

## False Humility

Reprint 651 with a preface by Br. Richard Stewart

About a year ago, the conclusion began to form in my mind that some of the brethren were equating the qualities of humility and uncertainty, apparently thinking them to be synonyms. If one is uncertain concerning a matter of the truth, he would be humble to admit it, but ‘without approval’ if he did not seek to reach an understanding concerning the matter. (2 Tim. 2:15) On the other hand, if one was certain concerning the matter, it would be dishonest to imply differently, and foolish indeed to become uncertain. (1 Thess. 5:1; 1 Cor. 14:33; Heb. 2:1) Shortly after discussing this conclusion with some other brethren I was referred to the Reprint article on page 651 which is submitted herewith in its entirety for your consideration. It was pleasing to find that my conclusion was not an original thought but was so excellently treated by our Pastor. May this article prove to strengthen your convictions concerning the things we have learned knowing from whom we have learned them and help you to remain steadfast even unto the end of the way.—Bro. Richard W. Stewart

R651: page 5

### FALSE HUMILITY.

“Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”—2 Tim. 3:7.

One of the most serious and dangerous besetments of the adversary is an exaggeration of the truth. It seems to be one of his most successful methods against the saints. Thus faith is exaggerated into credulity, reverence into fear, the wages of sin into torture, and humility into mental listlessness, doubt and uncertainty.

Under the influence of this false humility, how many take pride in saying on nearly all important religious subjects, “I tie to no man’s opinion, and have none of my own—I want only the truth.” They consider this a saintly humility, which never reaches any conclusion, for fear they should be considered bigoted. They say they are *seeking* truth, but if so, they never know when they find it, and might as well not have sought. These are covered by the language of our text—“Ever learning, but *never able to come to* [arrive at] the knowledge of the truth.” Such, because not rooted and grounded in faith, are always tossed to and fro—“carried about with every wind of doctrine.” (Eph. 4:14.)

But, says one, since I find that so much which I once believed is error, I never believe anything very strongly, and am afraid to become rooted and grounded, lest it be again a rooting into error. Besides, I see so many rooted and grounded in error so firmly, that the truth cannot shake them. Ah yes; it is the same snare of the adversary; in spite of him you have gotten free from some of the error, but he drives to the *other extreme* to hinder you from ever getting so grounded in truth that you would be able to stand the storm, let alone assist others to stand.

Can you not see the difference between being rooted and grounded in the teachings of a fallible church creed, a set of man-made doctrines and traditions, and, on the other hand, being rooted and grounded in the statements of God's Word, statements too, which do not contradict, but, by their harmony and oneness, support each other, and, by their reasonableness, appeal to your judgment as being the *truth*?

The expression of some—"I drive no stakes"—is bad. We should drive stakes; the man who will not do so will have his tent of faith overturned by the first windy doctrine the adversary brings upon it. They should be driven in well—"grounded" well—in the firm ground of God's Word. The Word of God certainly calls for faith, strong faith, settled faith, grounded and well rooted, and without such it is impossible to please God. All the Scripture writers had a *positive* faith and expressed it in a positive manner, and called upon us to receive the same and *be established* IN THE TRUTH.

But if those who seem to hold at least a measure of what we think Scriptural views, in common, shall differ on the minor details of truth, what then? We answer, that while we are in the flesh our surroundings may be such as to make some of the *details* of truth appear somewhat differently for a time, but as we each approach closer and closer to God's standpoint in viewing the matter, our ideas of the details will become more distinct and more harmonious.

It is *harmony* and *fixedness* on the FUNDAMENTAL features of truth that Scripture demands, with so much harmony on the other features as we can obtain by communion of saints in the study of the Testimony, and we have the promise of full harmony ultimately among all true watchmen in Zion. Our desire and vigilance to ascertain the mind of God on even the *details* must not be relaxed, else we cease to grow in knowledge, and cease to do *our share* in bringing the body of Christ as a whole into the perfection of knowledge most beneficial to it and most pleasing to God.

But if those who attempt to teach the Church differ, how shall I decide? says another.

That God has been pleased throughout the entire age to use some members of the body as *channels* through which to send truth to the body, is unquestionable; and that Satan has adopted much the same plan to deceive and spread error in the Church, is also evident, not only from facts, but from Scripture statements. It would be a serious error, then, to believe anything *because* a would-be teacher wishes you to. To do so, would be to throw away chart and compass and let your faith drift before the changing winds of prejudice and preference, and would, sooner or later, make ship-wreck of faith.

A teacher is of value only as an instrument of the Spirit of God in bringing all things to your remembrance and notice, whatsoever things were *written for our instruction* in the Scriptures. Whatsoever is more than this cometh of the evil one and tendeth to evil. The duty and office of a lawyer is not to *make laws*, but to clearly set forth the law and present to the jury its bearing upon the case discussed; so also, the duty of a minister of the Gospel is not to *make truth*, but to cite the TESTIMONY, and quote the covenants, and show their bearing upon any subject discussed; and the duty of the

Church as of the jury is to decide each for himself what is the mind of the written and established law.

True, this is not the common idea regarding the ministers (servants) of the church. On the contrary, their testimony is taken so implicitly that it takes the place largely of God's testimony, and thus the law of God is made void, and the traditions and theories of the teachers are received instead. It is because you had received and become rooted, and grounded in *such* teachings of men unsupported by the word of God that you had so much to unlearn and break loose from. We urge, then, that doctrines be received, not because of the teacher, but because tried and found to be the teachings of God's word. "Beloved, believe not every spirit [mind, or doctrine, or theory] but try the spirits [doctrines] whether they are of God." (1 John 4:1.) But mark well, that the Apostles words, *Believe not every doctrine* gives no support to that FALSE CAUTION which never fully believes anything, and is never grounded; for his other words, "TRY the spirits [doctrines] whether they be of God," shows that it is a duty to DECIDE whether the doctrine is Scriptural or unscriptural. To "*prove* all things" and to "*hold* FAST that which is good," is a statement of similar import. But some would rather be always *unsettled* than go to the necessary labor of "*proving*" by diligent study of the Scripture what is good and what is erroneous doctrine. Verily, they

R652: page 5

have their reward. Their indifference will expose them to error, of which the adversary will not be slow to take advantage. If thou *searchest* for her as men search for silver *then* shalt thou find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:4.) "Light is sown for the righteous." (Psa. 97:11), but for no others; and that heart is not right, and that soul not really truth-hungry, which, knowing the necessity of labor to prove all things, neglects it.

The pathway of the just—of him who proves all things and holds fast that which is good—will shine more and more until *perfect* day is reached, but it is a sad mistake of some to suppose that they must be ever changing, ever discarding yesterday's light for tomorrow's. The light is *added to*, but never needs EXCHANGING. If we receive as light nothing which we do not first *prove* by the Testimony we will have nothing to throw away, but may both *hold fast* the good and *add* to the same daily.