

June 7

The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 1 Peter 5:10

(1 Pe 5:8-10 KJV) "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: {9} Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. {10} But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

R1053 "ESTABLISHED, STRENGTHENED, SETTLED *"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."*--1 Pet. 5:10

The above words were penned by the Apostle Peter who after years of experience in the Master's service and under his discipline, through much tribulation, had evidently reached the blessed experience of one established, strengthened and settled in the faith and in the practice of the principles of the gospel. Peter had much to suffer and endure in his continuous effort to overcome. In common with all our Lord's disciples he had much to endure from without, in the way of reproach, and sometimes of persecution, for the truth's sake. But he had probably much more to contend against from within, his disposition being naturally impulsive and wavering and difficult to bring under restraint even when the truth was clear to his mind and when his affections were fastened upon the Lord...

Be sober; be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Sometimes he goes about as a roaring lion, and sometimes as a skulking serpent in the grass.

Sometimes, lion-like, when we are off guard he springs upon us unawares, stirs up the evil of the old nature, and unless desperately resisted he will take full control and drive us on to ruin. Or he will endeavor at least to turn us off the track of the narrow way. And sometimes, serpent-like, (2 Cor. 11:3) he assumes a pleasing and seemingly reasonable aspect, and endeavors to beguile us from the way. If we permit ourselves to be so off guard either by neglect to feed upon the truth, or by indifference to the reception and cultivation of its spirit, we may be sure that our ever vigilant adversary will gain an advantage over us which we may not be able to resist.

Our only safety, then, is in giving earnest heed to the Apostle's counsel. Be sober, be steadfast in the faith, be vigilant, and resist the adversary. We find foes within as well as foes without which we must not deal too gently with. The human nature which we covenanted to crucify must not be too sensitively regarded by ourselves though we should be careful and thoughtful in our dealings with others. We must let the human nature die, and rejoice to see the new nature triumph over it. We must look our old nature squarely in the face anxious to see all

IT is only through endurance of hardness as good soldiers of Christ that this desirable condition can be attained--viz., perfect self-control and ability to resist evil, established faith, patience and virtue, settled, abiding rest in Christ, and hope

its deformity, and thankful for a brother's or a sister's kindly showing of the same; and even the heartless rebuke of an enemy, or the impatient criticism of an unwise but well meaning friend, should be soberly considered and profited by, though it may severely wound the sensitive quivering flesh. All this is a part of the crucifying process, a part of the humbling under the mighty hand of God--under the discipline of his truth. If we study it carefully and cultivate its spirit day by day, seeking constantly to purge out all that is contrary to it, our character will mature, ripen and grow more and more like the glorious model given for our imitation. Our convictions of the truth will become more settled and clear; our faith in God and in the power of his love and grace will be more and more established. And our constant effort to learn and to do the will of God will harden into habit, and thus we will grow strong in the Lord and be able to strengthen and to confirm the faith of others...

Let us bear in mind that not all of the suffering and cross-bearing comes from the world's opposition to the truth, but that much of it must necessarily come from our faithfulness, not in excusing and cultivating, but in humbling and subduing the evil propensities of our fallen nature."

(2 Pe 1:12-19 KJV) "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth...{15} Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. {16} For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty...{19} We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn..."

R3215 *"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen."*--2 Pet. 3:17,18.

THERE is a touching tenderness in the epistles of the aged Apostle Peter to the household of faith, showing that, while he realized that the time of his departure was drawing nigh (2 Pet. 1:14; John 21:18,19), his solicitude for the growth and development of the Church was increasing. Accordingly, he writes two general epistles, not so much to advance new truth, as to call to remembrance truths already learned and fully received (2 Pet. 1:12-15), and to counsel all to faithfulness and to growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the preceding verses he has been calling to mind some of these truths, and he recognizes the fact that those addressed are already established in them; but, in view of his knowledge that false teachers would arise to

through His word of promise. This undoubtedly was the apostle's own experience as he grew old in the Master's service, and so may it be ours. Let each departing year find us nearer the glorious summit of perfection! Z.'95-202 R1860:4

pervert the truth, he counsels special watchfulness against being led away from their present steadfastness by the error of the wicked...

Paul says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught [by us, the apostles], abounding therein with thanksgiving." -- But, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Col. 2:6-8.

