

Established in Faith

*“As ye have
therefore received
Christ Jesus the
Lord, so walk ye in
him: Rooted and
built up in him,
and stablished in
the faith, as ye
have been taught,
abounding
therein with
thanksgiving.”
—Colossians 2:6,7*

THE TRUE CHILD OF GOD

is instructed in these words of the Apostle Paul that they, as followers of the Master, should be “rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith.” This Scriptural admonition, if wisely received in the hearts of consecrated Christians, will be of special encouragement to his people now living during the time of

the “harvest” at the “end of the age.”—Matt. 13:39, *The Emphatic Diaglott*

This condition of steadfastness is one in which the consecrated child of God is anchored, a hope that “we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” (Heb. 6:19) Paul also encourages: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).” (Heb. 10:23) The Scriptures present to us a broad spiritual balance.

They reveal the necessity of true Christian progress, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of being rooted and grounded in the faith: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”—Eph. 4:14

In our opening text, the apostle is addressing those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, and who, through full consecration to do the Heavenly Father’s will, have been accepted as prospective members of the body of Christ. These understand that it is the divine will that through our Lord Jesus—as Head of the church, and his body members—his kingdom will soon be established upon the earth. (Col. 1:18-20) Through that kingdom, he will deliver mankind from the power of sin and death. All those who are in Christ Jesus have received him with this calling and understanding. This is the message which God has sent through his Word and constitutes “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—Jude 1:3

It is these dedicated Christians to whom Paul admonishes that they continue in the faith, not combining earthly philosophy or understanding with this heavenly message. Having received Christ Jesus, and having been accepted as members of his body, they are to realize the ultimate Truth that in him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Col. 2:3) Furthermore, they are to understand that in him “the fulness of God’s nature dwells embodied, and in Him you are made complete, and He is the Lord of all princes and rulers.”—vss. 9,10, *Weymouth New Testament*

Having recognized and accepted Jesus as their Master and Teacher, Christians are admonished to continue to make progress in being rooted and grounded in him. They thus place themselves in a position to partake more and more of his wonderful Spirit of Truth, realizing that any other course of action would serve to confuse and confound the heavenly message in their minds and hearts.

THE ROOTS OF FAITH

In contrast to the picture of a follower of Christ Jesus as a member of his body, the apostle in our opening text uses the illustration of a tree, the root of which goes ever more downward, and the trunk, together with its branches, which reach ever upward to provide beauty, shade, and fruitage to the owner. In this beautiful illustration, which has been taken from our natural surroundings, the Christian life and its relationship to Christ Jesus are seen as the roots of faith that push down deep into the knowledge of God's plan. At the same time, the branches of character grow higher and stronger, developing and maturing the rich fruits of the Holy Spirit of God.—John 15:5-8

While the Christian is growing up in character likeness to our Redeemer, and the roots of his faith are reaching down into the deep things of the Word of God, he is becoming more established and settled in the knowledge and Spirit of Christ. Paul teaches: "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of

God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”
—I Cor. 2:10-12

A tree that is well rooted in the earth is able to withstand the violent winds and storms that may come upon it, and so it is with Christians whose faith has been properly established. They should be so fixed and firmly established in the promises of God, and so filled with the spirit of those promises, that no “wind of doctrine” can overturn their faith or shake their confidence in the divine will concerning them. (Eph. 4:14) The apostle cautions against a contrary spirit, and to be alert toward those who would otherwise lead the Lord’s people astray. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” (II Tim. 4:3) It is not a sign of spiritual health and growth for one to be ever looking around for something new and different. Let us not be of those who Paul speaks of as “ever learning,” but “never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”—II Tim. 3:7

When we first learned about God’s plan and our blessings associated therewith, it was proper that we should be on the alert. We wanted to find the best possible explanation of God and his ultimate design and purpose concerning the human family, and to know his plan of reconciliation and restitution for the sin-sick and dying world. When we were gradually favored by God with a true and better understanding of his glorious plans and purposes, we saw revealed in them the length, breadth, height,

and depth of divine love and the wondrous harmony of the Scriptures. (Eph. 3:17-19) In our hearts we knew, and rightfully so, that it was the answer to all our questions, even as the psalmist proclaimed, "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."—Ps. 107:9

After God had thus shined into our hearts through the precious Word of Truth, and in responding properly to this evidence of his grace, we went on to the next step and presented ourselves in full consecration—dedication—to do his will. (Rom. 12:1) Upon the acceptance of our consecration by God, we were assured that as a result of our actions we would be counted as prospective members of the body of Christ. (I Cor. 12:27) We also trusted that our spiritual vision would be enlarged and enriched through the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.—John 14:16,17,26

