlightenment infused our movement with a rational perspective according to which the Bible itself became a sort of **scientific manual, a constitution, or a technical blueprint**” (p. 82).

vii. “Newton (1642-1727) and Descartes (1596-1650)...made popular a perspective that glorified reason, not religion...many believers concluded that if Christianity was to be viable for their age, it must be cast in a **scientific mold** and must rest on a **rational foundation**” (p. 83).

viii. “In Scotland, this perspective reached its zenith in the school of Common Sense Realism led by Thomas Reid (1710-1796) and Dugald Stewart (1753-1828). These men taught that the Bible should be treated as a compendium of concrete facts, not as a book of abstract truths....Since the Common Sense school, therefore, invoked the scientific method as the only proper method of biblical interpretation, it was often labeled “Baconianism” after Sir Francis Bacon, founder of the scientific method” (p. 84).

ix. “Alexander Campbell...was deeply devoted to the Common Sense perspective...Campbell argued over and over again that “the Bible is a book of facts, not of opinions, theories, abstract generalities, nor of verbal definitions...Campbell supposed, agreement must prevail among Christians who simply confine themselves to the facts of “this divine science of religion...For Campbell, the Bible was a book of theological truths, to be sure, but even more it was a collection of facts that should be scientifically and rationally understood—facts that collectively comprised a kind of **blueprint or constitution**” (p. 84, 85).

x. “...the Enlightenment taught our fathers the importance of a rational faith, rationally formulated, rationally defended, and predicated on the “**facts**” of a **rational Bible**...To these perspectives of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, Churches of Christ are heir” (p. 86).

2. Smith, F. Lagard, *Radical Restoration*, published in 2001 alludes to this Enlightenment influence in his book: “The truth, therefore, is that we are neither Catholic nor Protestant, nor the fully-restored first-century church. We are a hybrid of the three...at the very least (There is also the influence of the Enlightenment and American culture to consider...**we are the offspring of religious history...**” (p. 61).

3. McLaren, Brian, *A New Kind of Christianity*, published in 2010 states,

i. “How would I describe the way we typically use the Bible, especially in conservative settings like my own heritage? In short, we read and **use the Bible as a legal constitution**. It shouldn’t surprise us that people raised in a **constitutional era** would tend to read the Bible in a constitutional way. Lawyers in the courtroom quote articles, sections, paragraphs, and subparagraphs to win their case, and we do the same with testaments, books, chapters, and verses...” (p. 78).

ii. “We have plenty of scholarship that grows from the assumption that the Bible is a divinely inspired constitution. And we have plenty of scholarship that reads the Bible as a collection of human literature and nothing more, devoid of inspiration altogether. **I’m advocating a third approach**. I’m recommending we read the Bible as an inspired library. This inspired library preserves, presents, and inspires an ongoing vigorous conversation with and about God, **a living and vital civil argument** into which we are all invited and through which God is revealed” (p. 83).

iii. “...I hope you will understand that, just as you cannot in good conscience cease to see the Bible as a constitution, many of us can no longer continue to do so in good conscience; that’s why **we are on a quest to find other ways** to cherish, understand, and **follow the Bible**” (p. 85).

iv. “...for all its difficulty, I anticipate that the quest for **a new approach to the Bible will become more attractive the more we practice it**...as we politely notify **the thought police** that we don’t fear then anymore, we will humbly and joyfully add our voices to the age-old conversation with and about God, a vigorous and vibrant conversation rooted in and inspired by the fascinating array of voices in the Scriptures” (p. 86). Notice the militantly evangelical tone...

4. E. Randolph Richards & Brandon J. O'Brien in *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes* published in 2012:

- i. "...this chapter [First Things First: Rules and Relationships, JRW]...is about a far more subtle change of perspective that **germinated in the Enlightenment** and later took root deep in the modern Western mind..." (p. 157).
- ii. "The Western understanding of this relationship between Creator and creation was among **the first casualties of the Enlightenment**. Through advances in mathematics, physics, astronomy and medical science, Western intellectuals learned more about the fixed rules or laws by which the universe operates...If God created the universe to operate by prescribed rules, we think, he must have created everything to operate **by established rules**" (p. 158, 159).
- iii. "Today Westerners have a tendency to view all relationships in terms of rules or laws. The way we relate to the cosmos, to each other and to God is determined in large part by reference to natural and even spiritual "laws." This, of course, influences the way Westerners read the Bible" (p. 160).
- iv. "Rather than an image of a **contract or a courtroom**, the Christian life is more helpfully viewed as a journey along a road...In the West, rules must apply to everyone, and they must apply all the time. In the ancient world, rules did not seem to require such universal compliance" (p. 167, 168).
- v. "To the non-Western mind, it seems, **a law is more a guideline**" (p. 170).
- vi. "...Paul prioritizes healthy relationship over doctrinal precision (Rom 12:18)"

5. John Mark Hicks in *Searching For the Pattern*, published in 2019:

- i. "This book describes how I have interpreted the Bible over the years...I describe the specific move from what I call a blueprint hermeneutic to a theological hermeneutic" (p. 19).
- ii. "...The method, in summary, is this: nothing may be done in the work and worship of the church that is not positively authorized by **command, example, or necessary inference**. Absent any positive

authorization...it is forbidden. Historically, this is called the regulative principle, which the **Reformer Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, Switzerland, restorationist Puritans in England, and conservative Presbyterians in Scotland** and the United States also utilized. Churches of Christ often referred to the regulative principle as “the law of silence” or some other similar descriptor...” (p. 70).

iii. “This is the pattern. God’s self-giving in the incarnation of Jesus is the model or pattern for Christian life and practice...Paul’s step two does not find its pattern in some **detailed and exclusive blueprint** for church practices but in the pattern of God’s mighty acts in Israel and Jesus the Messiah...The pattern is the activity of God, which finds its fulfillment in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus the Messiah” (p. 100, 101). This is Hicks’ shift from a “blueprint” (CENI) pattern to a “theological” pattern for action.

iv. He explains, “Rather than looking for patterns of church practice as part of **a blueprint**...we seek the heart of God” (p. 105). Question: is it possible our approach should be a “both/and” not an “either/or”?

v. “I did not (and do not) reject the categories of commands, examples, and inferences but wondered whether they should be framed more by the story than a **presumed blueprint**” (p. 113).

vi. “Though Paul does not lay down any apostolic prescriptions as a matter of conformity to a blueprint for the church, he does characterize this as a matter of obedience...It is not an obedience to a prescribed blueprint but obedience to their gospel confession” (p. 131). Can it be both?

