

what apology can be given for not declaring the whole counsel of God? Or what merit is there in misty speculation or uncertain deliverances? How will that man convert the world who is himself at the mercy of every wind of doctrine? "Unstable as water thou shalt not excel."

When our Lord taught the people and preached in the streets, He had something definite to say; His words had a meaning. Is it therefore presumptuous for one whose office it is to "open up the Scriptures" to ascertain what He did say, or what His words do mean, and tell it to the people? Our first aim is to find out the mind of the Spirit, and proclaiming that is just doctrinal teaching. Two positions mutually contradictory cannot both be true. Therefore what is doctrine in the Scripture sense, is just what is truth. We must seek the law at God's mouth and deliver that to men and not our own foolish fancies, whims, or conceits, though these be as full of curiosities as a peddler's pack.

Doctrine is just teaching; it is systematic thinking. The whole teaching of the Bible on any point is simply the doctrine of the Bible on that point. What the Bible says about *sin, grace, repentance, faith*, is just the Bible doctrine on sin, grace, repentance, faith, etc. And as ambassadors we have nothing else to deliver than the message committed to us.

Indeed, doctrine cannot be escaped from. Every man must preach doctrine if he utter any sentiment; and no precept can be enforced without making doctrine the basis of our pleading. Even *heresy* has its dogmas as well as orthodoxy. Even Bob Ingersoll has his doctrines, though they may be the negatives of divine truth. Whether the Lord Jesus Christ be regarded as a *mere man* or the *highest created being* or *God's incarnate Son*, it is a *doctrine* concerning the *person* of Christ. Whether His death be a *martyr's death*, or intended to *produce a grand moral impression*, or a *real atonement for sin*; it is a doctrine concerning His *work*. Whether faith be only *intellectual assent* to truth presented, or a *personal trust in the Saviour*, it is a doctrine concerning faith. Whether you teach that man has a future or that this life ends all, it is a doctrine on man's nature or destiny. Even Robertson, the historian, of whom Hugh Miller said that he preached through the New Testament and failed to discover the atonement, preached his own doctrines. The