The plan of God as revealed in his Word furnishes an abundant source for research and study in spiritual things. Let us therefore be more diligent in searching the Scriptures for our information and guidance. (Acts 17:10,11; II Tim. 3:15-17) There is virtually no limit to the glorious truths and promises found in the Bible, and it is by this means alone that we may become grounded in the true faith. Such looking into the Word of Truth will help establish us in our understanding of God's plans and purposes and in the maintaining of a clear vision of his will for us in that plan. Our spirit should be one of deepest gratitude and thankfulness that we have been granted this glorious divine revelation. It will be by thus following in the Lord's way that we will find true joy and will be able to

make progress that is authorized and encouraged in the Word of God.—I Thess. 2:12,13

The Scriptures embrace all of the necessary teachings relative to Christ and his work as well as our own relationship to him as members of his body. We should familiarize ourselves with the many important features of this Gospel of Christ. This glorious faith which was “once delivered unto the saints” is firmly founded in the Word of God. (Jude 1:3) No matter how searching and scrutinizing our study may be, it will cause the message to shine out more beautifully and to convince us more than ever how truly wonderful it is in every aspect.

To be thus established in faith, we should know what our Lord taught, and why he taught it. We should learn how to connect the different aspects of God’s plan into one harmonious whole. In this way, we will become thoroughly furnished, not only in knowledge, but in the manner in which that knowledge is to be a guide in our lives. Step by step we learn to apply the words of the Apostle Paul: “Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman tested by trial who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth.” (II Tim. 2:15, *Amplified Bible*) It is in the personal application of the Word of God that its real importance becomes most apparent.

FIRMLY ESTABLISHED

Mature Christians can be confident in their understanding of the fundamentals of Truth because they know, through a regular study of God’s Word, that the teachings of Christ to which they have subscribed are firmly established therein. Knowing this, they

realize also that the responsibility for them is not theirs, but the Lord's. Being confident of the divine will for themselves, and of God's plan to bless all the families of the earth in due time, they are willing to give all of their attention to serving and pleasing the Lord. They are thus assured of his guidance and direction.

To boldly stand for the teachings of the Bible and to present them to others does not mean that we are judging and condemning those who may not have the same understanding that we do in spiritual matters. We should, of course, be sure of our own position and not adopt a compromising policy described by the Apostle James as being "double minded" and therefore "unstable" in all our ways. —James 1:8

If we are firmly established in the faith once delivered unto the saints, and have partaken of the spirit of that glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are in a more responsible position to exercise tolerance toward others who may not be as certain of their Christian beliefs. The assurance of our standing in the Truth and of our relationship with the Lord should thus produce in us an amiable and understanding attitude toward those who may not be so richly blessed.

Let us, therefore, seek to avoid all snares and pitfalls that may be set for us by the Adversary in these days of final testing upon the consecrated people of God. (I Pet. 5:8,9) We are now living at a time during these closing years of the Gospel Age when faith in God and in his Word is being ignored or challenged on many fronts. Yet it is also a time when the truly consecrated and enlightened children of

God have much to strengthen their faith in the wonderful promises of his Word. It is a time to lift up our heads in confidence and full assurance of faith, rejoicing in the vision of Truth with which our Lord has favored his people. Indeed, we are living in a most momentous time in the history of the world.—Luke 21:28; Heb. 10:22

In order for the Lord's people to hold up the banner of Truth against a worldly spirit, they will need to be more and more emptied of self, and filled with the Spirit of God and his spirit of love. (Eph. 5:18-20) We become filled with the Spirit of God by continued, energetic, and careful study of his Word. It is important that we then apply its principles in our daily lives. In so doing, we will find that it is the spirit of a sound mind which will give us a sense of balance in relation not only to a proper appreciation and understanding of the Scriptures, but also of all our experiences as Christ's followers.—II Tim. 1:7

Being firmly established in the faith and fully convinced of all its many implications insofar as our relationship to the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus is concerned, we will vow to tolerate no deflection on our own part from the course of true fidelity to the divine will and purpose. While granting no liberties to ourselves outside of the clear expression of God's will for us, we should, nevertheless, grant full liberty of thought and conscience to others, by leaving them in the Lord's hands. Let us patiently and carefully watch for opportunities to do all in our power to assist and bless others, doing good unto all, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—Gal. 6:10

We know that God's plan of reconciliation and recovery from the penalty of sin and death that remains over all mankind will come to a glorious climax in due time. In this wonderful realization, we trust and praise our loving Heavenly Father. The Prophet Isaiah, looking forward to that grand time, wrote: "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:9

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