

-DEPARTING FROM THE TRUTH-

As we study Second Timothy, which is Paul's last writing before his death, we find that the key word is TRUTH. It occurs 5 times in the epistle. Five is the number of GRACE. The epistle was written in the present dispensation of grace and therefore is TRUTH FOR TODAY.

The epistle is prophetic and the apostle sees the church in ruins, a condition from which it has never recovered. Its downward path of departure from the truth is given in 3 steps. They are found in 2:18; 3:8; and 4:4. The epistle instructs the man of God as to his personal conduct in the midst of this ruin.

The first step is **ERRING FROM THE TRUTH**. Error begins by perverting the truth. In Paul's time some said that the resurrection was already past. We hear some stories like that yet today. It is natural that the enemy should attack the truth of resurrection, for it is that power which defeats him. His first lie to people was that one does not die, that man lives on and that there is no need of resurrection. This first lie of Satan is a part of the creed of most of Christendom today. It is this same resurrection power that gives new life to the believer, sanctifies him, and raises him with Christ to heavenly places. The Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 15 teaches us that without resurrection all men who have died have perished. This means that they do not live and never will live unless they are resurrected from the dead. Read the chapter for yourself. Almost all of professing Christianity today prefers to believe the philosophy of the heathen Plato rather than the truth of God as to the nature and destiny of man. Beware that you are not robbed of your prize and crown by vain philosophy.

The second step is **RESISTING THE TRUTH**. Men resist the truth because their minds are corrupt. They are reprobate concerning the faith. Man reaps more than what he sows. If he sows to the spiritual

side of his nature, he may reap the grace of God with all the benefits and blessings. If he sows to the flesh, he will reap corruption and loss. Men are slow to change to anything new which is an improvement. New truth is resisted. Man does not want to grow in truth and grace. The flesh wars against the spirit. He is more satisfied with forms and rituals than with spiritual truth. These forms and rituals deaden spiritual perception so that man can no longer be taught by the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees resisted truth because it would interfere with their rituals, their ideas of worship, and their mode of life. Truth necessitates a change. Man can never remain the same after he has been exposed to truth. He will either improve and want to know more truth, or he will be hardened so that finally he will not wish to have any truth at all. To be orthodox is to be set in one's opinions and beliefs. There is no room for growth and advancement. So when one subscribes to a church creed, he must stop all further growth into truth. A barrier has been set up and he must go no farther than what the creed prescribes. The mind of man can become so corrupted with empty rituals and false worship that not a ray of the light of truth can penetrate his consciousness.

The third and last step is **TURNING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH**. When man has erred from the truth and has resisted the truth, then his next step is to accept a substitute. So he turns from the truth to fables. A fable is a lie. It is an untruth. Man does not like truth because it cuts, it hurts him. But lies are designed to please the flesh. A man likes to hear that if he does good works he will be rewarded with eternal life. He likes to be told that he can atone for a shady deal by buying an organ for the church or subscribing to some charity. Man likes to be told that he can live his life as he pleases if he will support a certain denomination with his wealth which

will insure his salvation. Man likes to be told that he can keep his own salvation by maintaining good works. Then he can boast in the flesh. He likes to be told that he can keep his salvation by observing certain ordinances his church has invented or stolen from some other dispensation. Man can deceive himself, but he cannot mock God. He will be called to account for every fable he makes himself believe. The man with one talent deceived himself and finally had to reckon with his master. He was a wicked and slothful servant. He wanted to be free from the bother of taking care of his master's business. He wanted to live his life in his own way. So he deceived himself into believing the wrong thing.

The prophecy of Paul has been fulfilled. Christendom today has taken the three downward steps. It has erred from the truth, it has resisted the truth, and finally it has turned away from the truth. In the train of these 3 downward steps have followed awful perversions, moral corruption, and actual lies held up as articles of faith. How long will the grace and longsuffering of God put up with these conditions? Some day the Gentiles will be set aside, just as was Israel at the end of Acts. The day of grace will be over and God will set up another program.

Today many say, as did Pilate, "What is truth?" But they have no more desire to know it than did Pilate. Their words are just empty words. They have truth at hand. It is on the pages of the book they so neglect. The average church member is so indifferent to truth that he will not even spend ten minutes studying a Sunday School lesson. He is too lazy to carry a Bible, even a small one, and has to be handed a little lesson leaf with a few verses on it when he gets to the church. The church has fallen so low that the vast mass of its members are dumb, and are satisfied that one man only in each congregation should teach and admonish. All who have life in Christ Jesus should be so skilled in His Word as

to be able to teach and admonish one another.

