

THE FOUR GREAT PILLARS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three

The First Great Pillar—Truth

(2)

Knowing the Divine Truth, the Divine Reality

Scripture Reading: John 1:14; 8:32; 14:6, 16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:6, 20

I. The divine truth, the divine reality, is the Triune God and His word— 1 John 5:6:

- A. Reality is the element of God realized by us in the Son—John 1:14.
- B. The divine reality is God, who is light and love, incarnated to be the reality of the divine things—1 John 1:5; 4:8; John 1:1, 14.
- C. The divine reality is Christ, who is God incarnated and in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, as the reality of God and man, the types, figures, and shadows in the Old Testament, and all the divine and spiritual things—Col. 2:9, 16-17; John 1:18, 51; 11:25; 14:6:
 1. Because Christ the Son is the embodiment of God, He is the reality of what God is—Col. 2:9.
 2. The truth is the reality of the divine things, and this reality is Christ Himself—John 8:32.
 3. The reality of the divine things came through Christ and becomes the realization of God to us—14:6.
- D. The divine reality is the Spirit, who is Christ transfigured, as the reality of Christ and of the divine revelation; hence, the Spirit is the reality—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:6.
- E. The divine reality is the Word of God as the divine revelation, which not only reveals but also conveys the reality of God and Christ and of all the divine and spiritual things; hence, the Word of God also is reality—John 17:17:
 1. The Father's word carries the reality of the Father with it.
 2. God's word is the reality, the truth, unlike Satan's word, which is vanity, a lie—8:44.
- F. God, Christ, and the Spirit—the Divine Trinity—are essentially one; hence, these three, being the basic elements of the substance of the divine reality, are actually one reality—1:1, 14; 14:6; 1 John 5:6:
 1. This one divine reality is the substance of the Word of God as the divine revelation.
 2. The divine reality thus becomes the revealed divine reality in the divine Word and makes the divine Word the reality—John 17:17.
 3. The divine Word conveys this one divine reality as the contents of the faith, and the contents of the faith are the substance of the gospel revealed in the entire New Testament as its reality, which is the divine reality of the Divine Trinity—Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5.

- G. The divine reality is versus the lie, the vanity of the old creation, and the idolatrous substitutes of the true God—John 8:44; Eccl. 1:2; 1 John 5:20-21:
 - 1. The devil's nature is a lie and brings in death and darkness—John 8:44:
 - a. With darkness is falsehood, the opposite of truth—1 John 1:6.
 - b. The satanic lie is the expression of the satanic darkness—Rom. 1:25; 3:4.
 - 2. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun; only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not “under the sun,” is not vanity but is a reality—Eccl. 1:2-3; 2 Cor. 5:17.
 - 3. Anything that replaces, or is a substitute for, the divine reality is an idol, and we should garrison ourselves against it—1 John 5:20-21:
 - a. Idols are the heretical substitutes for the genuine God and the vain replacements for the real God.
 - b. We should be on the alert to guard ourselves from heretical substitutes and from all vain replacements of our genuine and real God—v. 21.

II. We may know the divine truth, the divine reality, by being in the true One—v. 20:

- A. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, has come and has given us an understanding that we might know the genuine and real God—John 1:14, 18; 1 John 5:20:
 - 1. This understanding is the faculty of our mind enlightened and empowered by the Spirit of reality to apprehend the divine reality in our regenerated spirit—Eph. 4:23; John 16:12-15.
 - 2. *Know* in 1 John 5:20 is the ability of the divine life to know the true God in our regenerated spirit through our renewed mind, enlightened by the Spirit of reality—John 17:3; Eph. 1:17.
 - 3. Because as believers we have been born of the divine life, we are able to know the true God and the things of God—John 1:12-13; 3:6, 15; 17:3.
- B. First John 5:20 twice speaks of *Him who is true, the true One, the True*:
 - 1. The term *the true One* refers to God becoming subjective to us, to the God who is objective becoming the true One in our life and experience.
 - 2. The true One is the divine reality; to know the true One means to know the divine reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.
 - 3. This verse indicates that the divine reality, which is God Himself, has become our reality in our experience; the God who was once objective to us has become our subjective reality—v. 6.
- C. To be in the true One is to be in His Son Jesus Christ—v. 20:
 - 1. This indicates that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the true God.
 - 2. This also indicates that the true One and Jesus Christ are one in the way of coinherence; therefore, to be in the Son is spontaneously to be in the true One.
- D. The word *this* in verse 20 refers to the God who has come through incarnation and has given us an understanding to know Him as the genuine God and to be one with Him organically in His Son Jesus Christ:
 - 1. All this is the genuine and real God and eternal life to us.

