

"The love of many shall wax cold," answered Jesus to His disciples after they had asked Him, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?"

So, preachers and laity have been expressing sorrow for the loss of love among men. No wonder. It is lamentable! The cooling of affection for mankind is serious, because along with it comes a loss of love for truth.

Many witty proverbs declare truth's eternal value. Daniel Webster said, "There is nothing so powerful as truth—and often nothing so strange." Another warns, "Falsehood may have its hour, but it has no future." A poet intones:

There is no defeat in truth,
Save from within;
Unless you're beaten there,
You're bound to win!

A Scriptural proverb advises, "Buy the truth, and sell it not . . ." (Proverbs 23:23).

The Love for Truth

Ray L. Straub

A college professor told his class of the value of truth in our modern terms by stating, "I would rather teach the truth from this insignificant desk than to spread falsehood from the highest star." This was mentioned in reference to the space race to land technical instruments on the moon or other distant planets.

The eloquent William Cullen Bryant assures:

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error wounded writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshippers."

All of these express a regard for truth. It is a love that must not diminish!

A New Testament prophecy predicts, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming, even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the LOVE OF THE TRUTH, that they might be saved."

Those that fail to receive the love for truth not only miss their salvation, but God *removes from them the ability to recognize truth when it confronts them*. "And for this cause shall God send them strong delusion, that they might believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:8-12).

If the love for truth is so important, the bewildered Pilate represents well the confounded masses who ask, "What is truth?" It is a good question. At least a great many scholars nowadays would think so!

Go to the man on the street, the housewife, the clerk, the secretary, the teacher, the businessman, and ask each one, "What is truth?" They will respect your question by attempting to answer.

Reader, what is truth? Can you define this valuable, elusive commodity? You must love it. What is it?

After plodding through much foggy wordiness, we would probably agree that truth is an accurate description of reality and fact. In the name of truth the sound waves carry multitudinous messages which attempt to accurately describe what is realistic and factual.

We still face a severe problem, for we have come practically no distance in our attempts to define the truth we must love. In order to provide accuracy in our descriptions of what is *real* and *factual*, WE MUST KNOW WHAT REALITY AND FACT ARE.

The evolutionist contends that the Scriptural account of creation is not realistic. "The earth is more than 70 billion years old," he declares in his description of what he conceives to be reality, "and we can prove this by various scientific methods. Its creation simply cannot be as recent as 10,000 years or less!"

The liberal declares his intellectual freedom by insisting, "I will no longer subject myself to the belief that the Bible records actual events. This is not to say that its myths are without value. Jesus was a great teacher, but He was not divine. His birth was unusual, but it would be naive to believe He was born to a virgin. The resurrection account is an interesting and exciting tale, but no more than that. It is unrealistic to believe these events actually happened. Please do not expect me to be that unsophisticated!"

On and on descriptions of

what men consider to be reality continue. The scientist has a fixed attitude toward fact. He contends that all "facts" are subject to investigation and experimentation with the attitude that it may need revision or discarding. Who can doubt that this probing philosophy has long proven its value?

If reality and fact are this elusive, how can it accurately be described? If truth demands that we must offer precise reports of something so changeable, it must be difficult to identify and much more challenging to love.

Those that love truth know that it is more than the description of fact and reality as men conceive it. Jesus, in speaking to His Father, observed, "... thy word is truth" (John 17:17). How simple and believable!

Man has been looking everywhere for truth. He finds it when he turns to the Holy Word, and he loves it! It tells the truth about God, beginnings, yearnings, values, eternity. It tells the truth about man, how he came into being, why, and where he is going. It reveals God's plan for all the earth.

God's Word is truth, but this refers to more than the Holy Bible, a book which a man can hold in his hand. Jesus is the Incarnation of the Word of God and of Truth. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

"And the Word was made

flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 4-9, 14).

Consistent with this introduction, Jesus said of Himself, "... I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). He identifies Himself with truth in John 9:32, when He states, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Truth is more than creed. It is more than an accurate analysis of a given Scriptural teaching. Truth is identified in John 8:36, "If the SON therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." It is Jesus, the Son of God and the Truth Incarnate that sets man free. It is stated plainly in John 14:6, where Jesus declares, "I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life. ..."

Not only was Jesus the embodiment of truth, but God, Himself, is the very Principal of Truth. He is characterized thusly in Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie. ..." The essential substance of hope is expressed by the writer of Hebrews as he reviews this same quality: "That by two immutable things, in which it was IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast..." (Hebrews 6:18, 19).

The psalmist's poetry chants soulfully of the flowing, everlasting Truth. "... God shall send forth his mercy and his truth" (Psalm 57:3).

"For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth

for ever" (Psalm 119:160).

Jesus, the embodiment of Truth, came speaking the words of His divine Father. In conversation with His disciples, He declared: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. ... And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14:7, 10, 24).

