

True Doctrine Vital to Salvation

"For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who believe not the Truth"—2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

TRUE FACTS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE

IN any walk of life except religion, it is fully realized that accuracy and a correct perception of the real facts are vital to any accomplishment.

We know what would happen to a chemist who believed that any mixture or any ingredient would suit his purpose as long as his intentions were right; or an engineer who thought that the correctness of his mathematical calculations was quite unimportant as long as he was trying to do good to everyone; or an electrician who attached little value to the matter of which wires he connected together feeling that somehow everything would be all right; or the farmer who was convinced that as long as he meant well he would get just the crop he wanted regardless of what kind of seed he planted.

In all human endeavors, men have learned that to be successful they must first take the trouble to determine the facts, and then work in harmony with them.

The sincerest belief—the best of intentions—the most arduous of labors—will never help a man who goes blindly right in the face of actual fact and reality.

The very continuance of man's life depends upon his proper acceptance of and adjustment to the facts and realities around him. The law of gravity would destroy him in a moment if he ignored or flaunted it. He must keep eating to live, but still he cannot eat everything that looks edible—many attractive-looking things are poison. This knowledge does not come naturally or instinctively, it must be learned. Children will attempt to eat practically anything.

THIS PRINCIPLE COMPLETELY IGNORED IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS

ALL of the foregoing seems almost too simple and obvious to mention. But the moment we turn to religious affairs—affairs that concern eternity—the only affairs of any real importance—we find all these natural lessons ignored completely.

There is no more any need to study and learn, no more any need to carefully distinguish between hard, cold fact and pleasant fiction, no more any need to lay out and adhere to a course that is strictly adjusted to proven realities. The common philosophy is expressed in the oft-quoted words:

"For creed and faiths let senseless bigots fight:
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

This is a supreme example of illogical and meaningless sentimentalism. It completely misses the question at issue. Of course a man can't be wrong if he is right. But—WHAT IS RIGHT? Who is to say? Is it a matter of feeling or fact? Is right something that can be established like the fact that two and two make four? Can we be mathematically sure that we are right in our actions, just as we can be sure we are right in adding two figures? Is there any fixed, dependable standard of "right," to which we can turn—with which we can compare ourselves, or does each man make his own standard?

A VAST DIVERGENCE OF VIEWPOINT AS TO WHAT IS "RIGHT"

People speak of right, and good, and justice, and fairness, and other qualities related to proper conduct. Superficially these appear to be universal standards, but immediately we go into details we discover that there is a vast divergence of viewpoint regarding what is right, and what is good, and what is just, and what is fair. Conscience will make two sincere men do diametrically opposite things. Which is right? Clearly there is no natural instinct or "light within" to infallibly guide man. Men's opinions differ according to many factors.

And when we get the facts in religious matters—that is Doctrine—revealed Truth and Fact concerning man, and life, and death, and eternity. The Bible is a book of facts; the facts that it is necessary to know in order to succeed in the greatest of all occupations—life itself.

TRUE RELIGION A MATTER OF FACT, RIGHT FROM THE START

RIGHT from the beginning, religion is a matter of facts. Either there IS a God—a supreme, all-powerful Authority—or there is NOT. If we wish to live intelligently, we must face that issue. We may say it is immaterial—that a man should and could "do good" regardless of whether he believed in God or not—but this is the shallowest of meaningless thinking in a circle. Our whole conception and standard of what "good" is hinges entirely upon our belief on this point.

If there is a God, this is the biggest single fact in the universe and in our lives. If there is not, each man must make his own god—every man must have a basic principle by which his life is guided, something to determine his conduct. The natural, unthinking animalistic mind of the flesh will assume this position if nothing else does.

The world's sordid history, the various degrees of decency and proper conduct that different nations have attained to, the unbelievable depths to which some have sunk—all stem from the characteristics of the gods that each have created for themselves—the supposed "basic facts" which each have believed in and lived by. In each instance, conduct is the inevitable reflex of doctrine. Men act according to what they believe.

We are not going deep enough if we think the question is whether or not doctrine is necessary. That is settled for us. The question is—WHICH doctrine shall we live by?

For we must of necessity live by some "doctrine"—some basic principle. Is it important that we find the truth—the real facts—or can we live successfully and purposefully by beliefs that are false?

