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The Duty Of Contending For The Faith

By Rev. A. M. Fraser, D.D.*

This article is an excerpt from the Smythe Lectures delivered by Dr. Fraser at Columbia Theological Seminary in 1925. The lecture from which this excerpt is taken is entitled "Witness To The Truth."

The cause of truth demands an aggressive attack on error. Even as the ascended Christ declared that he hated the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes, he would have his people hate them. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." No more can we love truth and be indifferent to error. An abhorrence of falsehood is the measure of our love of truth.

When Peter wavered in his adherence to the truth, through the influence of zealous but uninformed men, Paul "withstood him to the face." Christians should not only hold "the faith once delivered to the saints," but "contend" for it, and not only contend for it, but "contend earnestly." Paul exhorted young Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith." It was an unspeakable solace to Paul himself as he approached the time of his departure to reflect that he had "fought the good fight" and "kept the faith." Phillips Brooks says that the "faith" which Paul claimed to have kept was the truths of redemption. It was not the subjective grace of faith. The ascended Jesus commended the Church at Ephesus because they could "not bear them which are evil" but had tried "them which say they are apostles and are not" and "found them liars."

There are those who themselves believe in that body of truth so often referred to in the New Testament and which Jude calls "the faith once delivered to the saints," who nevertheless are willing to compromise with those who are disloyal to the faith, in order to avoid the appearance of

differences and for the sake of the imposing effect the solid front of Christianity will have upon the world. Is it proper? Is it faithful to our trust? Is it a worthy following of "the Faithful and True Witness"? The greatest danger of the age in which we live does not come from unsound men, but from men who are sound themselves but who, for the sake of the impression made upon the world by an undivided Church, are willing to cooperate with heterodoxy, and thus give it countenance. By so doing they produce on the world the impression that the doctrines of Christianity are of minor importance. To compromise truth for the sake of peace is untrue to all those who have suffered for it in the past, to Paul who succeeded and to Jeremiah who seemed to fail. God's word places honor upon those who remain true in an age of laxity and defection, the seven thousand who in Elijah's day had not bowed the knee to Baal and whose lips had not kissed him, "the remnant according to the election of grace" in Paul's day, the remnant foretold in the Apocalypse which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, though the dragon and all of his hosts make war upon them.

It is quite common to brand the man who is watchful against the encroachments of error as a "heresy-hunter". An epithet is recognized as a last resort of a defeated cause. I dare affirm, that, in view of the infinite and everlasting importance of the saving truth of the gospel, the man who resists the entrance of false teaching into the Church has done humanity a greater service than the one who has established a chain of hospitals and asylums. The more he is forced to stand alone the more honor to him.

"Faith of our Fathers, Holy Faith,
We will be true to thee till death."

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UNASHAMED

By Rev. Samuel McP. Glasgow, D.D.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel."
(Romans 1:16)

Paul's buoyant confidence is contagious across the centuries. The Gospel has taken terrible toll of Paul and he's striking a balance. On the human level he has every reason to be ashamed and dismayed. It was the Gospel that had changed his entire life plan and robbed him of the fruits, well within grasp, of human greatness and satisfying recognition.

His chosen profession could no longer be followed, though he was out in front of all his fellows therein. A complete reversal of one's publicly avowed policy and passion is always humiliating. Paul had been the leader in the destruction of Christianity. The Gospel had called and now he is the leader in defense of Christianity. He had hated Christ deeply. He now serves Him utterly. Such reversals are costly.

His popularity had waned. Both Jew and Greek looked upon him as a great scholar, an outstanding Pharisee with a matchless contribution to give to his generation. When the Gospel turned the tide of his life into lowlier and what they thought unworthy channels, they left him with disdain or hatred burning in their hearts.

Not only had he given up heavily, yea completely, on the human level, but he had picked a path steep and stony, lonely and difficult. Along its way there are dangers; shipwrecks, scourgings, the bitterest persecutions, long imprisonments.

From being the idol of his people, as a great university graduate, ready to take over the leadership of the party of the Pharisees, second only to Gamaliel, the recognized brain of them all; he describes his position as being made "the off-scourings of all things," a door mat for the nation's feet; and it was to this that the Gospel called.

He declares, however, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." But how can he say it? He might endure these hardships, but how can he glory in them?

He tells us, and his explanation is satisfactory and convincing. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel," he says, because of:

1. **What Is It - "The Power Of God."** He has wielded power before. He was a man of power. He was a powerful personality, but since he turned in completely with the Gospel, he is handling a new power. Here was "the Power of God."