It is apparent that our efforts to identify and define truth lead us into an involvement of depth with all that is divine. Truth is not merely a single person's concept of that which is factual or realistic. TRUTH IS GOD, HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, WHO WAS THE WORD MADE FLESH, AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WHICH WERE GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This is precisely why the Holy Spirit was sent. Jesus defined the essential function of the Holy Spirit for us. He assured the disciples that He would not leave them comfortless (John 14:18), but that the Comforter would come to fill the void that the absence of their Master would cause. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

This Comforter (Holy Ghost) is also identified as the "Spirit of truth" (John 15:26), and consistent with this appellation, He "... will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

It becomes apparent why TRUTH demands our love. Love

for TRUTH is not mere interest in theological verbosity, doctrinal discussion, or excellence in Scriptural interpretation. *It is a love for God, His Son, His Word, and His Holy Spirit.*

Assuredly, *to love truth is to love Jesus.* "... If any man love me," said Jesus, "he will keep my words... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings

..." (John 14:23, 24).

Truth is notably involved in our worship of God. "... the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him MUST worship him IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" (John 4:23, 24).

This requirement for the worship of God has no timetable. It was present back in Joshua's day when the tendency for the love for truth to wax cold must also have been present. "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him IN SINCERITY AND IN TRUTH..." (Joshua 24:14).

TO BE CONTINUED

BUT CHARITY EDIFIETH

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which he seeks to regulate his life and actions, there is a code by which God would have the church (as a unit) to be guided. Jesus is coming for a CHURCH which is WITHOUT SPOT OR WRINKLE (Eph. 5:27). There must be, therefore, within the church these things: 1. A caring, or concern, for each other's welfare (physically and spiritually); 2. A desire that the whole church be free from the things of the world; 3. A love of unity; 4. All filthy practices removed from our midst; 5. That we spend no money for useless and unsatisfying things (Isa. 55:2); 6. That nothing be countenanced which would hinder our usefulness in the Lord's work and, 7. A united front, and an upholding of the highest possible example for all the world to see.

Too, it must be remembered that when we do that which hurts others we are sinning against the Saviour Himself! Strong language? Yes! But listen to the Word: "But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Cor. 8:12). Need we say more?

All Things To Edify

The Scripture sometimes seems almost to ask more than man can meet. But this is only because we all too often attempt to do things without the help which God has promised to provide. Paul's word to the Corinthians is a case in point. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of

God" (1 Cor. 10:32). "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed" (2 Cor. 6:3). The ministers must be careful two ways. They may be too harsh—too unfeeling—and thus drive people away. But more often than not, it is the other way around. They are too anxious to please their people, and so often fail to tell them things they have need to know. Either way, the minister is at fault. Truly, he has a heavy responsibility resting upon him. If we declare all the counsel of God we shall be free from the blood of all men. But this does not free those who are not of the ministry from also living in such a manner as to be free from blame before God and man. Paul's words at this point once again hit home. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7).

Cain asked, in what we can well imagine was an insolent manner: "Am I my brother's keeper"? Many are still asking it today. The Bible has the answer: "Let your light so shine before men..."

All believers are brethren, a closely knit fellowship. What affects one affects all. There must be a deep concern one for another, prompted by a deep and an abiding love for each other in the sight of God Who sees all we do, and knows the secrets of our hearts. As we read in Romans 12:5, we are: "... one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

How far are we to go in the matter of doing that which may be offensive to others? Again Paul comes to our aid. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is

offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14:21). Our own liberty ceases when it tramples on the rights of others. This is true Scripturally. It is also true in the laws of our land.

There are other things besides the tobacco habit which need our attention, we freely admit. All offensive things must be cleared away that we may be pleasing to God, and edify one another. God help us all to come clean for Him and for the edification of the brethren everywhere. To fail in this is to be shut out of the kingdom of God.

THE LAW OF MOSES

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Now to the leading question: Do we subscribe to the Law of Moses in our Christian era?

No. The apostles, in the 15th chapter of Acts, voided the Law of Moses and the law of circumcision.

On the surface it may appear that we keep part of the Law of Moses and ignore other parts—that we keep what we like and ignore the rest. We keep the Sabbath, as well as the other nine commandments and observe the law of clean and unclean meats, but we do wear clothing made of material which is in turn made of mixed fibers. We harvest the corners of our fields even though the Law of Moses forbade this.

As will be recalled from part one of this article, the Sabbath and the laws of clean and unclean meats were pre-existing laws which were incorporated into the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses did not bring them into existence, nor could that law, upon being voided, put them out of existence. This is the case with

The love for truth defines sharply the duty of the Church. It is Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, Who is the very corner stone of the Church (Eph. 2:20). It is on this section of the foundation that the building stands. When Truth is removed, the entire structure falls.