With these sentiments of "our beloved brother Paul," Peter's counsel is in fullest harmony, his advice being, not to waste valuable time in investigating "the errors of the wicked;" but, on the contrary, to endeavor the more earnestly to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," who is the way, the truth and the life. The more thorough our knowledge of the Lord and the more intimate our acquaintance with him, the more secure we are in our own steadfastness...

We grow in knowledge: not, however, by finding out each year that what we learned last year was false, but by adding to what we learned last year, by putting on more and more of the armor of God until we realize its glorious completeness in the full discernment of the divine plan of the ages. We are then ready to do valiant service for the cause of truth in withstanding the encroachment of error (Eph. 6:10-13), being established, strengthened and settled in the faith (1 Pet. 5:10.) But even to those thus established in the faith there is abundant opportunity to grow in knowledge; for while they will see nothing new or different in outline or design, they will be continually charmed and cheered with newly discovered lines of harmony and beauty in the divine drawings of the wonderful plan of the ages. As pupils we may ever study the master workmanship of the Divine Architect,

"And still new beauties shall we see,
And still increasing light."

ESTABLISHED IN FAITH

R1218 "It is our duty to have settled convictions of truth, convictions so rooted and grounded in God's Word that we cannot be moved therefrom.--See Col. 1:23; 1 Pet. 5:10.

R5045 "St. Paul...taught believers that it was not only their privilege, but their duty to be *established* in the faith, to know on the evidence of God's Word, *why* they believed, and to be able to give to every man that inquired a reason for the hope that was in them.

Let it be so with us also. Each consecrated believer should ask himself, "How carefully have I studied that which I recognize as Divine Truth? How fully capable am I of handling the Sword of the Spirit?" Few indeed are those who can say they have fully digested and assimilated all they have received; and that they have let none of these things slip from memory; that

they have so treasured it up in their hearts that it is their meditation by day and by night; that they have a ready answer--a "Thus saith the Lord"--for every man that asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, concerning any point of doctrine; that they can clearly and intelligently portray the Divine Plan, quote the Divine authority for each successive step of it, and, if need be, point out its place in the Divine system of types."

(Eph 6:11-13 KJV) "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. {12} For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. {13} Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

R2275 "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."--Eph. 6:13.

The evil day here referred to is this Day of the Lord, in which we are now living, wherein every man's work shall be tried, so as by fire. These are the "perilous times" of which the Apostle forewarned the Church -- times peculiarly perilous to Christian faith, because of the many subtle and delusive forms of error now springing up to intercept the progress of the truth. But God's provision for his saints is equal to the emergency of the perilous hour. Never before this "evil day" was it possible for the saints to put on the whole armor of God; and never before was it needed. For some years past the Lord has been handing us this armor, piece by piece, and has been telling us to put it on and wear it that we might become accustomed to it and feel at ease and at home in it, because the time is shortly coming when it will be impossible to stand without it."

R1719 "THE POWER OF FAITH... "This is the victory [the conquering power] that overcometh the world, even our faith." --1 John 5:4...

We must pull hard against the current of the world's spirit which is deeply inwrought in our old nature, as well as surrounding us on every side. Yes, it is a hard pull; and we need all the inspiration and energy that faith can impart to accomplish it.

It is important... to see that our faith is a correct faith; for if the faith be an erroneous one, inspiring false and delusive hopes built upon sandy foundations, the stronger this impelling power becomes, the more surely and quickly will it drive its deluded victim to shipwreck upon the rocks. Faith, like steam in an engine, is a power either for good or for evil. Hence the importance of a correct faith.

It was because of this importance of faith, and of recognition of it as the motive power, either for good or for evil, that the Apostle Paul was so solicitous for the continuance of his converts in the faith. (See 1 Thes. 3:2,5,6,7,10.) He urged all to examine and prove themselves, whether they were in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, but rooted and built up in Christ and established in the faith; and to beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudi-

ments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col. 1:23; 2:7,8.) He was deeply solicitous, too, that the faith of the Church should not stand in the wisdom (the vain philosophies) of men, but in the power of God. And, therefore, in his preaching, he did not launch out into foolish speculations or follow his own or any other men's reasonings, and so pander to the popular craving for something new; but he confined himself to the expounding of the sacred Scriptures and to exhortations, inspired, as they were, by the revelations made to himself--a prophet, as well as an apostle.--1 Cor. 2:4,13; 2 Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11,12; 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:15,16.

