

Christianity Evolved?

Dub McClish

In a Bible class I attended several months ago, we were discussing some of the events that occurred in the period between the Testaments. This period of about four centuries is not recorded by the inspired writers, but the uninspired record makes for some informative and interesting reading for the Bible student.

During the course of the discussion, an out-of-town visitor in the class offered the information that the Jews had become accustomed to the practice of baptizing proselytes long before the time of Christ. This, of course is true. But the visitor then voiced this conclusion:

We may think that baptism in the New Testament was something new to those people, but it was not. It is interesting to see how Christianity has evolved.

This conclusion is alarming to me. While it is true that one may observe some similarities in Jewish practices with those that are a part of New Testament teaching, our visitor made the unfortunate (and equally unwarranted) assumption that similarity implies dependence. One might just as well say that since the Romans baptized the devotees of Cybele-Attis in bull's blood as a ritual of sanctification in the third century BC, thus Christ borrowed baptism.

One cannot believe very strongly, if at all, in the inspiration of Christ's way if he thinks that it was merely accommodated from existing ways, be they Jewish, Greek, or Roman. To believe in the Divine origin of the Gospel and the church rules out any conception of it as the product of philosophical evolution. Jesus didn't borrow his message from the Jews: "... I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things" (John 8: 28). Paul wrote: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." (1 Cor. 2:13). It is my observation that our people need more teaching on fundamental subjects such as evidences, inspiration, revelation, and the consequential conclusions thereof.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the October 16, 1974, edition of *Granbury Gospel*, weekly bulletin of the Church of Christ, Granbury, Texas, of which I was editor.]

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