But there is a few who show some spiritual life. They read and study the Word. They walk worthy of their calling. They have the hope. They have Christ.

Now you may ask, "What is truth?"

There is TRUTH FOR TODAY which many have erred from, which many resist, and from which many have turned away. When Paul wrote his last epistle, he then stated that all the churches of Asia had turned away from the special dispensation which God by the Holy Spirit had revealed to Paul to preach to all peoples. This dispensation was a secret which had been hid in God from ages and generations. The mystery, the church of the one body, was not in the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is not found in the gospels of the New Testament. It cannot be found in Acts nor in any epistles written during the Acts period. That means that the present dispensation is not to be found in Matt., Mark., Luke, John, Acts, Rom., 1 & 2 Cor., Gal., 1 & 2 Thess., Heb., Jas., 1 & 2 Pet., 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude, or Rev. Only 7 books of the New Testament were written after the revealing of the mystery or secret. All these were written by Paul, dictated by the Holy Spirit.

It is the common belief that the church of today is planted on the earth. That was true of the Hebrew church which began with Abraham and ended at Acts 28:28. But the church or assembly which is the body of the living Christ is planted in the heavenly places. And therein lies a world of difference. The Word of God does not recognize any church or assembly on the earth today. No difference what their claims may be, they are false. God has no such organization on the earth today. No earthly organization even remotely represents that which is in heavenly places. Every organization with all its false claims will eventually go up in smoke. Members of the body of Christ will have no tags of any kind on them to designate their particular denominations when they are manifested with

Christ in glory.

To the Hebrew church the Lord said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The members of the present dispensation are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Before Acts 28:28 there had been some Gentiles added to the Hebrew church. They were grafted in according to Rom. 11. They partook of the blessings of the good olive tree; they had to depend on Israel for all blessings. These blessings were stopped when Israel was set aside. No more could be grafted in. Those already grafted in did not lose their position. They could attain to a new position by faith. That was the message Paul sent to the Ephesians. Both believing Gentiles and Jews and unbelieving Gentiles and Jews now had access to the new calling and position. This is no longer a joining of Gentiles to a body already in existence. It is something entirely new. Now redeemed men are taken out from among both Jews and Gentiles and are joint-bodied with Christ and so become A NEW MAN. This is the great mystery or secret. It is Christ Mystical, One Body, The Church, He being the Head. Eph. pictures the believer in Christ. Christ does not dwell in the believer by sacraments, but by faith. Col. pictures Christ in the believer.

This new man that is created is in heavenly places. All the members have their citizenship in that place, not here on the earth. It is in that place that they expect to see the Lord when He is manifested. They will be glorified with Him there. Not only is their hope to be glorified with Him, but they are said to be the hope of glory. Principalities and powers in heavenly places are awaiting the day when all the body will be taken up and completed so that He who is the Head can be manifested. This is the EPIPHANIA. It is the hope of the church today. It means association with Christ above all heavens. But conscious union with Him there can only be enjoyed by

faith. Into this sphere and realm sacraments and ordinances cannot enter. It is the Holy of Holies. He delivers from all bondage to law and its ordinances. They only hide Him from the heart, for they are human and earthly. These ordinances dull spiritual perception.

The location of Christian worship is now changed. During the whole history of Israel, their worship centered around a tabernacle or a temple. That was true right up to the last of Acts. Paul was taken while in the act of finishing a vow with its sacrifices in the temple. Now the nature of Christian worship is revealed to be heavenly. A table and bread and wine would be meaningless there. They would be impossible there. Where Christ, the Head, enters, symbols withdraw, and the eye and heart are engaged with spiritual realities and not with carnal shadows.

By such preaching as this is where the offense of the cross comes in. If we and Paul had preached salvation by sacraments, there would be no offense of the cross. There would be no persecution. It is by a system of works that man likes to associate himself religiously and morally with God. It is too much for the natural man to endure to have preached to him that God has declared all men, whether moral or immoral, to be sentenced to death and to be incapable of procuring any holiness by any self-righteous efforts, such as ordinances and rituals. Man cannot endure having to receive salvation by pure grace and not by any merits of his own. Men gnash their teeth in rage when they and their religious activities are declared worthless before God. Paul aroused the hatred of both Jew and Gentile by such preaching. It is the same yet today.

