

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH

J. Noel Merideth

“And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies : but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord” (Jer. 9:3).

The prophet’s arraignment of his people is a grievous one; they were not valiant for the truth. Whether it be from ignorance, mistake, moral imbecility, cowardice, or flagrant disloyalty, when men are not valiant for the acquisition, maintenance, and service of the truth they are failures in the eyes of God. Staël has said that the search for truth is the noblest occupation of man and that its publication is a duty. Jesus said, **“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”** Jesus Christ came to bring the truth, and he is **“the way, the truth, and the life.”** When Christ ascended into heaven He sent the Holy Spirit which guided the apostles **“into all truth.”** Today we are sanctified and saved by the Word of God which is truth.

OPPOSITION TO THE TRUTH

Christ came to bring a fire upon the earth and a sword. Instead of promising feather beds He tells us that we may expect persecution and hate from the world because we teach the truth. In the New Testament, we read that Stephen and James were martyred for preaching the gospel and contending for the faith. Paul suffered stripes, beatings, being stoned, shipwrecks, journeyings, and perils

to preach the certified gospel which he received, not from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 11:32-38 summarizes the persecutions and deaths of courageous men during the Old Testament period. The Roman Empire sent wave after wave of persecution against Christians. The most severe one was waged by Diocletian in 303. He set out to “exterminate Christianity.” In a series of edicts, it was ordered that every copy of the Bible should be burned and that all church buildings be torn down. In some places the Christians were assembled in their buildings, which were set fire and burned with all the worshipers within their walls.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

In the apostasy and during the dark ages, the Roman Catholic Church corrupted the truth and added the traditions and commandments of men and popes—such things as holy water, penance, mass, images, extreme unction, purgatory, instrumental music, celibacy, indulgences, auricular confession, sprinkling, and transubstantiation, etc. These things are not authorized by the New Testament. The Albigenses, Waldensians, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, and others who opposed Catholicism were persecuted or extirpated in a great slaughter. After Wycliffe’s death, his body was dug from its grave and burned and his ashes scattered on a brook that flowed into Avon River. And what did he do—he translated the Bible, the truth, into the language of the people so they could read it! *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* recounts the gallant history of noble souls who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom from ignorance,

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**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
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DISHONESTY

Foy L. Smith

Honesty is a Christian attribute. Without it no one can entertain the slightest hope of salvation. We are to be honest in our words, our thoughts, and our actions. We are to give each the benefit of the doubt until he is proved to be wrong. The church would be better off by far if all dishonest folks would get out and stay out until they have a complete change of heart.

Some who profess to be Christians think that they can live a lie if it helps to promote their own welfare. They can cheat a bit if no one is “really hurt” in the process. They can have a clean hand on top and dirty underneath if circumstances demand. Shady deals become “good business” to them. They operate on this principle in business, in the world, and try to operate on the same basis in the church.

What really is dishonesty? Webster says it is “characterized by fraud, knavish, fraudulent; wanting in integrity; not trustworthy...” From this definition we can readily see that one can be dishonest in many ways.

He is dishonest when he makes promises he doesn't intend to keep. Sometimes he promises a child something just to get rid of him. Or, maybe a brother in the Lord for the same purpose. He makes promises in one breath and forgets them in the next.

He is dishonest when he acts the hypocrite. He is “knavish”—mean and subtle. He speaks out of one side of his mouth to one person, out of the other to another. He goes around, as the fellow said, “wid' two faces under one hat”!

He is dishonest when he pounces upon every thing he sees without investigating to learn if he has the right slant on it. Sometimes this applies to writers. They see a report, perhaps incorrectly written, as many often are, and hops on it like a tomcat on a June bug. He is afraid to investigate for fear he will learn the truth and not be able to write his feelings in the matter. This is one of the most flagrant forms of dishonesty at all!

He is dishonest when he promises the elders that he will do his part, but has no intentions of doing so. Again his promise is a “got rid” avenue of escape.

He is dishonest when he feigns to live for God but lives for self. He talks like a pillar in the kingdom and acts like a reed shaken in the wind. He shouts “Amen” on Sunday and acts like the hypocrite through the week. He

sings “Oh, how I love Jesus,” at the meeting house and “does others before they do him” in the world.

All forms of dishonesty are sinful. What a better

world we would have if all people would realize this. And, how much better and more effective the Lord’s work would be too!
—Deceased

(“Valiant” continued from page 1)

superstition and religious corruption.

DENOMINATIONALISM

The fallacy of the Reformation was that it took away the papal edicts from the Scriptures only to cover the Bible again with other man-made creeds. Instead of Roman Catholic councils covering the Bible, now it was Protestant councils, creeds, and decisions. Unwilling to accept the Bible as the final and sole authority in religion, which should be done, denominationalism has missed the true course. And so hundreds of Protestant denominations have been started, each having its own creed and manual.

