

ESTABLISHED, STRENGTHENED, SETTLED.

"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, 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.

It should be, and is the aim of every truly consecrated saint to reach this desirable standpoint of strength and settled establishment in the faith, but it cannot be reached at a single leap. It is gained by a gradual steady growth under the discipline of suffering – as the apostle says, "after ye have suffered a while." "Now," as Paul remarks (Heb. 12:11,12), "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." "Wherefore" with him we would add, "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way."

Are you weary and disheartened in the journey, discouraged at your slow progress, and almost overwhelmed with the cares and various besetments of this life. Is a lethargy and indifference creeping

over you, cooling your ardor for the Master's service, relaxing your energies in that direction, and enlisting your interest more and more in other matters? Then beware! It is high time to wake up. 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 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. [R1054 : page 2] 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.

If we have cares, we are invited to cast all our care upon the Lord, knowing that he careth for us. And we have the encouraging assurance in the midst of present trials that we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, if in steadfast sobriety and humility we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, having been first redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and thus through faith having gained the privilege of working it out. And we are comforted in the midst of trials with the blessed assurance that while God resisteth the proud, and they also resist him, he giveth grace to the humble. Let us humble ourselves therefore, dear fellow members of the called and Anointed body, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time. And 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. "If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." – James 1:23-25.

"Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
Painful the humbling may be;
Yet low in the dust I'd lay me
That the world my Savior might see."

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