

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore 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; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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.

II Peter 1:12

Peter is a good example of a faithful messenger. His resolve to stand for truth was forged in the fires of persecution along with corrections and rebukes at the hands of other disciples. All of us are prone to err and Peter was no different. In the early days of his ministry he was overtaken by his own desire to dissimulate with the Judaizers who tried to make the law of Moses, a standard by which one could have fellowship with various believers.

Yet the LORD used the apostle Paul to rebuke him. *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"* (Gal 2:11-14)

Peter demonstrated the fact that the "root of the matter" was in him, as he, being led by the SPIRIT and not the flesh, submitted himself to the faithful rebuke of Paul and was corrected in his thinking. This is not an attitude that one finds among many so called "preachers" today. Most of them are convinced that their own line of thought which they learned in some school of men, is proper, and seldom have any desire to be corrected in their doctrine or practice.

Peter is here exhorting the believers to whom he wrote this epistle to stand fast in those things that "they knew". When Paul admonished Peter, he was not telling him something which Peter did not already "know," but he was "putting him in remembrance" of those things. The saints of GOD are all taught of GOD. *"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."* (1John 2:27) (see I Thess. 4:9)

It is impossible that a man could in anywise impart to another man those things which only the SPIRIT of GOD can teach him. The purpose of the exhortations which are numerous in the New Testament, is not to inform the ignorant but is rather to encourage and remind the sons of GOD of the great privilege and standing that they have as priests and kings in the HOUSE of GOD. The flesh and the devil do continually seek to cloud the view of the sheep of the LORD's pasture, both as to their standing as the chosen people of GOD as well as those types of conduct which are becoming to a people of such stature.

When Paul said, *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."* (Rom 6:11-12); he is not trying to stir up the Romans to activity

through the power of positive thinking. Rather he is bringing to their remembrance the very fact that CHRIST has delivered them from enslavement to the flesh, which they already knew, having been brought out of darkness and into the LIGHT. This is but the precursor to what he reminded them of in the eighth chapter. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* (Rom 8:1-2)

Those who would seek to exhort the sons of GOD through threats and conditional promises, are still under the law of sin and death and can only minister the same. *"The dead know not anything"* (see Eccl. 9:5); yet those who are made alive in CHRIST know that HE alone is the SOURCE and SUBSTANCE of all of their righteousness. They are built up in the most holy faith by faithful exhortations which bring to their remembrance those things that they are taught by the SPIRIT of GOD. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."* (1Pet 2:9-10)

Thus Peter exhorts his hearers to remember their establishment in "the present truth." The Psalmist said, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."* (Psa 46:1-2) The promises of GOD are not some canned clichés which are ingrained in the carnal mind by rote memorization; rather they are the very breath of GOD to the souls of those who are awakened by HIS SPIRIT. They are thus "known" by them.

How often it is true that some exhortation or admonition found in the Word of GOD stirs our soul like the ringing of a bell, and we have a "eureka" moment when we realize what we actually knew all along. For instance, the apostle Paul "knew" quite well that the grace of the LORD was all that he needed, but it was in the place of prayer in earnest supplication, that the application of this "knowledge" was etched in his soul as he tells us, *"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* (2Cor 12:9)

"Present truth" is that which is engraved upon the heart, and not some doctrine which one has picked up in a "systematic Theology" course. This is the "truth" as it is made applicable to the soul and not simply the mind. Again we see an illustration of it as Paul recounts his consideration of his religious past, *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Php 3:7-10)

Many seem to view the ability to recount accurate and true doctrine as the pinnacle of faith, and some have even set forth the notion that one's standing with the LORD depends upon one's knowledge of various doctrinal shibboleths. While we would never be opposed to sound theology as the basis of true faith, yet we see clearly that a man can learn all sorts of sound doctrine and yet not be *"established in the present truth."* That which is in the head and not the heart, that which can be argued but not demonstrated is not an evidence of the presence of the SPIRIT of GOD in those who may loudly proclaim that what they say is "the truth".

"Present truth" is that which is applied to the conscience of the inner man and is manifested in the life, outlook, and desire of the whole man. Paul speaks of this when he says, *"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal 2:19-20)

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