

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## CHRIST, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Guy N. Woods

### QUESTION:

“How was Christ made ‘righteousness’ for us (1 Corinthians 1:30)?”

### ANSWER:

The verse, alluded to in this query, 1 Corinthians 1:30, reads in full as follows: **“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”** He is the *means* of righteousness, that is, it is *through* him we are enabled to receive the blessings of righteousness—the blessings which come to us through a life of righteousness. It is in this sense that we receive “the gift of righteousness,” not righteousness itself, but that which righteousness bestows. *Righteousness* is right-doing—the keeping of God’s commandments (Psa. 119:172). Neither here, nor elsewhere, in the sacred writings, is the denominational doctrine (lately espoused by some brethren) of imputed (transferred) righteousness taught. One might as well argue, from 1 Corinthians 1:30, that the *wisdom* of Christ is transmitted to the sinner in conversion, as to argue for a transference of righteousness (Rom. 5:17). The “gift of righteousness” is salvation.

The blessings of righteousness are received through

faithful compliance with the will of the Lord and through obedience to His commandments, and not through some mysterious bestowal of merit which the Lord possesses. We must remember that justification does not obliterate the history of sin in life; it simply releases the sinner from the guilt thereof. Paul, ever mindful of the great grace he had experienced, was never without the consciousness that he had persecuted the church of God and wasted it (1 Tim. 1:12-17). Pardoned, saved, justified, acquitted, no longer under the guilt of sin, it remained for him, through faithful adherence to the Lord’s will, to exhibit personal righteousness, *right-standing*, with God. So it is with us. The blessing of salvation is through Christ. He is the *means* of righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30), through Him we receive “the gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17), we are accepted by Him when we work “righteousness” (Acts 10:34, 35) through unswerving allegiance to His will as set out in the New Testament. We must distinguish between a righteousness imputed (credited) to us because we are in a right relationship with God through obedience to His will, and a righteousness which Christ (through *his* submission to the will of the Father), is alleged to have transferred to us. The former, the New Testament clearly teaches; the latter is Calvinism.

There is a vast difference between imputing *guilt* and in conferring *merit*. A pardoned criminal is no longer regarded as guilty of the crimes which led to his arrest and conviction, but he is thence by no means a valuable citizen simply because he has been pardoned! Righteousness is right-doing. To be righteous, one must do right. We do right when we keep the commandments of the Lord.

—Deceased

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# Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder  
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## Editorial....

# IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO PREACH THE TRUTH

As a gospel preacher, I am responsible to God for not only what I preach, but with whom I associate. It is not enough for me to be able to SAY that I am opposed to:

1. the efforts of some in the church to make it just another denomination among denominations;
2. social drinking;
3. premillennialism;
4. receiving into fellowship persons only on the basis of their having been baptized for the remissions of sins;
5. the compromise of the gospel;
6. mechanical instruments of music in the worship of God;
7. the violation of Matthew 19:9 in divorce and remarriage;
8. etc., etc., and infinitum.

When churches, colleges, or individuals have proven that they are not going to change their erroneous positions, then I must cease my fraternal associations with them. I dare not, by my actions, give anyone the idea that I condone error in anyone.

To say that the only time I must cease my fellowship with someone or something is *when that person or thing has gone TOTALLY bad*, is to allow fellowship with just about anyone or anything! Did the apostle Paul wait for the apostle Peter to be in error on everything before he “withstood him to the face...” (Gal. 2:11)? Does anyone believe that if Peter had not repented, Paul would have taken the position that since Peter was not totally wrong that he (Paul) could continue to fellowship Peter in the good things that he was doing?

Brethren, love does not cause us to say that we are opposed to thus and so, and then move us to continue in fellowship in lectureships and other such gatherings with those who teach what we say we oppose. I know of nothing that the liberal or anti-brethren (especially the liberals) would like more than if and when I disagree with their teaching that I continue to associate with them

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# PROVE IT BY THE BIBLE

J. Noel Merideth

First century Christians were told to test and examine what they heard. **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world”** (1 John 4:1). **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (1 The. 5:21). During that first century men were actually given a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit known as “discerning of spirits” (1 Cor. 12:10), whereby they could decide if a doctrine was from God or the devil and thus whether or not it was true. With the passing of the miraculous age, the inspired men committed the truth of God to the inspired Book. Today, the sole and final authority in religion is the Bible. Paul says:

**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

This passage forever settles the question of authority in religion. The Scriptures are able to make us perfect, what more could we ask for? The Scriptures contain all the doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction we need. Anything more is too much, anything less is not enough. And so in our age, saturated with materialism, modernism, skepticism, and sin, there is a foundation for our feet, a map for our eyes, a sword for our hand, food for our soul, and a healing balm for our heart—the Word of God. **“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path”** (Psa. 119:105).

