

-REPENTANCE-

At the very beginning of the New Testament we find John preaching repentance to Israel. If they were to receive their King and the blessings of the kingdom, repentance was necessary. Some people have the opinion that repentance is a great show of sorrow and tears. Such is not the case. Repentance is a change of mind. It was in view of what was about to take place in regard to fulfilment of prophecy.

The Lord Himself began His ministry by preaching repentance. But Israel did not repent. They slew the Prince of life instead.

Peter began the Acts ministry with a message of repentance. As a nation Israel did not repent. Just a remnant responded. But they had a conditional repentance. It was necessary. It had to be accompanied by baptism in water in order for one to enter the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom was conditional. Repentance was the first step.

Paul also preached repentance. He preached the same kingdom gospel that Peter did, except that he included Gentiles. Peter did not preach to Gentiles except in the house of Cornelius.

The last chance that Israel had for repentance was in the all-day meeting with Paul in Rome as recorded in Acts 28. On that day some believed and some believed not. This was followed by the pronouncement in verse 28 which closed the doors of the kingdom to both Jew and Gentile. From that day to this the kingdom has not been offered to anybody.

After Acts 28:28 the Holy Spirit never used the word REPENT again. The message of the gospel now is unconditional. Repentance is not necessary for salvation. There is nothing for us to do. It is only to believe. When one is saved, repentance will come. But it is not a condition of salvation today.

John's gospel shows that repentance is apart from life. He does not use the word at all.

-OBEDIENCE-

This word is well-nigh forgotten in the day in which we now live. The small child just starting to school has already outgrown it. He will receive orders from no one. In high schools and colleges it is the same. Authority is rejected. The new psychology does not allow for any restraint. One must be absolutely unhampered by any restrictions in the development of his own personality. In the business world the conditions are about the same, unless somebody gets the upper hand and exercises the powers of a dictator over his subjects. This truly is not a day of obedience.

One outstanding case of obedience is that of Isaac to his father, Abraham. Abraham was ordered to offer Isaac up as a burnt offering to God. Isaac was obedient even unto death and was willing to be offered up. He was 33 years old.

Another case of obedience was that of the Lord to His parents. It is recorded that when they came home from Jerusalem from the temple when He was twelve years old he was subject to His parents. That was from the time He was twelve until He began His ministry when He was 30 years old.

Other cases may come to your mind from the Scriptures.

The only commandment with promise was the one concerning the child's relationship to his parents. He was to honor father and mother that his days might be long in the land which God gave him. That in spirit is TRUTH FOR TODAY for we find it in Ephesians.

Think of the untimely deaths because of disobedience to parents! Think of the sickness and sorrow because of rebellion against the authority of parents. How many have you heard who were sorry that they had not heeded the advice and commands of parents?

It is not very likely that any one will be obedient to God who has disobeyed parents. This, of course is a much more serious matter.

Are the children today better than the Lord was?

-POSITION AND WORKS-

It is a well known fact that in business, if a person is hired, he cannot begin work until he has been assigned to a position and receives that position. To attempt any work without an assignment would only result in confusion, if not in actual damage. Not only must a position be assigned, but some instructions must be given if the work is going to be satisfactory to the management.

The same is true in the realm of spiritual things. A man who is just saved is in no position to do good works. Yet think of the many thousands today who think that being saved is all there is to it. They assume no responsibility in any position. They think that being morally upright is all that is required after salvation. In fact moral uprightness is considered in most circles to be a godly life. A man may belong to church and lead a morally upright life and still be as rebellious as Satan against the will of God. There is nothing more wicked.

In Eph. 2:10 we find that after salvation the new creation is accomplished which makes the believer God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. These works were before ordained or set up that we should walk in them. I am basing this argument upon a literal translation of verse 1. It is, "and you being dead (oncs) to the trespasses and to the sins." This is our state in grace and not by nature. The new creation follows, which is the result of our accepting our calling by faith.

A man may have life, but no position. He may be saved, but have no calling. He may be written in the book of life and have no hope.

Furthermore, if he does not accept the calling which is offered he cannot strive for a crown or run for a prize. It would not be lawful for him to do so.

If we would do that which is acceptable unto God, we must first find what position is offered and receive it by faith.

-SURETY-

When the neighbors saw Judah returning home from Egypt, they could know that Benjamin was safe. Judah had said, "Send the lad with me, I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him, if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever," Gen. 45. If Judah returned, Benjamin would return with him. Judah would not come back without Benjamin.

Our Lord was surety for us. He took the blame. He went to the cross and to the tomb. He was raised again because of our justifying. See Rom. 4:25.

When the disciples received the message from the Lord, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father," they could rejoice. Not just that the Lord was alive again, but that they and all who believe are safe. They have life too.

"Send the lad WITH ME." With me suggests the great experience that is ours. It is identification. Is this your experience? Notice the steps;

1. When He died, we died. Rom. 6:8.
2. When He was crucified, we were crucified. Gal. 2:20.
3. When He was buried, we were buried. Col. 2:12.
4. When He was raised from the dead, we were raised. Col. 3:1.
5. When He was seated in the heavenlies, we were seated in the heavenlies with Him. Eph. 2:6.

Here are 5 steps. Five is the number of GRACE. How gracious the Lord has been to us!

