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-STUDIES IN EPHESIANS- #30

"NOT OF WORKS... BUT UNTO GOOD WORKS." Eph. 2:9, 10. Under grace, works are excluded as a means of salvation, but included in good practice. Human nature being what it is, the common tendency is to put them in the wrong place. The result is boasting. But under grace boasting has no place, except boasting in THE LORD.

Not until a man has been set free from the dominion of sin is he free to Choose his master. Delivered ones can yield their members to sin or to God, whichever they choose. The one will bring corruption (loss). The other will bring all the benefits of life everlasting.

If there ever was one thing for us to remember, it is the fact that not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. And in the same context where this great truth is proclaimed God strenuously insists that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works! A lot of folks profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

The Christian is urged to speak the things that become sound doctrine, in all things showing himself a pattern of good works. But far too many who have been exhorted to be zealous of good works end up by being jealous of the workers. Many are all the time whining and finding fault, while others go blythely on their way rejoicing and busy spreading the good news.

The same passage that says that He hath saved us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, goes on to speak of a man purging himself of certain things, and being prepared unto every good work. Just a perusal of the concordance is very enlightening on this subject. There is a place for works.

There is a great purpose, according to the Word, for the giving of all the Scriptures. There is a matter of inspiration. There is correction and reproof. Why? That the man of God may be perfect. How? Thoroly furnished unto ALL GOOD WORKS.

The popular and traditional idea of God is that He is a great super-man who is in the business of snatching men from a horrible doom. Why He should do it we are never told except that He might not like to see them suffer. It never seems to enter the mind of man that God may have had a great purpose for the ages and that those who are saved might have some work to do to glorify their Maker.

-GOD HATH SPOKEN-

It is very fashionable and "smart" these days to scoff at the Bible. It is an outdated book, some say. Others try to find flaws in it, rather than in themselves. Such men would "instruct God."

They will tell you that there are two, or maybe 5 or 6 writers of Isa., that Moses couldn't write, that Daniel was written years after the events described, ad infinitum.

Anything is used that can be found that will do away with the miraculous. But that is a very old, old tendency. Even at the time our Lord was on earth, some objected to His miracles. He rebuked them by saying that they did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. And there is the answer to the trouble today. We have far too many preachers and teachers who do not have a heart knowledge of the Scriptures and who have never experienced the power of God in their lives. In other words, they have never been saved and they do not have any spiritual perception.

Recently the editor's column in the little magazine called Christian Economics was headed with the words, "Behold the Lamb of God." Then the editor continues, "The above declaration of John the Baptist is the heart of the Christian gospel. When it becomes once more the theme of the sermons preached in our churches, Christianity will regain the power which it seems to have lost."

We do not have space to quote more, but it shows that there are some who are wondering why the organized Christianity of today seems so powerless. It is because of unbelief. The young man who desires to be a minister today has a hard time finding a seminary where the Bible is believed and is taught as the Word of God. At the present rate the outlook for the churches is indeed dark. But we rejoice to know that not all knees have yet bowed to Baal.

It is indeed surprising that men who profess disbelief in the Bible will teach it in seminaries (for a salary, of course). If it is not true, why not do away with it altogether instead of piecemeal? Again it is surprising that men who say the the Bible is just fables, are proud to be called Christians. Christ believed the Scriptures and many a time said, "It is written." He spoke of Moses and the prophets as being of authority. If the Bible is not true, then He was just an imposter and an honest man would not think of being proud of being a follower of such.

Who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof? Are you guilty?

-HIS FULNESS-

John's gospel, as well as Eph., speaks of the fulness of Christ. It is something that is not subject to dispensations, season, or any limited times, for it is unlimited.

It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. But today that fulness is overflowing. The church which is His body is His fulness. So the church has the fulness which fills all the members with all spiritual gifts and blessings. This is the conclusion of the first prayer in Eph. that all might be filled with the fulness of God.

There is a copious supply of this fulness. The supply is constant. Then why should there be any need? So many are all the time speaking of their needs. Don't they know about this supply? Every want is supplied. We do not say wish, but every want. A want is a lack. There is nothing that is lacking. Why should anyone sorrow? Will not His fulness soothe every sorrow? Why should there be any anxiety? Is He not able to supply every need? All too often all these anxieties, sorrows, wants, and needs show a spirit of unbelief, of faithlessness.