Preachers who feel they are too sophisticated to quote from the Bible should examine the teaching of the apostles and note the many references to the Old Testament. Those who are tempted to “fill the time” with philosophy or psychology or hobbies would do better to heed the injunction of Paul and **“preach the word”** (2 Tim. 4:2) The Bible has been right, is right now, and will always be right. It is relevant to our times and answers the basic questions of life. If a man disagrees with the Scriptures he is wrong, whether he has no degrees or all the degrees in the world. It is not a question of degrees, it is a question of what the Bible says. If a person can prove his proposition by the Bible it should be accepted; if it cannot be proved by the Bible, forget it.

Now, how does one establish truth from the

Scriptures? The Scriptures rightly divided and correctly applied may be found to teach truth in the following ways: (1) commands, (2) examples, and (3) necessary inferences.

1. *Commands.* There are two kinds of commands, viz., (a) general and (b) specific. A general command is a command authorizing the performance of some act without giving directions as to the manner or method of its performance, while a specific command carries with it the manner or method of its performance. For example: the command to “Go” in Mark 16:15 is a general or generic command. We could walk, fly, ride, skip, hop, jump, etc. It is not important “how” we go but it is necessary that we do “Go.” There are many things authorized by general commands which are not specified. We have no command to build church buildings yet we do. Why? Church buildings are authorized but not specified. They are authorized by commands such as not forsaking the assembly. To assemble necessitates a place. So a church may buy or build a building in which to meet. An example of a specific command is found in Genesis 6:14 where God told Noah, **“Make thee an ark of gopher wood.”** Here God specified what kind of wood he wanted Noah to use in building the ark. Noah was not left to use any kind he wanted to. When God specifies, it excludes all not within the purview of the command. M.C. Kurfes points out how valuable this principle is in his fine work, *Instrumental Music in the Worship*. Chapter VIII titled “Scope of the Divine Command Authorizing Music in the Worship of God” should be studied by all preachers. This chapter points out that if God had said make music in the church we could have any kind of music we wanted, vocal or instrumental or both. But God specified by a specific command in such passages as Ephesians 5:19, **“Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”** This specific command sets vocal music in the church and allows no other kind. To have another kind goes beyond God’s word and becomes sinful (2 John 9).

2. *Examples.* There are many various *actions* recorded in the New Testament. Some of these are optional. For example, the mode of transportation (Acts 13:4) and meeting on the third story (Acts 20:8). The mode of transportation is not binding nor the height of the building. However, some actions recorded in the New

Testament are binding and thus become *examples* for us to follow. Thomas Warren gives this special definition of example, “an obligatory action performed by New Testament characters and which is also obligatory upon men today” (*Abilene Christian College Lectures*, Year of 1960). The question that naturally arises is how do we determine when an action is one that is optional for us or when it becomes a binding example. The general rule which Warren gives is “it is necessary to apply to the description of that action the rules of sound hermeneutics and the principles of logic in connection with the totality of Bible teaching upon the matter in question.” The examples of baptizing people in Acts should be followed today. The example of Christians partaking of the Lord’s supper on the first day of the week in Acts 20:7 is binding in the light of the background commands of the Scriptures (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 16:2; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

3. *Necessary Inferences*. D.R. Dungan says that “Inference may be used legitimately in the ascertainment of facts, and also in the conclusions reached from them” (*Hermeneutics*, p. 91). An inference is not a guess. It is a logical effort to ascertain the facts from phenomena. This is done by looking at all the known facts and reaching conclusions. For example, Abraham went down from Canaan into Egypt; when he came out from that country Lot returned with him (Gen. 13:1). Though it is not said specifically that Lot went into Egypt with him, we infer it. For it must be obvious to all that you cannot come out of a place you never went in! Acts 8:35 says that Philip was with the eunuch and **“preached unto him Jesus.”** After that the eunuch wanted to be baptized. It is not stated that Philip preached baptism in connection with Jesus but we infer it for why else would

he want to be baptized? So you cannot scripturally preach the “man” without the “plan.”

