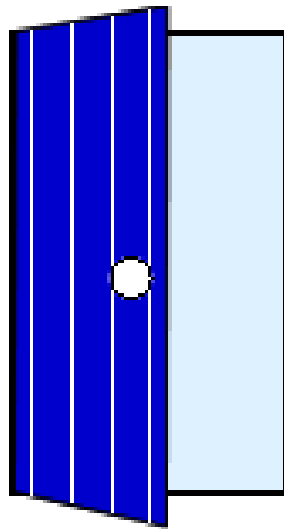


BIBLE STUDIES



Mill Lane Chapel

Titus

5) ***“The things which become sound doctrine”***

Read Chapter 2: 1-10

The message of Chapter 1 is very clear: false teaching must be met by sound **doctrine**. The contrast could not be greater. On the one hand we have “unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision” (1: 10) and on the other, godly men who hold “fast the faithful word” themselves and who by “sound doctrine...exhort and convince the gainsayers” (1: 9). In this connection, Titus himself was urged to “rebuke them (the believers) sharply; that they may be sound in the faith” (1: 13).

The message of Chapter 2 is equally clear: good **living** is urged to counteract adverse criticism. In a climate of so much religious talk it was necessary to show the real character of the Christian faith.

Chapter 1 concludes with the words, “They profess that they know God, but in works (‘by their works’, RV) they deny him” (v16). That is, their profession was unsupported by their manner of life. They professed to know God, but their profession was supported only by “Jewish fables and commandments of men” (1: 14) or, as Paul says elsewhere, in “fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions” (1 Tim. 1: 5).

Chapter 2 commences with the words, “**But** speak thou the things that become sound (healthy) doctrine” or ‘the things that become **the** sound doctrine’ (RV). The connection with Chapter 1 is clear if we ignore the chapter division thus: “**They** profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. But speak **thou** the things that become sound doctrine” (1: 16 – 2: 1). ‘Paul encourages Titus to spread healthy teaching in the local church. As germs are to the physical body - so false teaching is to the spiritual body. Titus must feed the assembly with teaching which is wholesome’ (J.Waldron). If the teaching of the Judaisers was unsupported by sound moral conduct, then the doctrines of Christianity were to be supported by exemplary behaviour.

Chapter 2 begins and ends with similar injunctions: “But speak thou the things...” (v1); “These things speak...” (v15). This stresses the importance of the intervening teaching. The chapter can be divided with reference to the opening words: “But speak thou the things that become (beful) sound (healthy) doctrine”. The “things that become sound doctrine” are discussed in vv2-10, and the “sound doctrine itself” in vv11-14.

It should be noted that in the first part of the chapter (vv2-10), Paul deals with Christian conduct in specific terms, whereas in the second part (vv11-14), he deals with Christian conduct in general terms.

In summary, we can say that vv2-10 show us **how** we are to behave, whereas vv11-14 show us **why** we are to behave in this way. Verse 10 is pivotal: “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”. The words, “adorn the doctrine” summarise vv2-10 and the words, “God our Saviour” summarise vv11-14. The chapter can therefore be divided as follows: **(1)** the

accompaniments of sound doctrine (vv1-10); **(2)** the features of sound doctrine (vv11-14).

1) THE ACCOMPANIMENTS OF SOUND DOCTRINE, vv1-10

“But speak thou the things that become (‘befit’) sound doctrine”. The word “become” (*prepo*) occurs in 1 Tim. 2: 10, “But (which ***becometh*** women professing godliness) with good works”; 1 Cor. 11: 3, “Judge in yourselves is it ***comely*** that a woman pray to God uncovered”; Eph. 5: 3, “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as ***becometh*** saints”.

Sound doctrine therefore requires a befitting standard of life, and we should make some general observations at this juncture.

i) These verses clearly teach that doctrine and practice are not separate entities. The complete Christian has doctrine and practice in balance.

ii) These verses cover everybody: both sexes; both age groups (old and young: (‘middle age’ is not mentioned in the Bible); both social groups (free and bond). None are exempt from the necessity to behave as befits sound doctrine.

iii) These verses emphasise that sound moral conduct will remove any grounds for adverse criticism of the word of God. In this connection we should notice that Paul has three objectives in mind, all of which are introduced by the word “that”:

- “That the word of God be not blasphemed” (v5). The word of God must not be brought into disrepute.

- “That he which is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (v8). The servants of God must not be brought into disrepute.

- “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (v10). The honesty of servants must not be brought into disrepute.

It is important to remember that laxity of conduct will bring the truth, as well as believers, into disrepute. See Rom. 2: 24, “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written”.

iv) These verses give specific injunctions. Appropriate guidance is carefully given to each class of person. Five classes of people are addressed: older men (v2); older women (vv3-4); leading to younger women (vv4-5); younger men (vv6-8); bondslaves (vv9-10).

a) Older men, v2

They are to be marked by **dignity**. “That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound (*hugiaino*, healthy) in faith, in charity, in patience”. Here is the healthy man.