This fulness is a great fountain from which flows all the blessings which come from the will of the Father, the work of the Son, and the power of the Spirit. In the Father's will is a great purpose of the ages. In the work of the Son was a purchase that is greater than any other of all time. The seal of the Spirit displays a power to usward who believe that silences the atom explosions down to a whisper.

There is one great mistake that we make all too often. We try to measure all this by our own feeble experiences. We cannot see any farther than what we have seen or felt in our own lives. We have no standard of comparison in ourselves. How can we in our experiences come to know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height?

Then too often we try to imitate the great benediction, Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He not only is able to do, but He is doing. It is a doing according to the power that worketh in us. Let us believe it and be content therewith.

Whence cometh our strength? We are strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. It is not some might, but it is all might. Can we believe it. Do we realize that when we are weak is the very time that we are strong?

Of His fulness have we all received. This is written to believers. Can we believe? Do we believe? Do we experience it?

- E A R S -

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Fourteen times the Lord used these words. He used them 6 times while on the earth (as the Son of man, 6 being the number of man), and 8 times from heaven (as the risen Lord, 8 being the number of resurrection).

How many of us have gotten our views wholly from the Word of God? How much do circumstances, friends, teachers, ministers, books, and even our own desires have to do with what we have accepted as truth?

It would be entirely impossible to measure how much of what we call truth has come from the Word and how much has come from other sources. It would be very difficult to say how much is of God and how much is of man.

In the light of the above facts, it is very foolish for any man to try to maintain his own opinions, but rather he should be constantly testing them by the light of the Word of God. Such a one will be changing, but the change will be in the direction of growth.

We should be willing, yes, even eager to receive correction from the Word of God. Thus we can eliminate that which has come from man, and become established in that which is of God. So we should ever have the opened ears so that we might hear what God has to say to us.

Nothing can close the ears so effectually as vain traditions received of men. At the time our Lord was on earth, the greatest obstacle He had to overcome was to break down the traditions so that He could teach truth. Even as it is now, at that time tradition was put above the Scriptures.

When the Lord spoke to the multitudes, very few had the opened ears to hear what He was saying. Very few followed Him to any great extent because of this fact. But on various occasions we note that the disciples were aware of what He was saying. They understood. They wished to understand.

But today we have many who do not wish to understand or hear. They either depend on traditions or they feel that they must make up a new Bible, one that is up-to-date and which will be pleasing to men. God no longer knows it all, they think. So they have to instruct God.

The sorry part about it all is that they deny the righteousness of God and then go about setting up their own righteousness. They do what they please to do, but try to do it in the name of God, calling themselves Christians. But if Christ were to come upon the scene, He would have to say, Depart, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you!

TRUTH FOR YOUTH

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-ARE GOD'S GIFTS ALL GOOD? -

The fact that something is a gift of God is no proof that it is good, lovely, or even an undeserved favor. There are many instances where He gave something which was terrible in its consequences. Let us take 3 examples for a short study, two of them being history and one still future.

I. In the wilderness the children of Israel murmured against God and against Moses. They wished flesh to eat. So God in His anger gave them flesh to eat, not for a day or two days, but for a whole month, and so much that it came out of their nostrils. Along with the flesh He also sent a plague and many of them died and were buried there. There is danger in asking for things without first consulting what the will of God might be. There is also danger in murmuring. See Num. 11. In speaking about the same event, the psalmist says that they also received leanness of soul. See Psa. 106:15. That may be the reason so many have leanness of soul now.

II. In 1 Sam. 8 Israel rejected God and His rule by wishing a king like the other nations had. They demanded a king. So God gave them Saul (Acts 13:21). When He had finished punishing them with this gift, He then raised up David to be king (Acts 13:22). Hosea in speaking of the incident says that God gave them a king in His anger and took him away in His wrath. But as bad as he was, Saul was only a type and a foreshadowing of what is yet to come. Just as there was the pre-Davidic kingdom, so will there be a pre-millennial kingdom. The people will have their own way and choice first before they will learn to accept God's will and rule for them. That Saul should try to get the aid of the powers of darkness is only a dim foreboding of what is to come.