IS THERE A GOD? — THE GREATEST SINGLE FACT TO DETERMINE

If there is a God, if there is even just a possibility that there is a God, then no one can claim to be intelligent who does not make a determined effort to find out the facts. So much depends upon it. Life is a continuous series of decisions and choices, conscious or unconscious. Success depends upon knowing the facts—above all, the real, deep, eternal facts.

What is the real meaning of life? What are time and history working toward? What is gradually shaping itself in the purpose of God? What is man and what is his relation to these things? These are the facts of which doctrine is made; the necessary facts for intelligent life-planning.

What is our goal in life? What possible goals are there? Here again we need knowledge and facts. Is there life beyond the grave? Do we care if there is? If we are concerned merely with present satisfaction, any pleasing and inspiring illusion will do as long as we can maintain our

faith in it, but if we look beyond the present to an ultimate accomplishment, then we must have the facts to make our plans.

EVERYTHING IN LIFE HINGES ON THIS ONE FACT

FIRST then, is there a God? Is there a supreme, all-wise, all-powerful central Authority in the universe? To determine that, if possible, is the first logical step, because the road forks widely at this point. If there is, then obviously "right" is that which He approves and which fits in with His purposes. If there is not, then "right" is merely a matter of individual judgment according to probable consequences.

Once we profess a belief in God, it is impossible to logically escape the force of the fact that the first and most important step of both wisdom and duty is to find out as much as we can about Him, and plan our life in harmony with the facts we discover. Wisdom lies in recognizing and adjusting ourselves to facts. Folly is simply an inability or refusal to make this recognition and adjustment, whatever field of activity we are considering.

Men have from time to time claimed to have a message from God. But there is one object that stands out in this connection without any comparable rival—the book known as the Bible. This should naturally be considered first in any search for a message from God. If it is authentic, it fulfills all the requirements of the case and also supplies a touchstone by which all other similar claims can be tested.

We accept God and His revealed Word as the two basic and primary facts of life. We are convinced that they can be proven as facts beyond any reasonable shadow of doubt.

WE COME TO THE BIBLE FOR FACTS AND TRUTH

WE come then to the Bible for knowledge and guidance—truth and instruction—doctrine and conduct—facts and what to do in relation to them. The main purpose of our remarks up to this point has been an attempt to demonstrate the inseparability of these two things, because the great modern fallacy on this point is that doctrine and conduct are two separate and independent things—that we can do what is right without knowing what is true.

When a fallacy becomes so deep-rooted as to be accepted without thought as axiomatic, it takes a strong and very self-reliant mind to shake off its shackles. Such a fallacy fastens itself onto the very words we use, and twists those words into its own deceptive tools. "Do good," it says, "and forget doctrine." And to be able to answer this we must first take this word "good" and scrape off the accretions of this falsehood from it.

If God is the supreme Authority and Source of knowledge, then "good" is that which He approves. And that which is known as "doctrine," which is in such disrepute today, is that body of basic fact which He has revealed as the foundation of His instruction as to what is good, and why. He tells us first the facts and second how we should conduct ourselves because of those facts, and in relation to those facts—that is, if we desire to please Him and take part in any future arrangements He may have.

WE SHOULD FIND TRUTH GIVEN PRE-EMINENT IMPORTANCE

If all that we have said is correct, we should find the Bible placing supreme importance upon TRUTH. We should find it repeatedly emphasized that a correct knowledge of the facts God has revealed is essential to fellowship with Him and acceptance by Him. We should find careful instructions given for preservation of correct beliefs in, and exclusion of error from, the assemblies of worship. And we should further find instances and illustrations of the application

of these principles. We should find error and falsehood and imagination and supposition condemned in words as clear and strong and uncompromising as the warning label on a bottle of poison.

All these things we DO find—in vivid clarity and overwhelming abundance.

Jesus said (John 4:24)—

"They that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in TRUTH."

"Thou desirest Truth in the inward parts" (Psa. 51:6).

"Teach me Thy Way; I will walk in Thy TRUTH" (Psa. 86:11).

"His Truth endureth to all generations" (Psa. 100:5).

"The Lord is nigh to all that call on Him in Truth" (Psa. 145).

"He that speaketh Truth showeth forth righteousness" (Prov. 12).

"Buy the TRUTH, and sell it not!" (Prov. 23:23).

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the Truth may enter in" (Isa. 26:2).

