

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

GOD’S WORD GIVES PLAIN ANSWERS TO CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

Thomas B. Warren

The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe not (John 10:24; ASV).

If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer (Luke 22:67).

Jesus knew that these men, in spite of their pleading for him to “tell them plainly,” were not really seeking for the truth of His sonship. He told them that they would not believe even if He *did* tell them. Is it not much the same way today? Seemingly, many are seeking for the truth of God’s Word. But when they are shown plain statements from the Bible, they will not believe. Rather, they will continue to hold onto the doctrines set forth in the creeds of men.

Men cry out, “*Tell us plainly, Lord, who is the one that shall be saved?*” Seemingly, they seek for a plain answer to this all-important question, but when they are shown that Jesus said, “**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved**” (Mark 16:16), they place their hands over their hearts and say, “I have had an ‘experience’ in my heart: I do not believe that one has to be baptized to be

saved.” Truly Jesus said, “**I told you, and ye believe not.**” All preachers who tell their hearers that they are saved without being baptized, and all who listen to such preachers, will have to answer to the Lord in the judgment for having done so (Luke 6:46; John 12:48; 3:3-5; Rom. 6:3-5).

Men cry out, “*Lord tell us plainly, how many churches are there?*” Apparently, they are seeking the truth on this searching question. But when they are shown that Paul, in Ephesians 4:4, said, “**There is one body,**” and that Paul, in Ephesians 1:22, 23, identifies that one body as being the *church*, they will not accept the truth that there is only one church. Rather, many will say, “I do not believe that there is only one church. I believe that there are many churches, that one church is just as good as another, and that each person should go to the church of his choice.” Truly Jesus said, “**I told you, and ye believe not.**” There are just as many churches as there are Gods—*one* in each instance. But how few will accept the truth about the church!

Men ask, seemingly in all sincerity, this important question: “*Tell us plainly, how many faiths are there?*” But when they are shown God’s plain answer, “There is one faith,” as recorded in Ephesians 4:5, they will not believe. Instead of acceptance of this plain statement from the Word of God, we hear men saying, “There are many faiths, and one is just as good as another.” Jesus can truly say to such, “**I told you, and ye believe not.**” When Paul said there is *one* faith, why will men say there are *many*? In New Testament times, there was no such thing as the

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917–October 10, 2001**

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

G. K. Wallace

We hear much about “unity in diversity” these days but such is an impossibility. Unity means together and diversity means divided. Such language is a contradiction of terms and anti-scriptural.

Departure from Bible doctrine and worship invalidates the claims of any church (denomination) to be accepted by our Lord. The prophet Jeremiah told God’s people in his day that they should not trust in lying words. It was not enough to say, “The Temple of Jehovah” and still not amend one’s life and teaching. God will not recognize any group (church) where his word is not respected and obeyed. False churches do not hear the word of God. The refusal to meet each Lord’s day to observe the Lord’s supper and the use of instrumental music in worship are marks of the will and “wisdom” of man. God is not obligated to false teachers. To claim a line of successive baptized believers is of no value when present believers do not emulate the faith and worship of the true or original believer. The priests of Malachi’s time were true blood descendants of Levi but God would not have them. Jehovah said, **“But ye are turned aside out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble in the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts”** (Mal. 2:8). Nothing is more absurd than to argue a line of succession exclusive of teaching. Just suppose you could prove a line of successive baptized believers but all Christ’s teaching about organization and worship is abandoned? Of what value is this to any one? There is no similarity of modern churches to the New Testament church.

The church is founded upon God’s word. No true church exists where God’s word is not found. God’s people hear His voice. Jesus said, **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”** The church is founded upon the teachings of the apostles and not the doctrines of men (Eph. 2:20). The church is God’s kingdom and He rules only through His word. The scepter of Christ is His word (Isa. 11:4). He who does not receive the **“rod of his mouth”** rejects the ruler of the kingdom of God. No amount of good works will cause one to be justified in God’s presence while at the same time refusing to respect the word of God in true worship. Bus programs, meals on wheels, TV specials, outreach, mission programs, prayer and praise without true worship become outward show and empty glitter.

The bond of fellowship based on love depends upon
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Contending For The Faith—October/2024

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO BE FOR THE RIGHT!

W. N. JACKSON

Strange as that may sound, it's true. One must not only be for the right, but a part of being for the right is to be against the wrong! In our day, when the forces of sin and wrongdoing are so vocal, the temptation surely comes to God's servants to have an inward loyalty to that which is right, but to refrain from taking any stand against the wrong which would cause the public spotlight to shine on them.

