

Sound Doctrine



*“Thy Word
Is
Truth”*



The Apostolic Faith

*N.W. Sixth & Burnside
Portland, Oregon 97209
U.S.A.*

SOUND DOCTRINE

PAUL while awaiting execution in a Roman prison and knowing that the time of his departure was at hand, in his farewell message to Timothy penned this exhortation: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Tim. 4:2-4).

Nineteen centuries have demonstrated that Paul was a true prophet. We can say today that the time **has** come when they will not endure Sound Doctrine. In these days of “broadmindedness,” of “freethinking,” of “liberalism,” and “modernism” there is little room for sound doctrine; it has become a despised and hated term. Those tried teachings of the Bible that once constituted the faith and practice of the church, the teachings for which the early apostles stood, which were revived in the great Reformation of Luther’s day, which were preached in the mighty holiness movement of Wesley’s time, and which have been the inspiration of all true evangelism down the ages – teachings which have shaken continents and shaped the destiny of nations – these time-honored truths the religionist of today

is ruthlessly discarding. He even hails this modern movement as “a great advance in religious thought,” as “an emancipation from religious bigotry,” and he contemptuously brands those who still hold to the old fundamental doctrines “querulous, narrow-minded dogmatists.” Surely the times of which Paul prophesied are upon us.

What is Sound Doctrine?

There is nothing mystical or obscure about the term “sound doctrine.” It is that body of teachings in which Jesus instructed His disciples, which they in turn delivered to the church, and which the church adopted as its rule of faith and practice, and preached to the world. These teachings, in the main, consisted of a belief in one God, but three persons in the Godhead – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The teachings embraced the essential deity and incarnation of the Son in the Person of Jesus Christ – God manifested in the flesh (I Tim 3:16); His sacrificial death and shed blood as the only atonement for sin; His physical resurrection and ascension; the fall of man, his sinful depraved state, and his desperate need of salvation found only in the vicarious sacrifice provided upon the Cross; and the necessity of heartfelt repentance and restitution to those we have wronged.

Sound doctrine includes the teaching of three definite experiences: namely, Justification

(regeneration, John 3:3); Sanctification (holiness, Heb. 12:14; 13:12, 13); the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (endowment of power for service, Acts 1:4-8). Sound doctrine includes the teaching of the literal second coming of Jesus Christ to establish His millennial kingdom upon earth; of two resurrections (the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust); of the final judgment of the quick and the dead; and an eternal Heaven and a never-ending hell. Jesus also taught healing for the body, and provided for it in the Atonement. He denounced divorce and remarriage. He instituted three ordinances which He commanded His disciples to observe: water baptism by immersion, the Lord's Supper, and the washing of the disciples' feet.

These were the teachings which constituted the framework of early apostolic Christianity and which produced the godly living and Christian zeal which marked that period. The disciples "went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." No age of the church has ever surpassed that early standard. When persecutions broke out, as was the case, they suffered imprisonment, endured cruel mockings and scourgings, and endured burning at the stake rather than recant or deny one of the least of the doctrines which they had received. Apostolic Christianity shines out in bold relief on the pages of history against the dark background of the

succeeding generations. Sound doctrine was its bulwark.

The Mainspring of Revivals

Those same teachings, which marked the apostolic age, have likewise been the inspiration of all revivals since that day. With the close of the early period sound doctrine became obscured and almost lost amid the ecclesiastical trappings and theological rubbish of the Dark Ages. But with the opening of the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, in the face of violent opposition, struggled through to the doctrine of justification by faith. A great revival swept Europe, and the Reformation was launched. In this Reformation not only was religious liberty reborn, but also the seeds of civil liberty were sown, out of which have grown our free forms of democratic government which have shaped the course of nations down to the present day. That is what the doctrine of justification by faith has done for the world.

Two hundred years later John Wesley was used of God to restore to the Church the doctrine of entire sanctification, with the result that Christians were fired with a new zeal. The great holiness revival of the eighteenth century was launched. It swept the British Isles, spread to the countries of Europe, and finally crossed the Atlantic, Countless Christians in America rejoiced in the experience of entire sanctification.

