

## In Defense of the Doctrine

By  
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*“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 Timothy 4:16)*

From the middle of the nineteenth century till the beginning of the twentieth, at least twenty-five holiness denominations sprang up in America, coming out of the Methodist Church in protest against the general trend within the mother church away from the doctrine of holiness and heart purity. These groups were led by fiery-souled preachers who with a clarion call lifted up their voices in scathing protest against the falling away from this Wesleyan doctrine.

There were hundreds of preachers who remained in the Methodist Church and ceased not to preach and write night and day in defense of the second blessing experience. The tenor of their sermons and the spirit of their writings were militant, attacking those responsible for the letting down and softening up in preaching and practicing the holiness experience and life.

The cycle of religious history in the Old Testament and the pattern of Christendom in the age since apostolic days is the same in at least one respect: always the voice of the prophet was heard above the comprising and backsliding of Israel. The prophet would march with his people to far-away lands of slavery, preaching and weeping as he went, calling the people back to the landmarks of the fathers. In every period of falling away in the church age, the voice of the true preacher has been heard in protest.

Some of the most militant literature of Christian history came off of the press in the latter half of the nineteenth century in defense of the doctrine of holiness and the separated life. A remarkable fact is that many of those small holiness denominations still preach, write and crusade for the holiness experience with just as much zeal, fervor, and militancy as their forefathers did a hundred years ago. There was and still is something about the positiveness of their defense of holiness that rings clear and true, striking a responsive cord in the hearts of sanctified believers everywhere.

It is my opinion that those second blessing dissenters wrote and spoke with an awareness of their responsibility to the church and the world to keep alive and perpetuate the great doctrine of holiness. It was their responsibility in that day, and in many respects, they did a remarkable job.

The Pentecostal Holiness Church was born in that kind of atmosphere, among holiness firebrands. Embracing not only the second blessing experience but also accepting and championing the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit-filled, Spirit-anointed life. Thus, we believe that we not only have and preach Luther's justification by faith and Wesley's second blessing experience, but we have received and joyously proclaim the promise of the Father, the earnest of the Spirit, the mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost.

This is our obligation as a church to all Christendom and to the world: to preach, practice, and proclaim this dual experience. The holiness experience and the separated life, with the gift and gifts of the Holy Ghost among us, is our sacred trust to proclaim until Jesus comes. The pioneers of the Pentecostal Holiness Church preached

regeneration, sanctification, Pentecost, divine healing, and the second coming of Jesus every time they stood up to preach. To them it was a must, an obligation.

In many of our protracted meetings a person may attend for ten days and never get an idea of what we as a church believe. The old timers who introduced this Pentecostal Holiness message to us never left anyone in doubt very long about where they stood and what they believed. It is so much easier to give an ethical treatment of some scripture text or draw an object lesson from the exploits of a Bible character than it is to stand up and preach scriptural holiness or to give an expository sermon on the great doctrines of Pentecost, the blood atonement, or the second coming of Jesus Christ.

If we preach regeneration, our people will repent.

If we preach restitution, our people will make straight paths for their feet.

If we preach holiness, our people will get sanctified.

If we preach Pentecost, our people will seek and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

If we preach divine healing, God will confirm his Word with signs following and heal the sick.

By the same token, if we preach only ethics and moral restraint, we will develop into a church of professors and not possessors. We will become superficially pious and effeminate, a church void of conviction. Jesus said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." He came to kindle a fire in the earth. This indicates that the preaching of his Gospel will create opposition, persecution, and division. It will force men to take sides, to stand up for right and righteousness at all costs. It will incite hatred and bitter criticism from unregenerate men.

I do not intend to be presumptuous when I call upon Pentecostal Holiness preachers everywhere to lift up their voices in defense of the doctrine. Cry aloud until you stem the tide of encroaching pacifism. Recapture that militancy that characterized our pioneer preachers and laymen of fifty years ago.

Preach it until your own heart is aflame.

Preach it until the zeal of the Lord has consumed you.

Preach it until hell is enraged.

Preach it until sinners wilt and come weeping home to God.

Preach it until hypocrites rage.

Preach it until the fire falls.

Preach it until every man, woman, boy, and girl in America knows what the Pentecostal Holiness Church believes.

Preach it with the conviction that we know we have God's message for this hour.

Preach it with the assurance that we came into the world to preach it.

Preach it until all men know what we stand for and, if need be, die for. So help us God.