But there are those who say, “You can prove anything by the Bible.” However, we differ with this statement. How would you like it if someone were to say he could prove anything by your words? How do you think God likes such statements about his words? It is true that you can twist the Scriptures and take passages out of context but this is not **“handling aright the word of truth”** (2 Tim. 2:15). A classic example of taking passages out of context and stringing them together is the following: “He went away and hanged himself;” “What thou doest, do quickly;” “Go, and do thou likewise.”

The story is told that John Quincy Adams called both Houses of Congress together for a special meeting. He walked to the rostrum and said, “The bushel measure in my right hand came from South Carolina; the one in my left hand comes from the city of New York. One of these bushel measures contains sixty-eight cubic inches more than the other one.” In the same deliberate way he picked up two one pound weights, the kind that were used on a set of balance scales to weigh produce. He said, “This weight in my right hand came from Massachusetts; this one came from Maine. One of them weighs nearly an ounce more than the other.” Then he said, “Gentlemen, we need a standard measure and a standard weight for the United States of America.” Thus came into existence the Bureau of Weights and Measures. The principle of this story is important. We need a standard of authority. In religion it is the Bible. Let us apply it.

—Deceased



# CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS

G.K. Wallace

It is easy for us to become self-centered. Christ, our example, never once acted as one who sought His own ease or profit. **“For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me”** (Rom. 15:3). The ideal attainment of every Christian is to be like Christ. The test and proof of our discipleship is to be led by the spirit of Christ. **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”** (Rom. 8: 14.) Christ was not primarily concerned with His personal comfort. **“And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”** (Mat. 8:20). Christ did not seek personal honor or make an effort to build a reputation. **“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men”** (Phi. 2:7). Christ did not refuse to pray for and help even those who persecuted and despised him. **“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”** (Mat. 5:44).

The impelling motive of Christian usefulness is genuine love. **“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you”** (John 15:12). True love seeks not its own good, but the good of others. Jesus said, **“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love”** (John 15:10). Too, Jesus said, **“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”** (John 15:13).

The usefulness of love may be shown in Christ’s sympathy with the sorrowing. **“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not”** (Luke 7:13). A Christian’s usefulness is manifested in his readiness to bear the burdens of the weak. **“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”** (Gal. 6:2). The Christian’s usefulness is demonstrated when he feels the responsibility of taking the gospel to others. **“I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish”** (Rom. 1:14). The usefulness of love leads us to do a work that is hard and disagreeable for others’ sake.

**And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God** (Acts 20:22-24).

Even though Christian usefulness prompted by love means certain sacrifices, it is not without rewards. It is a well-known fact that a positive life is the happy life. The real joy of good living is in service to others. In acts of Christian usefulness we find a way to forget all of our trials and heartaches. When the seventy returned from their mission they were happy in that they had been able to serve. **“And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name”** (Luke 10:17). The Psalmist said, **“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, beareth precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him”** (Psa. 126:5, 6).

By being useful we make friends. **“A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”** (Pro. 18:24). To be a friend of Christ is to obey Christ. **“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”** (John 15:14). Friends do not keep each other in the dark. Jesus said, **“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you”** (John 15:15). To be a Christian is to be useful, and to be useful is to be a friend to man. The poet has said, “Let me live in the house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.”

It is through usefulness that we meet the approval of our heavenly Father. At the great judgment day the King will invite members of the body of Christ to share the blessings of heaven, not simply because they have been immersed, but because as immersed believers they have been useful.

**Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for**

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# LED BY THE SPIRIT

Roy. J. Hearn

Romans 8:14 says: **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”** Everyone interested in salvation should understand how this is accomplished. Often it is shrouded in darkness, due to false teaching, and people fail to investigate God’s Word, and are thereby deceived.

