

J.C. Ryle: "Is the Bible the Word of God? Then be sure you never read it without fervent prayer for the help and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Here is the rock on which many make shipwreck. They do not ask for wisdom and instruction--so they find the Bible dark, and carry nothing away from it. You should pray for the Spirit to guide you into all truth. You should beg the Lord Jesus Christ to "open your understanding," as He did that of the His disciples. The Lord God, by His inspiration the book was written, keeps the keys of the book, and alone can enable you to understand it profitably."

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 (*Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church*)

102. Q. What is the Lord's supper?

A. The Lord's supper is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to his appointment, his death is shown forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace (Mt. 26:26, 27, 28; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:16).

103. Q. Who are the proper subjects of this ordinance?

A. They who have been baptized upon a personal profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance from dead works (Acts 2:41, 42).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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EARNESTLY CONTENDING

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 1:3)

There was a time in this country when there was such reverence for the Word of God that even wicked men, although not believing it, did not dare to show contempt for it. It occurs to me that even in my days of unbelief and rebellion that I had a sense that the Bible was to be treated with respect. Those days seem to be long past as we witness open contempt for Christianity and all that pertains to it, especially the Word of God. Sadly, open contempt in general has caused a drift in churches toward a form of presentation that is more palatable to the ways of the world. The things found most offensive to the world are the very things that define the faith of God’s elect and render what is being taught as being empty of substance and devoid of Gospel truth. The temptation to move toward the appearance of success is great and to varying degrees they dilute or corrupt the Word of truth and have in effect “trodden under foot the Son of God.”

At the time of Jude’s writing men were already dying for this faith and they have done so through the centuries since. Men like Stephen would not and could not bow to the opposition. This is not proud contention over pet doctrines; rather it is the earnest expression of the Master’s word to us. It is with a holy jealousy that we stand for our Father’s integrity since to oppose truth is to oppose God. We are confident that God is able to defend against all

comers, but we are herein exhorted to contend and to do so earnestly.

David, in Psalm 51, referred to “Thy salvation.” From this we may understand that the thought of salvation is not open to any “private interpretation.” The implication here is the fulness of the Gospel and all that pertains to it. There are no “designer” Gospels. That is a gospel of one’s own choosing. There is only one Lord and there is but one faith (that which is believed) that He declares. He is the “Author and finisher of our faith,” and this author wrote only one book. We note that while salvation is the same in whatever context it appears, it is addressed to believers. In the first verse of this epistle, they are identified as “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called...”

Among believers we may observe several things they have in common. There is a common and familial love. They are all the children of God. The Father endearingly speaks of them as being His by Grace and by sovereign choice. It is understood that grace and all the attendant blessings and promises are the same to all. Specifically, it is said of the early disciples that they had all things in common. In that all had been declared as being sinners and having come short of the glory of God, all needed the same redemption by nothing less than the blood of Christ. None of them claim to be their own.

Thus, they sing together, “Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” All possess the same justifying righteousness of Christ. All have been regenerated and called by the same Holy Spirit and they will respond to no other; they are partakers of the divine nature. And they do and shall possess the same glory.

The thought of exhortation is that of calling near for encouragement. I remember my grandmother describing a preacher she had known as being and exhorter. As a preacher I have learned of the importance of just such a tone in preaching. Often exhortation is expressing urgency as was the case here. The danger sensed by Jude was imminent. In the following verses he describes false teachers who were, in effect, denying “the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” The faith for which we are to contend is the focus of the evil one and his followers and so we are bidden to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“The faith” here is the whole body of truth which we believe and trust. It obviously begins with the being and purpose of God (Hebrews 11:6). It is referred to in several ways in Scripture. In Romans 10, Paul called it “...the word of faith, which we preach...” He urged the Philippians to be “...striving together for the faith of the Gospel...” The exhortation to Timothy was to hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.” Paul called Titus his own son “after the common faith.” Toward the end of this epistle Jude uses a reference we should all seize upon. *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 1:20-21).* This is the whole body of truth that is apprehended by

the believer. It is for this we would “earnestly contend,” to struggle, to faithfully declare. *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. (Acts 20:27).*

Jude would reinforce the thoughts above with the declaration that this faith for which we must contend is “once and for all” (Thayer). Two things are here emphasized. First that it was once and completely delivered. And it was for the saints, the called according to His purpose. This faith incorporates and embraces the grace sent forth from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit upon men. It rejoices and delights in the teaching of a divine and eternal love. This faith rests on the choices of God knowing that they are born out of such love as only He can exhibit. It relies on that which was agreed upon in eternity in the Godhead to save a people for His name. It discovers peace with God in that God was in Christ “reconciling the world unto Himself.” It rests upon the imputation of the righteousness of Christ being justified and reconciled by the blood of His cross. Such faith acknowledges that regeneration has occurred, sanctification is accomplished, and final perseverance will be experienced through He, the Holy Spirit.

Such faith is delivered to the saints by His Son through whom He has spoken and in Whom it is demonstrated. We have in the inspired word of the Apostles and writers who were witnesses to His ministry. We receive it by the teaching of the indwelling Spirit illuminating and bringing witness to the word of truth.

As we reflect on those who have suffered in the past, the One who has authored it, and the value thus placed upon this faith, how shall we not contend for it earnestly? *bhs*

Life is to be measured by action, not by time; a man may die old at thirty, and young at eighty; nay, the one live after death, and the other perished before he died.

Thomas Fuller

Praising God in Zion

“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.”
Psalm 65:1

Sacred Scripture is God breathing in our presence, and praise is our breathing in God’s presence. Praise is a proof of our spiritual life before our glorious living, breathing God. The Psalmist, by Holy Spirit inspiration wrote, “Whoso offers praise glorifies Me” (Ps. 50:28). Remember the answer to the question, “What is the chief end of man?” And the answer is, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” The reason we exist is for God’s glory, not our own! “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:5-6). God’s eternal purpose for us is “the praise of the glory of His grace.” True praise properly terminates in its glorious object—God, because of who He is and what He has done as Psalm 65 beautifully shows. What has God done? He has heard prayer, He has dealt with our sin, He has blessed us to choose us, He satisfies us with His goodness, He is our confidence as a result of His salvation, He controls creation, He crowns the year with His goodness, He provides flocks and grain (Ps. 65:2-13). Spurgeon noted, “Praise is a slender return for the boundless favors we enjoy; let us not be slack in rendering it in our best music, the music of a devout soul.”

The great earthly location of the praise of God is in Zion or among the people of God gathered in the temple for divine worship. Zion was the appointed place to worship the Lord in olden times and the Zion of God today is wherever God’s people meet for His worship. Our God must be praised for His being and doing. We, as created beings, owe praise to God while He owes us nothing but condemnation for sin. God’s Son, the Lord Jesus, has bought us with a price therefore we are His—“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:33). Praise waits for God in Zion because in Christ we have a new song to sing in praise, “The LORD has made known His salvation: His righteousness has He openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He has remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise” (Ps. 98:2-4). Those who know His salvation sing praise in private and public worship. You must look higher than the pulpit or you will be disappointed.

Jesus, where’er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where’er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallow’d ground.

What the Psalmist is saying as he is being borne along by the Holy Spirit is that when God comes to Zion there His people await His arrival with anticipation and adoration. Oh, that our worship would be able to welcome our glorious Redeemer-God’s presence among us for His just praise. Yes, God’s people praise the glorious Majesty of their God who fills heaven and earth. Praise awaits our God unless something is wrong with His people. –Dr. Ron Rumburg