Let us see, then, that we have the faith of Christ--the faith well founded in the Word of God, a faith examined and proved, deeply rooted [in the heart as well as in the head, and therefore established as the motive power of life. Such a faith is not nervously looking about for something new, and always probing the vain philosophies of men to see how skilfully they can withstand the Word of the Lord; for those who do so show plainly that their faith is not of sufficient influence to be the moving power in them, impelling them onward to full and complete victory over the world.

Faith, to be a conquering power in us, must go deeper than the head: it must go into the heart, and thus permeate and energize the whole being, bringing not only the outward conduct but every thought into subjection to Christ."

ESTABLISHED IN HOLINESS

R4662-4664 "THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS" "The Lord makes you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at [in] the presence [parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all saints."--1 Thess. 3:12,13...

Increase in love signifies that love already has attained an ascendancy in the heart, a mastery in the mind, by which it is progressing, conquering and bringing into subjection all the thoughts and conduct of life. And this thought, that love is to increase in the hearts of God's people, is in full accord with the general testimony of the Scriptures, that we are to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love; approaching more and more and attaining and maintaining the "mark"... It is as though a cistern were being filled more and more with pure water from hidden springs, until, increasing and increasing, it overflows with its abundance. Thus the Lord's people are to increase in love continually, until the love abounds or overflows in all the thoughts and words and conduct of life; not only carrying blessings to their own refreshment and to the refreshment of all with whom they come in contact, but also redounding to the glory and praise of God from whom this blessing is derived.

The Apostle's words, "Even as we do toward you," are full of meaning and force. Paul and his associates were not teaching a Gospel which they did not appreciate and practise; on the contrary, they were exemplifying in their daily course of life this very abounding love, which, overflowing, was leading them to sacrifice their own interests and rights and privileges for the sake of the Lord's people everywhere. They were laying

down their lives for the brethren--daily, hourly; they were sacrificing for the sake of others, opportunities and privileges as respected their earthly life, earthly pleasures, etc. It is with particular force, therefore, that they exhort fellow-Christians to follow after them in the same way of self-sacrificing, loving obedience, as imitators of Jesus...

The Apostle in our text tells us why it is necessary that we progress. It is "to the end," or with the object in view, of our hearts being established, fixed, settled, rooted, grounded in holiness. It is not sufficient, from the Divine standpoint, that we learn something about love, and have the feeling of love thrilling our hearts, and that generous emotions shall occasionally be ours; what the Lord seeks is "a peculiar people," "a royal priesthood," thoroughly established, firmly fixed in love for righteousness--so that all unrighteousness, all sin, all injustice, would be an abomination to them. Not only will they not love iniquity, but, as the Scriptures declare, they will hate iniquity. And whoever truly loves righteousness must in the same proportion hate iniquity. But this is only the result of fixed character, and time and experience and many lessons from the Word of God and from the book of experience are necessary before character becomes so settled, so crystallized, that it is fixed and unwavering in its loyalty to righteousness. It is for this reason that the Lord has hedged up the way of his people during this Gospel Age, and made the way of life, the way to the Kingdom, a "narrow" one, full of difficulties, full of trials, which thereby become tests, and sift out those who do not develop the character which the Lord approves...

We may rest assured that God is not seeking to find in any a perfection of the flesh, and that if he should seek perfection in the flesh he would not find it. It is not such an unreasonable and impossible thing that the Apostle teaches; but something quite reasonable, viz., as he says, that our hearts may be established, fixed, in holiness before God our Father. Ah, yes! To have a heart [will--motive--intention] that is blameless, is a very different thing from having flesh that is blameless... Surely God could ask nothing less than that our hearts, our intentions, should be in accord with the principles of righteousness, and that these principles should control our daily lives to the extent of our ability; and that thus we should seek to put away all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in the reverence of the Lord. (2 Cor. 7:1.) Anything less than this good desire and endeavor could not possibly be acceptable in the sight of God; without these we could not hope to be of the finally acceptable elect Church...

