

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

Benjamin Franklin

An apostle has thought it needful to enjoin upon us, “Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” An old soldier of the cross, when about to put off his armor, rejoiced that he had fought a good fight, kept the faith, and finished his course. In the course of his warfare, we are informed that he disputed two whole years in a certain school, or contended for the faith. This warfare, disputing, or contending, is an advocacy, a defense and a maintenance of the faith once delivered to the saints. The first thing, in order to this advocacy, is to ascertain what the faith once delivered to the saints is, and the next thing is to advocate it, maintain and defend it with every power. The faith exists in two forms:

1. In its concentrated embodied or constitutional form, as it is presented for the confession of the new convert, in a single proposition, that it may be received or rejected by either an affirmative or a negative answer.

2. In its fully developed or detailed form, as we find it spread upon the pages of the Christian scriptures. This is the creed of the church, by which she is governed and guided in all her journey through this world.

The whole of the detailed or fully developed creed, so far as its truth or authority is concerned, is in the concentrated, embodied or constitutional creed. Indeed, the whole system of Christianity was in purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ before the world in the

promise to Abraham, in the good news borne by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem, in the last commission, was in the announcement, “**This is My Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased,**” in the confession of Peter, “**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,**” the same that John testified that we might believe, when he said, “**These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,**” or that God uttered in the mountain when He gave Him honor and glory, or the same is contained in any one of these that is contained in the gospel. Any one of these expressions, and many others that could be maintained, contain Christianity in its concentrated, embodied, or constitutional form. These all embrace Christ. All Christianity centers in Him, comes from Him, and is authorized by Him. Through the holy witnesses of Jesus men are made acquainted with Christ, convinced that He is a divine person, the Son of God and the Savior of the world; and, in the confession, receive Him as their only leader. This is simply receiving Christianity in its constitutional form, without having examined its details, or knowing what they are. We do not, therefore, read Christianity through, sitting in judgment, as we do merely human composition, noticing every expression to see whether it is true. When we become acquainted with the author, and find Him sent from God, declared His Son in His resurrection from the dead, divine and infallible, we place ourselves under Him, and receive His holy instructions implicitly, only wishing to know that they are from Him.

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

WHEN YOUR HANDS ARE TIED

One of the most difficult, perplexing, and heartrending situations is when one must sit back and watch others make decisions the results of which will create more problems than the decision-makers ever thought. In fact, what compounds the problem is when one knows that those making the decisions think that their choice is the solution to a legitimate problem or problems. There is a further compounding of the problem when the decision-makers have been taught correctly and yet to no benefit concerning the decisions they make. In circumstances of this nature, some persons are moved to ask, what can we do to help the situation? The answer many times is: At this point there is nothing anyone can do that has not been done.

To volunteer information to those who could have asked such of you but did not is folly. Under such circumstances, people simply open themselves up to all manner of unwarranted charges and accusations. **People need to learn where their responsibility begins and ends in trying to help others.** Thus, under such circumstances and insofar as being able to help, **honest folks must finally conclude that their hands are tied.**

God's hands were tied regarding Adam and Eve's decision to sin. God had informed them as to what was right and wrong and told them of the consequences if they chose to sin. Their choice and its blessings or consequences was theirs alone to make (Gen. 3). Such has been the case with God and man to the present and will continue for all time. **What else could or can God do?** (Rom. 1:21-32; 3:23; Rev. 22:17).

Parent's hands are tied regarding their children's decisions. Besides setting a Christian example before their children, godly parents have the responsibility of teaching, training, and disciplining them (Eph. 6:4; Pro. 22:6). Some children, while still in the home, will appreciate none of this and decide to go their own way. In such situations when all is said and done if children are rebellious enough, there comes the time when there is nothing that parents can do to change the rebellious child. Remember, after others have done all that they can do, change is effected by the person who needs to change (Jos. 24:15; Acts 2:40; 8:22; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 2:5).

When children are of age and thus out from under their parents' jurisdiction, parents' hands are certainly

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7:15-16).
Paul warned:
Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:17-18).