2. This genuine and real God is eternal life to us so that we may partake of Him as everything for our regenerated being.
 3. *This* refers to the true God and Jesus Christ in whom we are; it includes the fact that we are in this One, the true One, and implies that, in a practical sense, eternal life is the God in whom we are in our experience.
 4. Therefore, the true God and eternal life include our being in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ; now in our experience the true One becomes the true God, and Jesus Christ becomes eternal life.
- E. By being in the True, we know the divine reality intrinsically and experientially—v. 20; John 17:3.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE DIVINE TRUTH

The Meaning of Truth

In 1 John 1:6 John speaks concerning the divine truth: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth.” What is truth? It is difficult to define truth. We may think that truth in such a verse as 1:6 refers to sound or correct doctrine. The word for truth in the Chinese language means genuine doctrine. Many have a similar understanding of the English word “truth” and consider that, at least insofar as it is found in the Bible, it means correct doctrine.

In our daily conversation we may have a somewhat different understanding of truth and regard truth as meaning something that is true as opposed to something false. For example, we speak of telling a true story.

If we would understand the meaning of truth in the Bible, we need to go beyond the traditional and common understanding of what truth is. The traditional view concerning the truth in the Bible as correct doctrine is not accurate, and the common denotation of the word should not be applied to the word truth as found in the Bible.

The Greek word for truth is *aletheia*. In studying this word, I consulted a number of lexicons and concordances. I was especially helped by the article on truth in Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Furthermore, I also considered all the verses in the New Testament that use either the word *aletheia* or a related word. After studying these verses in context and after consulting the lexicons and concordances, I came to certain conclusions regarding the meaning of truth in the New Testament, and these conclusions are summarized in the lengthy note on truth in 1:6 printed in the Recovery Version of the Epistles of John. In this message we shall consider only the first part of this note.

The Greek word *aletheia* means truth or reality (versus vanity), verity, veracity, genuineness, sincerity. It is John’s highly individual terminology, and it is one of the profound words in the New Testament. This word denotes all the realities of the divine economy as the content of the divine revelation, contained, conveyed, and disclosed by the holy Word.

God

According to the New Testament, truth is first God, who is light and love, incarnated to be the reality of the divine things—including the divine life, the divine nature, the divine power, the divine glory—for our possession, so that we may enjoy Him as grace, as revealed in John’s Gospel (John 1:1, 4, 14-17).

Christ

Second, truth in the New Testament denotes Christ, who is God incarnated and in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:9), to be the reality of: a) God and man (John 1:18, 51; 1 Tim. 2:5); b) all the types, figures, and shadows of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16-17; John 4:23-24); and c) all the divine and spiritual things, such as the divine life and resurrection (John 11:25; 14:6), the divine light (John 8:12; 9:5), the divine way (John 14:6), wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Hence, Christ is the reality (John 14:6; Eph. 4:21).

The Spirit

Third, truth is the Spirit, who is Christ transfigured (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17), the reality of Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) and of the divine revelation (John 16:13-15). Hence, the Spirit is the reality (1 John 5:6).

Now we can see that truth, *aletheia*, in the New Testament refers to God. Truth is God as the divine light and love incarnated to be the reality of all the divine things for our possession so that we may enjoy God as grace. This means that the very God is the truth, the reality, of the divine things for our possession. Therefore, we need to possess God as the reality and then enjoy Him as grace. Hence, the divine reality is actually God Himself. He is the reality of all the divine things.

Truth in the New Testament also denotes Christ as God incarnate. Christ is the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. As the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, Christ, who is God incarnate, is the reality of God and man, the reality of all the types, figures, and shadows of the Old Testament, and the reality of all the divine and spiritual things.

What is truth? What is reality? Reality is Christ as God incarnate. Reality is Christ as the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily to be the reality of God, man, the types, figures, and shadows, and all divine and spiritual things. In the Old Testament we have many types, figures, and shadows. Christ is the reality of them. In the Bible we also read of many divine and spiritual things, such as life, light, wisdom, and righteousness. Christ Himself is the reality of all these things. Therefore, when we read the word “truth” or “reality” in the New Testament, we need to realize that it refers first to God and also to Christ.

We have indicated that in the New Testament truth denotes the Spirit, who is Christ transfigured and also the reality of Christ and of the divine revelation. For this reason, in 5:6, John says, “The Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”

The Word of God

Having seen that truth is the Triune God, we may go on to point out that truth is also the Word of God as the divine revelation, which not only reveals but also conveys the reality of God and Christ and of all the divine and spiritual things. Hence, the Word of God also is reality (John 17:17).

The Word is the explanation of the Triune God. This means that the fourth aspect of what the truth is, the Word, is actually the explanation of the first three aspects of the truth, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Therefore, reality is God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, and also the divine Word. (*Life-study of 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude*, pp. 78-81)

The True One

In 1 John 5:20 John twice speaks of “Him who is true.” A better translation would be “the

true One.” To speak of God simply as God may be to speak in a rather objective way. However, the term “the true One” is subjective; it refers to God becoming subjective to us. In this verse, the God who is objective becomes the true One in our life and experience.