III. In 1 Thess. 2 there is mention of the mystery of iniquity. Some day it will be revealed, but now is hidden. God will send to apostate Israel another like unto Saul. Also He will send them a strong delusion that they should believe the lie of Satan. The delusion will be that the kingdom of the beast is the kingdom of heaven that is the hope of Israel. But it will be a kingdom of heaven that is not the hope of Israel. The prince of the powers of the air will energize the king. He will be able to bring down fire from heaven to show the heavenly character of his kingdom. Miracles will be in abundance, surpassing anything done by Jannes and Jambres. The delusion will be so great that all but the very elect of Israel will be deceived, even the Gentiles. But at the middle of the 70th week it will cease to be from the heavens.

DEAR YOUNG FOLKS; Each age has had its philosophies and fads. The present age is no exception. We may not be able to put the finger on all of them or name them definitely as they are too close to us for a proper perspective. But some we CAN detect and we should be very careful about them.

Recently an educator said that the young folks should have the right to experiment and learn right and wrong for themselves. There is more implied in that than we might at first suspect. For some decades the tendency of education has been to remove all restraints and let children do as they please. They argue that restraints result in frustrations and warped characters. I am afraid that the opposite is true. Life imposes restraints on all of us and we cannot escape them. It is not fair to the child that he be allowed to enter adult life with no practice or knowledge of restraints. He is going to have more than an inferiority complex!

Life on this earth is a struggle for existence for all creatures and man is not excluded. But man has been endowed with a different mechanism than the other life on this globe. Man can learn from precept.

I put a single wire around my pasture and hook it to the high line thru a controller. I do not tell the cows not to touch it. If one does touch it and almost jumps out of her skin, she cannot tell the others about it. Each has to learn for herself. Mama cow cannot tell little Bossy of Ferdinand Jr. that the wire will bite. Each learns the hard and painful way.

Now this is just what the educator is recommending for education of young human beings endowed with the power of reason. How silly! There would never be any progress with that kind of system.

But God has given us His Word and in it we find precept upon precept. There is no need or excuse for anyone to sin. At the very first there was the forbidden fruit. It was not necessary that Eve taste to find out. But she did, and look at the terrible consequences! The Bible is full of precepts for you and me. If we fail to heed, there will be the inevitable results.

Man ever wants to degrade himself to the level of the brute beast over which he was to have dominion at first. Then he will at the same time boast that he has evolved from that same beast.

Now the question I would put to you is just this; Do you have to learn like the brute beast, or can you listen to God?

Sincerely in HIM, *Dora M. Baker*

- THE EDITOR'S DESK -

TRUTH FOR TODAY is published each month as the Lord permits and is sent free to anyone anywhere upon request. Welcome to all you new folks this month. I might remind you that we have backnumbers of TFT back to about #67 which are free for the asking. Just ask for a set of back copies. This is #93 and when we get #96 done we shall have completed 8 years.

STUDIES IN ACTS, mimeographed lessons to go with the book, From Pentecost to Prison, by Charles H. Welch, are still available at 50¢ per set. Can send you the first 25 lessons now and the rest when the class here gets thru the book. That will be about 6 months from this writing. These studies will be fine for beginning classes or for individuals who wish to study. We have just made a reprinting of the first part of the course.

BIBLE CLASS meets at the home of the editor each Tue. nite at 7:30. New ones are always welcome. This is a place where you can ask questions and not be afraid of ridicule or condemnation. Also you are always given an opportunity to ask them.

TAPES: We still have 8 tapes of the various addresses by Mr. Welch when in this country last year. They are not too clear, but you can get a lot out of them. These are lent free. Just ask for them. They are at 3.75 ips speed, double track.

We also have 19 addresses on Eph. by Mr. Welch which are on 10 tapes. You may borrow these free or you may buy duplicates at \$3.50 each made on good tape. These cover the first 3 chapters of Eph. The rest of the tapes on Eph. will be available soon. Other tapes by Mr. Welch are in preparation. These are mostly made at the Chapel in London, England.

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