Christ has a double pre-eminence; over both the church and over all creation. Christ has a double reconciliation; both of things in heaven and things on the earth. Paul had a double ministry; both to men everywhere and to the church in particular. To believe these

facts will lift the believer into a region where man's ceremonial religion cannot enter. Most carnal believers hold to the ceremonies and so do not enter the heavenly sphere of blessing; they never go on to perfection. The Levitical rudiments or religious rites were but shadows. They pointed to the substance, Christ. When we have the substance, Christ, what business have we with rudiments or shadows? When a good friend of mine is absent I might console myself with a photograph of him. But when that friend is with me, should I insult him by turning my back on him and looking at the photograph? Many people have to have pictures of Christ around them, when they should have Him in their hearts. Many people try to observe the Passover as the disciples did with Him that night. They say that it is in remembrance of Him. We do not need to remember Him if He is in our hearts.

May we ever remember that each member of the Body finds in the Head fullest provision for every need. There is provision for the fullest Christian life of fellowship. There is provision for holiness. There is provision for victory. There is provision for testimony. There is provision for growth and progress. In Him the believer finds the substance of all ordinances and sacraments.

As a final word, let me give you a brief outline from Col. 2:8-23.

1. WARNING. LET NO MAN DECEIVE you. Verse 8.
Why? Christ is the Head; the believer is complete in Him. 10
THEREFORE: Symbols are abolished. 14
2. WARNING. LET NO MAN JUDGE YOU. WHY? Christ is the Head; the believer is nourished by Him. 19
THEREFORE: Ordinances are forever valueless.

If you have come under the bondage of ceremonial religion, I pray that your spiritual eyes may be opened; that you may have joy and peace in Christ instead of fears and doubts among the shadows. Leave the ordinances of past dispensations and accept TRUTH FOR TODAY.

-OUR BLESSINGS-

In Eph. 1:3 we are told that the saints and the faithful are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It would be impossible to enumerate all these blessings, but in that same chapter at least 7 are named. They reveal something of the great love and grace of God.

1. 1:4. CHOSEN. The time of the choosing is from before the overthrow of the world. The purpose is that a people should appear before Him in love who would be holy and without blame.
2. 1:5. PREDESTINED. It was predestined that these should be adopted as children. This is by the work of Christ.
3. 1:6. ACCEPTED. It is only by grace that any can be accepted. No one can be worthy in himself for such an honor.
4. 1:7. REDEEMED. The saints and faithful were redeemed at a terrible cost, the blood of the Son. In this is also included the forgiveness of sins. We are again reminded of His grace.
5. 1:9. INSTRUCTED. Nothing can be received by faith without knowledge. God, thru His Word, has given all necessary instruction so that faith may act.
6. 1:13. SEALED. The believer is sealed in Christ by the Holy Spirit. His position in the Body then is secure, for this pledge or seal is a guarantee.
7. 1:14. ENRICHED. The believer receives a pledge of the inheritance. He becomes a joint-heir with Christ to the riches of the universe.

All these blessings are gifts. They come only thru grace. They are absolutely undeserved. It is pleasing to God to be gracious. It is His nature to be generous. He loves to honor those who honor His Son, the Beloved One.

All these spiritual blessings may be had for the asking. They are appropriated by faith. Faith is believing what God has said and acting as if it were true.

Faith honors God. Faith magnifies the name of Christ. Faith purifies the believer.

-JOSEPH'S FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS-

Joseph was a little lad of 17 when he was sold into Egypt. There he was in the midst of idolatry and sin. There was not a one of like faith in all the land. Certainly this would be a test for anyone's faith.

Joseph had his first test in the house of Potiphar. There he was not only faithful to his master, but he was faithful to God in that he did not break the law of God.

The prison was another test. He no doubt felt at times that not only had man forsaken him, but also that God may have forgotten him. He was faithful to his masters in all tasks that came to his hand and in all things God prospered him.

The greatest test of all was under prosperity and popularity. He was in politics and still remained faithful. Today such a thing is so rare as to be considered almost a miracle. Joseph remained humble before God in all this.