The church of Christ is often misrepresented. Opposers say God must do the converting, and say we deny it. Also, that one must be converted by the Spirit and power of God, and imply we deny it. Some say that the heart is changed by faith; that faith is a gift from God, and say we deny that. But we believe all these things to be true. There is no difference on *what* God does, but *how* He does it. **“To the law and to the testimony”** (Isa. 8:20) and let that decide.

## FAITH IS PRODUCED BY THE WORD OF GOD

Jesus prayed for a certain class of people, that is, those who believe on Him through the words of the apostles, His personal representatives on earth (John 14:26; 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). John 20:30-31 shows that *saving* faith comes through the written Word of God. Peter said that the Gentiles believed by hearing the Word from his mouth (Acts 15:8).

Apostle Paul testifies that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). But, that one must hear before faith can be produced (Rom. 10:14). There is no belief without first hearing the Word. All these witnesses agree. The only difference is that now the Word that produces faith is written in the New Testament. Paul told Timothy to preach the things he had heard from him with many witnesses (2 Tim. 2:2). Further, he said that we should stand fast in the Word he had taught whether by Word or letter (2 The. 2:15), and that any who would teach a different doctrine would be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

## HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES FAITH

As shown above, in reference to John 16:13-15, the Spirit was sent to the apostles to guide them into all truth. 1 Peter 1:12 says they preached the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Acts 2:1-4 reveals the coming of the Holy Spirit, and that the apostles began to speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. In Revelation 2:1, Christ said, **“Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write.”** Verse 7 says, **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith**

**unto the churches.”** So, the Spirit speaks through the written Word.

Where is all this found? In the New Testament. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that the Scripture furnishes all one needs for perfection. 2 Peter 1:3 states that everything that pertains to life and godliness comes through knowledge, and for that reason one should study (2 Tim. 2:15).

## HOW PEOPLE ARE CONVERTED BY THE POWER OF GOD

Romans 1:16 says the gospel is *the* power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it, and that faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17). This Word was given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles (1 Cor. 2:13). Paul said that the gospel came to him by revelation (Gal. 1:11-12). Peter affirmed that the Gentiles were purified by faith, which was produced by his preaching (Acts 15:7-9). Also, one purifies his soul in obedience to the Truth (1 Pet. 1:22).

Without doubt, therefore, the Scripture teaches that faith is a gift of God, but that it comes from the study of God’s Word, and not by some mysterious, direct means.

## DEMONSTRATED BY DIVINE EXAMPLE

Acts 2 reveals that the Holy Spirit spoke through the apostles to the multitudes (Acts 2:1-4, 22). When they heard the Word preached, they were pricked in their hearts—made believers. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). It was wielded by the mouths of the apostles (Acts 2:1-4, 22-27; 8:4-5, 12). When the people on that Pentecost day heard the Word preached by the apostles, they were pricked in their hearts—convicted of sin.

## THE PENTECOSTIANS LED BY THE SPIRIT

Their change, or purification, was begun, and the effect produced by the power of the Holy Spirit. They were led by the words spoken by the apostles. But *where?* They were led to cry out, **“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** Then Peter answered and said: **“Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”** (Acts 2:37-38).

With this example, it is clear to see that to be led by the Spirit, to receive faith, and be saved by the power of

God is now produced by the written Word. Please observe that the whole process of conversion was begun in preaching the gospel, hearing the gospel which produced faith and repentance, and salvation was consummated in baptism.

### IS SOMETHING BESIDES THE WORD NEEDED?

How do you know Christ is the Son of God? “The Bible says so.” Do you not need some other proof? “No, for the Bible says so.” How do you know there is a heaven to be gained, and hell to be avoided? “The Bible says so.” Do you not need other testimony? “No, the

Bible is enough.”

If one were to hear Christ say: “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” how would you know you were pardoned? “Christ said so.” Would you not need other proof? “No, for Christ said so.” The same Christ said that in order to be saved one must (1) Believe in Him as God’s Son (John 8:24); (2) Repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19); (3) Confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32; Acts 8:37); (4) Be baptized to be saved (Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rom. 6:3-6). Christ promises to save when one obeys His Word. Why fight it?