We may be sure that all who do not speedily come to this condition of establishment in righteousness will be tested, sifted and rejected; for the time for the completion of the Body of Christ is at hand. The Apostle asks, "Who shall be able to stand?" This is the question: Who shall be so thoroughly established in love that the trials and testings, necessary to prove him so, will be passed successfully? According to this we are not to wonder if various special trials are permitted now to come, thick and fast--trials which will test and prove our loyalty to the Lord and to the principles of love. Yet we are not to be discouraged with this thought of testing, but are to remember that he who began the good work in our hearts, began while we were yet

sinners, by giving for us the great ransom price; that if he so loved us then, while we were yet sinners, much more does he love us now that we have accepted his grace, and are justified from all sin by faith in his blood, and are seeking to walk in his footsteps. And all who have this desire to receive the Lord's lessons, and to profit by them, and to become more and more copies of Jesus -- all such have the assurance that it comes, not by their strength, but by the Lord's strength; and that if they submit themselves to him, he will perfect in them his spirit of love and righteousness and holiness; that they may be

"meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

R4911 "It is not enough that we know the Truth, or that we be content to hold it in unrighteousness. We must see to it that the Truth is having its legitimate and designed effect upon the character. And if the Truth is thus received into good and honest hearts, we shall have the assurance of the Apostle Peter that "We shall never fall," but that in due time we shall be received into the Kingdom.

Hence we see the necessity of ever keeping the instructions and precepts of the

Lord fresh in our minds, and of drinking deep into their inspiring spirit, although we are already established in the faith. To be established in the faith is one thing; to be established in Christian character and in all the graces of the Spirit is *quite another*...

The race must be run with this constancy if we would reach the "mark;" and after reaching the mark we can maintain our position only by the grace of constancy, patient endurance, that having *done all, we may STAND!*"

R1859 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)
SOBRIETY, VIGILANCE, STEADFASTNESS

--1 Pet. 5:8,9--

WHAT more appropriate watchwords than these could express the proper attitude of the Christian soldier? --"Be *sober*, be *vigilant*; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom *resist, steadfast in the faith*, knowing that the same afflictions are endured by your brotherhood in the world."

The "brotherhood" includes all the soldiers of Christ throughout the world, and this symbol of their present character is not a mere empty sound; for there is a mighty conflict in progress, a war being waged, and the encounter is one of desperate earnestness. Those who know nothing of this great conflict, and who have no part in it, though they may bear the name of Christ--Christians--really have no right to that name; for they are not Christ's soldiers. Jesus himself was a soldier, and fought the battle through to the bitter end, and gained the victory. And he is the Captain of all those who accept the redemption he purchased and that follow in his footsteps, and he will lead them on to certain victory, if they faint not.--Gal. 6:9.

The Apostle Paul gives the same idea of the Christian life. He represents it as a desperate warfare, and urges all the true soldiers of Christ to "put on the whole armor of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for," says he, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places....Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness," etc.--Eph. 6:10-18.

When we consider how strongly our adversary is entrenched in the world--in its ideas, its maxims, its institutions, its policy, its hopes, aims and ambitions--and the Christian life as in direct opposition to all these; and when we further consider how, because we were once partakers of the spirit of the world, the enemy of our souls has strongly entrenched himself in our weak fallen natures; and still further, how, with shrewd subtlety, this invisible, intelligent personal foe is plotting and scheming to allure, deceive and lead us into sin--when with sober judgment we consider all these things, then indeed we realize that we are in the midst of a great conflict.

The three points of attack by the enemy are, as the Apostle John (1 John 2:16) enumerates them, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

The first of these includes all those appetites and passions common to the whole human family, which in their legitimate uses under the full control of reason and conscience, are right and proper, but which, unduly cultivated until they become the masters of reason and conscience, degrade and debase the man.

The second,--"the lust of the eyes,"--includes all those ambitions to acquire and possess whatsoever things the eye (the natural eye or the eye of the understanding) perceives to be good; *i.e.*, to be gratifying to the carnal mind, the old unregenerate nature. This disposition impels to self-gratification regardless of the rights and liberties of others in any direction. It craves wealth, or fame, or power, or social distinction, and to these ends it inclines to harness every energy of mind and body.

The third,--"the pride of life,"--is the blossom of selfishness, so abhorrent to God and to all good men. It is that disposition in a man which glories in his shame. When the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes have brought their curse of narrowness, bigotry and conceit; and when they have gone further in depriving fellow-men of their rights and privileges, then pride, the exultation of meanness, has its short triumph, and loftily soars above the unfortunate subjects of its power and gloats over the desolation it has wrought.

These three points of attack by the great enemy are the points which the Lord would have us guard with unwearied vigilance. Be sober, be vigilant, and watch that the enemy gain no approach to the citadel of your heart by any one of these routes.

