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Some Incentives to Contend for the Faith

We should contend for the faith because we love the souls of men. We learn from Acts 17:16 that Paul's spirit was provoked within Him because he loved the truth and the souls of men. The results of his defense are well known. The great difficulty in getting men to defend the faith today is the fact that men's spirits, generally, do not burn within them when they see men lost and practicing things that will not save.

Paul knew something that they did not know, and that was the knowledge of God, Christ, and the church. So no matter where Paul might find himself and regardless of what the circumstances might be, he was ready to dispute if it meant the salvation of souls.

"So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him." (Acts 17:17)

"Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up by revelations; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain. But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Jesus Christ, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." (Galatians 2:1-5)

The man that defends the faith must be courageous enough to be willing to speak out for the defense of sound doctrine regardless of the consequences.

We should contend for the faith because if we do not then nobody will. The church is the pillar and support of the truth.

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (I Tim. 3:15)

Denominational preachers do not and will not preach the full truth; and if they

did they would destroy the very denominations which support them. No denominational preacher exalts the church of Jesus Christ above denominational churches. What denominational preacher could be expected to show that his man-made church is in open conflict with the church of our Lord? However, it is a fact beyond dispute that the church of our Lord is just as far above all churches that have been built by men as the Lord himself is above men or as divinity is above humanity.

In Acts 4:15 Peter and John were commanded to stop preaching the truth. If they had stopped preaching the truth, they would have stopped making Christians; for men become Christians as the result of the truth's being preached, received and obeyed.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and he shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common; and they sold their possession and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

(Continued on Page 2)

The Church and I

JUST WHAT does the church mean to you? JUST WHAT does it mean to you to be a part of the church universal and of this congregation locally? There are numerous ways in which those two questions could be answered, but the following article from the pen of Brother Frank L. Cox had something to say that we all need to read. Please read it carefully.

The church is the feeding-place of the soul. It is a place of fellowship, overcoming the perils of loneliness. It is a place of spiritual reminder, refreshing consecration and quickening love. It is a place where hearts are warmed, where the bond of friendship is made stronger, where the cares of the world are forgotten, where the soul loses itself in the Eternal God. It is a dynamic of new power. In Holy Writ it is said, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." When we wait at Jesus' feet, in the spirit of humble devotion, human weakness is replaced with divine strength.

Said some devout soul: "The church is the home of my soul, the altar of my devotion, the hearth of my faith, the center of my affection and the foretaste of heaven. It claims the first place in my heart, the highest place in my activities, and its unity, peace and progress concerns my life in this world and that which is to come. I owe it my zeal, my benevolence, and my prayers. When I neglect its services I injure its good name, I lessen its powers, I discourage its members, and I chill my own soul.

Jesus died for the church; it becomes our privilege to live for the church. God grant that we may do this to the fullest measure of our live, unhindered by the spirit of selfishness or sin in any form. Like all precious plants, the church does not grow and thrive of its own accord. It is to be cared for and cultivated. My dear brother and sister in the Lord, may we not neglect the meetings of the church. When we neglect the church, we neglect ourselves and endanger the salvation of the soul.

Surely after reading such wonderful words and contemplating such marvelous thoughts we will all have a keener appreciation of the church and what it really means to be a part of it. Let us never be found guilty of neglecting the church of our own souls.

Paul W. Eubanks

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen
and James E. Henley.

Some Incentives To (Con't.)

And the Lord added to them day of day those that were saved." (Acts 2:36-47)

If you stop making Christians you also stop planting New Testament churches; for the New Testament church is made up of Christians binding themselves together to work and worship according to the teaching of the apostles. When you cease planting the New Testament church you begin the destruction of the only institution through which any responsible soul has the promise of eternal salvation.

Our salvation as well as theirs depended upon their preaching the whole truth. This being true, their responsibility was indeed great; yet no greater than that which rests upon every gospel preacher today. Our own salvation as well as the salvation of future generations depends upon our preaching the entire truth.

