

The Old Paths

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“The Cause We Plead...”

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Have we heard the saying, “We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent”? Have we heard people say, “We do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names”? These are not idle statements, for this plea has been made since Bible days (Deut. 29:29; I Pet. 4:11). Many in the late 1700’s and 1800’s in America were crying out for the religious world to do what the Bible says, and leave off all man-made names, creeds, doctrines, etc. This attitude struck a chord with many, and it resulted in a religious movement eventually called the “restoration” movement. One of those involved in the “restoration” movement was a man named Moses Lard, who published a quarterly teaching magazine for many years. From the first issue, he was pleading for a return to Bible practices.

On page 5 of the first issue of his magazine, he noted that some misunderstood and had, “erroneously thought, and certainly falsely said” that they were “a new sect.” His point was that the “cause” was not in trying to form a “new sect,” but to return to what was in the mind of Christ originally. To replace them “with something immeasurably better, to-wit: The “one body” of Christ” (p. 7).

As I read that article, it hit me that this **still** needs to be done! Our “cause” we plead is not merely trying to get folks to join another denomination, nor are we just “varying” the same theme found

around town. To the contrary, we are trying to show folks that what Christ had originally intended can be accomplished. Christ prayed, “*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*” (Jn. 17:20-21).

Yes, unity can be had and maintained. This is what Christ prayed for, and this is what Paul commanded (I Cor. 1:10). We can be united when we agree to go by the same standard, the Bible! Unfortunately, we live in an age when the Bible is mocked and ridiculed by the “elite” of society (much like Christ Himself was ridiculed when He walked the earth).

We live in a time when people say “choose the church of your choice,” and “there are good things about every church.” (I had one woman tell me, “God is in all churches.”) Such sayings and doctrines are contradictory to our Lord who said, “*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*” (Matt. 16:18). The popular thoughts of men concerning finding a “church” (or a mosque or synagogue) which suits you and fulfills your needs stand in blatant opposition to the New Testament which proclaims, “*There is one body...*” (Eph. 4:4). Regardless of how “sweet” and “kind” the people are, they are fighting against the King of Kings with such teachings!! (Matt. 15:8-9) Do we realize this?

Therefore, let us get back to simply following what the Bible says,

and forsake the whims, thoughts, experiences, suggestions, and edicts of men. Let us do this that we might be faithful to the “cause” — the “cause” of Christ!

“The Cause We Plead...”

Is A Biblical Cause

We are not interested in what men have or have not said. We are not interested in what the popular opinions of the day might be. We simply wish to stand upon the principles found in the Bible. Yes, many people pay “lip-service” to such principles, but we’re interested in doing more than saying it—we want to do it!

It is God’s word which “*thoroughly furnishes*” us “*to every good work*” (II Tim. 3:17). Therefore, if a thing is not authorized of God, we know it is not a good work! It is God’s word which cleanses and keeps us from sin (Ps. 119:9, 11). It is God’s word which nourishes us with spiritual “milk” and “meat” (I Pet. 2:2; I Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:14). In fact, some people looked upon God’s word as even more necessary than their food (Ps. 19:10; Job 23:12). Our “*inward man is renewed day by day*” (II Cor. 4:16) and needs the nourishment that only God’s word can provide.

If we are not focused intently on the Bible, God’s will, we are like a boat with no rudder. Our cause we plead must be the cause which draws all men to the Bible for the answers in this life!

Is A Christ-Centered Cause

Christ is the focal point of the Bible. He ought to be the focal point of our lives! When we gather to worship, when we are at work, when we are at home, wherever we may be, Christ needs to be our focus! Paul said, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*” (Col. 3:17). Whatever we do or say must be done or said in accordance with the will and authority of Christ. When Christ talked about the Judgment,

He said He would tell those who did things without the law, or without authority, "depart from me," and that He "never knew" them (Matt. 7:23). For me to refuse the authority of Christ and to go by some other authority is for me to remove Christ from the throne and put someone or something else there! May that never be so with us. The cause we plead is Christ-centered.

The apostles understood this, and continually pointed people to Christ in their writings. Are we pointing people to Christ? The majority of the "religious" world today points people to what their "church" does and says. The majority of the "religious" world has no idea what the truth is because they are so wrapped up in social things, in satisfying man's physical appetites, and in trying to obtain the world's acceptance, that they have stopped being Christ-centered at all! Unfortunately, we have brethren acting this same way, too! Though people claim to love Christ, and claim to put Him first, it is when we obey Him completely that we show our love for Christ. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15). John taught this same message in I John 5:2-3. Do we truly live this way, or are we merely giving lip-service to it? Be honest!

Is An Apostolic Cause

The cause we plead is nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else than what the apostles were pleading in their time. Paul said, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me

mightily" (Col. 1:27-29). To the Corinthians, he wrote, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Cor. 2:2-5).

In thinking about this "cause," let us remember that we are not interested in doing what "everyone else" does. We are simply interested in doing the will of God. Seeing that the apostles were "ambassadors for Christ," and seeing that they spoke in "Christ's stead," we need to pay close attention to the words written by these inspired ones that we may know what the truth is (II Cor. 5:20). Yes, the cause we plead is an "apostolic cause," for we want to only live according to the doctrine taught by the apostles of Christ, the very ones who were told to "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). They were inspired to teach and preach the truth (Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:8-13). They wrote it down for men today to follow, and we need to be living according to their words (which are the commands of God, I Cor. 14:37) and not live according to the words handed down by the Pope, or by some synod, or by my "favorite" preacher, Bible

class teacher, my parents, friends, etc., "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!"

Is An Eternal Cause

Unlike the majority of things we do in this life which will soon fade away, fall apart, be sold, die, tear up, or otherwise be destroyed; the cause we plead is an eternal cause. The creeds of men change daily, but what we are talking about is eternal. Denominations, just like sovereign, civil nations, change daily. Those among our brethren who WISH to be like them also change daily. Yet, we wish to be just as unchangeable as the Bible (Ps. 119:89; Matt. 24:35). We only want to "speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11). In the days of Moses Lard, those who took such a stand had to give up infant baptism, mechanical instruments of music, denominational titles and creeds, and a host of other things. So also, today if we wish to promote the cause of Christ, we will not involve ourselves in the workings of the denominational world. We will not involve ourselves in many of the "extra-Biblical" things our brethren want to do. Nor will we involve ourselves in the affairs that the world calls "religious" or "spiritual," for oftentimes, they are not. We wish to simply return to what the Bible says, and stand on it alone, without addition or subtraction. We wish only to follow the precepts of God, hate every false way, and look forward to Heaven one day.

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"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)