vii. “...the ministry of Jesus is the ministry of the church; the mission of Jesus is the mission of the church. In this sense, the church does not have a mission as much as it participates in and continues the ministry of Jesus. As such, **the ministry of Jesus is the pattern**...The identify, message, and mission of Jesus is the pattern” (p. 135). BTW, some might call this the “Finding Jesus First” method or JOY (Jesus, Others, Yourself method). Hicks has influenced these approaches being advocated by some brethren today. Question: if Jesus is the pattern...then how about how Jesus approached Scripture during His ministry?

viii. “the gospel...does not regulate them [our assemblies] by specifics found in a prescribed law as if the genre of the New Testament documents were **constitutional or ritual guidelines** and thus read through a blueprint lens...they are occasional writings that bear witness to the gospel **rather than legal briefs that set out detailed, timeless rules** for an assembly” (p. 151, 152).

ix. “Campbell clearly, and self-avowedly, recognized his indebtedness to **what historians have called “Baconianism.”** It was the dominant scientific and philosophical understanding of the world in early 19th century England and America. Campbell was a natural-born child of that world...” (<https://johnmarkhicks.com/2008/05/28/stone-campbell-hermeneutics-i-campbells-scholarly-baconianism/>)

x. “The fact that God has given us a document in written language, in human language, presupposes a valid interpretative model and a correspondence between language and reality. Language reflects reality; it does not create it. This is the language theory of **Scottish Common Sense realism**. It is empirically rooted, but guided by native (intuitive, innate) principles which ground our language in reality and guarantee our ability to communicate. Indeed, it is a “universal” art that is “common to all nations” (p. 16). There are universal, common rules of interpretation which every intuitively practices, and these are inductively discovered through the practice of interpretation. Thus, Campbell’s purpose is to “unfold the principles of this art, whether we regard it as native or acquired—and to deduce from those principles some plain precepts” (p. 17)” (ibid).

xi. “Campbell, along with most trained people in his culture, accepted a **Baconian understanding of the scientific method as empirical inductivism**. Campbell read the Bible as an historical witness to “facts” which were not only the mighty acts of God in the narrative but also the historical precedents necessary for the reformation of the church” (ibid).

6. Richard T. Hughes & James Gorman in *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, published in 2024,

- i. "...churches who root their identity in efforts to restore ancient Christianity are susceptible to the illusion that they have escaped **the influence of history and culture altogether**" (p. 2).
- ii. "Campbell himself was not an idealized abstraction but a human being who **belonged to human history**. With his understanding of the **New Testament as a "constitution,"** he could not avoid defining "New Testament Christianity" in concrete terms..." (p. 6).
- iii. "To ignore **the nineteenth-century** would be to ignore the very heart and soul of the tradition..." (p. 9).
- iv. "Campbell was a rationalist who based Christian union on adherence to the New Testament as a kind of **scientific blueprint** for the church. Central to Campbell's thought was his **dependence on Enlightenment philosophy, especially the thought of John Locke and the perspectives of the "Baconian" school** of Scottish commonsense realism" (p. 12).
- v. "...many who came out of the old Stone tradition blended Stone's robust apocalypticism with the **rationalism, legalism, and sectarianism** they perceived in Campbell's Christian Baptist" (p. 13).
- vi. "...thanks to his [Campbell] **Baconian outlook**, which assured him that all Christians could read and understand the Bible alike, Campbell imagined that once the people took matters into their own hands, Christian unity could not be far away" (p. 24).
- vii. "He often spoke of the New Testament **not so much as a theological document but as a veritable constitution for the church**: "the constitution and law of the primitive church shall be the constitution and law of the restored church"...the emerging Churches of Christ increasingly focused their attention on God's commands as a principal locus of his grace and reflected a **legalistic approach** to the Christian faith" (p. 25).
- viii. "He [Campbell] sensed no radical discontinuity between the first age of the Christian faith and his own period, dominated as it was by **Enlightenment thinking**, science, and technology. We might best characterize **Campbell's position as rational progressive primitivism**" (p. 26).

ix. “Campbell’s reconstruction of primitive Christianity was shaped by early modern, **Enlightenment presuppositions**, and especially by **Scottish common-sense realism** and the method it espoused, popularly known in those days as **“Baconianism.”** This philosophical perspective, immensely popular in antebellum America, **emphasized induction**—as opposed to deduction—as the way to truth and knowledge. According to this method, one simply collects all the pertinent facts on a given topic and then draws the proper conclusions on the basis of those facts. We recognize this procedure as **the scientific method**, and Campbell’s faith in this method of inquiry underscores the extent to which he viewed study of the Bible as a kind of scientific enterprise...he argued that the “inductive style of inquiring and reasoning, is to be as rigidly carried out in reading and teaching the Bible facts and documents, as in the analysis and synthesis of physical nature”” (p. 27).

x. “Robert Richardson, a longtime colleague of Campbell at Bethany College and Campbell’s personal physician, exulted that even the apostles “began with facts and drew from these **by induction the proper inferences and rules of action**”” (p. 27).

xi. “From 1823, [Walter] Scott emphasized in **Lockean and Baconian terms** that the New Testament’s simple teaching was that “Jesus is the Christ”” (p. 39).

xii. “Moses Lard typified those who sought to undergird Church of Christ orthodoxy with an unassailable **framework of rationality**...Lard applied to Scripture the **Baconian commonsense principle** that all persons can know a thing precisely as it is without any differences in perception whatever” (p. 44).

xiii. “...he nonetheless argued that a biblical doctrine or practice might be established in one of two ways: “by being actually asserted [in the biblical text]” or “by being necessarily implied.” He thereby made explicit what had been implicit among Churches of Christ for many years—namely, the belief that the New Testament makes its requirements clear in one of three ways: through direct command, through example, or through necessary inference. This threefold hermeneutic has characterized Churches of Christ ever since, hardening into a virtual orthodoxy by the twentieth century” (p. 45).

xiv. Tolbert “Fanning enrolled in 1832 at the University of Nashville and there studied under Philip Lindsley from Princeton, a strong proponent of **Baconian commonsense rationalism**” (p. 46).

xv. Daniel “Sommer utilized the **legal hermeneutic and Lockean method** discussed above, but he added that silence was prohibitive: “what the word does not declare we cannot believe,” and “whatever is not revealed in the divine testimony no one can possibly believe to be the divine will...Sommer’s speech [Sand Creek] indeed represented the culmination of the **radicalized, exclusivist, rationalist, and legalist Campbell tradition**” (p. 61).