He could make claims that reached to the fundamental needs of the race and never have to apologize or give excuses for the insufficiency of his Gospel. As he felt the vibrant movements of God in His Gospel, he saw the "dunamis," the

dynamite, the inestimable power that had created the heavens and the earth. He found that in the Gospel he was a partner with God and he wielded a power but poorly symbolized by an engineer who moves a lever and a thousand gigantic wheels in a great factory begin to move with silent precision and well nigh irresistible power.

II. What It Does - "Unto Salvation." This new power produced an entirely new issue in men. The Greeks with their philosophy and art and their magnificent minds had patterned the thought of the world for coming centuries in the intricacies of reasoning, psychology and philosophy.

The Romans with their short sword, their closely knit organization, their national loyalty, their mighty laws, their great empire, had well nigh conquered the world and organized it.

His own people, the Hebrews, with their exquisite lore, their beautiful ritual, had a religious culture reaching back into the dim beginnings, and a unique relationship to Jehovah.

Not one of them, however, nor all combined could bring about the salvation of a lost soul. They could only polish and veneer the exterior, they could not revitalize the spirit. They could only galvanize the corpse, but they could not start the heart to beating and the blood to pulsing and the life to sparkling and glowing within. In Christ, in His Gospel, Paul had found the power of God, the creative power of God that

could do this thing. "Unto salvation"; all the way to the ultimate need of a broken and blackened life; this power to cleanse, to change, to re-create, to renew; this saving, keeping power goes. No marvel that Paul, with such a mind and heart, was fascinated and held and royally and boldly unashamed.

III. Whom It Saves - "To Every One That Believeth." No class distinctions, no national exclusions, no water-tight compartments. The best, the only hope of mankind, belongs alike to every man. To Jew and Greek, to bond and free, to rich and poor, to black and white: to every one who would hear and heed and bring the heart along in faith and acceptance. As Paul looked back down the path, he saw Timothy, that beautiful, talented, princely youth of gentle birth and abundant culture. There he was kneeling at the feet of Christ, saved and satisfied and ready to be sent upon his mission. And by his side there knelt a poor, bedraggled girl of the streets, the fortune-teller of Philippi. How drab and soiled her life! And yet as he looked upon her face there was a light that never was seen on land or sea, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God which she had found in the face of Jesus Christ.

And this same Gospel, "the power of God—unto salvation—to every one that believeth," satisfied Paul's soul fully and left him radiant and confident.

Jesus - Saviour - God

By Rev. W. H. McIntosh, D.D.*

There is a fact about St. Paul's use of the word "Saviour" which may have meaning. To those who believe in the verbal inspiration of scripture, the Apostle's selection of names and titles cannot be by chance.

In the King James Version of the New Testament, there are fourteen letters attributed to St. Paul. These letters contain one hundred chapters. In every one of the letters, the Apostle uses a number of titles for God and Christ. "Saviour" is one of these titles. He uses this word only twelve times in the fourteen letters. One of these times the word is a common noun; it is used eleven times as a name or title. Of these eleven uses, ten of them are in the Pastoral Epistles; three in First Timothy, one in Second Timothy, and six in the short Epistle of Titus. Titus has three short chapters, the fourteen Epistles one hundred chapters. In less than 3 percent of his total writings is found more than half the number of times he uses this word as a title.

Here is the fact. If this fact be ascertained by a careful reading of the Epistles rather than by counting references in a concordance, perhaps some probable inferences may be drawn.

The letters to Titus and Timothy are written to preachers. First Timothy and Titus contain much the same subject matter. The occurrences of this title in the Epistle of Titus are in pairs: twice in the first chapter; twice in the second chapter; twice in the third chapter. In the first chapter the expressions are, "God, our Saviour," and "Christ,

our Saviour." This same order the use of the title occurs also in the second and third chapters. The following possible inferences are suggested:

1. If God is Saviour, and Christ is Saviour, then Christ is God.

2. Titus and Timothy are both preachers sent upon difficult missions. They are not to despair because of the difficulties because God is the Saviour. They are not to be proud of their successes because God is the Saviour.

3. Titus and Timothy are directed to give attention to the importance of sound doctrine but however sound the doctrine, it is still true that God is the Saviour.

4. Sound doctrine is to be accompanied by sound morals. The preachers are to insist upon right living but correct living will not save; God is the Saviour.

5. The preachers are in these particular fields to take care that they have the right kind of church officers, the qualifications especially of elders are stressed. However important, correctness in church government will not save; God is the Saviour.

These and many other possible inferences may suggest the true reason for St. Paul's partiality to this particular title. The fact that he so uses it is clear and we cannot believe that he did it by chance or simply to give variety to his style.

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