Jesus is also the Head of the Church (Eph. 4:15; 5:23). In this capacity He leads, directs and guides the Church. Those who join and follow are moved by His love, which is necessarily a love for Truth, because that is what Jesus represents.

Paul, in recognition of the importance of truth and Jesus' role in revealing it, admonishes, "... Behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..." (1 Tim. 3:15, 16).

The description of the Church sets forth her essential obligation to appreciate, guard and teach Truth. In Ephesians, Chapter 4, Paul

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calls on the Christian to walk worthy of the vocation to which he is called. In the course of defining this vocation he outlines the methods and reasons for the organization of the Church. Her purpose in being set in order is to perfect her various capacities and abilities, to provide stability and to speak "... the truth in love, (so that we) may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Verse 15).

The Holy Scriptures challenge the minister to preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2), and this charge remains a part of our present ordination ritual. Why preach the Word? So often it divides men. Some suppose that the approach to our church work should be doctrinally compromising in favor of greater display for tolerance, understanding, and cultivating of love amongst all denominations and faiths. Why take this single portion of Scripture so seriously?

The question is thought-provoking and understandable, but it is answered candidly in the previous chapter: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). It is in the Word of Truth that the Church finds the means to do her life-saving work. To compromise the importance of the pure Truth is to strangle the Church by disconnecting her from her own Head.

It should be made clear that our varying interpretations of the Bible's passages cannot assume the importance of the Word itself. It behooves us to assign proper values in this respect. I can be wrong. You can be wrong. *A statement reflecting reservations about a personal opinion or interpretation is tolerable.* **TO DEPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH IS INTOLERABLE.**

There are two areas in regard to personal interpretation and opinion that the Christian will wisely alert himself to. These concern the use of logic and personal testimony. Both of these verbal

tools serve excellent functions and offer invaluable help. But, they have their limitations. They cheer hearts and enlighten minds, but they also bring about deception and disappointment.

Logic is the science of correct reasoning, a valuable and commendable exercise of the mind. It is an essential skill we use in making the innumerable adjustments all men find necessary. We respect the ability to reason, because such talent provides hope, comfort, faith, and other precious answers to dark and confusing moments. The amount of reasoning skill relates in direct ratio to the value of our decisions.

To serve helpfully, logic must be built on a valid premise. Multitudes of people are deceived because they carelessly overlook this.

For instance, I present the following syllogism, which is a form of logic or reasoning:

Reptiles are warm-blooded vertebrates.

A snake is a reptile.

Therefore, a snake is a warm-blooded vertebrate.

This syllogism presents two premises: (1) Reptiles are warm-blooded vertebrates, and (2) a snake is a reptile. Based on these two premises, the conclusion that a snake is a warm-blooded reptile is a logical and correct one. However, it is untrue! A snake is not a warm-blooded reptile. No amount of logic can make it so! What happened here?

One premise is in error. Reptiles are not warm-blooded vertebrates. They have a backbone, but they are cold-blooded. Having begun on an incorrect premise, no amount of logic regardless of how believable, could have produced a truthful conclusion.

Too many present-day doctrines present logic, but they are based on a false premise. Consequently, no amount of

admirable reasoning can make their conclusions acceptable as truth. It is a serious mistake to accept a teaching on the quality of its logic without investigating carefully the accuracy of its premise.

How can one determine whether a premise is valid? The answer is simple. It must conform with complete accuracy to the Word of God!

Some insist that John received revelations on Sunday, the first day of the week. "Sunday is the Lord's Day," they contend, and the Bible says he "...was in the Spirit on the Lord's day..." The conclusion that John received revelations on Sunday is in error, because the premise that Sunday is the Lord's day is in error. No Scripture sustains that assumption.

Some propose that the difference between clean and unclean meats vanished at the cross, because that is when the gospel went to the Gentiles. The clean and unclean meats represent the Gentiles and God's chosen people, Israel. The conclusion is logical, but it is in gross error, because the premise that the clean and unclean meats represent Israel and the Gentiles is without valid Scriptural foundation.

One can appreciate the value of logic in the determination of a valid creed, but at the same time we must recognize its limitations. It cannot by any means have value as truth when the premise upon which it builds is false.

Testimonies also have their limitations. Experience remains an impressive teacher. We value the advice of the aged because disappointing experiences have taught them lessons they can pass on to others who then may avoid similar adversity. Also, experiences direct us to areas of endeavor that reward us with joys and protect us from hardship—that is, if we learn well.

A testimony is also a valuable tool in the use of persuasion. With our similar motives, ide-

als, goals, and trials, it is reassuring and enlightening to listen to the achievements of others. In this way we receive courage, hope, and a new vitality.

It cannot be presumed, however, that every testimony is a statement of truth. Occasionally, two individuals of the same religious faith doubt the validity of each other's testimony.

