

SOME HAD RATHER RUN THAN FIGHT

(Part 1)

By E. L. Bynum

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” 1Timothy 6:12

History has shown that the Nations of the World cannot always live in peace. As much as they might desire peace, the time comes when they must fight to keep it. Pacifist nations become slaves and lose their liberty and freedom. No one should ever want war, but war has always come to every peaceful nation.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The faith has been delivered unto God’s people once for all. That should be enough for us all, but there is one problem and that is the presence of evil in the world. No sooner had God placed mankind in a perfect environment and then up jumped the devil. Here on this earth began the war between good and evil. (It had previously begun in heaven, but we are talking about mankind.) Good and evil involved Satan and a host of angels against God and His Creation.

That battle that began in the Garden of Eden continues to this very hour, and will continue until God throws Satan and all his followers into the lake of fire. Those Christians, who desire to live without fighting, will ultimately be the devil’s helpers.

The Christian life would be far easier if all we had to do was preach the saving gospel of Christ and declare God’s wonderful plan for mankind. But that is a pipe dream that will lead to ruin if followed. For proof of this, simply look at Adam and Eve and see what they lost by not fighting evil. Not only did they lose Eden and its glory, but look at the effect it had on the whole human race!

So it is with the Christian faith that was once delivered — *“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) As Christians, we can either fight for the faith, or stand by and watch the evil one destroy all that we have built. The spiritual destruction we see today is a direct result of Christians not defending the faith!

THE FIGHT IN SPURGEON’S DAY

Spurgeon’s Church in London, England was for many years affiliated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain. For a number of years he struggled over the drift towards liberalism in the Baptist Union. He boldly preached against it and wrote extensively about this evil of compromise. Many of

his writings were published in “The Sword and Trowel”. Finally he came to the point where he could do nothing other than withdraw from the Baptist Union. He was disappointed that many of his friends, who believed as he did, stayed in the Union and broke fellowship with him. Some historians have written that this heart break led to his early death. Of course no one really knows, but one thing is clear that Spurgeon never gave in to the liberals.

THE FIGHT IN THE 20TH CENTURY

In the early 1900’s, a flood of modernism/liberalism swept into this country from England and Germany. They worked deceptively to undermine the doctrines of the Christian faith by questioning the integrity of the Bible and by suggesting there were two accounts of creation in the book of Genesis. That meant that Moses didn’t write the book of Genesis and after all it was just a bunch of stories handed down from generation to generation. They also denied that the book of Isaiah was written by Isaiah, saying that there were a least two Isaiahs. The miracles of the Bible could not be believed and the prophecies of the Bible were written after the fact. The Bible was not inspired but a fallible book. Of course they did not teach this all at once, but little by little they destroyed the faith of their listeners. (**Note:** Most of the modern Seminaries and Colleges of today are still teaching the same junk.)

I admire the early fundamentalists that stood up against the modernism that was overcoming the denominations and churches. I could name many of the prominent ones who had large churches and a greater capacity to make their voices heard, but I would leave out a host of others. They were fighters and attracted a large number of followers, but they could not stem the tide of error. Denominations, one after another, fell into the trap of compromise. The most effective voices came from the Baptists. I am glad they stood in the gap and at least tried. During this same period of time, there were many Baptist churches that never belonged to the organized denominations. There were some that held tightly to the doctrines of the Bible.

The Baptist fundamentalists contained some effective preachers who did great things for the Lord, but they had some fatal flaws that doomed their long time effectiveness. Here are a few of those flaws.

1. They were involved in trying to save organized denominations, when those organizations had no Scriptural grounds to even exist. Organized denominations cannot be found in the New Testament, nor can we find doctrinal teaching that justifies their existence.
2. Baptists entered into fellowship with Protestants and Inter-denominationalists; because they were fighting a common fight against rank unbelief among liberals. That led Baptists to place less emphasis on many other doctrines which were fundamental to having a Scriptural Church. I speak of the doctrine of the church and the church ordinances, as well as other doctrines. These are fundamental doctrines and vital for maintaining sound churches. It was easy for them to face a common foe of modernism and more or less ignore other doctrines upon which they could not agree.
3. Many of these churches had suffered extensively under the denominational pressure that

was put upon them by the Northern Baptist Convention (now American Baptist Convention), and the Southern Baptist Convention. Instead of seeing the complete folly of such organizations, they set about organizing their own organized fellowships and Associations. This move eventually would bring about another organization that would cause them to have to flee or give in to many of the same errors. I will have more to say about this in the next article that I intend to write.