II. Implications of These Allegations

A. Implication #1: Those involved in the “Restoration Movement” ironically fought against man-derived teachings using an Enlightenment-based philosophy (man-derived teaching) based in the Scientific method/rationalism (essentially, “primitivism” is of men, not God).

B. Implication #2: CENI (Command, Example, Necessary Inference) is merely a manmade doctrine borne out of a historical movement (making members of the “church of Christ”, no different than any other denomination or faith “tradition”).

C. Actionable Goal: CENI, thus, should be rejected/replaced by a more Biblical hermeneutic (Hicks proposed his “theological hermeneutic” in place of a “blueprint hermeneutic”, Gorman speaks a bit more academically and urges a “theological hermeneutic” over a “literary” hermeneutic).

D. Motives: Now, what could possibly be the motivation of ridding ourselves of a “blueprint hermeneutic” in favor of another approach? If we get rid of the essentiality of CENI logic it would also eliminate the disagreements that have divided brethren and allow us to downplay certain issues. Examples:

1. Divine Illumination: “Fanning’s understanding of Locke and the Scottish Baconians thus defined his understanding of the task of reading Scripture...**From the Baconian tradition**, he learned that one should read the Bible as though it were a science book, always sensitive to the facts, and that one must gather all the facts on any subject before drawing any final conclusions. On this basis, he determined that the project of restoring primitive Christianity was simply a matter of following the Book in Baconian-

Lockean fashion...**Fanning's slavish allegiance to Lockean epistemology rendered him hostile to any suggestion that the human mind is receptive to divine illumination apart from the Bible**" (Richard T. Hughes & James Gorman, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 2024, p. 48).

2. Spiritual gifts: "...theological interpretation is **a work of the Spirit of God**, the same Spirit who gives the church gifts of grace (Greek *charismata*)...such exegetical skill needs the grace and **guidance of the Spirit** to achieve its intended end to greater communion with God...This principle...requires the theological interpreter to be open to **new, imaginative readings** of Scripture that are appropriate outgrowths of the historical, literary, canonical and ecclesial contexts...**the Spirit's new work** always resembles the Spirit's previous work" (Gorman, Michael J. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, p. 169).

3. Personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: Benjamin "Franklin and his colleagues sustained their sectarian position with the same mixture of legalism and historical naivete that was characteristic of Fanning and others...Franklin also helped define...the orthodox position among Churches of Christ regarding the Holy Spirit...when some Bethany graduates began preaching the validity of "spiritual illumination" and began praying "that we might receive the Holy Spirit," Franklin saw neglect of the plain and rational message of the Bible. **He concluded with the contention that, "as to 'personal indwelling,' it is not New Testament language"** (Richard T. Hughes & James Gorman, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 2024, p. 53).

4. Missionary Society controversy: "Campbell had opposed missionary societies...and **the developing hermeneutic among Churches of Christ asked the question: Could one find a command, example, or necessary inference in the New Testament that would justify missionary societies?**...Fanning moved from support to opposition of missionary societies on legal or patternist grounds..." (Richard T. Hughes & James Gorman, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 2024, p. 56).

5. Instrumental Music controversy: "...many began to couch their **resistance to instrumental music in terms of the biblical pattern**. This is hardly surprising, given the powerful strains of **Baconianism** and biblical primitivism that characterized this movement...Moses Lard appealed in 1864 to the notion that the New Testament was the only standard for "the smallest point of doctrine"...Franklin was couching his opposition to the use of instruments in the same terms: "There is not a man anywhere who claims

any [biblical] authority for the new element...The worship in all its parts...is a matter of revelation—divinely prescribed. Nothing is acceptable worship, only that which the Lord ordained”” (Richard T. Hughes & James Gorman, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 2024, p. 58). Poor Francis Bacon probably never imagined back in the 1500’s his Scientific Method was going to be the blame for the instrumental music controversy!!

6. Limited Benevolence or “Saints Only” Teaching: “After I graduated from Freed-Hardeman University, I sensed a growing tension within myself...it was as if there were two hermeneutical methods operating in my head from my earliest years...This, surfaced, for example, in my **gut feeling** that the “**saints only doctrine**” did not cohere with the grand narrative of God’s redemptive plan” (Hicks, John Mark. *Searching for the Pattern*, p. 108).

E. Is there a good reason to leave behind CENI? Or, is part of the motivation to turn to a blueprint with more flexibility on what have been divisive doctrines?

III. Defending CENI As an Interpretive Pattern

A. Our purpose, in defending CENI, is not:

1. In defending terminology (Inductive/Deductive Method, Necessary Inference, Logic, etc). Some of these terms are not in Scripture.
2. To prove/disprove whether or not various “Restoration Movement” figures (Campbell, Stone, Fanning, Franklin, Sommer, etc) learned from and utilized “Enlightenment”-era approaches to knowledge/reason.
 - i. They did. This is documented.
 - ii. Yet, learning from others and living in the same era as other movements does not make one a heretic!
 - iii. Reading from their writings does not automatically make us one of their disciples unable to decipher from human/divine teachings.

B. Our key Task: To prove the interpretive principles (CENI) were not “invented” by Restoration Movement figures (thus of merely human origin) but can be found prior to the “Restoration” tracing back to the Scriptures themselves.

1. We will use three lines of argument (I guess that makes me Baconian) to answer the question.

2. First, we will note how CENI is a common, self-intuitive method of communication in several fields of study—not just the Scriptures.
3. Second, and most importantly, we will document the use of logical reasoning and CENI from the inspired Scriptures themselves!
3. Thirdly, we will note, historically, how the interpretive posture/principles documented in “Restoration Movement” history predate the Movement.
4. In so doing, we will prove the hermeneutics employed by those in the Restoration Movement did not originate from human minds, but they merely applied principles of divine origin! There is quite a difference in *applying* a principle found and restated historically and *creating* one!

C. A key question: Why is it important to consider how the Bible communicates its message to man and how to interpret it?

