

# The Truth or Its Effects?

by H.J. Vine

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*The sermon explores the necessity of adhering to the original truth of Jesus Christ and the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers away from distractions and towards deeper communion with Him.*

**Scripture:** John 1:17, John 14:6, Ephesians 4:13, Colossians 1:25, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 4:6, 1 John 5:20

**Topics:** "Grace And Truth", "Holy Spirit Guidance"

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## Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the profound truth that grace and truth are found through Jesus Christ, as depicted in John 1:17. The sermon emphasizes the unique roles of different apostles in ministering the truth about Jesus, with Paul revealing Him as the Son of God and John providing the deepest understanding of His divine nature. The Holy Spirit guides believers to progress in the truth, encouraging them to grow in grace, knowledge, and communion with God, while warning against distractions that hinder true understanding and joy in the truth.

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## Transcript

"Grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

The eye of a master artist takes in the beautiful prospect of the landscape made warm and beautiful by the rays of the glorious midday sun and he reproduces it upon the canvas in vivid and lasting colours. The painting is admired, and copied, and recopied. But the original stands alone as the true and representative transcript--the work of the master. Other copies may come near, or be far removed from its excellence, but that only is resorted to as the real representation.

How great was the glory that shone upon Saul of Tarsus, when the Lord Jesus spoke to him on his persecuting pathway to Damascus. It was a radiance "above the brightness of the sun!" Through him the Holy Spirit has given to us the true meaning of that wonderful event and of the resultant truths connected with it. He, to use our illustration, has put the picture upon the canvas. This was the man--Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who went forth and proclaimed that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Father had previously revealed to Peter that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. That is the rock-foundation of Christ's assembly. Peter confessed Him, but he did not become the minister of this great and glorious truth. The keys of the kingdom of the heavens were given to him, not of the assembly. It was through Paul that this truth was specially ministered. He tells us, "God who set me apart even from

my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal HIS SON in me, that I may announce HIM as glad tidings among the nations"; and again, "By revelation the mystery has been made known to me . . . which in other generations has not been made known to the sons of men"; also, "The assembly, of which I became minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given me towards you to complete the word of God" (Col. 1:25).

Peter, after his confession, speaks of Jesus as THE SON but once. Paul, who ministered the truth concerning the assembly in such a special way, often does so, for that is the vitality and strength of the assembly. It is, however, through John, the disciple, that leaned on the bosom of Jesus, that the Holy Spirit gives us the deepest and fullest unfolding of the truth concerning the adorable Son of God; leading us on to that wonderful word at the close of his first epistle: "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."

It is thus that the truth has been premised, pictured and preserved for us by the Holy Spirit. And John, linking the apostolic witnesses all together, says, "He that knows God heareth us. He that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). It is to the truth, and not to its effects, that the Spirit of truth brings us; to that which is from the beginning, and not to the later copies of it; to the faith once revealed, and not to subsequent imitations. "He that knows God," wrote the surviving disciple, "heareth us." We are not told to hear the immediate or later so-called apostolic successors, but to hear the apostles themselves. And we may well be thankful that this is so, for on every hand there are systems of religion which claim Christian authority, but which in doctrine, or practice, or both, are found to be in opposition to the revealed truth of God. These systems tell us we must hear them: God tells us that those who know Him hear the truth made known to apostolic witnesses.

Those who have been delivered from the authority of darkness through the grace and power of God, and have been set in His marvellous light in communion with Him through the redeeming blood of Christ, are constantly encouraged by the Spirit of God to progress in the truth. The death of Christ has met our old sinful state, and put away our sins. He came by water and blood for this purpose; and that we might have eternal life in Him--the Son of God--on the other side of death. The Spirit bears witness as to this, and the truth known in divine power by us gives freedom to follow the Spirit's leading. On the one hand He encourages us into deepened communion in fullness of joy, and on the other to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him who is the Truth. He leads; He guides; He teaches. He does not drive us; but we may easily grieve Him, though He never gives us up; but giving us to feel anything that has disturbed our communion, He desires our recovery and restoration, through confession to the Father and the prevailing advocacy of the Son, that He may lead us on in the truth.

A very definite objective is thus kept before the saints of God; and the activity of the gifts from the ascended Head on high has this also in view, for all the members of His body, the assembly: "till we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; and it is added, "holding the truth in love, (that) we may grow UP to Him in all things, who is the Head" (Eph. 4:13-15).

Where freedom is known through the truth, the Holy Spirit leads on such. He is called the Spirit of truth (never the Spirit of light), for He indwells those who are in the light, on the ground of Christ's death and blood-shedding, to bring before them the glory of the Son who said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father unless by Me."

Next to self-occupation, one of the most subtle snares and hindrances to our joy in communion, and prosperity in the truth, is occupation with the effects of the truth instead of with the truth itself--the study of movements and their histories--good or bad--instead of giving heed to the truth, which produced in such movements anything that is according to God--the constant dwelling upon the departures from the truth in certain respects, instead of apprehending the truth itself, which would preserve us from those departures, and which we should then rightly feel as walking in the truth ourselves.

See that perfect masterpiece placed before the student. He has to reproduce that picture twice. He diligently applies himself to his interesting task. If he is wise, however, he will not carry away his first copy, and then make his second painting from that; but, laying it aside rather, he will now with increased experience, still follow the perfect original. It is just here that many get astray. They follow those who have sought to follow the truth as it was perfectly revealed at the beginning, instead of following the truth which such faithful men followed, and they forget that there is always failure in the carrying out of the truth even on the part of the most faithful. They see and study the effects of the teaching of such, and they have an imperfect copy for their study, instead of getting their own souls filled with the blessed truth which produces those effects--in as far as they are of God. The truth of the Head in glory greatly affected certain godly souls, giving them the blessed sense that they were livingly united to Him, and to all the members of His body on earth. This positive truth detached them from systems which were inconsistent with that truth. Now, alas, instead of having the heart and mind filled with that same unchangeable truth, we find a mournful mass of time, and thought, and energy wasted in occupation with the historical results. We may well feel with God all the failure that has come into the assemblies, just as God foretold and foreshadowed that it would come; but we shall only prosper ourselves and help others, as with purpose of heart in the energy of the Spirit, we press forward in the truth itself as it has been graciously made known.

It is the normal work of the Spirit to glorify the Son of God. He has come for that purpose, and to show to us the things of the Father and the Son, and the coming things. May we be in liberty of Spirit to be led and guided by Him. "He shall guide you into all the truth," said our blessed Lord concerning Him. The Son of God is now in glory, and the Spirit is here in and with us on earth.

"Tis thence--now Christ is gone on high,

Redemption's work complete--

The Spirit brings His glory nigh,

To those who for Him wait."

Beloved brethren, can anything be the truth--by whatever name it is called--if it turns us away from simplicity and singleness as to the Son in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells? He loved the assembly and gave Himself for it. Now risen and glorified, He, to whom is given the pre-eminence in all things, is the living Head of His body, the assembly which He loves so well. Soon He will come again and present her to Himself, without spot, or wrinkle, but all glorious. Blessed be His Holy Name!

The Father's voice says, "Hear Him." The Holy Spirit glorifies Him. All the Scriptures point to Him. He said of Himself, "I am the Truth." May we, therefore, be found in ever deepening communion, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Himself till He come.

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