

THE OAKWOOD ROAD

CONTENDER

“...exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith...”

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THE BATTLE BEFORE US

It may sound trite or melodramatic to talk of "the battle before us," but there is always a battle before us to talk about. Democracy always has a battle before it, because there are always forces set to destroy democratic principles. So it is with Christianity. There is always a battle before us because Satan has no plans to let up in his efforts to thwart God's purposes.

Brotherhood tensions will continue. In spite of the prayer of Jesus and the entreaties of Paul, the church has been plagued with controversy and division in every age. We can only continue to fight a good fight and learn to live with the difficulties without letting the anxieties hinder our spiritual growth or curtail our evangelical spirit.

Localities will continue to experience the competitive spirit between congregations of the Lord's people due to differences over issues, personality clashes, and disfellowshipping aloofness. We are living in a time when international tension and competitive spirit in all phases of international interests lead us dangerously close to warfare. But Amer-

icans are generally happy and prosperous in spite of the situation. In the church we can continue to make our stand for the truth, wield the sword of the Spirit effectively and still enjoy the Christian life. The letter to the Philippians serves as an illustration pertinent to the point.

There are many things to encourage those who are standing for the New Testament fundamentals in all phases of church activity and Christian living. It seems to me that the tide is turning. More brethren, more congregations are awakening to what is going on. Many congregations which have followed the institutional movement are beginning to apply their brakes as they look ahead to the consequential dangers. I am right sure that the battle which has been waged against institutionalism and liberalism has had some good effect on many churches which, although aligned with the institutional movement, have desired to avoid the extremes to which the institutional movement is headed. The opposition to institutionalism has contributed greatly to this braking action.

In fact there seems to be a great deal of tension between the liberal institutionalists and the more conservative ones. Perhaps this is the battle before the "conservative institutionalists." This impending battle may result in bringing many of the "conservative institutionalists" to a realization of what the institutional movement can do to churches.

The battle before us may take many new avenues of expression. But in general it will involve the watering down of Biblical authority. There are theological and common interpretations and definitions of liberalism. But liberalism can be explained in such a way to cover both the theological and common ideas. Liberalism is seen in a Christian when the Bible lacks its former authority to that Christian. Certain principles and emphases of old are quietly minimized or boldly repudiated.

Liberalism will beset us in every phase of church interest and individual activity. It will continue to hit us in doctrine, organization, and morals. We shall not escape its nuisance. Our basic problem seems to be that of individual apathy. Brethren are much more inter-

ested in reading Norman Vincent Peale's stuff, than such works as R. L. Whiteside's "Doctrinal Discourses." Their faith thus becomes weak as water. Water is refreshing to many because it follows the course of least resistance. Liberalism makes its play on this kind of faith and it is refreshing to many to shake off moral restraints in favor of various forms of worldliness. To many it is refreshing to enjoy peaceful relations with denominational bodies, it is refreshing to compromise rather than to contend for the faith once delivered.

So there is a battle before us. It will always be before us, in fact it will always be with us. There are many encouraging developments, there are many discouraging circumstances. Success in the battle will depend on whether or not we keep on the whole armour of God. And we must remember that no armour is provided for the back.

-William E. Wallace

Article appeared in Truth Magazine in October 1959

DAILY BIBLE READING

March 12	Judges 1-3
March 13	Judges 4-7
March 14	Judges 8-10
March 15	Judges 11-13
March 16	Judges 14-16
March 17	Judges 17-20
March 18	Judges 21—Ruth 2

NEWS AND NOTES

Remember to answer the question posed to each if us.

We are going to begin a men's training class to develop leadership talents in leading in the worship assembly.

A women's training class will begin as well dealing with supporting and encouraging men to develop their talents in leading in the worship.

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