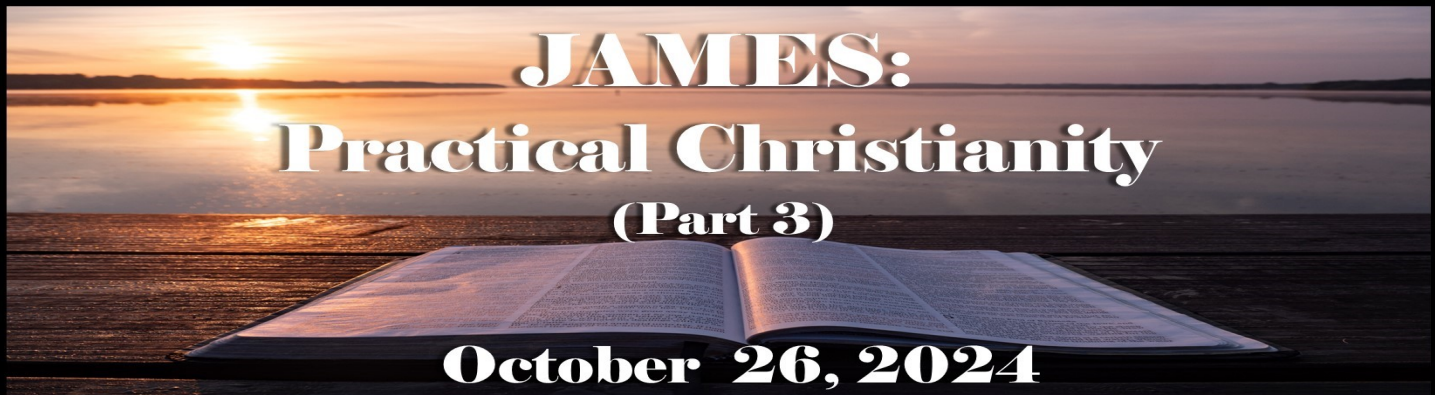
One of Satan's fondest hopes would be that the majority of feeling among the saints calls for a "nothing negative, nothing controversial" stand. It is a temptation to elders today to forget their obligations to be "**holding fast the faithful word...and to convict the gainsayers**" (Tit. 1:9) and to follow a "nothing negative, nothing controversial" course. Today, it is a temptation facing the gospel preacher to take the same course, and fall into the habit of proclaiming "nothing negative, nothing controversial." We are saying this: The gospel preacher, in planning his presentations over a period of time, must deal with the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and that includes items negative and controversial. How could elders and preachers rest at night unless the truth on all Bible matters is pre-

sented? In their very hearts, how could they live with themselves unless they thus keep themselves "**pure from the blood of all men**"? (Acts 20:26).

In the long ago, David spoke of God's precepts, acknowledged them as being right, and therefore said, "**I hate every false way**" (Psa. 119:104). He, as God's servant, could not be for the right and then be passive regarding the wrong! Isaiah said that for the sake of God's own, "**...will I not hold my peace...I will not rest**" (Isa. 62:1). God spoke to Ezekiel, telling him that the wicked would perish and that if God's servant did not warn the wicked, "**his blood will I require at thy hand**"! (Eze. 3:18). And the other side was true as well: "**Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not...he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul**"! (verse 19).

Elders, preachers, Bible class teachers, are you for the right? You say, "Yes!"? Then, test it: Are you against the wrong? Will you stand against the crowd against that wrong and for that right? Remember, it's not enough to be just for the right.

—Deceased



JAMES:
Practical Christianity
(Part 3)
October 26, 2024

Fish Hatchery Road Church Of Christ
1380 Fish Hatchery Road, Huntsville, Texas
Phone: 936-581-4346 Email: bruces_1@netzero.com

9:00 am: *Don't Leave God Out Of Your Plans* (4:13-17) ~ Jose Gamez
10:00 am: *The Misuse Of Riches* (5:1-6) ~ Eric Paluka
11:00 am: *Patient Endurance* (5:7-12) ~ David Brown
1:30 pm: *The Prayer Of Faith* (5:13-18) ~ Jack Stephens
2:30 pm: *Saving A Soul From Death* (5:19-20) ~ John West
3:30 pm: *Question & Answer Session*

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“Plain Answers” continued from page 1)

“Presbyterian faith,” the “Episcopal faith,” the “Methodist faith,” the “Baptist faith,” the “Catholic faith,” and so on. There was only *the faith!* Children of God were commanded to contend earnestly for that *one faith!* (Jude 3). They were warned that the preaching of any other gospel (faith) would bring them under the anathema of God (Gal. 1:6-9). And they were further warned that the following of a false doctrine would lead to their damnation (2 The. 2:8-12). But how few believe that it makes any difference what one believes. Truly Jesus said, **“I told you, and ye believe not.”**

If one does not understand what he must do to be saved, how many churches there are (with divine approval), and how many faiths there are, it is not because the Bible does not give a plain answer.

Why not take your own Bible and find the plain answers to these and other vital questions? After you have found them, accept them for the answers in the Bible are from God. Obedience to these answers will bring you into salvation (Heb. 5:8, 9). Rejection of the Lord’s answer will result in your eternal damnation (2 The. 1:7-9).

—Deceased

“Unity In Diversity” continued from page 2)

unity of faith (Eph. 2:1, 5). Love is a motive and not an act. A pure motive does not produce a correct act. Paul’s motives were pure when he helped kill Stephen but his act was wrong (Acts 26:10). Love is not enough. There must be **“unity of the spirit”**—that is the unity the Holy Spirit reveals. **“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God”** (Eph. 4:1-6). We are taught to will and feel the same but it is in Christ. It is **“according to Christ,”** that is, our will and feeling must be according to the teachings of Christ (Rom. 15:5). Thus we see that apart from the teachings of Christ there is no such thing as unity. A so-called unity in diversity is not unity but an association of false prophets. Jesus said, **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves”** (Mat. 7:15).

The branch severed from the vine cannot bear fruit (John 15:6). It is fit only to be burned. Division is a sign that some one has been severed from the vine. The fruit of diversity is the sin of division.

—Deceased