Another test was the appearance of his brothers as they came to buy corn to feed the family. Here was a wonderful opportunity to GET EVEN for the great wrong they had done to him. But he loved his brothers. He seemed to treat them roughly at first, but this was to bring their minds back to the pit at Dothan. He knew that there could never be a sweet fellowship until they were softened and repented of their sin. His plan worked and there was a happy and joyous reunion.

In all the record, we do not find any sin or fault in Joseph. He is one of the few such characters in the Bible. Because of his faith and his faithfulness, God was able to use him to the saving of the lives of his kindred, and not only his kindred, but of Egypt and much of the world. Do you not see the Lord Typified here?

Joseph believed what God said. He believed that God would take his people out of Egypt again, just as had been promised to Abraham. So one of his last requests was that his brothers should keep his bones and carry them up to Canaan when the time should come that the Children of Israel should go there.

-SIN AND SINS-

Lately the country has been shocked by reports of immorality among some young people. Folks have raised their eyebrows and begin to wonder just what the world is coming to.

Not for a moment would I condone this awful immorality, but I just wonder about some of the so-called respectable folks. After all, Christ died for the sins the young folks are committing. They are already forgiven by the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God. But there is sin, a sin, which is not and cannot be forgiven. It is the only sin that stands between any man and salvation. That sin is the rejection of truth, whether it be the written Word or the Incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Now among those who would condemn immorality are many who are worse than those they criticize. They reject truth. They pervert truth to their own carnal purposes. Many are hireling ministers. They are in the ministry for money, not because they are called. Unbelief comes natural to the natural man. Basic sin is rejection of truth. This is the root of all other sins. This root of unbelief is man's inheritance from Adam. It is the old man. It deceives us. It is the old man that wars against the new creation that is in the believer.

When Christ was transfigured, some of His holiness and purity were shown forth. If He had appeared in all His glory, flesh and blood would have perished at the sight.

This same Lord is now seated in the heavenlies, far above all the heavens, as far as position and authority are concerned.

In this age a people has been chosen who are called to be His companions in that glorious realm. They will have to be holy, just as He is holy. They will have to be pure, as He is pure.

Spiritual impurity or adultery is disobedience to God. It is any form of idolatry, or putting anything before God. Obedience thru faith brings holiness and purity.

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

I hope all the folks who listen to the radio class have noticed the change in time. It is now at 7 o'clock each Tuesday night over station WRSW at Warsaw. This is an FM station only and cannot be gotten on the old AM radios.

The class now meets at my home each Tuesday night at 7:45. Now is a good time for you to get started coming as we are finishing some lines of study and getting ready for some new topics.

The time rolls around too soon, it seems, to get out the paper, TRUTH FOR TODAY. I am not a writer and I find it quite a task to express myself by the printed page. I try to get one out each month.

The long article, DEPARTING FROM THE TRUTH, which occupies the first part of the paper, is to be my radio lesson for Dec. 20. It is recorded on tape ready to run when the time comes. It will give some idea to those far off as to what the radio ministry is like.

If you have sent a gift, be sure that you get a receipt. It might get lost and I would never know about it. The receipts for Nov. are; A12 \$3., A13 \$10., A14 \$1., A15 \$2., A16 \$2., A17 \$25. I can not express in words what this fellowship on your part means to me. I thank you and pray that it may be effective in sending out the Word of God.

A hearty welcome to all the new members of the family. There is quite a number of new ones from Scotland, Australia, and New Zealand. Welcome to those also from Bolivia, Nigeria, and Fiji, as well as those in Alaska and Canada. If it seems that I am slow in replying to correspondence, remember that it has taken as long as 60 days for some of your letters to get to me.

On Dec. 9th another Brown Swiss baby calf came to our place. We have named her Rosita. She weighed 110 lbs. We think she is a beauty.

The correspondence was especially heavy last month and I am way behind. Hope you will be patient with me.

I received a request from Scotland for 15 copies of No. 15 of TRUTH FOR TODAY. I had only 5 left of that issue. I sent them anyway. I have very few copies of old ones left, just some of Nos. 4, 10, and 14.

Be sure to let me know if you change address. If you move, your paper is thrown away, and I have to pay 2¢ for the return notice.

We have been cutting some wood the last month. It helps out with the coal in the furnace.

My home is on the Harrison Center road, 4 miles south of Atwood, or 6 miles west of Warsaw. It is on the south side of the road back a lane. Bring your family and friends to the class.

TRUTH FOR TODAY
c/o Oscar M. Baker
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