

**DOCTRINE AND
DUTY MADE PLAIN
AND ATTRACTIVE**

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Doctrine and Duty Made Plain and Attractive by N. B. Cooksey

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DOCTRINE AND DUTY.

SOUND DOCTRINE

Our fathers made much of sound doctrine, emphasizing its importance on all occasions. The modern tendency is to steer shy of it. In fact, there is a growing aversion to doctrine, which is alarming.

If we are to believe the Scripture, sound doctrine is of the greatest importance to happiness in this life and that which is to come. Saint Paul says: "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Tim. 3. 16). Also he said to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4. 16). From these quotations, it is evident that doctrine is not only profitable, but upon it rests the salvation of men. Yet some people say: "It is a matter of little consequence what we believe, just so we live right; persons can believe anything, or nothing, but if they keep a good conscience they will be saved."

If our doctrine is wrong, our life will be wrong also. We may not be as good as our belief, but we are never better. Without sound

Bible doctrine we will be about as stable in religious life as a weather-vane is stable when moved by the wind. The Scripture says, "Be no more children, tossed about to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4. 14). A good conscience is no substitute for sound doctrine, as Saul learned from sad experience when his "good conscience" led him to become the chief of sinners in persecuting the disciples of Christ, compelling them to blaspheme that holy name, and cast them in prison (1 Cor. 15. 9). The word of God is the only rule of faith, and we must have correct views of its teachings, or, like Saul, we may fall into grievous sins.

Concerning the importance of sound doctrine, an old writer says: "When the peace and purity of our minds, the rectitude and happiness of our lives, and the blessedness of eternity has so close and necessary a dependence upon the doctrines we imbibe that we thereby either secure or forfeit them; who sees not, unless he be stupid and infatuated, that greater care and solicitude is necessary here than in any matter whatever because there is no other of equal moment? Bad money or bad wares instead of good; an ill title or conveyance instead of a firm and clear one may impoverish us; bad drugs instead of good may infect the body and destroy the health; but what is all this to the dismal consequences of error and heresy, which impoverishes and infects

the mind, perverts the life, and damns the man to all eternity? We must admit nothing hastily, assent to nothing without examining the grounds upon which it stands. Credulity, precipitation, and confidence are irreconcilable enemies to knowledge and wisdom."

It seems, in these modern times, the easiest thing in the world to propagate false doctrines of the most unreasonable kind. The world was never so full of isms and schisms as now. All false teachers have to do is to put forth these new theories without any proof whatever, and there are people ready to accept them without questioning their correctness. Such is the ignorance and depravity of men that they seem to sit like young birds with mouth wide open and swallow anything that is dropped in, without proper investigation. They swallow the wiggling worms of skepticism with much more relish than the bread of life.

The tendency of this craving for new and improved theories of salvation is bringing confusion, doubts, and restlessness that is destructive of Christian doctrine.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

Wesley has well said: "The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. It could not be the **first**, for they neither could nor would themselves invent a book, meantime lying in saying, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Not the **second**, for they

would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity; therefore, the Bible must have been given by divine inspiration."

There is abundant evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures. First: The apostles declare it in language that cannot be questioned. Paul says: "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3. 16). "Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2. 13).

Second, Jesus Christ indorsed the belief in the inspiration of Scripture by copious quotations from the Old Testament, and numerous declarations as to the fulfillment of their prophecies in his day.

Third, the numerous fulfillment of the prophecy of Scripture is one of the most convincing evidences of its divine inspiration. These prophecies which foretell events in the life of Christ and others hundreds of years before their fulfillment are conclusive evidence of the inspiration of the Word.

Fourth, we know the Scripture is inspired because of the wonderful things revealed therein. It brings immortality and eternal life to light with such clearness and authority as prove it to be of God.

Fifth, we know the Scripture is inspired of God because of its marvelous influence upon the world. Its civilizing and elevating influence

upon mankind is such as no uninspired book could have. The world has found by experience that it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3. 16).

The fact of inspiration of Scripture is established beyond all question. The manner of inspiration is not revealed, but it is not important, and no man is required to have a belief as to how the Holy Spirit accomplished this work.

SEARCHING SCRIPTURE

Searching the Scriptures is one of the great privileges and urgent duties of mankind. In it alone can we see the true image of our sinful hearts; in it alone is revealed the only salvation from sin; in it alone we have the standard of right and wrong, and in it alone do we find a hope of eternal life.

Do you claim the Bible is not interesting, and for that reason refuse to read it? What kind of literary taste do men have who cannot become interested in a message from heaven concerning that which is necessary to peace, purity, happiness, and eternal life? Certain the lack of interest comes from a failure to search the Scriptures and ignorance of the glorious contents of the sacred volume.

Do you say the Bible is too mysterious, you cannot understand it, and therefore do not read it? Of necessity, it deals with subjects somewhat mysterious, as are all things pertaining to