

The Cross

Should We Display A Cross?

George Burnside

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“Why no crosses on our Churches?” asked a questioner. “Why can’t we see a cross in our places of worship?” We do well to consider a few facts.

1. We must go “to the law and to the testimony.” Isaiah 8:20 to settle any problem. Here we discover that neither the Old nor the New Testaments give us a single instance where a material or literal cross was ever used in, or connected with any place of worship.

2. Further we discover that by the Bible and history there is no evidence that the cross was used as a Christian symbol for the first three hundred years of the Christian era.

Even the Roman Catholics admit this. For instance, no less a Catholic authority than “The American Ecclesiastical Review,” September, 1920, states: “It may be safely assumed that only after the edict of Milan, AD 312, by Constantine, was the cross used as a permanent sign of our redemption. De Rossi, a Roman Catholic archaeologist, states positively that no monogram of Christ, discovered in the catacombs or other places, can be traced to a period anterior to the year 312.” Thus it is generally agreed that the cross as a symbol of Christianity does not date back beyond the days of Constantine.

Writing in the “Christian Heritage” of October 1958, a former Roman Catholic priest writes: “The sign of the cross goes back to the days of Constantine, the pagan emperor who was supposed to have become a Christian.

“Like the avaricious dictators of modern times, he coveted world domination with his whole soul and was not content until he was ruler of the western world. He was a pagan all his life.” According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 4, pages 298, 299, he made a monogram of the name of Christ and placed it upon the laborum, the Roman pagan standard. In the dedication of Constantinople in 330 AD, the ceremonial was half Christian and half pagan. The chariot of the sun-god was set in the market place and over its head was placed the so-called cross of Christ, while the Kyrie Eleison was sung, (another relic of paganism, according to Cardinal Newman).

“Constantine was the first emperor who enforced the large body of civil legislation on the Sun-Day rest. He was the first one to replace officially the Lord’s day for the Sun-Day, or the day of the sun.

“Constantine’s life was bilateral - half Christian and half pagan. He pleased his pagan subjects and his so-called Christian subjects.” He issued the first Sunday Law and “Under Constantine the cross first became the acknowledged symbol of Christianity. Its use as an object of punishment was abolished by him,” states Edmund Klut, “These Times,” June, 1956, page 23. Is it not significant that both Sunday and the cross came into the so-called Christian Church at the same time? They are both of pagan origin. One is as pagan as the other.

3. The cross is of pagan origin. “The cross is found in both pre-Christian and non-Christian cultures.” New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 4, page 473. “The cross was a well-known heathen sign. Go to the British Museum, and look on the statue of Samai Vul, King of Assyria, BC 825: on his breast he wears this T. “The vestments of the priests of Horus, the Egyptian god of light, are marked T. At Thebes, in the Tombs of the Kings, royal cows are represented plowing, a calf playing in front. Each animal has a T like this marked in several places on it. M. Rassam has found buildings at Nineveh marked with the Maltese cross. Osiris, as well as Jupiter Ammon, had for a monogram a T.” Dr. Schliemann, writing of the cross, says: “It is the most ancient of all religious emblems, but as an emblem of Christianity it came into use after Constantine.”

Dean Burgon, writing of the catacombs of Rome, says: “I question whether a cross occurs in any Christian monument of the first four centuries.”

The cross is found marked on Phoenician monuments before Christ, 1600 BC! Neibuhr rightly sums up Constantine’s motives in adopting the cross as a Christian emblem: “His motives in establishing the Christian religion are something very strange indeed. The religion there was in his head must have been a mere jumble. On his coins he has ‘The Unconquered Sun.’ He worships pagan deities, consults soothsayers, holds heathen superstitions; yet he shuts up the temples and builds churches.”

“No; there is no warrant for saying the cross is a Christian emblem; before AD 300 the Christians emblems were the fish, the anchor, the ship, the dove, and the palm branch. The cross as a Christian emblem was brought in when Pagan Rome adopted politically some Christianity, and so became Papal Rome!” Bible and Modern Discoveries, pages 104, 105.

W.D. Killen, (1859 Edition), page 316: “From the remote antiquity the cross was venerated in Egypt and Syria; it was held in equal honor by the Buddhists of the East.”