—Deceased

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### (Editorial, continued from page 2)

in such a way as to make them think that I really only have a difference of opinion with them. When brethren do such a thing they are “in practice” doing the exact same thing that the liberals constantly advocate, namely: “Unity In Diversity” in matters of doctrine!

If the church at Corinth had rejected Paul’s teaching in First Corinthians, would he have continued in fellowship with them? (And as bad as they were, they were not totally bad.) Everything in the New Testament indicates that when brethren are in error on a subject and they will not be taught the truth on the matter, faithful Christians are to cease to associate with them in such a way as not to give the erring one any comfort in his or her error (1 Cor. 5:2; 2 The. 3:6, 14). Love demands no more and accepts no less!

Preachers, if you had gone to the church in Corinth for a gospel meeting, what would have been your sermon topics? Would you have preached in glowing generalities about obedience, love and heaven? Or, would you have preached like Paul did in his epistles to the church in Corinth? Do you follow the example of the Christ as He commended the good in Ephesus and then said, “**Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love**” (Rev. 2:4)?

Preachers, if you were invited to a church where you knew error was held on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, would you preach the truth on it and expose the error? When such a thing, along with others, are sweeping the brotherhood, do preachers routinely include in their gospel meeting sermons on the controversial matters, or do they just preach the truth that is acceptable to the particular church where they are presently

preaching? When invited to speak on a church, college or preacher school lectureship, but assigned a sermon, the subject of which will not allow me to deal with the gross soul-damning doctrines publicly taught by said institutions, do I decline the invitation or resolve in my heart that all within any of these institutions is not bad, so I will just preach what they assigned me to preach? What would the apostle Paul have done?

Yes, it is one thing to say that I am opposed to certain things and then to leave unsaid what ought to be said to the appropriate people. Or, to say I am opposed to certain false doctrines, but to continue to associate with friends and family in such a way that they see I really do not mean what I say. Jesus said, “**Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them**” (Mat. 7:20). Paul made it plain that love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). Hence, love discerns in the light of a rightly divided Bible whether the fruit is good or evil. When members of the church are evil but will allow me to teach the truth on the matter, that tells me much about the state of their heart; but when they are evil and oppose the teaching of the truth on the subject, or subjects of which they are in error, I have no choice but to cease and desist any kind of association with them that could possibly cause brethren to think I approve of the error lived and propagated by them. Love will not allow for any other conduct!

Brethren, the aforementioned points are not difficult to understand. However, if you have divided loyalties, well, that is a horse of a different color!

—David P. Brown, Editor

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**I was ahungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me (Mat. 25:34-36).**

In the world we erect monuments to men of worldly glory and of secular affairs, but one who has been useful in the kingdom of God is of much more value in the sight of the Lord. There is an old saying that “those who dress their meat but for themselves, eat the bread of sin.” There was a saying among the Jews that “he who neglects to visit the sick is like him who has shed blood.” If we neglect to help save a life when we have the power to preserve it, we are guilty in the sight of the Lord.

Are we Christ’s? If so, we must show it by acting under the rules of Christ and after the example of Christ. He who is selfish and ever seeking his own good will never find happiness in this life. The unselfish people are the happy people. Christian usefulness is the road both to happiness and to heaven.

—Deceased

## **GREAT PREACHING**

**Leroy Brownlow**

A mechanic went to hear a visiting evangelist in a little town. The preacher preached that night on money and presented the sermon under three points. First point: “Make all you can.” The mechanic nudged his wife and said, “That man is the best I’ve heard. He is no nitwit. He knows what it’s all about. He is a smart man.” Second point: “Save all you can.” This excited the mechanic, and he whispered to his wife again, “This beats anything I’ve heard. He’s smart enough to be president. This town has never had a preacher that holds a candle to him.” The preacher commanded hard work and thrift, denouncing laziness and waste. The mechanic could not keep quiet. He whispered, “I’ve believed this all my life.” Third point: “Give all you can.” “Oh, my,” exclaimed the mechanic, “now he’s gone crazy. He has quit preaching and gone to meddling.”

**Thought:** Is it not strange that some people’s conception of great preaching is a sermon that compliments them and rebukes others? Remember, your preacher did not write the Bible. He is not responsible for any word in it, but he is definitely responsible for preaching every word in it. And when it is preached, people judge themselves by their reaction to it.

—Deceased