Garland Elkins

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Come and See

PRE-JUDGING

The title is taken from John 1:46. They are the words of Nathanael, when Phillip informed him that he had found the one of whom Moses and the prophets had written, Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth"? It was then that Phillip told him to "come and see". When he saw, he knew that something good did come from Nazareth! Nazareth had a bad reputation, but the character of each individual did not merit such a reputation, yet man so considered them so!

TRUTH NEVER CATCHES ERROR

When President Kennedy was shot in Dallas, the whole south was blamed for his death, especially Texas, and more especially Dallas! The hatred of the South was said to have bred such a one as would take a gun to take the life of our President. Later, it was learned that the one who pulled the trigger, was not a native of Dallas, neither did he learn hate in the South, but from Russia and the communist, those who would destroy us! The news media had cried wolf, when there was no wolf present. But the damage was done world wide and the truth will never catch the error and the harm done by those who thought "nothing good could come from the South". This seems unbelievable in a civilized society, yet it did happen and can happen again! What a shame to indict millions of patriotic, God fearing, honest citizens, for the crime of one who learned to hate and to kill in a foreign country! Why did they not "come and see"? Why did they not get the facts before turning their tongues loose?

WHOLE CHURCHES INDICTED

Those who will not "come and see" often today will indict whole churches as if men were corrupted by physical association. The church at Sardis had so much wrong with it, so many corrupt members, yet the Lord said "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" Rev. 3:4. Please, let us not indict the Lord's servants unless we first "come and see"?
Glynn V. Purdy

The man who graduates today and stops learning tomorrow is uneducated the day after. Newton Baker.

WHAT TROUBLES YOU?

You are a slave girl. You have borne a son for your master, but his wife becomes jealous and demands that you be thrown out of the house. You are given some bread and a goatskin water bottle. These are your only possessions as you set out with your boy to wander in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. As far as the eye can see the weird waste stretches in monotonous ugliness, and the hot winds are blowing the sand. After several days the provisions play out. The desert tortures with thirst and threantens to become an untimely grave. You cast your son under one of the little bushes and then move some distance from him as you pray, "Let me not look upon the death of the child." The anguish is intense.

All of this happened to Hagar centuries ago. But you can still hear her sobs. And God heard them, too. "The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not; for God has heard . . .'" What a message of comfort in an hour of despair. And how typical of the Lord to hear and answer prayer.

Hagar had given up, but God hadn't. Hagar was hopeless, but God wasn't. Man's extremity has always been God's opportunity. First came words of comfort, then God opened her eyes and "she saw a well of salvation." Immediately "she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." She could not make the well, but she could take the water freely offered to her.

I do not know what troubles you, but whatever it is the Lord is interested and wants you to tell Him your problems. "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). It's a good way to lose your troubles.

John Gipson

If you FAINT in the day of ADVERSITY, YOUR STRENGTH IS SMALL.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of the sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on HIS law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in due season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

He Must Needs Pass Through Samaria

By Jess Hall, Jr.

Early in the ministry of Jesus, after He had been baptized in Judea, He decided to leave Judea and go into Galilee. "And he must pass through Samaria." Read John 4:19-24.

When Jesus reached Jacob's well, He sat down to rest. His disciples went into the city to buy food. Presently, a woman of Samaria came to the well to draw water. Jesus soon engaged her in conversation.

It did not take long for the woman to realize there was something unusual about this stranger. He showed her that He had a knowledge of her affairs, and she decided He was a prophet. She also knew that He was of the nation of the Jews, and supposed He would contend that Jerusalem was the God-appointed place to worship.

"OUR FATHERS . . ."

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," said the woman of Samaria. She referred to Mount Gerizim, on which the Samaritans had built their temple. They built up a lot of traditions around that mount--traditions that made it seem to them a very sacred place. Someone has said that Gerizim is still to the Samaritans what Jerusalem is to the Jews, and Mecca to the Mohammedans.