W. E. Vine, in “An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words,” Volume 1, page 256, says the cross “had its origin in ancient Chaldee (Babylon), and was used as a symbol of the god Tammuz, the initial of his name.”

The “Catholic Encyclopedia, (1908 Edition) Volume 4, page 517 says: “The sign of the cross, represented in its simplest form by a crossing of two lines at right angles, greatly antedates, in both the East and the West, the introduction of Christianity. It goes back to a very remote period of human civilization.”

“A Philistine Altar. In the inner sanctuary the most valuable find was a paneled altar of basalt, on the top of which is carved in high relief, a cross.” “Digging up Biblical History,” page 109. Further down the same page, “The only other cult object found was the upper part of a cylindrical object which terminated in a pig’s head.” Written by J. Carrow Duncan, Director of Excavations in Babylonia, Egypt and Palestine.

“It is a well known fact that on their arrival in America the Spaniards to their amazement found Indians in possession of the cross.” “With the Tarahumane the cross, is the pivot around which all his ceremonies and festivals move. He always dances to the cross and on certain occasions he attaches strings of beads, ears of corn and offerings to it.” “Their cross represents a human figure with arms outstretched and is an embodiment of Father Sun. When two crosses are placed on the patio, the smaller stands for the Moon.” Unknown Mexico, by Carl Lumholtz, Volume 1, page 172, 173.

“The cross was the symbol of worship of the highest antiquity in Egypt and Syria, and that rites resembling those of communion and baptism, (he refers here to the Catholic Mass and baby sprinkling) were practiced by pagan nations on whom the light of Christianity had never shone.” Conquest of Mexico, Volume 2, by W. H. Prescott, pages 382 and 383.

4. “Has the cross been used by pagans since the time of Christ?” Is a question I was recently asked.

Yes! Beyond all question. In the New Hebrides the heathen have used it and still do. When the Spaniards invaded Mexico some 500 years ago, They could not suppress their wonder, as they beheld the Cross, the sacred emblem of their own faith, raised as an object of worship in the temples of Anahuac. They met it in various places; and the image of the cross may be seen at this day, sculptured in bas-relief on the walls of one of the buildings of Palanque.” Conquest of Mexico, Volume 2, by W. H. Prescott, page 381.

An interesting statement of Scripture is found in Isaiah 27:1, where for “Piercing serpent,” the margin gives “crossing like a bar.” It is speaking of the destruction of “the dragon,” “that crooked serpent,” and could no doubt refer to the pagan use of the cross in their devil inspired worship, when they sacrificed to devils. In Canaanite mythology they looked to the “seven-headed serpent,” as the personification of evil, as revealed by tablets from excavations.

This reminds one of the “great red dragon, having seven heads.” Revelation 12:3. “That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan.” Revelation 12:9. Sun-worship was devil worship and the cross was the sign of Sun worship, then it was adopted into Christianity in the dark days of apostasy along with Sunday - the day of the Sun. Notice this significant statement: “As the Jews professed to revere the law, so do Romanists claim to reverence the cross. They exalt the symbol of Christ’s sufferings, while in their lives they deny Him whom it represents.

“Papists place crosses upon their churches, upon their altars, and upon their garments. Everywhere is seen the insignia of the cross. Everywhere it is outwardly honored and exalted. But the teachings of Christ are buried beneath a mass of senseless traditions, false interpretations, and rigorous exactions.” The Great Controversy, Ellen G. White, page 568.

When Jesus said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Matthew 16:24. He did not mean that a cross of gold was to be worn around his neck, or hung from a long chain or from cords at his side, or placed in or on a church building. When Paul said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he added immediately, “by Whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14. We do well to note Paul did not say, “the cross by which,” but “the cross by Whom.” It was the crucified and risen Savior who saves, not a material cross.

The question is asked, “Why no crosses?” Why not ask, “Why no crucifixes?” They at least have the appearance of being Christian. Or, why not ask, “Why not the sign of the cross?” It is as logical as the cross on a church building. We certainly do not need these relics of paganism. Ever since the time when Emperor Constantine took the cross as his emblem, that sign has been raised over half

Christian and half pagan church. Protestant churches have often offended in this matter also. As Lot who pitched his tent toward Sodom, too many Protestant churches have pitched too close to the gates of Rome.

May we all heed the call “Come out of her, My people”, and not ask why we cannot adopt some of her ways.

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