

AN APOSTOLIC ADMONITION

Gary McDade

An admonition is an earnest indication of duties or obligations that is presented in a gentle or friendly manner. The apostle Paul had been over some tough terrain with the Christians at Corinth before he gave them “an apostolic admonition.” He wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). The three points he presented in this one statement were intended to lift the brethren above the pitfalls of the past and instill confidence in them for a faithful future.

“Be Ye Steadfast”

The word “steadfast” is from *edaios* and also carries the meaning “firm.” It also appears in connection with the Christian father who is resolute regarding his virgin daughter remaining unmarried. He “stands firm” on the point. Or, as the KJV says, “Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well” (I Cor. 7:37). (The ASV places the word “daughter” after “virgin” within the text on this verse.)

Another place in the New Testament where the word appears is Colossians 1:23. Paul wrote here, “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” The English word “settled” is used as the meaning in this sentence. (These are the only three occurrences of this word in the New Testament.)

Therefore, the first part of the admonition Paul gave urges steadfastness, firmness, and being settled. The specific areas of obligation where this would apply according to the context of the book in which they appear are 1) unity, 2) purity, 3) respectability when resolving differences among brethren, 4) responsibility in marriage, 5) separation from worldly practices, 6) reverence in worship, 7) reception of the miraculously confirmed word of God, 8) edification of the resurrection, and 9) gracious giving (cf. I Cor. 1-4, 5, 6, 7, 8-10, 11, 12-14, 15, 16).

“Be Ye Unmovable”

The word “unmovable” or “immovable” is from *ametakinetos*. (The word is found only here in the New Testament.) The Christian’s disposition toward the foregoing list of duties is additionally described as “immovable.” The nuance of meaning contrasting “steadfast” from “immovable” is brought to light in the English definition of the word “immovable.” “Incapable of being moved” is what this word means. In addition, the dictionary mentions this in regard to an emotional stance, that is, “not capable of being moved emotionally.” The application of this admonition to a Christian’s life obviously requires a very high degree of determination and dedication. Paul expressed a marvelous disappointment in others for being moved so quickly from their spiritual moorings. It was to the Galatians that he wrote, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Gal. 1:6). It is possible for Christians to be moved, and it is also possible for a Christian to determine to remain “immovable.” The Bible says, “Be ye unmovable.”

“Be Ye Always Abounding”

The area in which Christians are admonished to be “always abounding” is in the work of the Lord. “Abounding” is from *perisseuo* meaning, “cause to increase or abound; provide in abundance.” (The word appears 39 times in the New Testament.) The lexicon says in I Corinthians 15:58 it means to “be outstanding, be prominent, excel.” Therefore, Christians are admonished to “be outstanding or prominent or excelling” in the work of the Lord. The Lord himself said, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [*perrisseusel*] the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). A careful and prayerful inventory should be taken by every Christian on this penetrating point.

Conclusion

The motivation for rising to meet the strenuous demands of this apostolic admonition is given at the end of the passage, “Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” The labor is not empty or a meaningless effort. It will yield a rich reward. Earlier Paul assured these Christians, “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building” (I Cor. 3:9). Imagine the impact heeding this apostolic admonition could have on the church today, the good that would be generated, the souls that would be saved, the

spiritual strength that would be sustained, and the glorious goal that would be gained.

SOURCES

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