

## Contending For Faith No. 135

### Introduction.

I. Many years ago Jude penned these words.

**JUDE 1:1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

II. From this reading I invite your attention to the last part of Jude the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse. Here we are commanded to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.”

A. The word “contend” is not a weak, watered down word. It is one of the most powerful and most dynamic words in the English language. The Greek word translated “contend” was used in the first century of athletes who struggled to the point of agony in an effort to win an athletic contest.

B. It is with such intense effort that Jude commands Christians to defend the doctrines of Christianity.

**Kenneth Wuest**, the noted Greek scholar, translates this verse:

“I had constraint laid upon me to write to you, beseeching (you) to contend with intensity and determination for the Faith once for all entrusted into the safeguard of the saints.”

**Williams** translates this verse:

“I found it necessary to write and urge you to carry on a vigorous defense of the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s people.”

The **Today’s English Version** says:

“I felt the need of writing you now to encourage you to fight on for the faith which once and for all God has given to his people.”

III. There are many things a Christian must contend for in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I would like for us to consider a few of the things that are attacked in our time.

I. **Deity Of Christ** - One thing we must contend for is the deity of Christ.

A. The Bible teaches Jesus was a man, but He was far more than a man. (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23; Jn. 1:18; 14:9; Matt. 16:16, 17; Heb. 1:8).

B. **We are living in an age of liberalism.** More and more people are denying the divine Sonship of Christ. According to a survey taken by “Redbook Magazine” some years ago only 40% of the young ministers in the leading denominational seminaries believe in the deity of Christ. Many scoff at the virgin birth of Christ, and deny Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit and was the Son of God.

C. **Think about this startling fact for a moment!** More than 50% of the future preachers do not believe that Christ was any more than a good man and perhaps an exceptional teacher. We must be prepared to contend for the deity of Christ. Christianity stands or falls with His divine Sonship. If Jesus was not Deity, if He were not the Son of God, He was an imposter. If He were an imposter, He was not our Savior and we are still lost in our sins.

## II. **Purity In The Church** - A second thing we must contend for is purity in the church.

- A. It is God's purpose that the church be holy and without blemish. God wants His people to live in such a way that men will glorify Him.
- B. I am afraid, however, that the church of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has lost sight of God's purpose for His people.
  - 1. The church has become so anxious to grow and become prominent in the community that it has lowered its standard and tolerates in its fellowship almost every sin under heaven.
  - 2. We should not be against growth. We should work for growth, but we must not grow at the expense of holiness. The church must not accept drinking, dancing, gambling, immodest apparel, immorality and other sins just to become popular with our loose society.
  - 3. The church must contend for holiness or cease to be the people of God. ( Rom. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 6:17; Jas. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:15).

## III. **Verbal Inspiration** - A third thing we must contend for is verbal inspiration of the Bible.

- A. The Bible claims over and over again to be God's holy word. More than 2,500 times the biblical writers use such expressions as "thus saith the Lord."
- B. Before we discuss the verbal inspiration of the Bible, I would like for us to discuss some false or erroneous theories of inspiration that are accepted by countless people.
  - 1. One false theory of inspiration is **natural inspiration**.
    - a. Many contend the writers of the Bible were inspired only in the sense that Shakespeare, Milton and other renowned writers were inspired. They assert that the writers of the Bible manifest great genius, but deny they were guided by the Holy Spirit in their writings.
    - b. **Paul** refuted this argument when he said. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
      - 1) Paul affirmed here that "all scripture is inspired of God."
      - 2) The word "inspired" means literally "God-breathed." The scriptures are the breath or words of God, not of men.
    - c. **Peter** also refuted this argument. (2 Pet. 1:21).
      - 1) The word "moved" literally means "borne along."
      - 2) The writers of the Bible did not pen their own words, but were borne along by the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit.
  - 2. A second false theory of inspiration is **partial inspiration**.
    - a. Advocates of this view insist that inspiration extends only to the moral and spiritual precepts of the Bible, but not its supernatural elements. They scoff at the miracles of the Bible and charge the Bible contains many myths. They also charge that the Bible is full of scientific and historical errors.
    - b. This theory is also refuted by Paul's affirmation that "All scripture is inspired of God" and by the fact that the Bible has been proven time and time again to be scientifically and historically accurate. There is not a proven scientific or historical fact that conflicts with the Bible.
  - 3. A third false theory of inspiration is **conceptual or thought inspiration**.
    - a. Advocates of this view contend that only the thoughts, not the words of the Bible are inspired. They

maintain that God imparted ideas to the human who clothed them in his own fallible language.

- b. Even if it were possible to separate ideas from words, which I think is impossible, this contention is opposed to the clear teaching of the scriptures that the actual words are inspired. (2 Sam. 23:2; Jere. 1:9).
- c. Jesus said to His apostles.