4. Organizing into fellowships and Associations led to the lowering of standards of personal separation and common decency. Years ago I was away on a business trip for the Church. The friend I was traveling with wanted me to go with him to a gathering of international Protestant fundamentalist churches. It was at a large hotel and conference center on the beach. While there was some truth preached during our short time there, the personal separation of many of the people gathered there was a shame. It was a beautiful hotel with a large swimming pool. Delegates attending the convention were coming and going from the swimming pool dressed in a shocking manner. It was too much for me to take so we only stayed one night and left after the morning session. It is a mystery to me that people would fight modernism and yet they had no standards of separation. In the morning session the President of this organization called my name, and asked me to come to the platform and lead in prayer. I should have walked out, but I did not.

I recently read a statement in the *Sword of the Lord* that I had even forgot making.

“E. L. Bynum aptly delineated this weakness when he wrote in the May 2008 issue of the *Plains Baptist Challenger*. ‘We hear of pastors who are tired of fighting and are trying to be more positive and successful. They simply want to be a part of a kinder and gentler religious movement’”

I am reluctant to quote from Augustine and the other Catholic quotable writers, because they wrote far more heretical quotes than truth. The same goes for the great Greek and Roman philosophers. Never the less I will quote from a Jewish philosopher who hit the nail on the head in this particular quote. **“Truth does not become more true by virtue of the fact that the entire world agrees with it, nor less so even if the whole world disagrees with it.”** –Maimonides (1135-1204)

Some Had Rather Run than Fight

(Part 2)

By E. L. Bynum

Many modern day pastors have shied away from being soldiers, and are more prone toward pacifism, when it comes to defending the faith. Political correctness is doing a lot of damage to our nation and its future. Political correctness has leaked into our pulpits so that some preachers can hardly say anything against Satan for fear that will offend someone. Many have taken of the armor of God, and put on garments more fitting for a pink tea party hosted by the Ladies Aid Society. People Pleasing Preachers will not fight the good fight of faith, but will talk and talk about things that will not ruffle the feathers of worldly Christians. They remind me of some of the Old Testament Priests who said, *“Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests’ offices, that I may eat a piece of bread”* (1 Samuel 2:36). I guess if they had a right to exist then, they can still exercise the same rights today.

NEW EVANGELICALISM – NEW WAY TO COMPROMISE

The father of New Evangelicalism is the title that has been given to Dr. Harold John Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Church, Boston, and first President of Fuller Theological Seminary. I will quote at some length from a news release of Dr. Ockenga of December 8, 1957: *“The New Evangelicalism is the latest dress of orthodoxy, as Neo-Orthodoxy is the latest expression of theological liberalism. The New Evangelicalism differs from Fundamentalism in its willingness to handle the social problems which Fundamentalism evaded. There need be no dichotomy between the personal gospel and the social gospel. The true Christian faith is a supernatural personal experience of salvation and a social philosophy. Doctrine and social ethics are Christian disciplines. Fundamentalism abdicated leadership and responsibility in the societal realm and thus became impotent to change society or to solve social problems. The New Evangelicalism adheres to all the orthodox teachings of Fundamentalism but has evolved a social philosophy.”* (*“Evangelicalism, The New Neutralism”* by Ashbrook)