1. Without a hermeneutic, preachers may abuse their role of faithfully preaching the Word of God.
 - i. Scriptures can be abused when preachers try to make the text mean whatever they want it to mean (eisegesis over exegesis)—sometimes in an attempt to be novel or original.
 - ii. A Scripture-based hermeneutic acts as a guardrail to preachers who go off the rails (see 2 Timothy 1:13)!
 - ii. We will not properly *exegete* the text from the pulpit if we do not approach Scripture with a sound posture as we study (2 Tim. 2:15).
2. Various hermeneutical methods have laid the groundwork for false teaching and error and need exposed and corrected.
 - i. The mystical/spiritualist method—claiming direct, special authority/revelation from God (cp. Jude 3).
 - ii. The allegorical method—the Bible is viewed as metaphor, various examples of such among the church “fathers” (cp. 2 Cor. 4:6).
 - a. “Clement of Alexandria, commenting on the Mosaic prohibition of eating the swine, the hawk, the eagle, and the raven, observes: “The sow is the emblem of voluptuous and unclean lust of food...The eagle indicates robbery, the hawk

injustice, and the raven greed” (Terry, Milton S. *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 163). What?

b. This might seem a stretch...but how many WOKE preachers out there are allegorizing the text to support the LGBTQ agenda in a religious context?

c. Example: the “Good Samaritan” of our culture is the one who defends the oppressed (LGBTQ, feminism, etc.), but traditional religion (represented by the priest/Levite) turns the other way...

d. Examples like this are Legion in our culture today!

iii. The hierarchical method—interpretation is for the priesthood/Magisterium of the church (puts our faith in men, not God’s Word—cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:13; John 8:31-32). This takes Scripture out of the hands of the common man and gives the clergy a monopoly on interpretation! It is “for the saints” (Jude 3).

iv. Rationalistic/naturalistic methods—nature the standard, reason the guide. Not exegesis, but “exit-Jesus!” as it denies the supernatural and true inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16). Ex. “Jefferson Bible”

v. Apologetic method—views every statement as inspired (even witch of Endor, Cain, Laban, Judas)—ignores context.

vi. Dogmatic method—Truth merely determined by past argument/tradition—Catholicism/Protestantism (cp. 2 Thess. 3:6).

vii. Literal interpretation—does not take into account genre (poetry, apocalyptic literature, etc)—misuses figurative language by literalizing what was not meant to be literal.

viii. (see Dungan’s *Hermeneutics*, pp. 58-81 or Milton S. Terry’s *Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp. 161-173 for a deeper dive into the above, Gorman also has an interesting section on hermeneutical “postures” in *Elements of Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 154-158).

3. Much of the writing being done and stances taken by the “Restorers” were, rightfully, a response to these interpretive abuses. Abuses we still see today. In fact, abuses we may be reverting to as CENI is abandoned...

IV. The Illogic of the Allegations

A. **Exaggerated Argument:** One of the allegations/insinuations being made is that the CENI framework is merely a Lockean, Baconian, Enlightenment-era invention.

1. Admission: As stated, it cannot be denied that some of those in the “Restoration Movement” did study from, quote, and use such principles in their approach to interpretation.

2. HOWEVER, does that mean it was “new,” and, therefore, a merely manmade approach to Biblical interpretation?

i. Consider an illustration :

a. If I were to argue, “we see a massive amount of wheels being produced after the invention of the automobile, the industrialization of America, and when Goodyear began mass producing tires in their factories.” Would I be wrong?

b. Now, if I were to take it a step further and say, “Therefore, the concept of the wheel really began, for all intents and purposes, during the Industrial Revolution.” Is that true?!

c. No! Because we’ve had wheels on wagons, buggies, carts, and wheelbarrows long before Goodyear and the modern car came along! We’ve even got chariot wheels in the Bible!

ii. This is my issue with what seems **an exaggerated argument** made by those trying to undermine the CENI approach to interpretation.

a. I do not take issue with those who might say, “Historically, we see an increase in references to those using an Inductive Method (CENI approach to Bible authority) after the Enlightenment and post-John Locke, Francis Bacon, etc.”

b. I do take issue with those who seem to give the impression this method did not exist prior to this era and **only exists because of the Enlightenment/Restoration** influencers.

c. CENI’s approach can be found in the Scriptures themselves!

d. As we will soon prove throughout the rebuttal content of this lesson.

B. Prejudicial Argument: Furthermore, the constant allegation of “primitivist, blueprint, Campbellite, Baconian” thinking sounds a lot like a deflection.

1. What is the difference between a denominationalist yelling “Campbellite!” whenever water baptism is taught and those teaching a “new hermeneutic” claiming “Campbellism”?!
2. This form of name-calling would be deemed “prejudicial” in a court because it tries to create guilt-by-association.
3. It is a form of an *ad hominem* attack. Thus, unethical argumentation.
4. The issue is not whether it is a Restorationism, Campbellism, or Baconianism, but is it Scriptural thinking? This should be the focus.
5. Our goal should never be to take any human being at their word...the Berean principle is to check every man with God’s Word (Acts 17:11).

V. A Communication Argument: CENI is the Foundational Grammar of Normative Logic

A. CENI is language often applied to the “Restoration,” but it is a core component of human reasoning in various fields. It is not just “church of Christ” jargon!

1. This type of reasoning is used in our justice system and courts of law.
 - i. The **rule of law** must be followed which includes following the law code. This expectation suggests we can understand the law!
 - ii. Yet, sometime **legal precedents** are used (examples)—Roe v. Wade, Brown vs. Board of Education, etc.
 - iii. Of course, where no explicit law or precedent exists then **inferences must be made** from the law and applied to legal cases.
2. Detectives may work in the same way.
 - i. A direct **confession** or eyewitness **statement** may prove one guilty.
 - ii. A character witness may build a case through prior **examples** of deviant behavior or a video may **show** the criminal in the act.
 - iii. Yet, sometimes fingerprints, DNA, and other corroborative evidence is used as **reasonable conclusions** are made!
3. Likewise, this process is used in everyday life. You want to be a chef.

- i. You can **read** books about food and cooking with recipe instructions to learn.
- ii. You can **watch** good chefs do their baking to learn the trade.
- iii. You can watch an Iron Chef judge's reaction (*yuck* or *yum*!) to certain dishes to **determine** whether or not it's a dish worth repeating.

B. If we are going to UNDERSTAND anything, we must COMMUNICATE. And the same exact thing is true of God, and His will. God communicates to us, in the exact same way that we communicate with each other...

