

LESSON XXXI—SCRIPTURAL TEACHING

INTRODUCTION: In order to maintain its identity with the Church established by Christ, controlled by His authority, described in the New Testament, the Church today must be Scriptural in its teaching.

I. Restrictions as to What May Be Taught:

1. Christ limited his teaching to "words received from the Father" (Jn. 8:26, 28, 38; 17:8).
2. The Holy Spirit did not speak from himself (Jn. 16:18).
3. The Apostles spoke only that which had been revealed to them (II Pet. 1:16-21; Gal. 1:6-12).
4. The Church today must limit its teaching therefore to revelation of Christ through the Apostles (II Jn. 9-11; Rev. 22:18, 19).

II. Teaching of Christ and the Apostles the Sole and All Sufficient Creed of the New Testament Church:

1. The righteousness of God completely revealed therein (Rom. 1:16, 17).
2. Furnishes unto every good work (II Tim. 3:14, 17).
3. Contains all truth (Jn. 16:13).
4. Furnishes unto all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3, 4).
5. The faith once and for all delivered unto the Saints (Jude 3).
6. One faith (Eph. 4:5).
7. "Speak the same things" (I Cor. 1:10).

III. Objections to Human Creeds:

1. Made by men, therefore unreliable.
2. Do not meet humanity's need, therefore insufficient.
3. Must continually be revised, therefore imperfect.
4. No authority behind them, therefore unenforceable.
5. Disagree and conflict with each other, therefore cannot all be true.
6. Conflict with the Word of God, therefore all wrong.

IV. The Identity of the Church Tested by What It Teaches:

1. In becoming a member of the Church to which you belong were you asked to do something more than people were required to do in New Testament days? Compare your experience with the cases of conversion in the book of Acts. Pentecostians (Acts 2:36, 41); The Eunuch (Acts 8:12, 34, 38); Saul (Acts 9:8; 22:16); Cornelius (Acts 10); Lydia and the Jailer (Acts 16:14, 15, 30, 34).

2. Has the Church to which you belong undertaken to excuse you from doing something which it is the will of God for you to do (Matt. 7:21; Jn. 12:48).
3. In order to find the religious teaching to which you have subscribed can you simply go to the New Testament or is it necessary to consult some human creed?
4. Are you left free to believe and teach whatever the New Testament says or have you subscribed to the doctrines and commandments of men, private interpretation of scripture or the humanly authorized theology of some Church?
5. Can you depend upon the teachings of the New Testament to learn how to worship and serve in the Church to which you belong?

Conclusion: The identity of the Church can as easily be destroyed by corrupting its teaching as it can be by corrupting its worship or wearing an unscriptural name.

Questions For Discussion

1. What sort of teaching will establish the identity of the Church?
2. How did Christ limit His teaching?
3. How did the Holy Spirit speak?
4. How were the Apostles limited in their teaching; what of those who go beyond the teaching?
5. Tell of the sufficiency of the Bible.
6. Point out the weakness of human creeds.
7. What book of the New Testament gives the execution of the plan of Salvation? Give some notable cases of conversion from this book.
8. Harmonize the cases of conversion given; show how all complied with the same terms.
9. How may the identity of the Church be destroyed by its teaching?
10. How does the name of the Church affect its identity?

LESSON XXXII—SCRIPTURAL TEACHING

I. Continue Steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine (Acts 2:42):

1. Received from Christ (Gal. 1:11-12; Jn. 17:8).
2. The Church taught to observe commandments of Christ to Apostles (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; I Cor. 11:23).
3. These commandments given to guide the Church (Phil. 4:9; I Tim. 3:15; I Cor. 2:10-16; 4:15-17; Jude 17-21).
4. To disregard and refuse Apostolic teaching is to reject God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (I Jn. 4:6; Lk. 10:16; I Thess. 4:8).
5. To go beyond is to become disobedient (I Cor. 4:6; II Jn. 9-11).¹

II. The Attitude of the Church Toward the Doctrines and Commandments of Men:

1. Prove all things (I Thess. 5:21-22).
2. In knowledge and all discernment approve the things that are excellent (Phil. 1:9-10).
3. Hold to the faithful word, speak the things which befit sound doctrine, reprove false teachers (Titus 1:9; 2:1).
4. No longer tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).
5. Believe not every spirit, prove them to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (I Jn. 4:1-6).
6. Be not carried away by strange teaching, eat at the altar of truth (Heb. 13:9-19).
7. Take heed not to be spoiled by the traditions of men (Col. 2:8).
8. Beware lest being carried away with the error of the wicked ye fall (II Pet. 3:17-18).
9. Speak only those things received (Acts 4:19-20).

III. The Attitude of the Church Toward False Teachers:

1. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:7-12).
2. Cut off the occasion for false apostles and deceitful workers (II Cor. 11:12-15).
3. No fellowship and encouragement to be given to those who walk not according to Apostolic teaching (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15).
4. A factious man after first and second admonition refuse (Titus 3:9-11).
5. Mark and turn away from them that cause division contrary to Apostolic teaching (Rom. 16:17-18).
6. Receive false teachers not into your house, give them no greeting lest you become partakers in their evil works (II Jn. 7-11).

IV. The Disaster of Allowing False Doctrines To Be Taught in the Church:

1. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9).
2. The warning of Jesus to the Church at Pergamum (Rev. 2:14-17).
3. The Bishops or Elders responsible for protecting the Church from the blighting and destructive effects of false doctrines (Acts 20:27-32).

Questions For Discussion

1. From whom did Paul and all the apostles get their teaching?
2. Why were the commandments of Christ given; and what if they were disregarded?
3. How must the doctrines of men be treated?
4. How must the Church act toward factious men?
5. How must the Church deal with false teachings?
6. To what should the Church hold fast?
7. Of what did Christ continually warn his disciples?
8. How will false teaching, if tolerated, affect the Church?
9. How did John warn the Pergamum Church?
10. Who is responsible for protecting the Church against false teachers?