Dr. Ockenga continues: *“The New Evangelicalism has changed its strategy from one of separation to one of infiltration. Instead of static front battles the new theological war is one of movement. Instead of attack upon error, the New Evangelicals proclaim the great historic doctrines of Christianity. The results have been phenomenal. The New Evangelical is willing to face the intellectual problems and meet them in the framework of modern learning. It stands doctrinally upon the creeds and confessions of the Church and grants liberty in minor areas when discussion is promoted on the basis of exegesis of Scripture. The strategy of the New Evangelicalism is the positive proclamation of the truth in distinction from all errors without delving in personalities which embrace the error. The evangelical believes that Christianity is intellectually defensible but the Christian cannot be obscurantist in scientific questions pertaining to the creation, the age of man, the universality of the flood and other moot Biblical questions. The evangelical attempts to apply Christian truth to every phase of life. Since I first coined the phrase ‘The New Evangelicalism’*

at a convocation address at Fuller Theological Seminary ten years ago, the evangelical forces have been welded into an organizational front. First, there is the National Association of Evangelicals which provides articulation for the movement on the denominational level; second, there is World Evangelical Fellowship which binds together these individual national associations of some twenty-six countries into a world organization; third, there is the new apologetic literature stating this point of view which is now flowing from the presses of the great publishers, including Macmillans and Harpers; fourth, there is the existence of Fuller Theological Seminary and other evangelical seminaries which are fully committed to orthodox Christianity and a resultant social philosophy; fifth, there is the establishment of Christianity Today, a bi-weekly publication, to articulate the convictions of this movement; sixth, there is the appearance of an evangelist, Billy Graham, who on the mass level is the spokesman of the convictions and ideals of the New Evangelicalism. The strength of this movement is recognized by the Christian Century, America's leading theologically liberal magazine, by its expression of fear that this movement may challenge the religious scene and change the religious climate in this nation. The New Evangelical believes that Christ is the answer; that He must be understood in a Biblical framework and He and His teachings must be applied to every realm of societal existence." (*Ibid*)

OCKENGA LETS THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

It is clear that the New Evangelicals had rather run than fight. The Fuller Theological Seminary followed this trend and it led them right into liberalism and compromise. Of course Ockenga felt right at home there as their first President. This seminary was founded by the famous radio preacher, Dr. Charles E. Fuller, who no doubt would have been shocked by the direction it soon took. Ockenga along with Fuller's son and other assorted fence straddlers made it a citadel of compromise.

Of course Billy Graham was a new evangelical in his approach to evangelism. W. B. Riley a Baptist pastor of Minneapolis, MN, was a militant fighter against liberalism, but alas he never led his Church out of the Northern Baptist Convention (now American Baptist Convention). It has always been a mystery to me as to why he picked Billy Graham to be president of Northwestern Schools. Billy did not last a long time there till he went on to greener pastures. He placed his membership in the First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas where it remained for many years, even though he never lived in Dallas. Dr. W. A. Criswell was the pastor of First Baptist and was known as a conservative, but he did little to drive out the modernism in the Southern Baptist Convention while he was their President.

Billy Graham could not be much of a Baptist since he was married to a Presbyterian, and most of his children were sprinkled in the Presbyterian Church. He was clearly a New Evangelical and felt comfortable in bringing some of the leading liberals in America to the sponsoring committees of his crusades. He said on one occasion that "The great theologians of today are Rudolph Bultman, Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and Carl Henry." All of them were some of the worst modernists of the 20th Century with the exception of Carl Henry who was a New Evangelical.

The Southern Baptist Convention is a kind of New Evangelical movement. Even though there have been some reforms in the SBC, they have not returned to the biblical doctrines which they once taught. That is another subject which we will not develop at this time.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS?

Independent Baptists are not immune from the possibility of compromise. All of us have to be on guard, lest we fall into the trap of compromise. We can easily compromise sound doctrine, and we are subject to moral or ethical failure. The Bible gives us adequate warning that we should pay attention to. *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Corinthians 10:12). Failure to heed such warnings can lead to spiritual disaster.

A number of years ago Jim Higgs the president of the Independent Baptist College of Dallas did an unbelievable thing. This College was sponsored by the Trinity Temple Baptist Church and was housed in their facilities. We were lead to believe that he was a solid Independent Baptist. He later resigned and after awhile became the pastor of the First Baptist Church of San Francisco, California. This Church was a member of the liberal American Baptist Convention and under his leadership also joined the Southern Baptist Convention. He remained as pastor of the San Francisco Church for 18 years, before going on to the Chicago area to pastor another Church. One pastor in the Chicago area told me that he had seen him at a Church sporting event, and that he wore long hair like a hippy.

