

Apologetics

(The branch of theology having to do with the defense and proof of Christianity)

Introduction

Christianity today is very different from that of the First Century when it began. Let us consider the original Apologists and their defense and proof in order to understand better what we should defend and seek to prove.

I am only interested in defending and proving those things which are important to understanding the Bible which consists of two testaments or two religions as supposed by many. Therefore, the matters which Jesus called weighty that blinded the heirs of the First Covenant to their inheritance are very important to understand because they blind Christians to matters of the inheritance in the New Testament.

In order to defend the Faith we must be able to properly define the Faith which every Christian is supposed to be able to do but as concerning proving the faith a Christian can only prove it with his life. If you have questions my lips have answers. If you seek proof my life has evidence.

Faith and love are the weighty matters defended by Jesus but left out of the religion which God gave Moses in the wilderness. Defining and defending these weighty matters is my objective in all that I teach or write because if we don't have the foundation then all that we build (edified) will collapse.

Weighty matters are those doctrines of the Bible which hold up the weight of many other doctrines. Doctrine is simply teaching and truth is essential to every doctrine but especially to those doctrines which hold up so many other truths.

To define a matter is to evaluate it, explain it in ways that it may be understood. In defining Bible doctrines we are also defending them from error. This is why it is important to rightly divide the Word of Truth in our precepts because the truth will defend against error. The best defense for truth is to declare the truth. To declare a thing is to show it. Prove it. Set it forth. Manifest it.

to insure fairness in distribution to everyone so the problem was solved. Then outsiders misunderstood the movement to be against Moses and the Temple (Judaism) whereupon Stephen became the first defender of the Faith and the first martyr.

Defining the Faith

Peter's sermon defining the faith at Pentecost was a reply to the question from a curious crowd concerning the miracle of speaking in tongues. When asked what is this? Peter replied that this is that which God has promised us in our Jewish Bible. Peter was explaining a phenomenon that the Jewish worshiper witnessed fifty days after Passover where they had witnessed the trial and crucifixion of Jesus the Nazarene who claimed to be the King of the Jews. The curious crowd was not aware of the Resurrection as was Peter and others.

Peter was explaining current events to Jewish worshipers as things which the Prophets had said would occur in the last days, which meant that the spring festivals of feast days this current year were last days events, implying that the fall festivals would be final days.

Stephen was on trial for his life accused of heresy regarding the Religion of the Jews. He was defending his life by defending his Jewish faith which he declared to be true to the Jewish Bible. His defense was rejected and he was put to death.

A Jewish Rabbi named Saul heard Stephen's defense. In fact he was a ruler of the Jews who prosecuted the case. He also was a very learned man of Judaism being a student of the great Gamaliel. He would have heard doctrine from Stephen that most could not have heard and understood. He would later become the greatest defender of the faith which Jesus ever had. He defended both in speech and writing that which the risen Jesus had committed to his trust. He set the standard, the cannon, the measure, the rule by which all Christian doctrine is to be judged.

He remains today the greatest Christian Apologist *¹ of all times. He apologized for his error as soon as he was made aware of it and since he was so zealous in wrong doing his regrets were the greatest of

of the Roman world began to join the movement the church had its first major internal conflict which divided the movement with different doctrines for worship and Christian living..

Paul became the teacher for the uncircumcision while Peter and the other Apostles continued to teach the circumcision. This of course will produce more dissension within the Church because of the difference in these doctrines.

Peter and James would disagree with Paul in some matters relating to uncircumcised Christians while others would maintain that all Christians should be circumcised. This produced the greatest dissension that the church had ever seen and if the issue is not resolved the result will be a divided church with two gospels and two religions resulting in different worship and lifestyle for the Christian faith.

What we call Christianity today began as a Jewish Faith among the circumcision then divided into a Gentile faith among the uncircumcised. The pillars of Judeo - Christianity held a council in Jerusalem to consider the issue of Gentile Christianity. They decided that there should be a difference among Christians concerning synagogue and temple worship as well as all things pertaining to Moses and Judaism such as kosher eating, sabbath keeping, temple tithing, sacrifices, feast days, etc.

Defending the Faith

Now we have two faiths to define and defend. Peter and James contend for the faith among the circumcised while Paul contends for the faith among the uncircumcised. Paul rebukes Peter for maintaining his circumcision when among the Jews rather than renouncing circumcision as Paul had done. James rebukes Paul for teaching uncircumcision to the Jews when such was for Gentiles only. Peter, James and Paul all agreed on freedom from law for all Gentiles but Paul believed in freedom from law for all the circumcision also. Such was the dissensions among the early church over Christian worship and lifestyle. Some wanted circumcision as evidence of faith and proof of Christianity for everyone. These were called Judisers because they would make Jews out of all Christians.

opposition and persecution from those within the church. How could he possibly defend such an unscriptural position?

