

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK, SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

The Bulwarks Of The Ancient Faith

Jude 3

The ancient faith has been the object of persecution from the earliest days of its existence. Christ suffered a horrible and ignominious death. One by one the apostles climbed the steep ascent to heaven. In the first century Christianity underwent ten bloody persecutions: "sharpen the ax," "unloose the lions," "light the faggots," were frequently heard by those following Jesus.

Shortly after his birth Herod cried "slay the children," and a few years later came the cry "Let Him be crucified." Yet in view of all this the Lord achieved his mission and his disciples dedicated themselves to the proclamation of His message. The blood of martyrs watered, as it were, the seed of the kingdom and Christians sprang up everywhere, like willows by the watercourses. In the year 300 the emperor Diocletian struck a medal on one side "Christianity destroyed" on the other "Worship of the gods." Twelve years after the coining of the medal the Emperor Constantine was converted and made Christianity the religion of the Empire. How did all this happen? Why did it happen? The fire could not burn it, nor could the floods drown it. The gates of hell would not prevent Christ from building His church Mt. 16:18.

From its inception the godless learning of all the centuries has been conveyed upon the Faith in a persistent and continuous effort to expose its weakness and thus destroy it. The test is welcomed. Kindle your hottest fire and pour on all your corrosive acids. The words of Martin Luther are a standing challenge: "If this religion have not in it the power of an endless life, let it go down." John 1:4-5 "The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out." (Goodspeed)

Why does the ancient faith still live? What are its defenses, or bulwarks? (a defensive wall for protection) What are its safeguards?

I. The Church is a Bulwark the Ancient Faith.

The Church, was built by Christ Mt. 16:18, "Upon this rock, I will build my church..." It was established in Acts chapter two, and contains all the saved in the earth Acts 2:47. It is the "pillar and support of the truth" 1Tim. 3:14-15. In Jude 3, Jude declared that he had intended to write of the "common salvation" however because of the threat of false teachers and their doctrine he now writes and admonishes them to "earnestly contend for the faith."

This was important for, the Church must be active in guarding the faith and protecting it from those who would change and destroy it.

"Earnestly contend" means to "wrestle" this word notes the extreme efforts which are to characterize the faithful in their defense of the truth, regardless of how formidable and numerous the enemies may be.

How The Church Safeguards the Faith.

1. By Propagating it:

Phil. 1:17 "I am set for the defense of the gospel."

2Tim. 4:1-2 "I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the living and dead at His appearing and Kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season and out of season..."

Phil 2:16 "holding forth the word of life..." The church maintains a continual posture of preaching and propagating the ancient faith.

2. By Keeping the Sacred Traditions:

1Cor. 11:1-2 "Now I praise you brethren that ye remember me in all things and keep the ordinances (traditions) as I delivered them to you." We refuse to compromise with sin, innovations (changes in the divine plan), and departures from the truth. WHY? because the church is a bulwark of the faith. She maintains the faith by standing up for it.

II. The Word of God Is a Bulwark of the Ancient Faith.

Faith is a firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing (Vine) Romans 10:17.

Jude 3 "The Faith" i.e. what is believed, the contents of belief. The word of God guards "the faith" because the word of God has revealed the faith. God's word is right, Psa. 33:4 (this settles so many issues regarding creation, age of earth, and other such questions.)

The word of God is given by inspiration. It came from God and not man (2Tim. 3:16).

In 2Peter 1:21 we read "for no prophecy ever came by the will of man but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." The Word safeguards the faith because it produces it Luke 8:11. It is the seed of the kingdom, and produces but one thing, one belief, one church, Christians only, nothing more or less. In Gal. 1:11-12, we read: "But I certify you that the gospel that I preached, was not of man, neither received I it of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

III. The Christian Home is a Bulwark of the Ancient Faith.

Home is where the heart is in dwellings great or small
And there's many a stately mansion that isn't a home at all
And a cottage lighted with lovelight is the dearest home of all

The essence of the power of a good home is recorded in 2 Tim. 1:5 "when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."

The primary spiritual functions of the Christian home are:

1. Faith building--Since attitudes are caught as well as taught, it is well to remember that the home, more than any other influences the attitudes toward God, Christ, the Bible, Church etc.

2. Expressing Christianity--It is one thing to learn from memory the bible, but quite another to live these out in life. It is in the home that we have the opportunity to "live" Christianity. Here behavior patterns are set, that will wield a powerful influence on the child.

3. Religious guidance--The home deals with life, life in its origin, life in its unfolding, life in its expression of personality, life in all its aspects. The home must teach and demonstrate faith in God, trust in Christ, mutual love, good will, stability, the church being first, etc.

We need homes where mothers and fathers pray and read the bible, where God is honored--Eph. 6:1-2, and where Children are disciplined Prov. 22:6 "train up a child..." this is a home duty. Not the church, not the school, not the baby sitter, but the home.

The decline and fall of Roman Empire was caused in part by the decline in her homes. What about America today? Crime, Abortion, Divorce, Lack of Discipline, etc.

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character
If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

IV. A Godly Life is a Bulwark of the Faith.

One who dedicates his life in selfless service to God becomes a bulwark of the ancient faith. Rom. 12:1-2, James 1:27, and 1John 2:15-17 all teach the necessity of maintaining a separation from the sinful practices of the world.

There is no impact upon the forces of evil any greater than a godly life. In Jno. 11:11, we read that "Because of him (Lazarus) many believed on Jesus."

The following poem teaches a truth we all recognize:

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example is always clear
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creed's
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs
I can soon learn how to do it, if you will let me see it done

I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run
For I may misunderstand you and the fine advise you give
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Daniel Webster was once asked what he thought be

best argument was that he had ever heard in defense of Christianity. He quickly replied "a little old aunt of mine who lives in the New Hampshire hills."

Such has been the testimony of many people, and their life became a bulwark of the Ancient Faith.