- 1. It is really that simple. There is nothing that is inherently profound about God's method of communication.
- 2. He communicates to us in the same way that we communicate to one another. In **Genesis 1:26**, the Bible teaches that we were created in the image of God. Therefore, we were created with the ability to communicate, think, and reason.
- 3. And so... How does ANYONE communicate their will/desires to anyone else? How does communication work? How do you communicate?
- 4. There are three ways, and only three ways, to communicate...
 - i. You can TELL them. This is the most direct way to communicate your will to someone else--an order (command) or a statement.
 - ii. You can SHOW them. You show them a step by step set of directions for what you want...
 - iii. You can IMPLY it to them. You can imply through gestures, or a look, or even through an indirect statement.
- 5. Question: Can you think of any other possible way to communicate your will to me without telling me, showing me, or implying it to me?
 - i. This is fundamental logic. These principles of communication are self-evident.
 - ii. Since our ability to think logically, and our ability to communicate, and reason comes from God, then our whole communication process comes from God.

iii. “Tell, show, and imply communication” is so basic that we cannot communicate without it. It is really that simple.

6. And so, when it comes to understanding the Bible, and understanding God’s will for our lives today (since God has all authority=the right and power to act), we look for what God tells us, shows to us, and implies to us.

VI. A Scriptural Argument: CENI or TSI In the Scriptures

A. Let’s first ask, is the core idea of laying out the details and making reasonable, logical conclusions found in the Scriptures?

1. Is this not what Eve did in the very beginning in the Garden? The serpent asks a question on an issue and Eve lays out the details of what God revealed to answer it! The serpent twisted the details and Eve failed to trust God’s Word and trusted Satan’s crafty deception (Genesis 3:1-6)!

2. Is this not what Moses did in *Deuteronomy* (“the law repeated”)? He took laws (10 Commandments), positive/negative examples (Sihon/Og, spies), and made a conclusion (blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 27-28)?

3. Is this not what Jesus did in Luke 24:44 with “*the Law of Moses, Psalms, and the Prophets*” as he “*opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures*” (NKJV) to indicate His Lordship?

4. Is this not the general process used by John in his gospel as he lays out several miracles of Jesus in order to come to a conclusion about the identity of Jesus Christ (John 20:30-31)?

B. There are many interpretive principles to consider as we approach Scripture...but, we are tasked with determining if the oft-targeted hermeneutical method of CENI is of divine origin. So, are commands, examples, and inferences, in general, and even our approach to Biblical silence, a revealed matter?

1. **Direct command** or precept—“*Thou shalt*” (positive commands) or “*Thou shalt not’s*” (negative commands)

i. John 14:15, “*If you love Me, you will keep My **commandments***” (NASB1995).

ii. John 15:14, “*You are My friends if you do what I **command** you*” (NASB1995).

iii. Matthew 28:20, “teaching them to observe all that I **commanded** you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age...” (NASB1995).

iv. 1 Corinthians 14:37, “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord’s **commandment**” (NASB1995).

v. 2 Peter 3:2, “that you should remember the **words spoken** beforehand by the holy prophets and the **commandment** of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles” (NASB1995).

2. Approved **apostolic example** or precedent (SHOW)—I’m assuming Marshall McDaniel covers this extensively in his ECIC outline...

i. 1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now these things happened to them as an **example**, and **they were written for our instruction**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (NASB1995).

ii. Philippians 3:17, “Brethren, join in following **my example**, and observe those who walk according to the **pattern** you have in us” (NASB1995).

iii. James 5:10, “As an **example**, brethren, of suffering and patience, take **the prophets** who spoke in the name of the Lord” (NASB1995).

3. **Necessary Inference** or Logical Conclusions/Implications (IMPLY)

i. Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, and let us **reason** together,” Says the Lord...” (NASB1995).

ii. 1 Peter 3:15, “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to **give an account** for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence...” (NASB1995).

iii. Acts 17:1-4, “Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths **reasoned** with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.” 4 And some of them **were persuaded** and joined

Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women” (NASB1995).

iv. Acts 18:4, “And he was **reasoning** in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks” (NASB1995).

v. Acts 19:8-9, “And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, **reasoning and persuading** them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus” (NASB1995).

vi. Acts 28:23-24, “When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was **explaining** to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. 24 Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe” (NASB1995).

vii. Some authors would like to rule out any doctrine that is based on necessary inference without a command or example. Have you considered how many doctrines this would eliminate (which might just be the motivation)? David Pratte has a helpful list on his Gospel Way site with the following excerpt.

viii. “ Can you prove your conviction using only direct commands or statements, without using examples or inferences? Try it. You cannot use examples and you cannot draw conclusions that are not directly stated.

- 1) Miracles for today
- 2) Modern-day prophets and revelations
- 3) Sprinkling or pouring for baptism
- 4) Alien sinner saved by prayer (before baptism)
- 5) Infant baptism
- 6) Animal baptism
- 7) Postponing baptism till a later service

- 8) Purgatory
- 9) Indulgences
- 10) Praying for the dead
- 11) Praying to saints and Mary
- 12) Burning incense in worship
- 13) Confessing sins to special priesthood
- 14) Successors to the apostles
- 15) Lord's Supper on weekdays
- 16) Annual or quarterly Lord's Supper
- 17) Literal body and blood in Lord's Supper
- 18) Hamburger and Coke on the Lord's Supper
- 19) One elder over a congregation
- 20) One bishop over several congregations
- 21) Earthly head or headquarters for the church
- 22) Church missionary/benevolent societies
- 23) Calling a preacher "Reverend"
- 24) Church support of entertainment/recreation
- 25) Church-owned businesses
- 26) Church-owned colleges, schools, day-care
- 27) Instrumental music in worship
- 28) Fund-raising by rummages, bake-sales, etc.
- 29) Weekday collections
- 30) Denominational names (Baptist, Methodist)
- 31) 1000-year reign of Christ on earth
- 32) Religious holy days
- 33) Gambling

- 34) Dancing
- 35) Drug dealing
- 36) Cheating in school
- 37) Abortion
- 38) Publishing/selling pornography
- 39) Religious holy days
- etc., etc., etc.

Even when people deny that examples and inferences are binding, they still hold strong views regarding some of these practices. But to prove their conclusions, they must use examples and inferences as binding authority! To be consistent, they must recognize that examples and inferences are binding, or they must give up their position regarding all these practices!” (Pratte, David. Online. https://gospelway.com/bible/necessary_inference.php).

4. In addition to these three we also must learn to view **God’s silence** with respect to authority with consistency. Is it permissive or prohibitive? Doy Moyer lists several references in his chapter on Bible Authority in *Pursuing the Pattern* (edited by Jim Deason, 2017, p. 46).