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

"I am the Way, the TRUTH, and the Life" (John 14:6).

"When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth" (John 16:13).

"Sanctify them through Thy Truth. Thy Word is Truth" (John 17).

Has all this passed away? Do Truth and Fact no longer matter, but merely human feeling and sentiment? It is uncharitable and narrow to insist that TRUTH be still given the preeminence that we find it given in the Scriptures?

Is it just and fair to represent Truth as something that unnecessarily constricts and hampers the operations of Love? Does not Love itself need the ever-present guidance of Truth if it is to be anything more dependable than shapeless, groundless feeling?—

"They that worship God must worship Him in TRUTH."

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated" (James 3:17).

The apostle Paul shows the same supreme regard for Truth, and abhorrence for ignorance and error, no matter how well-meaning. To the Ephesians he speaks of the "Word of Truth, the Gospel of salvation" (1:13) and of ignorance as "alienating from the life of God" (4:18). To Timothy he says—

"God will have (that is, desires to have) all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the Truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

James shows that a perception of the Truth is the vital connection between us and God when he says (James 1:18)—

"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

And of the bearing of a faithful adherence to this Truth upon salvation he says (5:19)—

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one convert him; let him know that

he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death."

John, too, bears the same testimony (1 John 2:21)—

"I have not written unto you because ye know not the Truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the Truth."

"No lie is of the Truth." This is a basic scriptural principle. Truth and error will not mix. There can be no fellowship between them. There is no hazy middle ground of charitable tolerance of well-meaning error.

"NO LIE IS OF THE TRUTH."

It must be quite evident that the concept of truth and accuracy holds a high position throughout the Scriptures—

TRUTH is one of the fundamental characteristics of God. He is spoken of as the "God of Truth" (Psa. 31:5).

He must be worshipped "in Truth" (John 4:24).

The Gospel of Salvation is the "Word of Truth" (Eph. 1:13).

Truth sanctifies (John 17:17), and saves (2 Th. 2:13).

Ignorance alienates from God and from life (Eph. 4:18).

God desires Truth in the inward parts (Psa. 51:6).

No lie is of the Truth (1 John 2:21).

ERROR IS AS STRONGLY CONDEMNED AS TRUTH IS EXALTED

THE testimony against error is as strong as the testimony for Truth. Consider Paul's striking denunciation (2 Thes. 2:10-13)—

"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 condemned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH."

A love of Truth—a desire to find the real facts and live in harmony with them—is here given as the key to God's blessing. The absence of this love for Truth brings condemnation and death. Is Truth immaterial? Does it matter much whether we take the trouble to get the facts? Is it sufficient to blunderingly and blindly "mean well," too busy with other things to put a prolonged and consistent study of God's Word first in our lives? It is so easy and so human to speculate: it is so hard and so against nature to really study and learn.

In his second epistle to Timothy Paul writes (2 Tim. 4:2-5)—

"Preach the Word. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

"For the time will come when they—'believers' in general—will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching

ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things."

What is the infallible index of declension and decay? It is a gradual—almost imperceptible at first—weakening of the realization of the paramount importance of TRUTH, and the destructiveness of error.

Paul says further to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16)—

"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."

And yet again (6:20)—

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so-called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith."

1 Tim. 1:3—"Teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables."

The world is so full today of "profane and vain babblings, oppositions of "science," falsely so-called. To the Hebrews, he commanded (13:9)—

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."

To the Ephesians (4:14)—

"Be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

The only defense against error and disaster is a solid grasp of the true facts; a complete, clear picture of revealed Truth.

This danger of the believers losing the realization of the vital importance of truth was always before Paul's mind and he did all he could to prevent it, although he knew that to a large degree it was inevitable that it should come and carry many away from salvation and life.

It takes so much work, day after day, to keep rebuilding and refreshing the mind, resisting the relentless pressure of nature to relax, that few continue to the end.

Let us glance through Paul's letter to Titus—

1:1—"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness."

1:9—"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

1:13—"Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith."

1:14—"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth."

2:1—"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2:2—"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith."

2:7—"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness."

2:8—"Sound speech that cannot be condemned."

3:10—"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject."

THE SCRIPTURES' SHARP LINE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

The Scriptures cut the issue sharply between truth and falsehood—

"No lie is of the Truth."