The woman must have thought it mattered not if a prophet did say that in Jerusalem was the place where men should worship. Samaritans had their own ideas--their own traditions. The woman was not far enough along at that point to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

"WORSHIP IN SPIRIT
AND IN TRUTH. . ."

The Samaritan accepted only the five books of Moses. In giving laws during the encampment at Mount Sinai, God said, "In every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee" (Exo. 20:24). As nothing was said in the five books of Moses about Jerusalem as the place to worship, and as Jerusalem did not become the permanent place to worship until David's reign, the Samaritans did not consider that a divine arrangement.

Rejecting the testimony of the prophet David, as well as the other prophets, they were really not worshipping God, though they thought they were. Hence, Jesus said, "Ye worship that which ye know not." When Jesus said the hour was coming when

they would worship neither in Jerusalem nor in Mount Gerizim He did not mean that God could not be worshipped in those places. He meant it would not be necessary to go to either place to worship.

"TRUE WORSHIPPERS . . ."

True worshippers in spirit and truth; the Father seeks that kind of worshippers. As there are true worshippers, there is also true worship. The Athenians worshipped God ignorantly; that was not true worship. If a man's religion was vain, so would his worship be (Jas. 1:26). Jesus quoted from Isaiah: "In vain do they worship me teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt. 15:9). Paul spoke of will-worship (Col. 2:23). Will-worship is self-directed worship. True worship comes from the heart, and is conducted according to the truth. Paul expressed a similar thought when he said, "For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son" (Rom. 1:9). Joshua exhorted Israel: "Now therefore fear Jehovah and serve him in sincerity and truth" (Joshua 24:14).

Worship and service must therefore have these two characteristics: It must be performed in sincerity and in harmony with the truth.

"IN SPIRIT . . ."

There is danger that all worship degenerate into a mere formality. Worship that does not come from the heart is more flattery.

"But they flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they faithful in his covenant" (Psa. 78:36, 37). David was speaking of God's own people.

Ezekiel was a prophet, and the people pretended to go to him to hear the word of God. God said of them: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but so them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain" (Ezek. 33:31). Jesus called such people hypocrites. "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:7-8). Sincere devotion to God must be manifested in obedience to truth of God. The sincerely devoted person wants to do what God says; if he does not want to do what God says, he is not sincere in his pretended service or worship.

In the foregoing quotation from Psalm 78, David connects sincerity with faithfulness in God's covenant. God said to Ezekiel: Her priests have done violence to my law, and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean."

The holy and the clean were things God had set apart for His service and worship. The common and the unclean were things they introduced. Bringing their own inventions into God's worship and service, thus mixing human inventions with divine requirements, was doing violence to God's law, and making no distinction between their own inventions and the laws of God. They were profaning God, bringing Him down on a level with them, in making their own inventions equal to His commands.

True education is a gradual process, like the sunrise--not a sudden one, like lightning.

A person who doubts himself is like a man who would enlist in the ranks of his enemies and bear arms against himself. He makes the failure certain by himself being the first person to be convinced of it.

Abraham Lincoln said: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives; and I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him. Now change that a little. I like to see a man proud of the church where he lives; and I like to see a man live so the congregation will be proud of him.

How is it with you? Are you proud of this congregation? Are you striving to make it something of which we can be proud? Are you proud of its accomplishments? Its attendance? Its giving? Its attitude? Its love and concern for one another? Then, too, are you the type of member that the congregation can be truly proud of? Are you making a real, genuine effort to be worth something to the Cause of Christ at this place? REMEMBER, WE CAN BE VALUABLE OR VALUELESS!!

—Selected

The Church and Salvation

Common expressions heard today are, "One does not have to be a member of the church to be saved; the church doesn't save anyone; one can be a Christian and not be a member of the church." Are these expressions of truth? Can one be saved or be a Christian without being a member of the Lord's church?

If one can be saved out of a denomination as well as in it, why be in it? Why preach and work to get others to be members of it, if there is no salvation in it? Such labors would not be for the purpose of saving the lost, but rather for the purpose of making proselytes to a human creed and the building up of a man-made religious fraternity in which there is no salvation.

