

The Necessity of

SOUND DOCTRINE

by Bob Allgood

"But speak thou the things which become SOUND DOCTRINE -" Titus 2:1

Recently I heard a preacher say, "Most of God's people don't know what they believe". I started thinking about this and I would add to this and say, "Most of God's people have never been taught from the Scriptures WHAT to believe". Man cannot teach a sinner to believe - God does this. But one of the purposes of Teaching and Preaching the word of God is to teach Sound Doctrine -- to teach God's people WHAT to believe. IMHO, most of God's people sit under the hearing of preachers (if they attend church on a regular basis) who do not teach SOUND DOCTRINE to their congregations. Sadly this is true with many among my own Primitive Baptist denomination.

SOUND DOCTRINE is a major subject in the Bible. DOCTRINE was a matter of great concern for our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles. There are at least fifty references to DOCTRINE in the New Testament alone, and most speak of the importance of holding to SOUND DOCTRINE or warn against the UNSOUND DOCTRINE OF MEN. The word SOUND comes from a Greek word that means "healthy, whole, solid and true". The word DOCTRINE comes from the Greek word "didasko" which means "teaching or instruction". SOUND DOCTRINE then, must be TRUE TEACHINGS or INSTRUCTIONS that are without corruption (the deliberate lies of man). The Apostle John tells us that "no lie is of the truth" (I John 2:21). SOUND DOCTRINE does not include HALF TRUTHS, as some of the more liberal brethren like to describe A LIE that includes a small element of truth. That is like calling a glass of 90% pure water and 10% arsenic HALF PURE WATER. There is only one problem - IT WILL KILL YOU IF YOU DRINK IT. Unsound doctrine can likewise kill !

Jesus said plainly to the Scribes and Pharisees: Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN" (Matthew 15:7-9). Jesus said "God is a Spirit: and they that wor- ship him MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH". Now, unless I have some severe brain damage, by putting "precept upon precept and line upon line", (Isaiah 28:9-10) and "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim 2:15), these passages TEACH ME THAT "TRUE WORSHIP" IS BASED ON "SOUND DOCTRINE" or TRUTH and that "VAIN

WORSHIP IS BASED ON "UNSOUND DOCTRINE" or the DOCTRINE OF MEN (that which is not Truth).

During our Lord's ministry "the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority (or power)" and not as the Scribes" and Pharisees. Speaking as the Son in subjection to his Father, Jesus said "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16). Jesus taught what the Father gave him to teach - HIS DOCTRINE WAS FROM GOD - NOT FROM MEN. Jesus WARNED his disciples "Take heed and beware of the leaven (doctrine) of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (Matt 16:6, 12). One should conclude from this the importance of knowing and holding to SOUND DOCTRINE. It should be A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN for every child of God, and especially every preacher, as it was for Jesus Christ.

There are some PREACHERS in the religious world who say they do not teach "doctrine" but teach the "practical aspects of Christianity". I will not name names, but I CHUCKLE at that SWINDLE, if you know what I mean. For SOUND DOCTRINE is practical and SOUND PRACTICE is based on SOUND DOCTRINE. Anyone claiming they don't teach DOCTRINE is really saying I DON'T TEACH THE WHOLE TRUTH. And if they don't teach the WHOLE TRUTH they disobey the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ who said "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations -- TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU --" (Matt 28:19-20).

SOUND DOCTRINE was a matter of great concern to the Apostles and the first Primitive Baptist Church of Jerusalem. In Acts 2:41-42 we read, "Then they that gladly received his word (the SOUND DOCTRINE just preached by Peter) were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them (the church) about three thousand souls. And they continued STEDFASTLY in the APOSTLES' DOCTRINE and FELLOWSHIP -". SOUND DOCTRINE was a normal meal of Spiritual food being fed to the FLOCK of the first church. The Apostles not get their doctrine from a library of books such as "COMMENTARIES", written by COMMENTATORS, (pronounced Common Tatters). Nor did they have books on "SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY", where men try to SYSTEMATIZE and PIGEON HOLE the "unsearchable riches of God" whose ways are past finding out (Rom 11:33). Their doctrine came from God, and God's Word, not man. Church FELLOWSHIP is based on SOUND DOCTRINE, for "How shall two walk together, except they be agreed" and "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness" ? The church that does not teach, preach and practice SOUND DOCTRINE is not a New Testament Church, and has no right or authority to call itself such, and especially no right to the name Primitive Baptist.