“Sober” means ‘temperate’ (*nephalios*). It means, literally ‘to be free from the influence of intoxicants’ (W.E.Vine) and here, ‘abstention from **any** excess’. This implies prudence, fully rational, avoiding rash conduct, carefully weighing the possible consequences of what they do and say.

“Grave” means ‘serious’. It is gravity with dignity. This does not mean that older men never laugh, or are devoid of a sense of humour. Remember, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Prov. 17: 22). On the other hand it does mean the avoidance of flippancy or lightness in divine things. “Gravity” implies a serious and reverent attitude.

“Temperate” (*sophron*) means ‘soberminded’ (RV) or ‘self-controlled’. D.E.Hiebert puts it like this: ‘The old men should be the balance wheels in the congregation, keeping its course steady’. “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls” (Prov.25: 28).

“Sound in faith, in charity (love), in patience (endurance)”. As David West points out ‘each of the three is governed by the definite article in the original text....and the whole expression could be rendered “sound in their faith, their love, their patience. Aged men then are to be healthy in their personal trust in God (the reference here is not to “the faith”, that is, the body of Christian doctrine), in their love to others, and in the patient endurance of trying circumstances...’

The first three (“sober, grave, temperate”) describe what he is to be in himself. The second three (“sound in faith, in charity, in patience”) describe what he is to be in relation to others: to God (“sound in faith”); to believers (sound “in love”); to the world (sound “in patience”). As J. Waldron points out ‘if faith fails, and love is weak, then we will have no endurance in trying circumstances’.

Perhaps we should remember that although this is addressed to old men, they might not have been Christians very long!

b) Older women, vv3-4

They are to be marked by **decorum**. “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things”.

The words, “that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness” have been rendered ‘that they be in demeanour suited to a sacred character’. ‘Priest-like’ gives the thought (D.E.Hiebert). Hiebert continues: ‘There is to be about their life that reverential spirit of consecration consistent with the fact of their spiritual priesthood. What a benediction and inspiration for service such a saintly grandmother can be in her family circle!’ We should add, without detracting from Hiebert’s rather lovely comment, that Paul was not necessarily limiting his remarks to grandmothers here!

“Not false accusers”. Paul uses the Greek *diabolos* here, as in 2 Tim. 3: 3 (“false accusers”) and 1 Tim 3: 11 (“not slanderers”). Believers, men and women, must ensure that they do not do the devil’s work for him. The word “devil (*diabolos*) means ‘accuser’ or ‘slanderer’. Calvin (note Calvin) said, ‘talkativeness is a disease among women, and old age usually makes it worse’. At this juncture, we should remember the inherent dangers in ‘talebearing’, ‘whispering’ etc. These are dealt with extensively in Proverbs. There is no need to say that men and women can be guilty of such things!

“Not given to much wine” means ‘not enslaved to wine’. If they are ‘enslaved to wine’ it is hardly likely that the younger women will listen to their instruction! Rather than being “false accusers” by using their tongues in the wrong way and “given to much wine” by refreshing themselves in the wrong way, older women are to be “teachers of good things”. This is one word in Greek (*kalodidaskalos*). The sphere of their service follows: “that they may teach (‘train’, RV) the young women to be sober...”. Literally, ‘that they may cause to be of sound mind the young women’.

D.E.West points out that ‘when private instruction is in view and home responsibilities are to be dealt with, Titus is not told to speak to the young women directly, but rather through the elders of their own sex. All teaching brethren, whether serving locally or in a wider sphere among the assemblies of the Lord’s people, should take note of this example’. These are wise words.

c) Younger women, vv4-5

They are to be marked by **devotion**. “That they may teach the young women to be sober (omitted by JND), to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”.

“To love their husbands...their children. This is literally ‘to be husband-lovers... children lovers’. Both are adjectives only found here in the New Testament. As to the latter, D.E.West observes, ‘it is wrong for a young mother to put her career before the welfare of her own children’.

“To be discreet”. The word “discreet” is *sophron* meaning, as we have seen, self-controlled. It occurs as “temperate” (v2) and “sober minded” (v6). “Chaste” means ‘pure’. ‘Purity is especially honourable in a woman in an ungodly age of moral permissiveness’ (D.E.West). Believing women are to hold tenaciously to their marriage vows, even though modern society often regards this as restrictive and out-moded.

“Keepers at home” means ‘workers at home’. They are the home-makers. As opposed to those described elsewhere, “who learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies” (1 Tim. 5: 13). Whilst the soaring cost of living and rising interest rates (there have been several of these in 2006/2007) bring financial pressure, so that we have become accustomed to ‘double-income families’, home and family life have undoubtedly suffered in consequence. The ‘latch-key kids’ syndrome does not fit in here!

