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expression in the language of its first readers—'we know that his witness is true.'

It is sometimes maintained that what John did was to take the Gospel story out of its Jewish shell and reshape it in a form that would appeal to Greeks. There is a measure of truth in this, but it is a mistake to think that John Hellenized the Gospel, casting it in a Greek instead of a Jewish mould. What he did was to take the primitive apostolic preaching—the story of Jesus, 'beginning from the baptism of John'—and present it in such a way as to emphasize its universal and eternal validity. The relevance of the good news is not confined to the early decades of the first century or to the lands around Palestine. John does not detach the message from its original environment (indeed, he sketches that environment vividly and unforgettably); but he does show clearly that this is the one saving message for all men everywhere and at all times: 'for God sent the Son into *the world*, not to judge *the world*, but that *the world* should be saved through him' (John 3:17).

(*To be continued*)

## NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

By W. WILCOX

'To hasten; give diligence', etc. (*Spoudazō*)

The Christian faith is one which demands the putting forth of effort, *physically*, to spread abroad its message; *ethically*, to live a moral life; *spiritually*, to reach up to God, and His standards and to grow in grace and strength. For the continuance of Christian practice in these and other directions the Apostles were ever exhorting the believer to put forth effort, to give diligence, to hasten, and they use words which are intended to stimulate the believer in these ways. One of these is *spoudazō*, which Griffith Thomas defines as 'to hasten, make haste, exert one's self, endeavour, give diligence': and Soutter as, 'I hasten, am eager (zealous)'. Another writer says, 'The ideas of making haste, being eager, and giving diligence, with the added idea of effort put forth, are in the Greek usage of the word'.

This is a word used by several writers of the New Testament, but especially by Paul:

(1) In personal exhortation to Timothy and Titus to *give diligence* to come to him; or, in writing to the Thessalonians, expressing his desire to see them, and stating that he had *endeavoured* the more exceedingly to see their face (1 Thess. 2:17).

(2) In exhortations regarding Christian life and practice. To these latter, coupled with those of Peter and the writer of the Hebrews, we now turn, and examine a little more closely, for they occur in a number of interesting connections.

1. *Christian Philanthropy*. Gal. 2:10. Paul is reminded how Barnabas and he were exhorted to 'remember the poor', and how they did this, 'which thing *I was also zealous to do*'. The Christian Gospel when it is received into the heart changes a man's outlook as well as his 'inlook'. He thinks not always of self, and the advancement of self, but also of others, particularly in their relationship to Christ, yes, and of *his* relationship to Christ also. Hence he is 'to do good, and to communicate, and to forget not' (Heb. 13:16) and such communication will be primarily 'to them that be of the household of (the) faith' (Gal. 6:10).

This Christian Philanthropy is regarded as:

(a) *An obligation*. The believer has freely received and is expected in consequence to freely give. While Gentile converts were not expected to put themselves under the bondage of the ceremonial law as taught and practised by the leaders of Israel in our Lord's day, yet the spirit of the law as expressed in its love to one's neighbour and in its kindness and mercifulness in dealing with the poor, the servant and the slave, might well be inculcated as a part of the Apostolic teaching to the Gentiles, yea, and be extended even to loving their enemies, and so to shew that 'the faith' was superior to the law.

(b) *An opportunity* to manifest the Christlike spirit, to work as He worked, and to glorify God. It is an opportunity to show that the claims of God upon me and my possessions are being cheerfully met, and that in that outflow of good through me some other may be helped and blessed, as the man born blind was in our Lord's day. Such opportunities are to be bought up, seized,

rescued from the dust and disuetude of forgotten things and used to bring men to Christ.

Christian Philanthropy also involves

(c) *An orientation* of ideas which will prove to be very different from those which formerly guided the life. Paul did not remember the poor with a grudge or a groan, but 'was zealous to do it': he hastened to do it, for in the doing of it he gave expression to the fact of the indwelling Christ, who was thus making His character known through His servant.

2. *Christian Practice.* 2 Pet. 3:14. 'Give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight'. Christian life is here required to be exemplary in conduct in view of the perplexing situations arising from combined persecution and manifest hostility on the part of the ruling powers. But while others acted in unbecoming fashion towards them, they must continue to be

(a) *In Peace* i.e., without strife in mind or heart or conduct. They were not to have a grudge in their thoughts against those who so evilly entreated them, but, in the integrity of their heart, to honour the King and be at peace with all men, including themselves.

(b) *In Purity* no evil deed or thought was to destroy their good name, or disturb their peace of conscience before God or before men. Pure in motive and pure in deed they would stand in vivid contrast to their persecutors who could not cause them to suffer for evil and hence could not destroy their harmony with God. To be thus pure would require unceasing diligence and unvarying pursuance of the path known to have been trodden by their Lord Who had left them an example that they should follow in His steps.

(c) *In Practice* to be blameless in His sight: the believer is not to be blameworthy. He is to have 'a good conscience toward God'. Reproof or blame are ever merited when the believer is disobedient to known truth. Previous upbringing, prior prejudice, or plausible teaching should not be allowed to hinder obedience to that which is known to be the will of God. If it should be, then the believer is blameworthy, and cannot be regarded as being 'blameless in His sight'.

