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The Grace of Continuance

Stanley Banks

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

Our Lord had been engaged in a series of arguments with the Pharisees, and the convincing way in which He had presented the truth had caused a number of His hearers to believe in Him, and to desire to become His disciples. It is to this small group that He addresses these words of our text, indicating to them the implications of discipleship; and not to them only but to all those who, down the centuries have believed on Him and become His disciples.

Here our Lord is laying stress upon a much-needed grace—the grace of continuance. We have heard a great deal about the grace of commencement, that momentous crisis when a soul comes into living, vital union with Christ and commences its spiritual pilgrimage. This is indeed a wonderful experience which is brought about by the grace of God and by saving faith exercised by the individual believer, and it produces a life-transforming experience.

A great deal, too, has been said about the grace of conclusion; that glorious moment when our earthly pilgrimage is over, and we pass into the presence of the Lord. But the grace of commencement can only become the grace of conclusion by the grace of continuance.

The apostle Paul not only commenced his spiritual pilgrimage on the Damascus Road, but because he continued night and day walking with God, he was able to say at the end, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith . . ."

Wesley discovered early in his ministry the importance of this grace, and as an outcome he conceived the idea of the Class Meeting as a means of fostering and increasing the work of grace which had been begun in many hearts. It was a divinely-revealed strategy to conserve the results and teach the converts how to continue. Wesley's feelings along this line are revealed in a letter which he wrote to the well-known commentator, Adam Clarke, in which he says: "To retain the grace of God is more than to gain the grace of God . . ."

The grace of continuance is the all-important link between the starting post and the finishing post; between the commencement and the conclusion. It is this thought which is emphasized in the text, and there are three important things said about it.

1. It is the Hall-mark of True Discipleship:

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

Here continuance is laid down as a condition of true discipleship. The implication is plain, that if we do not continue then we cease to be His disciples.

The Scriptures clearly reveal some of the things that the true disciple continues to do, and these constitute the marks of a true disciple.

A true disciple continues praising

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1).

A true disciple continues hoping

"But I will hope continually" (Psalm 71:14).

A true disciple continues to watch

"I stand continually upon my watch-tower in the daytime, and set in my ward whole nights" (Isaiah 21:8).

A true disciple continues in the grace of God

"Paul and Barnabas speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43).

A true disciple continues in the faith

"They returned . . . confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith—" (Acts 14:21-22).

A true disciple continues witnessing

"Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing to both small and great—" (Acts 26:22).

A true disciple continues in well-doing

"God . . . will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality; eternal life—" (Romans 2:7).

A true disciple continues instant in prayer

"Continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12).

A true disciple continues in brotherly love

"Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1).

There is a very vital link between the discipleship and continuance; you cannot have one without the other.

2. It is the Gateway to Spiritual Knowledge:

"If ye continue . . . ye shall know"

The knowledge here spoken of is spiritual knowledge; something that is not merely grasped by the mind, but revealed to the heart. It is the experimental knowledge that is always allied to obedience. "He that doeth His will shall know of the doctrine." If you would know spiritual truth and reality you must continue in His word; this knowledge is the outcome of our walk and fellowship with God.

Our Lord here specifies the kind of knowledge—He calls it "The truth," Truth, of

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A Modern Holiness Revival

George Frame

A revival-hungry Christendom has focused its attention upon the remote Scottish island of Lewis, where God is pouring out His Spirit in revival measure. The world-wide publicity that it has received has brought out that this is a genuine revival in every respect.

Commencing in a small hamlet, where practically everyone has been saved, it has spread from village to village with the same wonderful results. Old-fashioned conviction has come upon every one of these communities and the resulting conversions have been thorough and abiding.

Both individual and civic life have been transformed by the Spirit of God. The whole island has felt its impact and its influence has reached the adjoining smaller islands.

It is linked to the great revivals of the past by the recurrence of similar phenomena. Men and women are prostrated by the power. Miracles of divine healing have been spontaneously taking place without any special healing services being held.

Only a few months ago, a church building was literally shaken during a prayer meeting. It carries permanent evidence of this repetition of Acts 4, in cracks in its massive walls.

It is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that all this is happening in the midst of an unemotional people to whom, previously, religious demonstration of any kind was anathema, and when it is known that the services are destitute of anything akin to modern evangelistic methods.

Duncan Campbell, the human instrument of this divine awakening, preaches an old-fashioned Gospel that, while upholding Calvary, places the emphasis on judgment and repentance. When he preached in the Parkhead Church in Glasgow, Scotland, recently, the whole congregation, saint and sinner alike, was deeply moved with the manifest presence of God.

On this occasion, he made mention of a fact that has been universally overlooked, that the revival in Lewis is a holiness revival. He fervently believes and strongly preaches second-blessing holiness as taught by John Wesley.

Although this whole area is steeped in Calvinism, it is holiness preaching that has been used to perpetuate this heartening and thrilling move of the Holy Spirit.

Lewis was one of the most unlikely places in Great Britain for revival to break out. A religious people is always hardest to convince of their need of the new birth. As a stronghold

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