

View

The Firm Foundation of God

Homer Hailey

In every age the church has had some things in common with the church of preceding ages. There always have been things to discourage the strongest, and test the most steadfast. There have been false brethren within, along with bickerings and strife; false teachers without, historical epochs which have threatened the very life of Christianity, and waves of indifference to spiritual things. Some of these things Paul mentions as he writes to Timothy, encouraging him to steadfast continuance in his work in the Lord; making special mention of "profane babblings," "striving about words to no profit," and false teaching on the resurrection.

But along with these things, each age has had that which encourages, that to which men could lay hold with no fear of it giving way, or being shaken. In the very midst of these things discouraging in their nature, the apostle says, "How be it the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (2 Tim. 2:19)

This age is little different from others that have come and gone. To be sure the specific details are different, but so far as problems are concerned, and changes taking places with regard to the preceding generation or age, it is no different. Today nations are passing, old ideals are changing, the security of those things in which men have been wont to trust is being questioned, and a new wave of infidelity is dashing itself out against the "Rock of Ages," "foaming out" its "own shame." But these things have happened before. They were happening in Paul's day, when he wrote as he did to Timothy. Howbeit, in the midst of all these, "The firm foundation of God" stood, and stands, a sure foundation upon which one can build, and feel secure.

In the midst of the vast uncertainty of today, and the near panicky attitude that some take, begetting a pessimism that is even being felt in the church at various places, there are three things set forth by Paul in 2 Tim 2 that need to be emphasized by Christians, especially preachers and teachers, everywhere: 1) The definite principle of the character of God as set forth by Paul in verses 11-13; 2) The fact that the "firm foundation of God stands," though all else may be perishing; 3) The Lord knoweth them that are His," and that His demand of them that are His, is that they "depart from unrighteousness."

When the apostle said, "If we shall deny him, he also will deny us: if we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself," he simply stated a definite principle in the Character of God. God cannot act contrary to His nature, and His nature is definitely set forth in the revelation of Himself in the Bible. It matters not how dark the hour, how hopeless the immediate prospects, how strong the pressure brought to bear; man is still without excuse for his sin, and should he deny God even under these circumstances, God cannot but be faithful to Himself, "he also will deny us."

The church of Christ

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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30am
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 pm
Classes for all ages.
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The emphatic stressing of this principle in the Character of God will tend to build determination in the hearts of those honestly seeking heaven. It will likewise eliminate the necessity of so much "re-consecrating," "rededication," "restoration" of members in the meetings sometimes held. There are those who are "overtaken in a trespass," these are to be restored, certainly. There are those who "err from the truth," these must be converted, James urges it. But much of the half-hearted attitude that serves God "a little bit," and the devil "a right smart," oftentimes results from a lack of understanding of the character of God, and the principle that He "cannot deny himself." Once the principle is fully appreciated, greater care in conduct will be exercised.

But in the midst of ungodliness, troubles, turning away from God, and the denying of Him by those who should be faithful, the "firm foundation of God standeth." Here we have something solid upon which to build, and to which to hold, in the midst of any storm, internal or external.

God promised that in Zion He should lay for a foundation, a "tried stone" (**Isa. 28:16**), which Peter affirms to have been the Christ, (**1 Peter 2:6**). Christ built His church upon this very foundation, (**Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor 3:11**); and every individual built into that structure, is builded upon it (**Eph. 2:19-22**). While old institutions were crumbling, and passing away, the apostle said of the Hebrews in his day, that they were "receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken."

(**Heb.12:28**). Here we have something stable and certain in any time of uncertainty, doubt, or fear.

What is the point in all this? Simply this: that when those in the church fully appreciate the fact that the only things today which cannot be shaken are the things that pertain to the church, to the kingdom of God, then the church will become more precious to them. When it is appreciated that "the firm foundation of God standeth," regardless of all things else, the laying up of treasures in heaven will have greater prominence in the lives of its members, and the cares of riches and temporal things here, less.

But the "seal" of this assurance should not be overlooked. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Sometimes we become impatient, we feel that the Lord has forgotten us, and like Elijah of old, "I alone am left." But the Lord knows them that are His. It is He who calls them, through the gospel; and it is He who justifies. He adds to the church, cares for His own, and "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." One need not worry about the Lord forgetting him, for He will keep His part of the covenant. He will "in no wise fail thee, neither in any wise forsake thee." "He knoweth them that take refuge in him."

There is another side of the seal also, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." Although they never won a discussion on the subject, the Baptists used to debate that an individual once saved could not be lost. However, the doctrine seemed so attractive to the worldly minded, that some, while not actually believing it, yet live in the church as thought it were so. They claim to trust God, while at the same time they depart not from unrighteousness.

But the apostle said, "If we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself." Does Paul mean God will be faithful to save even though the individual does not continue faithful? Certainly not! But that God is faithful, "if we deny him, he also will deny us." The demand that those who know God depart from unrighteousness must be stressed today.

————— **Bible Banner - December 1941**

Rightly Dividing The Word

"Study to skew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." - II Timothy 2:15.

If the Bible is the very word of God as all Christians believe, it is of the utmost importance that every child of God should have at least a general and correct knowledge of this, the greatest library in the world. Today we are passing through a world of revolution in many ways and are soon to come face to face with other religions that know not our God and our Christ as we know them. Then too, there is an increasing number of religious sects that differ so widely from the Church which Christ established that if Christianity is to survive we must get back to the blessed old Book and walk in its ways, that our faith shall not rest on any word of man, but upon "Him in whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning."

"Rightly dividing (or handling aright) the word of truth" is our text. All competent teachers of the Bible recognize that the first great essential is a correct knowledge of its different parts or divisions. It is all the word of God, but the fact that the 66 books of which it is composed, were written over a period of several hundred years, and addressed to different peoples in widely different conditions, has everything to do with understanding its meaning and its applicability in this day. Hoping we might be of help to some beginners in this study, we are setting down an elementary sketch of the natural divisions of God's book.

First is the two general divisions of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament naturally divides itself into four parts: (1) Law first five books of the Bible; (2) History-the next twelve books; (3) Devotional-the next five books, and (4) the 17 books of prophecy. The four natural divisions of the New Testament are: (1) Biography-the first four books; (2) History of the early church-Acts of the Apostles; (3) Epistles-next 21 books, and (4) Revelation-the last book of the Bible.

Gentle reader, of this you may rest assured: there is no equal for this unadorned volume which graces the libraries and firesides of more homes today than ever before. As we contemplate the tremendous importance of eternal salvation to a lost world, we humbly submit this simple lesson, hoping for a greater interest in this "Book of books" in this dark and troubled hour.

Culbertson Heights Church of Christ

————— **Bible Banner - January 1944**