3. *Christian Position.* 2 Pet. 1:10. 'Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Christian experience is to be in harmony with Christian position. The man who is unfruitful, lacking these things, or forgetful of his cleansing from his old sins, (vv. 8, 9) is not assuring his heart before God, is not making sure to himself the fact that he has been called and chosen of God. Lip and life must tally; walk and word must harmonize; precept and practice must pursue the same paths, otherwise, where is the assurance?

This will require diligence that there may be no deviation from the ways of God, no stumbling from the path of rectitude, but an abundant entrance into the eternal Kingdom. Assurance is not merely theoretical, but practical, in fullest harmony.

4. *Christian Principle.* Eph. 4:3. 'Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

(a) There is an *existing unity* which has been made by the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They have been made *one in Christ*—men of different nations and different ideals, once worshipping different gods, have now a common unity in which there is expressed to God their common feeling, interest and purpose to do that which pleases Him and to grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth. They are *one in spirit*, the same love actuates them, the same thought animates them, and the same ideal appeals to them as worthy of their pursuit. They are *one in testimony*, ever bearing witness to the Gospel by which they have been won, and ever seeking to draw others to that Saviour who was declared to them in the Gospel they heard.

(b) There is an *essential care* exercised to keep this unity—'to keep, in the sense of maintaining *with watchful care*' (Salmond). Watchful care will be exercised lest there should creep in that which would be disruptive of that unity, lest a contrary purpose should be indulged in, lest insincere motives should be pursued.

A genuine desire for the maintenance of that unity will be manifest as there is a real bond of peace linking each with each, and binding the one to the other. An understanding ministry for one another will obviously be needed if such unity is to be maintained. The hard-pressed believer will need the thoughtful help of the true servant of God at all times; the querulous man will

need the understanding service of his fellows to restore him to spiritual equilibrium; the depressed saint will need the loving sympathy of all to be extended to him.

(c) *An earnest endeavour* will need to be exerted if this unity is thus to be maintained. 'All diligence' must be given—the word indicates exertion. A 'don't care' attitude will not achieve the end desired, but a rising up to seize the opportunity of the moment, when it is within the measure of the believer's reach. There must be *directness* of approach to the problem, and a *real devotion* to this one aim if ever this unity is to be maintained.

5. *Christian Possibility.* 2 Pet. 1:15. 'I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance.'

(a) The Apostle attaches much *importance* to these characteristics of Christian conduct of which he has been speaking. Their presence or lack make evident the truth or untruth of the lip confession of the believer.

(b) There is therefore an *insistence* that these things must be known, and that they should be able to recall them when the Apostle is no longer able to remind them. Without them the Christian life is unfruitful.

(c) They must have a *real interest* in them, for thus only can they really give diligence to maintain them. If the Apostle has been at such pains to remind them every time, then they must interest themselves in the instruction he has given them.

6. *Christian Privilege.* Heb. 4:11. 'Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest.'

(a) There is a *rousing* of every latent power to a performance of its duty to enter into that rest. Israel could only enter into the land of promise when her own propensities for disobedience and waywardness had been overcome, and when the foes of the wilderness journey had been defeated and the occupying hosts of the land had been dispossessed and driven out. The necessity ever arises for the believer to remind himself that he is engaged in a conflict ere his rest may be won. That conflict will call into play every activity of which he is capable. He must be up and doing.

(b) There is a *resisting* of the tendency to pursue the easy path, to compromise with the enemy, to stop short of the achievement of the end sought for. We must resist being satisfied with anything but the best, with the settlement on this side Jordan, with the foe but partially driven out, or with making a covenant with an unbeaten foe. It must be a fight to the finish, and then an undeterred entrance into the rest provided.

(c) There is a *resting*, a sabbath of rest, the labour completed and the weapons of warfare laid down. This is possible 'in Christ', as a present experience now and as a full inheritance in the near future.

7. *Christian Presentation.* 2 Tim. 2:15. 'Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God.'

Christian life commences with a crisis, continues in a progress, and culminates in a transformation. It commenced when one was arrested and brought face to face with the issues of life and of one's relationships to God. It goes on with a presentation of one's self continually before God and there comes a time in which He will give or withhold His approval. The believer is to give diligence to attain that approval which may be realized by him now in measure but more fully then, as he meets his Lord and receives his 'well done'. Without such diligence the Divine approval cannot be obtained, for again, the Christian life is not one of ease, but of earnest endeavour, and eager expectation. In view of the prospect, what should the practice be?

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**Lord, Increase our faith. Luke 17: 5.**

**Unto you that hear shall more be given, for he that hath, to him shall be given. Mark 4: 24, 25.**

After confidence in God has been strengthened through discipline and God has been proven faithful, it requires no more VENTURE to cast ones-self on God for great things than for small things. Only by USING faith are we kept from practically LOSING it, and on the contrary, to use faith is to lose the unbelief that hinders God's mighty acts.—A. T. PIERSON