

Chapter 12 - God Himself Will Stablish You in Him

"He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, is God." 2 COR.1:21

THESSE words of Paul teach us a much needed and most blessed truth--that just as our first being united with Christ was the work of divine omnipotence, so we may look to the Father, too, for being kept and being fixed more firmly in Him. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me"--this expression of confidence should ever accompany the prayer, "Forsake not the work of Thine own hands." In all his longings and prayers to attain to a deeper and more perfect abiding in Christ, the believer must hold fast his confidence: "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." There is nothing that will so help to root and ground him in Christ as this faith: "He which stablisheth us in Christ is God."

How many there are who can witness that this faith is just what they need! They continually mourn over the variableness of their spiritual life. Sometimes there are hours and days of deep earnestness, and even of blessed experience of the grace of God. But how little is needed to mar their peace, to bring a cloud over the soul! And then, how their faith is shaken! All efforts to regain their standing appear utterly fruitless; and neither solemn vows, nor watching and prayer, avail to restore to them the peace they for a while had tasted. Could they but understand how just their own efforts are the cause of their failure, because it is God alone who can establish us in Christ Jesus. They would see that just as in justification they had to cease from their own working, and to accept in faith the promise that God would give them life in Christ, so now, in the matter of their sanctification, their first need is to cease from striving themselves to establish the connection with Christ more firmly, and to allow God to do it. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ." What they need is the simple faith that the stablishing in Christ, day by day, is God's work--a work that He delights to do, in spite of all our weakness and unfaithfulness, if we will but trust Him for it.

To the blessedness of such a faith, and the experience it brings, many can testify. What peace and rest, to know that there is a Husbandman who cares for the branch, to see that it grows stronger, and that its union with the Vine becomes more perfect, who watches over every hindrance and danger, who supplies every needed aid! What peace and rest, fully and finally to give up our abiding into the care of God, and never have a wish or thought, never to offer a prayer or engage in an exercise connected with it, without first having the glad remembrance that what we do is only the manifestation of what God is doing in us! The establishing in Christ is His work: He accomplishes it by stirring us to watch, and wait, and work. But this He can do with power only as we cease interrupting Him by our self-working--as we accept in faith the dependent posture which honours Him and opens the heart to let Him work. How such a faith frees the soul from care and responsibility! In the midst of the rush and bustle of the world's stirring life, amid the subtle and ceaseless temptations of sin, amid all the daily cares and trials that so easily distract and lead to failure, how blessed it would be to be an established Christian--always abiding in Christ! How blessed even to have the faith that one can surely become it--that the attainment is within our reach!

Dear believer, the blessing is indeed within your reach. He that stablisheth you with us in Christ is God. What I want you to take in is this--that believing this promise will not only give you comfort, but will be the means of your obtaining your desire. You know how Scripture teaches us that in all God's leadings of His people faith has everywhere been the one condition of the manifestation of His power. Faith is the ceasing from all nature's efforts, and all other dependence; faith is confessed helplessness casting itself upon God's promise, and claiming its fulfilment; faith is the putting ourselves quietly into God's hands for Him to do His work. What you and I need now is to take time, until this truth stands out before us in all its spiritual brightness: It is God Almighty, God the Faithful and Gracious One, who has undertaken to stablish me in Christ Jesus.

Listen to what the Word teaches you:--"The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself"; "O Lord God, stablish their heart unto Thee"; "Thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever"; "Thou wilt establish the heart of the humble"; "Now to Him that is of power to establish you, be glory for ever"; "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness" ; "THE LORD IS FAITHFUL, who shall stablish you and keep you from all evil"; "The God of all grace, who hath called us in Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Can you take these words to mean anything less than that you too--however fitful your spiritual life has hitherto been, however unfavourable your natural character or your circumstances may appear--can be established in Christ Jesus--can become an established Christian? Let us but take time to listen, in simple childlike teachableness, to these words as the truth of God, and the confidence will come: As surely--as I am in Christ, I shall also, day by day, be established in Him.

The lesson appears so simple; and yet the most of us take so long to learn it. The chief reason is, that the grace the promise offers is so large, so God-like, so beyond all our thoughts, that we do not take it really to mean what it says. The believer who has once come to see and accept what it brings, can bear witness to the wonderful change there comes over the spiritual life. Hitherto he had taken charge of his own welfare; now he has a God to take charge of it. He now knows himself to be in the school of God, a Teacher who plans the whole course of study for each of His pupils with infinite wisdom, and delights to have them come daily for the lessons He has to give. All he asks is to feel himself constantly in God's hands, and to follow His guidance, neither lagging behind nor going before. Remembering that it is God who worketh both to will and to do, he sees his only safety to be in yielding himself to God's working. He lays aside all anxiety about his inner life and its growth, because the Father is the Husbandman under whose wise and watchful care each plant is well secured. He knows that there is the prospect of a most blessed life of strength and fruitfulness to every one who will take God alone and wholly as his hope.

Believer, you cannot but admit that such a life of trust must be a most blessed one. You say, perhaps, that there are times when you do, with your whole heart, consent to this way of living, and do wholly abandon the care of your inner life to your Father. But somehow it does not last. You forget again; and instead of beginning each morning with the joyous transference of all the needs and cares of your spiritual life to the Father's charge, you again feel anxious, and burdened, and helpless. Is it not, perhaps, my brother, because you have not committed to the Father's care this matter

of daily remembering to renew your entire surrender? Memory is one of the highest powers in our nature. By it day is linked to day, the unity of life through all our years is kept up, and we know that we are still ourselves. In the spiritual life, recollection is of infinite value. For the sanctifying of our memory, in the service of our spiritual life, God has provided most beautifully. The Holy Spirit is the remembrancer, the Spirit of recollection. Jesus said, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance." "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." It is just for the stablishing that the Holy Remembrancer has been given. God's blessed promises, and your unceasing acts of faith and surrender accepting of them--He will enable you to remember these each day. The Holy Spirit is--blessed be God--the memory of the new man.

Apply this to the promise of the text: "He that stablisheth us in Christ is God." As you now, at this moment, abandon all anxiety about your growth and progress to the God who has undertaken to stablish you in the Vine, and feel what a joy it is to know that God alone has charge, ask and trust Him by the Holy Spirit ever to remind you of this your blessed relation to Him. He will do it; and with each new morning your faith may grow stronger and brighter: I have a God to see that each day I become more firmly united to Christ.

And now, beloved fellow-believer, "the God of all grace, who hath called us in Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." What more can you desire? Expect it confidently, ask it fervently. Count on God to do His work. And learn in faith to sing the song, the notes of which each new experience will make deeper and sweeter: "Now to Him, that is of power to establish you, be glory for ever. Amen." Yes, glory to God, who has undertaken to establish us in Christ!