Any church which is not essential to man's salvation is not Christ's church, because membership in His church is indispensable to salvation. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28) Therefore, if the church is non-essential, Christ's sacrifice was useless. Christ is the saviour of the body or the church and promises to save no one outside the church. (Eph. 5:23) It is true that the church does not save anyone, but Christ saves the church. The church is not the saviour; it is the saved. All who are saved are in the church. (Acts 2:47) This verse teaches that the Lord saved the people and added them to the church in the same process. They were not first saved and then added, nor added and later saved; but they were saved in being added, and added in being saved.

One cannot be "in Christ" and have the forgiveness of sins and remain outside of His church, for the church is the body of Christ. The process that makes one a Christian is the process by which one is saved and added to the church. If one can be saved outside that divine body, then Christ died to establish a worthless institution. (Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:25-27)

Why not obey Christ and be saved? Let Him add you to His church and be a part of that institution purchased by the blood of Christ. You have nothing to lose, but so much to gain.

Let each one strive to know God's will - not man's.

Parents

One of the most beautiful pictures is that of an entire family attending Bible Study. All of the family activities cannot take the place of proper study of God's Word!

The greatest sin that is being committed against children is the failure to train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! (Prov. 22:6)

To help counteract our permissive society parents can see that their children are properly trained. This will insure a healthier society and stronger church for the future.

Mom and Dad need to be reminded that absolutely nothing can take the place of them setting the proper example in attending Bible Study; and especially seeing them walk not once a week with Jesus, but daily!

May our heavenly Father give parents the courage, desire and faith to always train their children in His nurture and admonition.

IVIE POWELL

The Cry For Love

The cry for love is a very familiar cry in religious circles. The Bible teaches that one is to love God and also his fellow man. (Matt. 22:37-40) Love toward God and our fellow man is something that should grow throughout life.

The cry for love by many is an attempt to cover sin which should be exposed. The modern philosophy is, "Love God and do as you please". If one loves God, he will want to do that which pleases God, God will not over look sin because of the cry for love.

It is possible that many cry for love because they want others to think they have love. It seems that those who cry the loudest are those who demonstrate love the least. The Bible teaches that it is not enough to love in word or in tongue, but love must be in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

The cry for love will not be so necessary when there is proof of love. Those who truly love, will prove their love by keeping God's commandments. (John 14:15, 1 John 5:3) The love of God is perfected in those who keep God's word. (1 John 2:5) When love is present, one will be careful to treat God and his fellow man right. It is not possible for one to love God and at the same time hate or mistreat his brother. (1 John 4:20).

What the world needs is less cry for love and more proof of love.

HUMILITY

I once saw a play about a young man who was constantly ridiculed by his fellow soliders. He was not quite as intelligent as they though he should be and they used him as the object of their jokes. This continued for several months until one day they attempted an extremely cruel joke. The joke involved a toy grenade which would be thrown in the vicinity where the young man was standing. The grenade was thrown and everyone began to run as if it were "live". Immediately the young man fell on the ground and began to yell for the others to run before they were hurt. No one ran. They were to stunned, too ashamed. The young man had risked his life for those who had only belittled him. Is that not humility?

Do you have humility? Do I have humility? Maybe we do. If we are willing to love others in spite of the fact they they ridicule us and use us and take advantage of us, we have humility . . . If someone were to hang us on the cross; drive nails into our hands and spat upon us, yet we could forgive them, we could say that we were humble. If someone took from us all our pride and self-respect and we could still wish for them only happiness, we could say we are humble.

But humility pays great dividends. It makes the owner beautiful. Nothing is more attractive than someone who thinks only of others. It will take a great burden from your shoulders. You won't have to worry so much about how your pride might be damaged by others. You will have more time to think about other things. Most of all, it will make you more Christ-like for truly Christ humbled himself, in the ultimate sense when he sacrificed all that he was in selfless payment for our sins.

--Sherria Smith

Rosa Hagsdale
Mammoth Springs, Ariz