It is the experience of many ministers involved in doctrinal discussion that when approaching the point of impasse some will resort to personal experience to offer as evidence of the truthfulness of their doctrinal stand.

"I cannot cite you a Scripture," they may begin, "but I want to tell you of an experience I had while in a worship service." They continue by giving interesting, often exciting accounts of their personal religious history. These testimonies deserve courteous attention, but they do not always represent truth. Premises are still much involved, and when in error, they lead to incorrect conclusions.

It has already been established by quoting Scripture that God is not a man that He should lie. His truth is everlasting. His Word (the Holy Bible) is truth. These premises being true, it is impossible for God to revise His Word by way of a revelation or experience to some individual. The need for revision and correction suggests previous misstatement. A misstatement is an erroneous declaration, or an untruth. God is not capable of such, and therefore any testimony which seeks to revise or enlarge upon the Scriptures has no basis in truth.

A man once pleaded, "Please, do not expect me to deny my experience. I simply cannot do that!"

The reply, "Your experience asks that I deny my love for truth, which is the same as a denial of my love for Jesus and God. Would you expect me to deny so much on the basis of

your testimony?"

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

Another answer to the question, "...What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" was, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt. 24:3, 4).

Paul elaborates in his pastoral advice to the ministerial trainee, Timothy, "Now the Spirit speaketh EXPRESSLY, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1). This theological seduction (persuasion to be disloyal, disobedient) will intensify. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). What is the answer to this threat? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (Verses 14, 15).

The Apostle continues by describing with noteworthy boldness those who lose their love for truth when he sternly warns, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17, 18).

In view of the false teachings, so abundant and with such grave consequences, Paul's words convey the truth about God's mercy offered in the form of caution: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh
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the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS OF DARKNESS BUT RATHER REPROVE THEM" (Eph. 5:6, 8-11).

It is a sad mistake to discount the value of truth. It is the Word of truth that introduces our salvation. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalm 119:9). "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). "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" (1 Tim. 4:16).

The Word of truth guides us to sanctification. "Sanctify them through thy truth:" prayed the Master, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17). In willing submission we can join the psalmist, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

A solemn and greatly overlooked fact is that the love for truth provides the only real basis for full fellowship as members of the family of God. "IF we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The preceding verse states bluntly, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

It should be understood that the love for truth cannot be subjected to classifications of *liberal* and *conservative*, as is true in many other facets of

Christian life, such as viewpoints concerning cultural standards. Truth is not relative. It cannot be given or received by degree. It is not a mere area of intellectual prowess. It is the revelation of the Divine to mankind. By way of truth we learn and experience the *agape* love, divine in origin but capable of practice by regenerated mortals.

Truth is specifically defined. It deserves special love. Heaven and earth shall one day pass. All that we have learned to love that is earthly and perishable will leave us. God's Word will never pass away. To love it is to gain love that is eternal, enlightening, secure.

Let him who loves truth preach it and defend it. This means to avoid compromising it or depreciating its importance. Those who love truth will read their Bibles, study its doctrines and support efforts to preach the Word everywhere.

There is no love for Jesus, God, or the Holy Spirit without love for truth. Where there is love for truth, such love will find a means of expression. May the love increase, so that the expression will be more effective.

GUILTY OF ALL?

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for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:13, 14).

When Jesus was on earth He taught us that we should do good on the Sabbath. There are so many good things we can do on the Sabbath such as visiting the sick, passing out tracts, having Bible studies, or taking time for God by reading our Bibles and praying and meditating. If we do these things all of our Sabbaths will be filled for the rest of our lives. We will have no time for working, baking, or doing our business, playing games, watching television, or listening to the radio on the Sabbath day, if we are

to keep it, and all the other commandments to the glory of God.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

Are we keeping all the commandments of God? We have no right to condemn Sunday-keeping people if we ourselves are not truly keeping the Sabbath. Let us, as the children of God, keep the Sabbath day holy along with the rest of the commandments so we may have the tree of life.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

OF SEEDS AND DEEDS

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crowded tenement and place him where he has plenty of room to explore and watch him grow.

Such a small beginning, it is a miracle that the seeds ever amount to anything. Likewise, if I nurture my children with the sunshine of God's love and quench their thirst with the water of life, I have the promise in God's word that they will not depart from the way they should go.

I re-hired my gardener today. She came back, cheerful, eager to work, "Mama, can I plant some seeds for you?" It reminded me that God is willing and waiting for us to come to Him with the request, "Lord, what can I do for you? Here am I, send me." ◀

Prayer Requests:

Family of Sister Toby Summa, Stanberry, for comfort in the loss of their loved one. Sister Summa passed away Thursday morning, March 24.

Sister Helen Brooks (Wash.)—asks prayer for her daughter Rosalie and her family.