"Be ye not unequally yoked, together with unbelievers. What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

What is an "unbeliever?" Can a man reject an elementary part of God's Word and be truly considered a believer? Is a partial belief mixed with error or ignorance a safe or saving faith?

Consider Paul's sorrowful words regarding his fellow Israelites, who believed fervently in God but not according to truth (Rom. 10:1-3)—

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that **THEY HAVE A ZEAL OF GOD**, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

This misplaced zeal and ignorance of the facts led them to reject and crucify Christ, and persecute his followers. Can we separate doctrine from conduct? Can we conduct ourselves acceptably before God if we are ignorant of what He has revealed and commanded?

Is ignorance and natural human sentiment a safe guide in anything? Paul gives the scriptural answer to this when he says to the Ephesians (2:3)—

"Among whom we also had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath."

Similarly in 1 Cor. 2:14—

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither **CAN** he know them."

DOCTRINE AND CONDUCT ARE INSEPARABLE

IT is the weakening of the bonds between doctrine and conduct that has created the common view that doctrine is unnecessary.

To see a great profession of doctrine with little noticeable effect on conduct naturally gives the impression that doctrine has no practical value.

But those that judge thus judge shallowly. We must not get at the doctrine a man professes but the one he lives by. Then we shall immediately see a vital connection between his doctrine and his conduct. Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

Where a man's heart and interest are most of the time, **THERE** is his life's doctrine, regardless of the one he professes, or wears on Sunday. And whatever it is, true or false, it will shape his life and determine his destiny.

There is only one doctrine that will lead anywhere but the grave. That is the true outline of eternal fact that God has revealed in the Scriptures.

Doctrine is never given in the Bible as an abstract thing apart from conduct. It is always presented as the basis for conduct. Broadly, it is put this way: God loves Truth and hates falsehood, therefore to gain His fellowship and His salvation hold to Truth and shun falsehood.

We may not with limited human perception be able to see the full force of the vast, irreconcilable difference between Truth and error when it is written on a piece of paper, but very few are unable to perceive the importance of the difference between purity and infection in a wound in their own body.

Modern civilization suffers from an over-consciousness of physical germs, but the far deadlier spiritual germs of error and ignorance of divine fact trouble it not at all. Could there be any more striking example of straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel?

THE PRACTICAL BEARING OF DOCTRINE UPON CONDUCT

THERE are a few verses in Paul's second letter to Timothy which help us to perceive the importance of truth in doctrine in its practical bearing. (2 Tim. 2:16-19)—

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

THERE is the first point: Error, once introduced, is bound to increase. He continues—

"And their word will eat as doth a canker."

The margin gives "gangrene." The Truth of God has a purpose—to purify and sanctify men and women, to transform their minds, to build them up into an acceptable Temple for the dwelling of God.

This transformation is absolutely essential if God is to accept them, and it is the Truth continually meditated upon that accomplishes this.

Error has no such power. It can only break down. Mix a little error with the Truth and its power for good is destroyed. What was the error in this case?—

"Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the Truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure."

What direct bearing on conduct and salvation did the belief in the resurrection have? Cannot we do good and love God and still believe that the resurrection is "passed already?" Why do we have to know and believe the truth concerning the resurrection?

First, because God says we must.

That alone is sufficient. God wants people who believe Him. If we reject what He says, and ask why we must believe Him, and say we cannot see what difference it makes, we immediately stamp ourselves as unsuitable material for His purpose. We have been asked to choose between God's Word and the natural promptings of our mind, and we have chosen the latter.

Consider what was said to Saul. He did what he thought was right and good but Samuel was sent to say to him—

"Thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, therefore the Lord hath rejected thee" (1 Sam. 15:26).

This false teaching about the resurrection "overthrew the faith of some"—destroyed their hope of salvation.

ERROR, LIKE GANGRENE, NEVER STANDS STILL

Paul compares error to gangrene. Gangrene does not stand still. It is out to destroy. Either the body is quick and strong enough to fight and overcome the gangrene, or the gangrene will certainly and inevitably destroy the body.

Surely the force of Paul's illustration cannot be missed or evaded! There can be no tolerance of error. Error is never harmless.

Most religious error is intensely sincere and well-meaning. But if men—in the words of Paul—"Err concerning the truth," then their teaching is as dangerous as gangrene. An infection may be very small, but it is never unimportant, for potentially it is death. Therefore the urgency of Paul's entreaty to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:20-21)—

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the Faith."