From that time on, numerous revivals have swept America and many foreign lands; and invariably the doctrines that were preached and which have stirred multitudes to seek the Lord were those which were preached by the apostles in the early church. But it was not until the year 1906 that God restored to the Church the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. A little band who had been sanctified wholly were praying and waiting upon the Lord in a humble place in the city of Los Angeles, when suddenly the power fell “and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

At last the great latter Rain of the Spirit had fallen, and it has been falling ever since. God is ripening the fruit for the harvest; He has restored to the Church not only the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but also the whole body of teachings that constituted the sound doctrine of the apostolic age.

The Apostolic Faith Church came into being at the time of the outpouring of the Spirit in 1906, and consisted of those believers who embraced the fundamental teachings as defined above. These teachings became the groundwork of this mighty Latter Rain Gospel which has since been preached at the Apostolic Faith headquarters, and which has radiated into all the earth. We are seeing today a veritable repetition of those early days when the disciples “went forth, and preached every where,

the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” Miracles are being wrought – sick are healed, lives are transformed, and a people are being prepared for the coming of the Lord. It is because sound doctrine has been steadfastly adhered to and preached.

The Spiritual and Moral Decline

It is this body of fundamental teachings, through the preaching of which apostolic Christianity has been restored, that our modern religionists would now discard! Someone has well said, “The doctrines are the framework – the bones of Christianity. And the man who will not endure sound doctrine has a jellyfish religion.” No term more perfectly characterizes the spineless religions of this present age than that. The “advanced” teachings of today, some way or another, are not producing the Pauls, the Peters, the Johns, the Luthers, and the Wesleys of former generations. There is not much resemblance in the carnally-minded, pleasure-loving, self-gratifying modern religionists to that army of early Christian martyrs who died in dungeons and perished at the stake for the faith.

Is it not also significant that parallel with this departure from the old fundamental teachings of the Bible there has been an alarming decline in morals as well as in spirituality? Does the ungodly state of the world today reflect any “advance” in religion? Has anything been gained either spiritually or

morally through the discarding of these tried teachings of old? The rapid degeneracy of the age and the “jellyfish” religions of today are the answer to that question. Without sound doctrine there can be no sound Christianity.

The Influx of False Doctrine

The alarming departure from the faith has not halted with the mere discarding of the teachings of the Bible. Such a condition is deplorable enough in itself; but with this falling away there has been the added evil of turning en masse to false doctrine. Among the stinging rebukes levelled at Israel in her backslidden state was this one, “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13). These “broken cisterns” were the idolatrous worships to which Israel turned after she had forsaken God. When men forsake true religion, their next step is toward false religion – which “can hold no water.” “They shall turn away their ears from the truth, **and shall be turned unto fables.**” Is not this just what has happened? The world today is overrun with spurious doctrines, false prophets, and counterfeit religions: Theosophy, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Modernism, Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, the innumerable fanatical sects in much of the so-called Pentecostal movement, and a host of others.

The Apostasy of the Last Days

What is the meaning of this deluge of religions that has swept the earth in recent years? What is the import of all this religious stir in the world? What are we to make of this confusion of cults and creeds, of doctrines and dogmas, of systems and sects that are infesting the earth? It means that we are living in the last days; that the great apostasy fore-told in the Word of God is upon us: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Tim. 4:1).

We are living in awful days, but these, too, are wonderful days. In the midst of this terrible apostasy God is restoring the primitive faith of the early church unto His people. The Spirit of truth, which Jesus promised should guide His disciples into all truth, is in the earth in these last days seeking out the bride of Christ – a people who love His Word, who abide in His doctrine, and who are preparing for His coming.

But while the Holy Ghost is thus seeking a bride for the returning Bridegroom, let it be remembered that another force is at work in the earth. For as the Spirit of Christ is in the world, so the spirit of antichrist is also in the world, and he, too, is preparing a people for his advent – “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that

perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (II Thess. 2:9, 10).

The time is at hand. Ultimately we are going to be found in one of these two camps: either in the ranks of the redeemed, to enter in to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb when Christ comes, or in the forces of the Antichrist to undergo the sorrows of the Great Tribulation that is rapidly coming upon the earth. Ought not, then, the terrible flood tide of apostasy that is setting in startle us into wakefulness lest we be caught in its fatal undertow? There is but one safe course; and that is to have the doctrine of Christ laid in the heart through the new birth, to be sanctified wholly, a second, definite work of grace, and to receive the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. When one has received these three experiences he will not be easily shaken. The doctrines will then be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. He will stand when temptations come.