- i. The Law: “*Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; **you shall not add to nor take away from it***” (Deuteronomy 12:32, NASB1995).
- ii. Wisdom Literature: “***Do not add to His words*** Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar” (Proverbs 30:6, NASB1995).
- iii. Historical narrative: “*Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; **do not turn from it to the right or to the left**, so that you may have success wherever you go*” (Joshua 1:6-7, NASB; cf. Deut. 5:32; 17:11).
- iv. The prophets: “*When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 **To***

the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn” (Isaiah 8:19-20, NASB1995)

v. The gospels: “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “**If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;** 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31-32, NASB1995)

vi. Acts: ““Since we have heard that some of our number to whom **we gave no instruction** have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls...” (Acts 15:24, NASB1995)

vii. Epistles: “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” (1 Corinthians 4:6; cp. James 1:25; 2 John 9; 1 Timothy 6:3-4, 20-21; Hebrews 7:14; 1 Peter 4:11)

viii. Revelation: “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **if anyone adds to them**, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 **and if anyone takes away from the words of the book** of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19, NASB1995)

5. Though some object to these methods or the *terminology*, the *ideology* and *methodology* is present in Scripture.

B. Jesus Used CENI: In establishing His Old Testament authority for His practices, Jesus used these three methods as He used the Scriptures.

1. Jesus used a **direct command** as He refuses to worship Satan in the temptation (Matthew 4:8-10; Deuteronomy 6:13).

2. Jesus follows a **divine example** as He refuses to trust more in bread than God (Matthew 4:1-4; Deuteronomy 8:3).

3. Jesus **logically infers** Satan would be testing God because of the blatant misuse of Scripture (Matthew 4:5-7; Deuteronomy 6:16).

i. In another **necessary inference**, Jesus makes it clear the statement made by God to Moses indicates there is a resurrection (Mark 12:26-27; cp. Exodus 3:6, 15).

ii. In Matthew 19:3-6, Jesus makes a **logical conclusion** based upon an Old Testament verse about marriage that indicates His position (Matthew 19:3-6).

iii. In John 9:29-34, the man born blind also gathers the evidence and makes a **conclusion** about the identity of Jesus Christ based upon it (cp. 9:35-36).

4. The one who rules out using inspired examples from the Scriptures or making inferences based upon the Scriptures rules out the methods Jesus used when He taught!

5. John Mark Hicks says this in his book, "Patternists, however, are generally concerned about authority and what is required...However, I suggest that **who Jesus is, what Jesus says, and what Jesus does is our authority.** His actions, teachings, and practices authorize..." (*Searching for the Pattern*, p. 182). I completely agree with his quote up to this point! And Jesus uses Commands, Examples, and Necessary Inferences! So, why does Hicks, *et al* also argue this process is merely Baconian or Lockean?

C. The Apostles Used It: These same methods of establishing Bible authority were used by the apostles as they settled religious controversies. In a recent issue of *Think On These Things*, Matt Hennecke writes, "...**the model for raising questions and examining them cordially already exists.** Acts 15 reveals a volatile, high-stakes doctrinal dispute handled with openness, courage, and ultimate submission to Scripture. The result was clarity, unity, and a strengthened fellowship. That's the template I think needs to be resurrected in many local congregations" (thinkonthesethings.com, Vol. 57, No. 4, 2026).

1. In Acts 15, Peter makes a **necessary inference** based on the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit both Cornelius' household (Gentiles) and the apostles (Jews) received on Pentecost (Acts 15:7; cp. Acts 10:15,20).

2. Next, Paul and Barnabas use the **example** of new Gentile converts (Sergius Paulus in Acts 13:12; Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:46-47; Iconium in Acts 14:3; Lystra in Acts 14:10-18) as authorization of Gentile salvation (see also 14:27) without circumcision (Acts 15:12). Acts 15:12 is a summary of multiple examples this evangelistic tag team could have cited!

3. Additionally, James uses a **direct statement** from an Old Testament prophecy indicating this Gentile prophecy had been fulfilled (Acts 15:13-19).

i. Note how James says after reading a passage, “**Therefore I judge...**” (15:19).

ii. He had to make a **logical conclusion** based on an indirect statement.

4. A fourth line of argument, **the silence of the Scriptures**, is also found as the apostles reason through an issue (Acts 15:1-29)

i. The apostle’s letter argues from the silence of God on circumcision- it is not a requirement of the new covenant (Acts 15:22-24)!

ii. If God has given “**no such commandment**” binding circumcision, then why try to require it and turn it into a divisive issue in the church?!

6. Another example of a necessary inference is found a chapter later.

i. On Paul’s second evangelistic journey, the Spirit chooses a unique way to reveal the truth to him.

ii. He has already been in Phrygia and Galatia (north and east; Acts 16:6).

iii. He is forbidden from going to Asia (southwest; Acts 16:6).

iv. He is forbidden from going to Bithynia (northwest; Acts 16:7).

v. At night, he has a vision called “*the Macedonian call*” (Acts 16:9).

vi. Based on prior information and this vision, Acts 16:10 says, “*Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, **concluding that** the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.*”

a. The term “concluding” here is defined as “(mentally) to infer, show, teach...” (Strong’s).

b. Now, would you say a “logical conclusion” is not Biblical? It’s exactly what Paul did with the information revealed!

c. How many times have you heard a preacher say “When we see a “therefore” we’ve got to ask what it’s there for?” This term typically precedes a logical conclusion!!

D. The Hebrew writer used these various forms of reasoning in his work.

1. For example, in Hebrews 12:5-7, there is an Old Testament quote from a **direct statement** in Proverbs 3:11-12 teaching us to endure discipline.
2. In Hebrews 12, the author cites the **negative example** of Esau to teach us not to sell our souls for the sake of fleshly impulse (cp. Gen. 25:31-34).
3. In chapter 11, he cites multiple **positive examples** he refers to as “*a cloud of witnesses*” to encourage us to live by faith (Hebrews 12:1).
4. In Hebrews 12:26-28 he quotes from Haggai 2:6 and makes a **logical conclusion** about the unshakable kingdom (note “*indicates*” in v. 27).
 - i. δηλόω: to make something known by making evident what was either unknown before or what may have been difficult to understand—‘to make known, to make plain, to reveal’” (Louw & Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1996, p. 339).
 - ii. “...is common in Gk. (and the pap.) for ‘to make evident, plain or clear,’ ‘to show,’ ‘to declare,’ ‘to impart,’ ‘to demonstrate’ (Bultmann, Rudolf. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1964, p. 61).
5. Hebrews 1 is full of Old Testament passages (Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 97:7; 104:4) that builds a case leading to a simple **necessary inference**: Jesus is “*better than the angels*” (v. 4).