**MAT 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves. 17 "But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; 18 and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 "But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. 20 "For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.**

- 1) Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles “what” and “how” to speak. The word “what” means the thoughts, the word “how” means the verbalism, the manner of expression.
- 2) Paul dropped a bomb on the thought theory in 1 Corinthians 2:13 when he said they spoke in “words” which the “Spirit teacheth.”

4. A fourth false theory of inspiration is **mechanical inspiration**.

- a. This hypothesis maintains that the human writers were passive instruments and unconscious penman of the Holy Spirit.
- b. This theory is easily disproved. For example, had God mechanically dictated the scriptures to men, the style of writing would be uniform throughout the Bible. A study of the Bible shows this is not true. The styles of Moses, David, Paul, John, Peter and the various other writers are quite different.

B. In contrast to these theories, **the Bible teaches verbal plenary inspiration**.

- 1. The word “plenary” describes the extent of inspiration. It means that the Bible is “fully” and “completely” inspired of God. The word “verbal” also describes the extent of inspiration. It means the Holy Spirit guided the writers in their actual choice of words. In other words verbal plenary inspiration means that every word of the original writings or autographs was God-breathed and infallible.
- 2. This does not mean, however, as we said a moment ago, that the writers were unconscious penman of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, in guiding the writers, worked through their own vocabularies and styles of writing.
  - a. For example Jesus’ statement that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Matt. 19:24; Mk. 10:25; 18:25). This statement is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Matthew and Mark used a Greek word which means an ordinary needle, but Luke, the physician, used a word which means a surgeon’s needle. Luke often used medical terms.
  - b. Another example is the expression “Verily, Verily.” The apostle John used this expression some 25 times in his writings. He is the only writer to use this expression.
- 3. **Dr. William Evans** once made this pertinent comment about verbal plenary inspiration:

“We must conclude, therefore, that while from the divine side the Holy Spirit gave through men clearly and faithfully that which he wished to communicate, from the human side that communication came forth in language such as men themselves would naturally have chosen. We may, therefore, safely say that we believe

in plenary and verbal inspiration - that is to say, the words as well as the thoughts have been given, whether mediately or immediately under the influence of the divine Spirit.”

**C. Let us now consider the importance of verbal inspiration.**

1. Some have thought that it does not make any difference if a person accepts or denies verbal inspiration. This is not so! Verbal inspiration is quite important. The Bible and Christianity stand or fall with it.
2. Let me illustrate.
  - a. In **Galatians 3:16**, Paul made an argument on the number of a noun in the Old Testament. He said that the word “seed” found in the promise made to Abraham was not plural referring to many, but was “singular” referring to Christ. If the words of the Bible are not inspired, the argument of Paul was very very weak and invalid.
  - b. Another example is **Acts 2:38**. For many years gospel preachers have contended on the basis of this verse that baptism is “for” or “unto” the remission of sins. If the word of God is not verbally inspired this argument is also weak and untenable because one cannot be sure that is the word the Holy Spirit meant to be there.
3. These examples and hundreds of others that could be given from any text in the Bible show the importance of verbal plenary inspiration. If the Bible is not verbally inspired, we cannot be certain about a single text in the Bible and we are without a guide to heaven. In fact, if the Bible is not verbally inspired of God, we cannot be sure there is heaven! You can see why I say we must contend vigorously for the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible.

**IV. Scriptural Way Of Becoming A Child Of God** - Another thing we must contend for is the one scriptural way of becoming a child of God.

**A.** There have been many theories advanced on how to become a Christian.

1. Some say we are saved by **the baptism of the Holy Spirit**.
2. Others say that we are saved by **mental acceptance of Christ without acts of obedience**.
3. Others state that we are saved by going to the **mourners bench and praying until God sends some evidence that we have been saved**.
4. The Bible does not teach any of these things and we must vigorously stand against them because the way of man leads to death. (Prov. 14:12).

**B.** The Bible clearly teaches a person must do the following things to become a Christian.

1. A person must believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. (Jn. 20:30, 31).
2. In order to become a Christian a person must repent of his sins and turn from the way of the world. (Lk. 13:3).
3. A person must also confess Christ and be baptized. (Rom. 10:10; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38).
4. After a person has done these things he is to emerge from the waters of baptism a new creature and “walk in the newness of life” the rest of his days upon the earth.

**Conclusion.**

- I. Beloved, let us always contend for the deity of Christ, the purity of the church, the verbal plenary inspiration of the scriptures, and the scriptural way of becoming a child of God. It is vital that we boldly defend these things and the other truths which comprise the faith once for all delivered to the saints. (Jn. 8:32).
- II. The Lord’s invitation is now extended. You are invited to come and give your life to Jesus and boldly stand for Jesus and His glorious message. Will you come as we stand and sing?

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