Likewise (2 Tim. 3:14-17)—

"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.

"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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

That is what God has given us the Bible for—instruction in righteousness. Righteousness does not come naturally or instinctively. We must not only desire to do good. We must carefully LEARN HOW by studying God's "instructions in righteousness."

To do good is to live in conformity with God's will and purpose. Therefore we must know what that purpose is. We must have a true view of what we are, what God plans and desires, who are the enemies of the Truth and who are its friends; what to seek and what to guard against.

False doctrine leads us astray and deceives us in these things. It tells us untrue things about God and our natures and sin and death, and the future. It sends us laboring in an entirely wrong direction, going about—as the Jews were—to establish something that we called "good" and "righteousness," instead of getting into harmony with the real facts and the way of true righteousness that God lays out.

"No lie is of the Truth."

It may be well-meaning and it may appear harmless, but still that does not change its true character. It still robs its believers of the salvation that only the Truth brings. Of the final commonwealth of the sanctified and redeemed it is said (Rev. 21:27)—

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a LIE."

And Rev. 22:15—

"Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

See what company lies are placed in! All who are content to believe error instead of diligently searching out the Truth are "loving a lie." Our only defense is to learn the Truth by patient, prayerful study of the Word of God.

WE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH TO PROCLAIM IT TO OTHERS

There is another aspect that makes it essential for us to know the true doctrine of God. We are to do our part in teaching it to others. Jude says (v. 3)—

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Peter says (1 Pet. 3:15)—

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

Be ready to give a reason for your hope—be able to give scriptural authority for what you believe.

"Speak the things that become sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1)

"If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

All this calls for FACTS and KNOWLEDGE. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria (John 4:22-24)—

"Ye worship ye know not what: We know what we worship . . .

"They that worship God must worship Him in truth."

WE MUST KEEP SEPARATE FROM ERROR

AND besides proclaiming the Truth, we have a further duty that requires a thorough knowledge of the doctrine of God. We are told (Rm. 16:17) to—

"Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them."

We have already noted similar instructions in the epistle to Titus (3:10)—

"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonitions reject."

John also said (2 Jn. 10)—

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed."

And Paul says (Gal. 1:9)—

"If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed."

It is quite clear from these testimonies that the maintenance of pure doctrine is a major duty in the conduct of faithful believers, and that to this end they must separate themselves from all who do not hold the Truth.

Paul, commanding separation from error, pointedly asks (2 Cor. 6:14-17)—

"What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

And he commands—

"If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing but doting about questions and strifes of words—destitute of the Truth—from such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

These instructions directly link doctrine with conduct, and make acceptable conduct impossible without first a foundation of true doctrine.

How can we obey these commands to separate from error if we do not clearly know the Truth?

ONLY THE TRUTH CAN UNIFY, UPBUILD, PURIFY AND TRANSFORM

THERE is yet another aspect with which we can fittingly close. God is at present calling out a people from the world for His eternal purpose. These people are commanded to assemble themselves together and hold forth the light of the Truth.

An acceptance of that Truth is to be the basis of their association.

The Truth, intelligently understood and sincerely believed, is to be the influence which unifies them into one whole and binds them together in the body of Christ. Otherwise they are merely a human, social, meaningless assembly, like myriads of others. Paul said to the Ephesians (4:3-6)—

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

"There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your calling; One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Then he continues (v. 11)—

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ:

"Till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

"But speaking the TRUTH in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ."

See what a vitally important part the Truth plays in the development and unification and PRESERVATION of the divine Household! Where would the Household be without it? What would bind them together; give them a common interest; fill their minds; occupy their conversation; supply the basis for all their hopes and mutual activities? And how long would they be able to hold on without a solid foundation of truth and fact?

Perhaps doctrine is unimportant in the lives of many people. Perhaps it is generally

regarded as dry and purposeless and only a source of wrangling and contention, with no living power to transform weak human clay into the divine image. Unfortunately this is all too true in the world, but not so in the Household of God. Paul continues (v.20)—

"But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the TRUTH is in Jesus.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts:

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

How CAN they do this, without an accurate knowledge of God's Word and God's will?

True believers, true children of God are—again using Paul's words to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:6):

"Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine."

—G.V.Growcott
The Berean Christadelphian,
April 1965