Hebrews	O.T. Reference	Indication
1:5a	Psa. 2:7	God never called an angel “His Son”
1:5b	2 Sam. 7:14	The Father called Jesus His Son
1:6	Psa. 97:7	God commanded angels to worship Jesus
1:7	Psa. 104:4	The angels are God’s ministers
1:8-9	Psa. 45:6-7	Jesus is called God
1:10-12	Psa. 102:25-27	Jesus is eternal
1:13-14	Psa. 110:1	Jesus sits at God’s right hand, not angels

6. Finally, the Hebrew author also references the **silence of the Scriptures** in Hebrews 7:14.

- i. The thread of the argument: To change a thing authorized by law, the law must be changed (7:12).
- ii. Jesus is not of the tribe of Levi, yet serves as high priest today, so there must have been a change in the law.
- iii. After all, in previous days, Uzziah tried to usurp the priesthood and failed (2 Chronicles 26:16-19).
- iv. No one but the Levites had the right to serve as priests because Moses “**spoke nothing**” about any other tribe (Heb. 7:14).
- v. Therefore, a new high priest must indicate a new law!

E. While some object to the terms, the interpretive concepts of command, example and necessary inference are very much Christian and apostolic! New Testament writers used Old Testament passages in this way. If what they did was a correct way to apply passages, surely we are right to do the same!

VI. A Historical Case Study: CENI and the Regulative Principle Pre-Restoration

A. One of the arguments where CENI and the Regulative Principle (Biblical Silence) come into play is the Instrumental Music issue.

B. While several authors would have us believe our stance on the instrument question is merely borne out of Enlightenment principles, history proves otherwise.

1. This reasoning process with regard to the instrument question has been used through the centuries, well before the Restoration Movement.

2. John Price argues in *Old Light on New Worship*, “When we come to the New Testament, the following three truths become clear: 1) The Old Testament Temple worship in all of its outward ceremonies and rituals has been abolished; 2) We must look to Christ and His apostles alone for the worship of the church; and 3) **With no command, or example, or any indication [necessary inference, JRW] whatsoever from the Lord Jesus** that He desires musical instruments to be used in His church, we have no authority for their use...these three truths will be found over and over again throughout the history of the church” (Price, John. *Old Light on New Worship*, 1982, p. 54).

C. Let’s begin with the first-century Jewish synagogue.

1. “Robert Douglas writes on the synagogue in his book *Church Music Though the Ages*, “**Instrumental music is not known to have been used** in connection with this worship” (Price, John. *Old Light on New Worship*, 1982, p. 65).

2. Professor James McKinnon adds, “Early Christianity inherited its musical practices and attitude from Judaism, especially from the Synagogue. Unlike the Temple, **the Synagogue employed no instruments in its services**...instruments had no function in the unique service of the Synagogue...The Synagogue’s rites were absorbed into the early Christian Mass, and the vocal music of the Synagogue, especially psalmody, was fostered by Christians with considerable enthusiasm” (Price, John. *Old Light on New Worship*, p. 65-66).

3. **Question: why would the first-century Temple have had instruments of music but not the synagogues?**

i. The answer is interesting...God, through Moses and David, **commanded** instruments in both the tabernacle (Numbers 10:1-2, 8) and temple to be used by the Levites in public worship (1 Chronicles 16:1-6; 23:1-5; 28:11-13, 19).

ii. So, Solomon followed this command by only using Levites in temple worship “**for David the man of God had so commanded**” (1 Chronicles 23:1-5; cp. 2 Chronicles 8:14)

iii. Due to apostasy, the Temple worship had to be reformed and restored upon several occasions. Every time, there is an interesting note that is significant to our conversation.

a. 170 years after David, Jehoiada restored worship “**according to the order of David**” (2 Chronicles 23:18).

b. 270 years after David, when Temple worship was restored, it was restored “**according to the command of David**” by Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:25-27).

c. 380 years after David, King Josiah reformed the Temple worship “**according to the writing of David king of Israel and according to the writing of his son Solomon**” (2 Chronicles 35:4) and “**according to the command of David**” (35:15).

d. 550 years after David, after the return from Babylon, Zerubbabel and Jeshua begin worship in the second Temple “according to **the ordinance of David**” (Ezra 3:10).

e. 600 years after David, Nehemiah restores temple worship “**according to the command of David the man of God**” and this includes “...the musical instruments of David the man of God” (Nehemiah 12:24, 35-36; cp. 45-46).

iv. What’s the point? There was music in the Temple because David commanded it to be performed by the Levites and in the Temple. Could it be this is why we see it in the Temple, but not in the synagogue? Because the Jews respected David’s commands?

v. John Price writes, “We have noted a recurring set of phrases on every occasion whether Temple worship was restored: “*according to the ordinance of David*” and “*according to the command of David the man of God.*” We should also note another set of recurring phrases on each of these occasions having to do with the re-institution of the sacrificial system of Old Covenant worship. These phrases are “*as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God*” (2 Chron. 23:18; 31:3; Ezra 3:2), or, “*as it is written in the law of the Lord*” (Neh. 8:14-15, 10:34-36, 13:1), and “*according to the word of the Lord by Moses*” (2 Chron. 35:6, 12). Both sets of recurring phrases, those that have to do with the re-institution of sacrifices, and those that have to do with the re-institution of musical instruments, are remarkably similar. **Just as these men looked back to Moses, the man of God, for authority concerning sacrifices, so they looked back to David, the man of God, for authority concerning the use of musical instruments in worship.** The divine authority concerning musical instruments was no less than the divine authority concerning the sacrifices. Both had been revealed by the Lord through His prophets” (Price, John. *Old Light on New Worship*, p. 31).

vi. The use of musical instruments in the Temple is proof the Jewish people **respected the commands of God** and obeyed them under the old covenant. The absence of musical instruments in the synagogue is proof the Jewish people **respected the silence of God** and refrained from the use of instruments in synagogue assemblies!

D. Now consider the early years of the church.

2. Price connects, **“the worship of the apostolic church grew out of the simple and spiritual elements of the synagogue...unaccompanied by any musical instruments.** The hymns of the early church were primarily sung by the whole congregation with their voices united” (ibid, p. 67).