Paul's unique position on this matter was very important because it would remove any benefit that a Jew might have from the First Covenant cut by Moses. It would cut out Judaism with its messianic hope from the Pentecostal movement of the Nazarene sect and set the stage for Christianity to embrace every family of the world with a better hope and a better covenant. This is how Paul became the great Apostle that he is today—not by doing better than his peers but defining Christianity as better than Judaism.

Paul was a master teacher. He could articulate well the faith that he declared but the Jews that he taught looked on the outward things of their Bible just as their fathers had done omitting those weighty matters of the heart and spirit demanding proof in signs and wonders even of Paul's Apostleship.

The proof which Paul gave was to be found in the Hebrew text of Moses Covenant but the truth that he presented was spiritual and many missed it. He appeared to be teaching a mystery. Something not revealed in the Hebrew Bible. He set forth in writing his unique definition of Christianity and defended all that he taught from the Hebrew manuscripts of Judaism. His defense of the faith was not the faith of the circumcision defended by Stephen rather the faith of the uncircumcision committed to his trust by Jesus for the salvation of the whole world.

Presenting the Faith

Billy Graham is an evangelist who presents the faith while C.S. Lewis was an apologist who defended the faith. Paul presented the gospel of uncircumcision to the whole world but his defense related to the leaders of original Christianity. Paul presented his gospel to the Athenians at Mars Hill but defended his gospel to Peter and James and the Judisers.

Christian evangelists today seek to present Paul's gospel to everyone of any faith. If they were presenting Peter's gospel they would require circumcision and subjection to Judaism. Christian Apologists, however, differ greatly from Paul in defending the Christian faith because they mostly

new lifestyle. Paul defended his gospel with Moses and the prophets who had kept the faith of circumcision. He was not defending a doctrine taken by the church, he was opposing the doctrine taught by the church...and presenting to the church a new doctrine never seen or heard before. In fact, he said that the thought had never entered the heart.

Today's apologist are different from Paul in the matters of faith which they defend. Many of which did not exist in the days of Paul. For example, the Trinity, Papal authority, Marien theology, Etc., etc.,...

We have to wonder that if Paul were alive today, would he defend the doctrines held by the church or defend the doctrines given him by the Risen Christ?

The church has presented a Christian faith to the world that is very different from the faith first delivered by Paul. So the questions are, which faith should the Christian defend? Which faith should Christians present? Which faith can Christians define?

We should consider the faith and practice endowed in the office of apostleship given to Paul. It is for everyone of all time—not doctrine to teach Gentiles only—but doctrine to teach Jews as well. It is not for people in the first century only—but for people today as well.

Conclusion

The term "Defender of the Faith" is a title conferred on a head of state by the head of the church. This title was first conveyed upon King Henry the VIII a British monarch by Pope Leo X in the fifteenth century.

I'm not sure what faith the monarch was defending but I'm sure that it is not the same as Paul, Stephen, the pillars or the Judisers. If we are to defend the faith we must know which faith.

Henry the VIII was a Catholic defending the doctrine of Catholicism until the Pope would not give him the permission he desired. He hijacked the office of Bishop in his Kingdom and seceded from the Catholic faith to establish his own Church with headquarters in London.

This title was then passed on to those who sat on

faith once delivered to Jewish Christians or that once delivered to Gentile Christians or that given to the Roman world in the fourth century by the Catholic church or that given the English world in the sixteenth century or any of the many protesting faiths resulting from rebellion to the Roman church.

Today Christianity has many faiths to define and defend. Apologists abound on every hand. We Christians need to know what we believe if we are to define and explain so others can understand our Faith and since the Christian inheritance is the Spirit of God we should prove we have it with our life.

Since Apologetics is defense and proof of Christianity all Christians should be Apologists, defending the faith with their lips and proving the faith with their lives. A Judeo-Christian like Stephen could defend his faith with the Old Covenant but Gentile Christians had to go back to Abraham to find their faith in a promise made to them. This uncircumcised promise included the circumcision, but the promise made to the circumcision did not include the uncircumcision.

Paul was a teacher to the Gentiles who taught their faith to them, explaining that the Spirit of God was the new covenant inheritance which Jews had received first, but now was given also to Gentiles. This means that Jews and Gentiles are following the same spirit with the same Heavenly Father in the same Kingdom of Christ. In other words Jews also have to find their faith with the Gentiles back in uncircumcised Abraham.

There is to be no difference in the Family of God for there is only one Faith for the Children of God in the new covenant to define - to defend - to live.

All apologetics should focus on the faith and every Christian should possess the new covenant inheritance in his heart, proving with his life what he professes with his lips.

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