“Obedient to their own husbands” means in subjection to their own husbands. This does not imply inequality. It is a question of divine order. It must be said that the husband who is always trumpeting his authority has totally misunderstood his position! He has ‘lost the plot!’

“That the word of God be not blasphemed”. ‘Sadly, it is true to say that problems within the home that lead to divorce can cause unconverted people to sneer at the Gospel’. (J.Waldron). Blasphemy in the New Testament sense is something wilful, not in ignorance. We must all be careful not to bring divine things into disrepute. D.E.Hiebert observes that ‘if the women of the church fail to manifest such character, Paul fears lest the whole Gospel be vilified’. He adds, and this could make an interesting talking-point, ‘The world still judges the churches largely by the character of its women’.

d) Young men, vv6-8

They are to be marked by **discipline**. “Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity (omitted in RV), sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you”.

We should note the change from “speak” to “exhort”. Titus will now be speaking to his own age group, as witnessed by the inclusion of himself at this point. “To be sober minded” (*sophroneo*) means, as we have already seen, to have a sound mind, to be self-controlled. It is translated “right mind” in Mark 5: 15, Luke 8: 35 (with reference to the demoniac). See also 2 Tim. 1: 7 (*sophronismos*).

The exhortation, “In all things shewing (supplying) thyself a pattern (*tupos*) of good works”, reminds us of the exhortation given to another young man: “Let no man despise thy youth but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in purity” (1 Tim. 4: 12). Both Titus and Timothy were to exemplify their own teaching. The word “pattern” (*tupos*) means ‘an impression, the mark of a blow’ and so ‘the impress of a seal, the stamp made by a die’ (W.E.Vine). ‘Titus was to live so that his life would be like a ‘spiritual die’ that would impress others’ (J.Waldron). **The speaker must be a model of his own ministry.** This gives moral force to his teaching. Titus was, first, to show himself “a pattern of good works” and, then, “in doctrine shewing uncorruptness...” This order is exemplified perfectly in the Lord Jesus. See Acts 1: 1.

“In doctrine (‘in thy doctrine’) shewing uncorruptness, gravity...” “Uncorruptness” and “gravity” refer to Titus personally, rather than to his teaching. He is to be free from taint in every way, in motive as well as behaviour. The word “gravity” also occurs in v2, and means, as we have seen, ‘serious...gravity with dignity’.

“Sound speech”, meaning ‘whole’ or ‘healthy’ speech, refers to the substance of Titus’ teaching and should be contrasted with the “unruly and vain talkers” present in Crete (1: 10). We should remember that “foolish talk” should be avoided (Eph. 5: 4), and that our speech should be “seasoned with salt” (Col.

4: 6). This is worth amplifying. We could make a start with Joshua 1: 8: “this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth”.

The reason for these injunctions follows: “that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (v8). The words “contrary part” mean ‘against you’. The word “evil” here (*phaulon*) means paltry, low, contemptible. We should of course remember that people will say “evil” about us anyway, but we must not give them any justifiable opportunity to do so! Daniel is a splendid example of a young man of whom those “of the contrary part” had “nothing evil to say!” See Dan. 6: 4.

The injunctions to Titus in respect of younger men begin with one kind of speech (“sound speech, v8), and end with another (“no evil thing to say of you”, v10).

e) Bondservants, vv9-10

They are to be marked by **diligence**. “Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters (*despotes*), and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”.

This reminds us that a high standard of Christian conduct must mark the way in which we discharge our secular duties. If godliness is only practiced by professing Christians whilst among their fellow-believers in the local church, then it becomes nothing short of hypocrisy. We should note that other relevant passages are found in Eph. 6: 5-8; Col. 3: 22-24 etc.

“Not answering again” or ‘not gainsaying’ means ‘not contradicting’. See 1 Pet. 2: 18-20. But read on: the Lord Jesus did not ‘answer again’. See vv21-23. The words “not purloining” refer ‘to that form of pilfering which retains for oneself part of something which has been entrusted to one’s care’ (D.E.West). Compare Acts 5: 2-3, “kept back part of the price”. This covers such things as the ‘tricks of the trade’ as well as embezzlement and dishonesty. “Shewing all **good** fidelity” is a well-balanced phrase. Fidelity to our master does not mean doing something dishonest in his interests!

The word “adorn” is ‘used of the arrangement of jewels in a manner to set off their full beauty’ (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*). It means to act in a way that makes “doctrine of God our Saviour” attractive. It ‘is to be adorned by the lives of God’s servants’ (M.R.Vincent). Yes, even in the lives of bondservants! Paul is not dealing here with an abstract theory, but day by day witness to others. The greatest testimony we can bear is to display the beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus in our lives.

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me:
All his wondrous compassion, and purity.
Oh thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
‘Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

Having considered the accompaniments of “sound doctrine”, we must next consider the “sound doctrine” itself (vv11-15).