SOUND DOCTRINE was a matter of great concern to the Apostle Paul. In Acts 20:17-38 we read a heart touching

experience. Paul had called the Elders of the church of Ephesus together, and told them that BONDS and AFFLICTION awaited him in Jerusalem, and how that he would soon suffer DEATH for the cause of Christ. But he said "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gos- pel of the grace of God". Paul was determined to remain "SOUND IN DOCTRINE AND STEDFAST IN THE FAITH" even in the face of death. I pray that God will grant unto his ministers today this same desire and determination.

Paul told the Elders of this church "Wherefore I take you to record this day -- I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD". He said "Take heed therefore unto yourself, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, which he hath purchased with his own blood". What an awesome responsibility the minister of God has to FEED THE CHURCH and "declare the whole counsel of God" to the church. How dare any of us to FEED THE CHURCH with SLOP from the devils pippen of UNSOUND DOCTRINE.

But sadly enough, Paul warned that it would happen. He said, "For I KNOW THIS, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ALSO OF YOUR OWN SELVES SHALL MEN ARISE, SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS (distorted, misinterpreted & corrupt things) TO DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEMSELVES (to have their own little following or church). History has proven this to be a true prophesy. One need only LOOK IN THE YELLOW PAGES UNDER CHURCHES for the evidence. And shame on us, even among Primitive Baptist we have some who "follow after" preachers, esteeming one preacher greater than another. God forbid! Follow after Jesus Christ only!

Paul wrote to young Timothy, whom he had left in Ephesus, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto THE DOCTRINE; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16). Both of Paul's letters to Timothy are filled with admonitions to BE SOUND IN THE DOCTRINE - to study the doctrine - to rightly divide the Word - to remain stedfast and TRUE TO THE DOCTRINE. In his second letter, Paul told him to "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 (the church) will not endure SOUND DOCTRINE; but after their own lust shall they (the church) heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they (the teachers) shall turn away their ears (those of the church) from the truth, and shall be turned unto "fables" [a non-factual tale or myth]" (II Timothy 4:1-4). SOUND DOCTRINE IS NOT "WHATEVER SOUNDS GOOD" TO THE

EARS OF THE CONGREGATION or the individual hearer of the preached word.

**"Preach the word ---- reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and DOCTRINE. For the time will come when they will not endure SOUND DOCTRINE - And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"
Full Text is II Timothy 4:1-4**

To the satisfaction of the devil himself, UNSOUND DOCTRINE AND FABLES is "the main course of preaching" being served up now days to many religious congregations. This is not said to cast stones, but to simply state a fact that is evident to anyone who is aware of what is happening in the world of religion. We will do well if we can prevent UNSOUND DOCTRINE and FABLES from overflowing from the religious world into Primitive Baptist pulpits, but I fear there is already a "breach" in the wall. Jude refers to SOUND DOCTRINE as "the faith once delivered unto the saints" and exhorts us to "contend for the faith". In the "make believe world of religion" many have "departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy". Even among Primitive Baptist we hear the trumpet making "uncertain sounds" as some preach "divers and strange doctrines" such as: Gospel Regeneration, No Hellism, Non-Resurrectionism, A Postponed Kingdom Theory, and various aspects of Universalism; such as: God loved Essau, Open Communion and the acceptance of "Alien Baptism".

An Elder (pastor or preacher) must be one "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by SOUND DOCTRINE both to exhort and convince the gainsayers (deniers of truth). For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: (Legalistic Jews, who like Armenians, trust in their own works for righteousness). Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. PREACHERS FOR HIRE (or Glory Hogs) are usually the ones with the "itching ears" and the main source of UNSOUND DOCTRINE (Fables).