What is the meaning of the expression “the true One”? In particular, what does the word “true” mean? Here the Greek word translated “true” is *alethinos*, genuine, real (an adjective akin to *aletheia*, truth, verity, reality—John 1:14; 14:6, 17), opposite of false and counterfeit. Actually, the true One is the reality. The Son of God has given us an understanding so that we may know—that is, experience, enjoy, and possess—this divine reality. Therefore, to know the true One means to know the reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.

First John 5:20 indicates that God has become our reality in our experience. The Son of God has come through incarnation and through death and resurrection and has given us an understanding so that we may experience, enjoy, and possess the reality, which is God Himself. Now the God who once was objective to us has become our subjective reality.

In 5:20 John says that we are in the true One. We not only know the true God; we are also in Him. We not only have the knowledge of Him; we are in an organic union with Him. We are one with Him organically.

When John says that we are in the true One, he is making a crucial point. Not only do we know the true One, and not only do we experience, enjoy, and possess Him as the reality, but we are in this reality. We are in the true One.

In the True One, in His Son Jesus Christ

In 5:20 John says, “We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.” To be in the true God is to be in His Son Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ as the Son of God is the very embodiment of God (Col. 2:9), to be in Him is to be in the true God. This indicates that Jesus Christ the Son of God is the true God.

The True God and Eternal Life

Let us now go on to consider the last part of verse 20: “This is the true God and eternal life.” “This” refers to the God who has come through incarnation and has given us the ability to know Him as the genuine God and be one with Him organically in His Son Jesus Christ. All this is the genuine and real God and eternal life to us. This genuine and real God is eternal life to us so that we may partake of Him as everything for our regenerated being.

We need to pay special attention to the word “this.” In 5:20 John does not say, “He is”; he says, “This is.” This is the correct translation of the Greek. Furthermore, John uses the word “this” to refer both to the true God and to eternal life. By this we see that the true God and eternal life are one.

We have seen that we are in the true One and in His Son Jesus Christ. Doctrinally, the true One and His Son Jesus Christ may be considered two. But when we are in the true One and in Jesus Christ experientially, They are one. For this reason John uses “this” to refer both to the true One and to His Son Jesus Christ.

For someone who is not in the true One and Jesus Christ, They are two. But when we are in Them experientially, They are one. We have seen that to be in the true One is to be in His Son Jesus Christ. This means that in our experience of being in Them, They are one.

Moreover, when we are in the true One and Jesus Christ, They are our true God and also our eternal life. First, John speaks of the true One and His Son Jesus Christ, and then he speaks of the true God. Here there may be some distinction between the true One and the true God. When we are in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ, the true One is called

the true God, and His Son Jesus Christ is called eternal life. This means that first They are the true One and His Son Jesus Christ. But when we are in Them, They become the true God and eternal life.

We need a clear understanding of what “this” in 5:20 refers to. The word “this” refers to the very God who has become experiential to us through our being in Him. No longer are we outside of this God. Rather, we are in this God, and we are in the true One, in His Son Jesus Christ. Because we are in Them, God and Jesus Christ are no longer objective to us, and in our experience They are no longer two. When we are in Them, They become one to us. Therefore, John says that “this” is the true God, and “this” is eternal life. Who is “this”? “This” is the very God and the very Jesus Christ in whom we are. We may also say that “this” includes the condition of our being in God and Jesus Christ. Hence, the true God and eternal life include our being in the true One and His Son Jesus Christ.

We are in the true One and in Jesus Christ. Now in our experience this true One becomes the true God, and Jesus Christ becomes eternal life. Where are we now? Are we outside the true God and outside eternal life? No, we are in the true God and in eternal life. The word “this” includes this fact of our being in the true God and eternal life. Hallelujah, this is the true God and eternal life, and we are in this God and in this life! We know that we are in the true God and in eternal life because we are in the true One and in His Son Jesus Christ.

Verse 20 says that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding so that we may know the true One, and we are in the true One, which means that we are in His Son Jesus Christ. When we are in the true One and Jesus Christ, *this*, including the fact that we are in Them, is the true God.

If we are not in God, we cannot say from experience that to us He is true. Of course, He would still be true in Himself, but we could not testify that in us He is true. But since we are in the true One, to us He is the true God. Furthermore, Christ is eternal life to us. If we were not in Him, Christ would still be eternal life in Himself, but He would not be eternal life to us. Because we are now in Him, to us Jesus Christ is eternal life.

Verse 20 indicates strongly that we are now experiencing the true God, and we are experiencing Him by being in Him. We experience, enjoy, and possess Him by being in Him. This, to us, is the true God and eternal life.

In verse 20 we have the crucial conclusion of the entire Epistle of 1 John. This Epistle reveals that now we are truly one with the Triune God, and He becomes true, real, to us. He becomes reality and life to us because we are in Him. (*Life-study of 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude*, pp. 351-355)