

Where the Bible Speaks, We Speak, Where the Bible Is Silent, We Are Silent

I Peter 4:11

Introduction:

- A. Words familiar to Christians of 25 years or more.
- B. Words have been claim of churches of Christ in past generations.
 - 1. Repeated by nearly every gospel preacher.
 - 2. Appeared in volumes of our writings and advertizing.

Discussion:

I. The SOURCE Of These Words.

- A. Sermon ending for Thomas Campbell at home of Abraham Altars in 1808.
 - 1. Between Washington and Mt. Pleasant, PA.
 - 2. Old idea newly stated: "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants". ("The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation", Chillingworth, 1637).
 - a. Had mostly been applied to Roman Catholic tradition.
 - b. Now Campbell applied it Protestant creeds.
 - 3. Initial reactions to Campbell's sermon from those present.
 - a. Andrew Munro, a scottish bookseller: "Mr. Campbell, if we adopt *that* as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism." Campbell replied, "Of course, if infant baptism be not found in the scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it."
 - b. "General Thomas Acheson: "I hope I may never see the day when my heart will renounce that blessing saying of the Scriptures, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" -- He then burst into tears.
 - c. James Foster: "Mr. Acheson, I would remark that in the portion of Scripture you have quoted, *there is no reference whatever to infant baptism.*"
- B. Became the rallying cry of Christians in generations that followed.
 - 1. It was held up as principle upon which unity could be established and maintained.
 - 2. It was held up as principle upon which soundness and security could be insured.

II. The SCRIPTURALNESS Of These Words.

- A. Our faith (and practice) to stand in revelation rather than human wisdom. (1 Cor. 2:1-13)
 - 1. We must speak as oracles of God. (1 Pet. 4:11).
 - 2. We must not teach for doctrine commandments of men. (Matt. 15:9,13,14).
 - 3. We must abide in the doctrine of Christ. (2 John 9).
 - 4. We must live by faith, faith comes from word. (Rom. 10:17).
- B. Our faith must respect silence of the Scriptures.
 - 1. Christ, the priesthood and divine law. (Heb. 7:11-16).
 - 2. Nadab and Abihu and strange (profane) fire. (Lev. 10:1).
 - 3. Prophets of old. (Deut. 18:20-22).
 - 4. False teachers are presumptuous. (2 Pet. 2:10).

III. The SIGNIFICANCE Of These Words.

- A. To what we preach in name of Lord without being presumptuous.
 - 1. Bible tells what to preach -- "gospel" (Mk. 16:15); "scriptures"; "word" (2 Tim. 3:16-4:2).
 - 2. Bible says nothing about preaching idle speculations, philosophy, sociology, politics, etc.
- B. To what we practice without being presumptuous.
 - 1. Bible tells about the worship, work and organization of the church.
 - 2. Bible says nothing about many worships, works and organizations.
 - 3. Bible does not have to specifically condemn a thing for it to be unauthorized.

4. Bible does not have to specifically mention it for it to be authorized.
 - a. Abraham offered Isaac by faith. (Heb. 11:17).
 - b. Abraham acted within expressed authority, though some things not specifically named but were included in the expressed authorization. (Gen. 22:1-3).
- C. To what we promise without being presumptuous.
 1. We can only promise forgiveness based on certain conditions. (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9)
 2. We can only promise safety in second marriage on one condition. (Matt. 19:9).
 3. We can only promise grace to those who do not continue in sin. (Rom. 6:1-3; Heb. 10:26-29).

Conclusion:

- A. We would like to hear those words spoken more often.
- B. We would like to see them more consistently applied.