Not only were we identified with Him, but He identified Himself with us. That was the only way He could meet our need. He partook of flesh and blood that He might destroy the one who has power of death and deliver us from bondage. Heb. 2:14, 15.

Let us magnify the name of the one Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. See 1 Pet. 2:24.

-PRACTICE IN EPHESIANS-

In this dispensation of GRACE, we do not have commands, but rather we are exhorted to do certain things or not to do certain things.

The practical section of Eph. begins with chapter 4.

The believer is exhorted to WALK WORTHY OF HIS CALLING, to FORBEAR ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, and to ENDEAVOR TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT. This is a full-time job. No mention is made of vacations or time off with pay.

Grace is given to each according to a measure; THE MEASURE OF THE GIFT OF CHRIST. We are to grow up and be no longer babes, but to measure up to the STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. As a member of the body, each is to work according to the MEASURE OF HIS PART. We have a measuring stick for everything here.

An application of the truth in Jesus will result in some definite actions. It will result in putting off THE OLD MAN. Our former way of living will be forsaken. It will result in putting on THE NEW MAN which is created in righteousness. This results then in true holiness. An application of the truth will cause us to PUT AWAY THE LIE, and every man speak or discuss the truth with his neighbor. To put on the new man is being renewed in the spirit of the mind. It is the new creation which turns us back to the process of regaining the lost image of God in man. It is only when these things take place that we have any freedom in discussing the things that pertain to the truth.

In this practical section we are told how to walk. WALK IN LOVE. A practical example is love of wives and husbands. WALK AS LIGHT. The children walk in the instruction of the parents. We should walk in the will or instruction of God. WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY. In other words, "Look where you are going." All these go to make up the walk that is worthy of the calling. These are some of the good works wherein the new creation should walk.

Not only are we instructed as to how to walk, but we also are told to stand. First, we are told to STAND against the wiles of the devil. This can only be done after we have put on the whole armor of God. Nothing else can stand for a minute against such a powerful one. We are to WITHSTAND in the evil day. To do this we are to take unto ourselves the whole armor of God. The two positive statements of putting on and taking the whole armor of God emphasizes the importance of this armor. Thirdly, we are to STAND, having worked out all. Here is no order to go forward and fight the enemy, but to stand and withstand. The Lord has overcome the enemy. We are to hold the ground that has been taken for us. The great power of God works within us. See 1:19.

The armor is made up of 6 parts. There is no provision for the back. We are to stand facing the enemy. The girdle of TRUTH. Our Lord is the truth. The breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS. He is our righteousness. The shoes of PEACE. He is our peace. The shield of FAITH. Christ is the one that is faithful and true. It is His faithfulness that keeps us securely. The helmet of SALVATION. He is our salvation. The sword of the SPIRIT. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, and Christ is the incarnate Word. In short, putting on the whole armor is PUTTING ON CHRIST.

Paul then at the last asks that the saints pray for his utterance; that he may OPEN HIS MOUTH BOLDLY to make known the mystery, that he SPEAK BOLDLY even tho in bonds, and that he speak as he OUGHT TO SPEAK. Do we not all of us need a similar prayer? We need more boldness to speak, not only at opportune times, but even when it seems inopportune. We need to know how to speak, how to say what we ought to say so that it might be effective. Too often we just do not speak.

Read again the last 3 chapters of Ephesians. They are intensely practical. They fill a need. By such we may be approved unto God.

-FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK-

I thank all of you for the good letters I got during the last few weeks. I wish I had space to put in a little of each for all of you to share. Keep the letters and cards coming in.

It is only natural to want to share good things with others. If you enjoy this little paper and would like for your friends and relatives to get it too, write their names and addresses plainly and completely and send them to me. I will put them on the mailing list.

There is no subscription price for TRUTH FOR TODAY. Neither do I solicit funds for any of the TRUTH FOR TODAY ministry. I wish to especially emphasize this at this particular season when we are being pestered for funds for all kinds of organizations.

The time of the radio class has been changed. It is now at 7 p.m. each Tuesday evening instead of at 7:15. You are welcome to come in at the studios while I am broadcasting. You might be disappointed if you do not find me there in person, as I may be present in voice only. You see, I make a recording sometimes so I can be at two places at the same time.

I am taking it for granted that the folks who come to the class at

my home each Tuesday night can come 15 minutes earlier, so we can meet at 7:45 instead of 8 as formerly.

In our study of Genesis we are now in the 43rd chapter. Last week we had a very interesting study of the suretyship of Judah.

We now are in chapter 19 of Acts. Those who live near should take advantage of this opportunity for Bible study.

It is about time that the Christmas cards will start coming in. I like a friendly letter so much better, don't you?

Have made no long trips to speak to any groups during the last month, but did call on some friends in Ft. Wayne recently. There ought to be a class there.

If you are interested in other papers and magazines which deal with truth concerning the Church which is the Body of Christ, I can give you a list.

I certainly thank all of you who have followed the injunction of Gal. 6:6. It has been a great help to me in this ministry.

You are always welcome to the Tue. night class at my home. This is on the Harrison Center Rd., 6 miles west of Warsaw, or 4 miles south of Atwood. The house is $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off the road to the south.

Address all mail to Oscar M. Baker, R. 2, Warsaw, Ind.

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