It would seem that this event would cause great consternation in the Dallas College, and they would be indignant of Higgs' action, but I never heard a peep from any of the leaders who were there. I wrote a short article in the PBC exposing this compromise. One faculty member (now deceased) of IBC, was reported as saying that Bynum did not understand that Higgs was simply trying to save a Church. All I can say is that it is a strange kind of "saving." I do know that he had a bad influence with some of the students at IBC as they visited with him in San Francisco. Higgs is back in the San Francisco area, and his website says, "For two and one-half years I served as a church consultant to forty-five churches in the Bay Area of California."

WE HAVE TO STAND READY TO FIGHT

I know that we live in a religious world where pacifism is more popular than taking a stand and fighting. Years ago, the hippies would cry out "make love not war." Of course this was a snappy saying that was wicked in its intent. Some Bible believers had rather speak about love than to take a stand for truth. When a rattlesnake crosses your path you had better not talk about love to the snake, but it would be advisable to kill the snake as fast as you can. Christians should be told that this is not a love feast with the devil. It is an all out war with evil and we must fight or we will be led into compromise.

ARE THEY OUT OR ARE THEY IN?

I am well aware that some good Independent Baptists were once a member of one of the various Fellowships or Associations. I have never been unfriendly with those who may have gone to some unscriptural College. I have always tried to be helpful to those who come out of these Fellowships or Association, if indeed they have come out. I am not so interested in where a man has been, but where they are right now.

There are some who seemed to be coming out, but years later they still have not made a clean break with extra-biblical organizations. They struggle to make up their mind. Some evidently would like to come out, but are unwilling to pay the cost or stand the heat.

Some men said they were coming out of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, but they continue to support BBF missionaries and other projects. They use the excuse that they are also supporting Independent Baptist Church missionaries that are Church sent. Others said they were coming out, but they ended up going into the Heartland Baptist College and the Global Baptist Fellowship movement. It is up to every preacher and Church as to where they will stand, but they ought to be honest about which brand they are wearing. My question to you is, "Are you in or are you out?" Just fly your colors and let people know what you are.

BE PREPARED TO FIGHT AND DEFEND THE TRUTH

There are many ways that a servant of the Lord must be ready to fight, if he intends to please God. *"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so **fight** I, not as one that beateth the air"* (1 Corinthians 9:26). Paul in this passage and its context is declaring that it is a **fight** to be temperate in all things. It is important that we keep our body in subjection to God if we would win the prize and finish the course with joy.

*"**Fight** the good **fight** of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses"* (1 Timothy 6:12). It is clear that the faith is worth fighting for and that we are to be sure and do this in light of the coming of the Lord. *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good **soldier** of Jesus Christ. No man that **warreth** entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a **soldier**"* (2 Timothy 2:3-4). It is clear that if we are going to "fight the fight of faith," that we must endure hardness, and not be entangled with the affairs of this life. When you enlist in the army, you cannot take your farm with you or any other business. The Lord expects you to give him your best and to be willing to fight. There is no room for cowards and sissies.

In Ephesians 6:11-18 we find the uniform for the Christian soldier and every part of it was for battle in the day in which it was written. It is the armor that ever Christian should be willing to wear, and be ready to fight for God and truth. The conscientious objector has no defense or even an offensive weapon. In World War 2 there were quite a few conscientious objectors and they

were generally scorned by most in that day. Now we have conscientious objectors in the ranks of the Christian faith. They will not take up the weapons of a soldier and fight for the faith once delivered unto the saints. Frankly, they had rather run than fight.

We are instructed by God to take up arms against the enemies of the cross of Christ. *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”* (Ephesians 6:11-13). Read Ephesians 6:10-18

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

Let us fight the battle in such a manner that at the end of the course, we will be able to say with Paul, ***“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”***