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And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

Finally, when all is said and done, the faithful children of God can and must act to protect themselves and other faithful brethren from the consequences of wrong decisions made by others (Jos. 9:1-21). **What else could or can a faithful child of God do?**

—David P. Brown, *Editor*



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Christianity, therefore, in its embodied, or constitutional form, embraces Christianity in its details. The faith once delivered to the saints is simply Christianity, the complete system as the Lord gave it. All who have confessed Christ intelligently have received Christianity and committed themselves to it. This is the faith, that which is to be advocated, maintained, and defended. The man who has received it with the whole heart, practices it, and enjoys it, is a Christian. The requirement of heaven resting upon him is to earnestly contend for the faith, advocate it, maintain and defend it. This the adversary has tried to defeat by a thousand stratagems. We beg leave to notice a few of these:

1. One plan is to stop the defense of the faith, or at least to check the force of him who defends it, is to call his preaching controversial preaching, or the preacher a controversialist, and then add, that “I do not like controversial preaching.” Any man who will discriminate in his preaching what Christianity is, and what it is not, the way to heaven and the way that leads not there, that which is for God and not for him, for the law of God and not for it, is called a controversialist, and the pitiful and childish complaint comes up that he has hurt my feelings! What is the object of such a whining complaint? Simply to induce some weak brethren to hold back the preacher, and beg him not to preach doctrinal preaching today, for some of our friends, the sects, are present. The preacher is duly

informed, and if he happens to be a coward, he shrinks, decides to preach a pretty little sermon that will touch no place, have nothing in it, and maintain nothing. The audience walks away quietly. Someone inquires cautiously, “How do you like our preacher?” “Very much indeed; he is just such a man as I love to hear,” is the reply. The enemy has gained his point. He has sealed the lips of the preacher, or what is the same thing, forbidden the preaching of anything that has any force in it, or that will do any good.

2. Another method of the enemy to avoid maintaining the faith is to preach philosophy bound off into the fog, into mysticism, where the people can not understand what it is. In that case they will not be offended, for they cannot tell whether it is right or wrong. They cannot understand it, but think it is deep, as they cannot see into it. Muddy water always looks deep. They spend their time in nice distinctions, splitting hairs, which never was of any profit, only to try a razor to see how sharp it is. These puzzle people to determine which side they are on, whether they are for the faith or against it. What an advocacy this! What a defense of the faith! What teaching this! What an advocacy that, which contains nothing, amounts to nothing, and cannot be understood! If there is anything to be deprecated, it is a professed advocacy of Christianity that never states it, never sets it forth, and never shows what it is. No man can advocate Christianity who does not

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describe it, discriminate between it and everything else, and defend it in its native purity as the Lord gave it. We have listened to whole discourses that contained scarcely a quotation from Jesus or the apostles, all beautiful fine and elegant, possibly all true; but no man could tell whether the preacher was a Jew or a Christian, a Mohammedan or a Mormon, an infidel or a Greek, so far as anything of a distinguishing character contained in it. It has no Jesus in it, no God in it, no Holy Spirit, no blood of Christ, no Bible, no church, nor anything that could possibly make a man think of turning to God, repenting of sin, or respecting divine authority. Still, the people were pleased, praised the preacher and loved to hear him! These men do not intend to bear the cross, to endure hardness as good soldiers, not to despise the shame. They shrink from the defense of the faith, and cater to a vitiated, popular taste and public sentiment. They are determined to please man at the hazard of displeasing God. These are of no consequence any place. They look not into the Bible to know what should be taught, but are simply looking to the popular caprice of the people.

Some men want a paper of this kind: one that would circulate palatably any place, touch no place, defend nothing, and amount to nothing. We know a few poor, unhealthy, feeble creatures, who would have us send forth a kind of milk water concern, that a man might read half a year without knowing where we stand. This, however, we shall not do. We are not trying to please man, but God. We shall, to the extent of our ability, describe Christianity, discriminate between it and everything else, and defend it. We shall at the same time try to do this in the utmost

kindness, the most respectful terms, but as plainly as it can possibly be done. Christianity never was maintained, manfully and nobly advocated, without a struggle. It will never be. We, as a religious body, have fought many hard battles. We have won a glorious victory, established ourselves in defiance of all opposition. The field is now open before us, and if we push the conquest forward, we can do more in one year than we have ever done in five. There is not a place where the cause is advocated, in kindness, affectionately, and with power, without success. On the other hand, no success attends sermonizing or theorizing, that does not define, illustrate, and advocate pure Christianity as it was in the beginning. A man who merely talks, but does not advocate anything, as a matter of course, does not promote the cause of Christ. Christianity must be maintained, as the Lord gave it, against all encroachments, subversions, and attacks of every description. It has its enemies, opposers, and corrupters, aiming to defeat it. It is our duty to maintain the ground we have gained, hold fast our begun confidence steadfast to the end, and see that none turn back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. We are right in aim, and what remains for us is to push on, illustrate, unfold, and maintain the cause. We hope the brethren will keep their eye upon every man who shrinks from a defense of the faith, preaches sermons that have nothing in them, and brings not the Lord before the people. The Lord will be ashamed of them when he comes in power and great glory. They would have forsaken the Lord and his apostles in the midst of their persecutions.

—Deceased