3. The Church Fathers also opposed instrumental music. Price writes, “The historical evidence of unaccompanied singing in both **the Jewish synagogue before the apostles** and the church of **the second century after the apostles** provides the most powerful evidence in interpreting the silence of the New Testament” (ibid, p. 69). Price quotes from the following “Church Fathers” in his work...

i. Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165, ibid, p. 71).

ii. Clement of Alexandria (150-ca. 215, ibid.).

iii. Origen (ca. 185-ca. 254, ibid., p. 72).

iv. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (ca. 260-ca. 339, ibid, p. 73).

v. Athanasius (ca. 293-373) of Alexandria (ibid).

vi. Ambrose (ca. 340-397, ibid, p. 74).

vii. Jerome (ca. 340-420, ibid.).

viii. Augustine of Hippo (354-430, ibid. p. 75).

ix. Isidore of Pelusium (d. ca. 440, ibid).

x. Niceta, Bishop of Remesia (370-414, ibid. p. 76).

xi. Council of Laodicea (A.D. 367, p. 76) forbid it.

xii. Council of Carthage (A.D. 416) forbid it.

xiii. Now, why was there unanimity on this issue in the first four centuries? Price comments, **“If the apostles had commanded and used** musical instruments in the early church, **then surely this practice would have been carried on by the Church Fathers...**All the historical evidence leads to only one conclusion, that there were no musical instruments in the apostolic churches” (ibid, p. 77, 78).

E. Now, consider the instrument question in the Dark Ages.

1. While the instrument had been introduced, it was rare. Thomas Aquinas wrote in 1260, “**The Church does not use musical instruments** such as the harp or lyre when praising God, **in case she should seem to fall back into Judaism...**For musical instruments usually move the soul more to pleasure than create inner moral goodness” (ibid, p. 81). Think about that argument...if it was “Judaizing” then it wasn’t approved by Jesus! In other words, there was no New Testament authority for it!

2. “Professor Girardeau writes, ‘There is no evidence, but the contrary, to show that instrumental music was commonly introduced into the church until the thirteenth century. The church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into **a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental worship for 1200 years**’ (ibid, p. 82). Note: the church refused to compromise this “apostolic practice” for 1200 years! In other words, they recognized the lack of Biblical authority and rejected this progressive innovation for centuries.

F. During the Reformation, there were many Reformers who appealed to Bible authority in their objection to instrumental music.

1. Price writes, “To the reformers, reformation was necessary not only in regard to false doctrine, but also in regard to false and idolatrous worship. The recovery of biblical doctrine must have its legitimate expression in the recovery of biblical worship...The Protestant Reformation therefore became to a large extent a movement to return the church to the simplicity and purity of apostolic worship. No small part of the sensuous worship of the medieval church that had to be reformed was its use of musical instruments” (ibid, p. 85).

2. The list of Reformation preachers, many pre-Enlightenment, who opposed instrumental music because of its departure from Scripture includes...

i. John Wycliffe (1320-1384)

ii. John Hus (1369-1415)

iii. Erasmus (ca. 1466-1536)

iv. Andreas Bodenstein of Carlstadt, dean of the faculty of Theology at the University of Wittenberg (1480-1541)

v. Huldreich Zwingli, leader of the Swiss Reformation (1484-1531)

- vi. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)
- vii. John Calvin (1509-1564)
- viii. Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva (1519-1565)
- ix. Menno Simmons, leader of the Anabaptists (1496-1561)
- x. Martin Mohler, Professor of Theology at Munich (1547-1606)
- xi. John Knox, leader in the Scottish Reformed Churches (1513-1572)

G. Likewise, in the Puritan Era, we find a rejection of instrumental music on the basis of three basic principles: "1) The Old Testament Temple worship in all of its outward ceremonies and rituals has been abolished, 2) The church must look to Christ and His apostles alone for the ordinance of worship, 3) In the New Testament, **we find neither command nor example of any musical instrument in worship**, and, therefore, we have no warrant for their use" (ibid, p. 106). Several names and quotations of Puritan leaders can be found in Price's book.

- 1. William Perkins (1558-1602)
- 2. Henry Ainsworth (1571-1622)
- 3. William Ames (1576-1633)
- 4. David Calderwood (1575-1650)
- 5. John Owen (1616-1683)
- 6. John Bunyan (1628-1688)
- 7. Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)
- 8. Thomas Ridgeley (1667-1734)
- 9. Matthew Henry (1662-1714)
- 10. Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)
- 11. Isaac Watts, hymn writer (1674-1748)
- 12. John Gill (1697-1771)
- 13. Cotton Maher (1663-1729)

H. I have intentionally selected these eras (without getting into the voices of the 18th and 19th centuries such as Thomas Chalmers, Charles Spurgeon, Andrew Fuller,

John Dagg, John Spencer Curwen, etc.) and the names of these men who opposed the instrument to help us make a specific point.

1. Our opposition to instrumental music is not a “church of Christ” or just a “Restoration Movement” doctrine.
2. It is not even a “Lockean” or “Baconian” doctrine as it pre-existed these men.
3. It is a doctrine well-supported by a broad background of historical figures who opposed the instrument on a similar approach to the Scriptures long before the Restoration Movement.
4. It is a New Testament doctrine based on the example of Jesus and the teaching of His apostles!

Conclusion: This excerpt from an article published in October of 1973 still holds true and serves as a good closing reminder:

“Have you noticed that preachers and writers will try to prove just about everything by “The Restoration Movement?”...Today you will find people going in all these directions [Missionary Society, instrumental music, institutionalism, church support of colleges, social gospel, premillennialism, etc. JRW]...all the while claiming to have authoritative background in the restoration movement. Any casual reader of the history of the restoration movement readily sees that the movement is not proof for anything, because of its diversities. The intelligent reader of the Scriptures knows that the movement is not authority for anything because **we must go to the Scriptures for our authority**. He knows that going back to the movement, revering as “my heritage” that movement, relying upon it for righteous authority; is plain traditionalism and is teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

When we hear the gospel and obey it we are granted remission of our sins, become children of God and citizens of the kingdom of Christ, are added to his body and glorify God in his church, and live in hope of eternal life. This does not initiate us into any entity known as “The Restoration Movement” and not into any “segment” thereof. The church of the Lord is not a segment of anything. To think of the church and of one’s self as a part of such a thing is nothing more nor less than denominationalism. Those men of past generations did not agree on truth, but that does not nullify truth and right. When men are not in agreement today it in no sense nullifies nor modifies nor mollifies truth and right. We must know the truth and do it, whatever others may have done or said, or whatever they may do or say today” (Welch, Robert. *Faith and Facts Quarterly*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, p. 57).