Today we are also confronted with cults who have a zeal but not according to knowledge. They have deep commitment though doctrinally they are in error. They have canvassed neighborhoods and states and many countries for their man-made dogmas, teaching such things as Christ being a created being, worship on Saturday instead of Sunday, soul sleeping, the new revelation of Joseph Smith, the denial of all matter, and the gift of tongues for today.

NEO-ORTHODOXY

A movement among intellectuals is that which is known as “modernism.” The point of unity among all modernists is the discounting of any real authority of the Bible. They do not believe in an inerrant Bible. The Old Liberals shifted to the new movement of Neo-Orthodoxy after the war. The boldest attack upon the Bible comes from Rudolph Bultmann’s view of “demythologizing” the Scriptures. It strips all the miraculous and supernatural out of the Bible and replaces it with an interpretation of symbolism. These interpreters teach a reading between the lines, e.g., Bultmann believes in the resurrection, however, he does not believe there was a literal resuscitation of the physical body of Jesus. The existential interpretation of the resurrection account means simply that a Christian of today “comes alive in Christ.” These men use normal Biblical terms but with existential meanings which are far removed from the truth. It is double talk deception.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAGMATISM

On the educational scene is the philosophy of pragmatism which has been carried into the field of religion. The pragmatist seeks for “what works” and

operates on the false premise that “truth is relative.” Its advocates claim, “we are absolutely certain that you cannot be certain about anything.” They seemingly never note their logical fallacy, for if nothing is certain how can they be certain that they are certain that nothing is certain! The moral, ethical, and religious code of the Bible is not relative but is a perfect standard of religious truth. The philosophy of pragmatism is incorrect, **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”** (Col. 2:8).

THE BASIC ERRORS

The basic errors of the foregoing have been: (1) denial of the supernatural, (2) rejection of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and (3) the abandonment of the Word of God as the sole authority in religion. The truth of the supernatural is abundantly taught in the Scriptures, from nature, and from the attributes of God. Paul teaches that even the words were inspired in the original autographs of the Bible (1 Cor. 2:13). And since the Scriptures contain all things of life and godliness and are able to provide all our doctrine and instruction to make us perfect; the Bible properly divided and correctly applied is the sole authority in religion. Those who do not have a genuine love for the truth will receive a strong delusion from God that they may believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness (2 The. 2:11-12).

Colton has well said: “The greatest friend of truth is time; the greatest enemy is prejudice; and her constant companion is humility.” Horace Mann said: “Keep one thing forever in view—the truth; and if you do this, though it may seem to lead you away from the opinions of men, it will assuredly conduct you to the throne of God.” Solomon said, **“Buy the truth and sell it not”** (Pro. 23:23).

The present situation is one of optimism for the spread of truth. Like the character Valiant-for-Truth in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrims Progress*, we find gallant soldiers of the cross who fight with the Sword of the Spirit in their hand. And their number increases more and more.

—Deceased

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHRISTIAN

G. K. Wallace

A Christian is a marked man. The whole world can tell who he is. Christ pointed out the definite signs of a true disciple in His Sermon on the Mount. These signs are a part of His character, and all true Christians have every mark to some degree. The marks of a Christian protect him and make it possible for him to lead others to Christ.

The marks of a Christian are not such as is seen by certain religious cults. Jehovah does not tell a child of His how to dress the outward man except that the dress be modest. Any modest apparel comes within the law of God (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

What then are some of the true marks of a follower of the Lamb of God?

1. *He is one who recognizes the need of a higher power.* “**Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**” (Mat. 5:3). A proud and haughty spirit is evidence that one is not a true follower of Jesus.

2. *He is sorry for his mistakes.* “**Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted**” (Mat. 5:4). The man who mourns for his sins will be comforted.

3. *He is a meek man.* “**Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth**” (Mat. 5:5). Meekness is not weakness.

4. *He has an appetite for that which is good.* “**Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled**” (Mat. 5:6). If one is hungry and thirsty for spiritual things he will go where his

appetite can be satisfied.

5. *He is a merciful man.* “**Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy**” (Mat. 5:7). Cruelty and harshness should have no place in our lives and we should be kind and gentle in the treatment of the faults and failings of all men.

6. *He has a pure heart.* “**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God**” (Mat. 5:8). The heart must be pure as well as the body. When the body sins it is directed by the heart.

7. *He is a peacemaker.* “**Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God**” (Mat. 5:9). In many congregations there are some who constantly make trouble. They are not true Christians regardless of how sanctimonious they may appear. We need in our great brotherhood this day some real peacemakers. Such is the mark of a true child of God.

A Christian is a marked man. The world can tell he is a disciple of Christ. When one obeys the gospel we have no robe for him to wear that indicates that he is a follower of Christ. We cannot put a ring on his finger nor a hat on his head to show the world that he belongs to the body of Christ. However, if he is truly dependent upon God, sorry for his mistakes, meek, merciful, clean in heart and in life, desires spiritual things, and is a peacemaker, all men will know that he walks in the path of right.

—Deceased