UNSOUND DOCTRINE (confusion) is masterminded by the Devil himself, but is usually preached by men "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof". Men who are "lovers of their own selves" and "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God". Men who are "ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth". Men who use "feigned and enticing words" in "fair speeches" with "cunningly devised fables" in order to make merchandise of God's people. We are told "from such turn away". However, sadly, we are also told that "Many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of

whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:2). UNSOUND DOCTRINE speaks evil of Christ, denies his honor and glory, while it always exalts man for his effort or knowledge. MEN WHO LOVE POPULARITY AND THE LIMELIGHT ARE USUALLY THE PROPAGATORS OF UNSOUND DOCTRINE.

SOUND DOCTRINE is revealed by God in His inspired word, when we "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15) and put "precept upon precept, and line upon line" (Isaiah 28:9-10). SOUND DOCTRINE will always bring honor and glory to God. SOUND DOCTRINE will always stand up under the scrutiny of the Scriptures. SOUND DOCTRINE never clashes with any other Scripture, but harmonizes with other Scripture as long as Scriptures are kept in their proper context. SOUND DOCTRINE does not depend on an outside influence, such as secular history or human knowledge to prove it to be true. SOUND DOCTRINE is not based on the OPINIONS OF MAN. SOUND DOCTRINE is truth for which no man can take glory or find boasting; but can only give PRAISE TO GOD for giving him an understanding of the Scriptures.

In the term UNSOUND DOCTRINE we do not include the "mistakes" made by the novice who is exercising his gift while learning to "rightly divide the word of truth". Nor do I mean to imply that any of us are "perfect" and know all things. NO, NO ! "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (I Cor. 8:2). "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then (when we have put off corruption and put on immortality -- we will see) face to face: now I see in part; but then shall I know even as I am known" (I Cor 13:12). No minister of God ever gets to the point where he is beyond learning more from the word of God. As the old saying goes, "It's what you learn after you think you know it all that really counts".

When the Scripture speak of UNSOUND DOCTRINE, it speaks of holding to a DOCTRINE (taking a fixed position) CONTRARY TO THE SCRIPTURES or one that HAS NO SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY at all. Many of us have different ideas about certain difficult passages of Scripture upon which we may disagree. Such passages should be studied and discussed with a willingness to learn and know the truth. But some have taken the position which is described in an old adage "Everyone is wrong except me and thee, and I am having my doubts about thee". Some act as "Know-It-Alls" and will hold to their positions even without any Scriptural support, or after being shown where they are wrong. UNSOUND DOCTRINE ALWAYS LACKS SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT AND ALWAYS DEPENDS ON MAN'S "PRIVATE INTERPRETATION". Unsound doctrine is almost always based on Scripture which has been taken out of context - or by ADDING or TAKING AWAY from the Word of God.

When UNSOUND DOCTRINE is preached BY A FEW that bear the name of Primitive Baptist it cast a reflection upon those who preach the word in "sincerity and in truth". UNSOUND DOCTRINE disturbs the peace of Zion and will turn the ears of God's people "from the truth". I say UNSOUND DOCTRINE in order to be as MILD as I can, even though it is contrary to my nature. I could just as easily say DAMNABLE HERESIES or DOCTRINES OF DEVILS. But by being KIND, GENTILE and MILD, I am trying to exercise the spirit of MEEKNESS, while "instructing them that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil -" (II Timothy 2:24-26).

We are to PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD (I Thess 5:21). I encourage you - "Search the Scriptures to see if these things be true". "Rightly divide the word of truth". "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine". "Let no man deceive you by any means". Jesus said " when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (Jn 16:13). John wrote, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing (Holy Spirit) which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (I John 2:26-27). I repeat, SOUND DOCTRINE comes from God and not from men! STUDY THE WORD OF GOD ! May God bless you as you do.

The Lord willing, next time, I will try to deal with SOUND DOCTRINE: THE BASIS OF TRUE WORSHIP. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). But to the Pharisees Jesus said, "Ye hypocrites - This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, teaching for doctrines the com- mandments of men" (Matt. 15:7-9). True worship of God must be both "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" - and not in the doctrines on men.