That he makes repeated attacks is certain; and that these attacks come suddenly and without warning, and often with terrible force, is a matter of experience with all; hence the necessity for sober and constant vigilance. Be assured the ever watchful enemy will take advantage of our unguarded moments and our unfortified conditions if such there be. Even with all the watchfulness and readiness which we can command, the ability to withstand the enemy and to resist his attacks causes more or less suffering, and often taxes the powers of endurance to the utmost. Indeed, we must expect that the tension on our powers of endurance will sometimes be so great as to threaten disruption, and as to surely cause it if we trust to our own strength. We are forewarned to think not strange of the *fiery* trial that shall surely try us if we are indeed the sons of God and soldiers of Christ, as though some strange thing happened unto us. (1 Pet. 4:12-16.) These things should be expected and carefully prepared for by the Christian soldier.

Peter intimates that the power by which we are to resist the adversary is the power of faith--"whom *resist, steadfast in the faith*." And John expresses the same thought, saying, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4.) If we are not strong in the faith, how can we endure hardness for it? Faith must grasp the exceeding great and precious promises of God and appreciate their value. Faith must lay hold also upon the power of God and find the grace to help in every time of need. And faith in a personal righteous God, whose eye is ever upon us, must steadily cultivate those elements of character which are always pleasing and acceptable to him, and which Peter tells us are most essential to our final overcoming in this warfare.--2 Pet. 1:5-10.

He urges that, in addition to our faith in the exceeding great and precious promises which inspire zeal and give us renewed courage, we should give all diligence to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." Then he adds, "For if ye do these things, ye shall *never fall*."

The steady persistent cultivation of these graces of character will also clarify our spiritual vision, enabling us the more fully to comprehend the truth of God, and thus, "by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," we shall be able to "withstand all the fiery darts of the adversary" and to win the victory of faith and make our calling and election sure.

With this view of the great battle of life to the Christian, ^[1] what a work we realize to be before us, and what necessity for sobriety, vigilance and steadfastness! It is a life work, a life battle against a mighty foe entrenched in our flesh. The powers without are strong indeed, but the civil war with the powers within is by far the most to be dreaded. If we become in any measure intoxicated with the spirit of the world;--if we give way to self-gratification, love of ease, pleasure, a little indulgence of any of the old dispositions of envy, malice, pride, vain-glory, vaunting of self, headiness, highmindedness, wrath, strife, or any such thing--even a little, Oh, how great is the peril to which we are exposed!

Beloved, let us war a good warfare against the world, the flesh

[1] Jun. 6 Manna, Lu. 21:34

and the devil, seeking and finding, daily and hourly, fresh supplies of grace; for every day and every hour is a time of need if we are but awake to realize it. It is to the warfare with the powers entrenched within that we are again referred, when it is said, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) Yes, the task is a greater one, and represents a greater, as well as a nobler, effort. Let us fight the good fight of faith along this line. Let our lives be a daily and hourly struggle to overcome the evil that is in ourselves, to purify and beautify our own characters. Thus shall we be the more fully prepared to strive faithfully and steadily against the foes without --to war a good warfare to the end.

The Apostle, out of the fulness of his love and sympathy for all his comrades in the army of the Lord, adds to his earnest exhortation

R2258 "Those who do not love the Lord with *all* their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the devil into some form of rebellion against the divine Word or divine providence..."

R5557 "TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the Faith, as ye have been taught, bounding therein with thanksgiving."--Colossians 2:6,7...*

St. Paul gives us the picture of a tree, the root of which goes downward and the trunk of which reaches upward, to obtain that nourishment which will give it strength and stability. As the roots of a tree push themselves downward and imbibe the nutriment of the soil, while at the same time the trunk and the branches reach up into the atmosphere to obtain through the leaves the necessary elements of growth, so the mentality of the Christian takes hold of the great and precious promises of the Word of God, while at the same time he is building character through his heart appreciation of these promises, in connection with the experiences of life. The roots of faith push down deep into the knowledge of the Divine Plan, while the tree of character grows higher and higher, developing and maturing the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit of God; for instruction is a form of *construction*.

While the Christian is thus growing up in character-likeness to our Redeemer, and his roots of faith are reaching deep down into the deep things of the Word of God, he is becoming established, settled. A tree that is well rooted in the earth is hard to uproot. It has a wonderful strength, a wonderful hold upon the earth, and requires years to die out. So it is with the Christian whose faith has been properly established; he should be so fixed, so established in the promises of God's Word, that no wind of doctrine could overturn his faith.

Whoever is continually looking around for something new is thus demonstrating the fact that he is not established in the Faith. Having once made sure that the Divine Plan is the Plan of God, we should not permit ourselves to be moved away from that position...

