

# EDITORIAL: The Love of the Truth

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*Michael Kimmitt*

Christians are followers of Jesus, “the way and the truth and the life,” so clearly the issue of truth is of the first importance. It is reiterated throughout Scripture:

thou art God and thy words are truth  
I have walked before thee in truth  
guide me in thy truth and teach me  
I have walked in thy truth  
thou God of truth  
let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me  
Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me  
take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth  
Buy the truth and sell it not  
the father to the children shall make known thy truth  
therefore love truth and peace  
the law of truth was in his mouth  
And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his  
glory ... full of grace and truth  
For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through  
Jesus Christ  
God is a Spirit: and they that worship must worship him in spirit and  
in truth  
Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come he shall guide you into  
all the truth  
Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth

It follows that we are to speak “the truth in love,” gird our “loins with truth,” and behave ourselves “in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Contrast that with the devil, “he was a murderer from the beginning and standeth not in the truth because there is no truth in him.”

And we are warned that when the consummation of all things finally occurs “for the fearful and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and fornicators and

sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

Just how important the issue of truth is, the ninth of the ten commandments shows: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

We do well to remember that these commandments are not some Jewish peculiarity! They represent the mind of God engraved on man for all eternity! The fact that we are addressed in the singular, "Thou," indicates to each and every one of us that we are to observe the sabbath day, not to kill or commit adultery, etc.

Listen to the *Westminster Larger Catechism*:

*What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?* The duties required in the ninth commandment are, the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man and the good name of our neighbour, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbours; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency; a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers; love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth; keeping of lawful promises; studying and practising of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report (Q. & A. 144).

This is then followed by an even longer question and answer:

*What are the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment?* The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature; giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth; passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil; rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked; forgery, concealing



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the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calls for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others; speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful and equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of truth or justice; speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, tale bearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstructing intentions, words, and actions; flattering, vainglorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others; denying the gifts and graces of God; aggravating smaller faults; hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession; unnecessary discovering of infirmities; raising false rumours, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defence; evil suspicion; envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavouring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy; scornful contempt, fond admiration; breach of lawful promises; neglecting such things as are of good report, and practising, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering: What we can in others, such things as procure an ill name (Q. & A. 145).

Agreeable to our Lord's teaching, we read that "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he shall guide you into all the truth"—and we find that fulfilled in the completion of Scripture in the remaining years of the first century. So we hold that "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men" (*Westminster Confession* 1:6).

But the work of the Spirit did not stop there! The early church fought a battle on two fronts. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the distinction between Jews and Christians became clearer to the Roman authorities and over the next three centuries the church was variously and vigorously persecuted. But at the same time many deviant forms of error arose. We see this already in the apostolic church—for instance, in Galatians and Colossians—but after the death of the last of the apostles we see it in the early church. It was therefore necessary for various gatherings of bishops and church fathers to elucidate truth from error. We have, for example, the



*Nicene Creed* adopted by the Council of Nicea (AD 325) revised AD 381 and with the addition of *Filioque* in AD 589; the *Athanasian Creed*, named after the church father who so vigorously defended the truth of the Trinity and the deity of Christ; and the *Creed of Chalcedon* (AD 451), settling out the Person and natures of our Lord Jesus Christ against the errors of Apollinarianism, Eutychianism and Nestorianism.

After the age of persecution ceased and while the church became increasingly apostate, there were still men like Aquinas in the thirteenth century thinking about theology. And earlier, Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century, gave us the theistic proofs for God and more importantly *Cur Deus Homo*, which we recognise as the orthodox view of the atonement.

Come the Reformation, there was an amazing pouring out of articles, canons, confessions and creeds from the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) on, culminating as the high point in the *Westminster Confession* (1647).

That amazing work of the Spirit which, under the preaching and teaching of Luther, Calvin and the other Reformers, transformed the church also produced an amazing unity in the subsequent creeds and confessions adopted by the various national denominations.

It is therefore no surprise that earlier centuries recognised the study of theology as the "Queen of Sciences," given as it was in the inspired and therefore inerrant Scriptures. We must emphatically note that in no way is that a derogation of the other sciences or indeed areas of knowledge. Man was created in the image of God: male and female. They were to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it," and so we find Adam engaged in taxonomy: giving names to every living creature, activities which are not abrogated by the fall. And if some results appear unwelcome or unwise, doubtless further work and the increasing evidence of design in the universe will in time resolve the issues.

**Discussion:** Let me suggest some practical applications of what has just been discussed. With some excellent exceptions I find that many Christians and not a few denominations exist in a state of abysmal theological ignorance. A good place to rectify that would be to learn the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer all of which may be conveniently found in any proper Prayer Book! For a more extended study, the RFPA do a nicely bound volume containing the *Three Forms of Unity*, i.e., the *Belgic Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism* and the *Canons of Dordt*, all with the proof texts printed out in full to aid one's study. The Free Presbyterian Bookroom



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have a nice volume containing the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, etc., again with proof texts printed out in full.

Dare one suggest that the daily Bible study might be enhanced and one's knowledge improved by working through these documents section by section over a period of time! "Prove all things—hold fast that which is good."

Second, we should cultivate a discerning scepticism. The nineteenth century gave us Irvingism, perfectionism and a strong emphasis on premillennialism, held even by excellent men like the Bonar brothers, though scarcely compatible with the *Westminster Standards*! Under the teaching of Darby, etc., this led on in the twentieth century to the Scofield Bible, dispensationalism and antinomianism and also saw the rise of Pentecostalism which infected the church in the 1960s as the Charismatic Movement, the Toronto blessing, etc. Clearly the twenty-first is continuing on the same lines!

Finally, as an editor and a publisher, I am concerned that as far as possible all that goes in be true—but mistakes will happen! I know some magazines and journals simply reject comments and corrections. That seems to me quite reprehensible: do we not care about truth?! I suspect in other cases where letters are allowed the correspondence may be terminated if the matter gets too hot! Well, obviously a Reformed journal is not expected to publish a Baptist article! But factual additions, corrections and letters are welcome, and my apology to the author for not publishing in the last issue the letter which this time appears at the end of this issue.

It is proper to state that this editorial was sparked off by Professor Herman Hanko's address on "The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth" at our recent BRF Conference (now available on-line at [www.britishreformedfellowship.org.uk/audio.htm](http://www.britishreformedfellowship.org.uk/audio.htm)), though he is in no way responsible for what I have made of it!

And the text I used at the head of my article? It is by no means clear precisely what Paul is talking about in II Thessalonians 2. But let it be a warning: "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. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."