The Apostle urges that we become established in the faith. This term refers to "the faith which was once delivered to the saints" -- the one Faith. This is to hold at all costs. Satan will attempt to divert our minds into other channels, to draw our attention to some new thing. But the Plan of God, the Truth of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord, is but one. It is given us for our instruction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished

this parting benediction--"The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." ^[2]It is only through endurance of hardness as good soldiers of Christ that this desirable condition can be attained--viz., perfect self-control and ability to resist evil, established faith, patience and virtue, settled, abiding rest in Christ, and hope through his word of promise. This undoubtedly was the Apostle's own experience as he grew old in the Master's service, and so may it be ours. Let each departing year find us nearer the glorious summit of perfection!

^[2] Jun. 7 Manna, 1 Pet. 5:10

unto every good work." (2 Timothy 3:17.) It is not the truth of Geometry or Trigonometry or Geology or Astronomy or any other science that we are to be diligent to study and be grounded and built up in, but God's Word. (John 17:17.) These other truths are very well in their way, but we have little time to study these now. We shall have all eternity in which to learn all the wonders of creation, but now we are to apply ourselves especially to the mastery of spiritual Truth, the deep things of the Mystery of God, revealed to His saints for a specific purpose...

The general sentiment among the teachers of false doctrine, and even among the world in general, who do not believe in the necessity or the advisability of being established in faith, is that to be established is to be bigoted. Those who are so unfair in mind as to receive and tenaciously hold what they have never proven, either by sound logic or by the authority of the Word of God, are rightly called bigots. But one who in simple, childlike faith accepts and firmly holds to what God has inspired, what He has caused to be written in His Word for our instruction, is not a bigot, but a strong, established character, and will stand when all the structures built upon the numerous theories and imaginings of men shall have fallen. The great Day now upon us is trying every man's character-structure, of what sort it is, and but very few, even among professed Christians, will stand the test.

The few who will pass safely through this crucial trial without loss are those only who have become established in the Truth of God, "rooted and grounded and built up into Christ..."

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-SCRUTINY

The Apostle's words in our text lead each child of God back to the time when he first made his own consecration. Under what conditions did we come into Christ? We recall that it required much humility on our part to acknowledge that we were sinners, utterly unable to save ourselves. Some seem to forget the way in which they started. They started with faith and humility and meekness, and with the desire to be truly built up into the Master's likeness. But they seem by degrees to lose sight of this, and begin to grow in another direction than straight upward into the fulness of Christ. They like to make some show before the world. They come to neglect the first principles of Christian development, while still talking about the doctrines, or making up doctrines

of their own.

Thus gradually these get away from the doctrines and the Spirit of Christ... Without careful scrutiny, you might think you are progressing when you are not. The Narrow Way remains narrow unto the end of the journey; a mere profession of faith and a certain round of observances are not sufficient...

Only by continual scrutiny of ourselves in the light of God's Word can we make real progress in the narrow way in which our Master walked. Truth is to become brighter and fuller and more luminous as we go onward. To this end, we must keep close to the Word and in line with His Program. The Lord will not accept little, undeveloped sprouts for the Kingdom, but He wants those that have grown and matured--strong, sturdy "trees of righteousness."--Isaiah 61:3.

GOD'S WORD ALONE WILL UPBUILD

Delve into the promises of God more and more. As you do this, the roots of faith will draw up the nutriment and send it out into your life, and you will grow, just as a tree grows, because nourished, fed. Thus alone will you become established in *The Faith*, and not in your imaginings nor the imaginings of others. Our faith is to grow stronger and more vigorous day by day. It is not to be a faith in ourselves or in anything apart from the Lord. Faith is what we started with in the beginning, and we shall need it in increasing measure as we go on in our upward way -- faith in God and in His sure Word. All that we know as children of the Lord has come to us through the channel of Jesus, His holy Apostles, and the Prophets of old, and we are to continue feeding at this same table with thanksgiving.

We are not to feel a spirit of bondage, and say to ourselves, "I would like to ramble outside; I do not like to confine myself merely to what the Bible teaches. I would like more liberty." This disposition is not the spirit of a true son of God. Such sentiments encouraged would lead to utter spiritual disaster. All such temptations, if they come, must be promptly and positively resisted. Our spirit should be one of deepest gratitude and thankfulness that we have been granted this glorious Divine Revelation. Following thus in the Lord's way, we find the only true joy, and can make the only true progress. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."