

## **Add to your faith . . . . knowledge**

### **No.1. Showing how II Peter adds “knowledge” to the “faith” of I Peter. pp. 117 - 119**

Sometimes we meet with good Christian folk who seem to have a real horror of knowledge, looking upon it as a work of the flesh, and antagonistic to faith. There is, of course, a specious form of knowledge that puffeth up (I Cor. viii. 1), but there is also an empty faith that cannot save (James ii. 17). While we give no place to the “oppositions of science falsely so called”, it is mischievous to assert that true science can ever be antagonistic to true faith. We are, however, not contemplating the adjustment of physical science to the faith, but considering the many passages in which knowledge is associated with faith as a second step.

We have borrowed the title for this study from II Peter, and we observe that the epistle which opens with the exhortation “add to your faith . . . knowledge” (II Pet. i. 5), concludes with the exhortation to “grow in grace and in knowledge” (II Pet. iii. 18). Peter, indeed, says much more in his opening exhortation, than that knowledge should be added to faith; in full his words are,

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (IIPet.i.5-7).

These added graces are all to be looked upon as so much “fruit”, for the Apostle says that if these things be present, and abound, they make us that we be neither “barren nor unfruitful” in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To examine every item in this great addition would take us too far afield so, while remembering that the exhortation would be incomplete without them, we will devote this study to the association of faith and knowledge.

If we examine Peter’s two epistles we shall discover that the first stresses “faith”, while the second stresses “knowledge”.

Here are the references to faith in the first epistle:

- “Kept . . . . through faith unto salvation” (i. 5).
- “The trial of your faith” (i. 7).
- “Though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice” (i. 8).
- “Receiving the end of your faith” (i. 9).
- “Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (i. 21).
- “Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious” (ii. 6, 7).

“Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (iv. 19).

“The devil . . . seeketh whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith” (v. 8, 9).

“A faithful brother” (v. 12).

The only references to faith in the second epistle are in i. 1 and 5.

The second epistle stresses knowledge:

“To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the *knowledge* of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the *knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Pet. i. 1-3).

Salvation is by faith, but things that pertain to life and godliness are here associated with the *knowledge* of the Lord. After all, we shall discover that faith and knowledge are but two sides of one great subject. If I believe a rumour, I cannot really say “I know”, but if I believe a statement made by one who is infallibly and indubitably true, can I hesitate to say “I know”? If I do, I deny the reality of my faith. Such knowledge is experimental faith.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge” (II Pet. i. 5).

*Paraesphero*, translated “giving” and meaning literally “to bring in beside” (from *para* beside, and *phero* to bring), is used here by the Apostle as though he would say “Besides those precious promises on God’s part, bring in, by grace, your co-operation, by using all diligence to furnish virtue”, etc.

“Add” *Epichoregeo*, literally means to supply the cost of leading the chorus or theatrical entertainment. The person who thus defrayed the cost was usually a public-spirited person of means, and was called the *choregos*. Visitors to the British Museum may remember “the Choragic monument”, a beautiful specimen of the Corinthian order of architecture, in the Greek gallery.

*En*. Where our versions reads “add *to* your faith virtue”, etc. the original uses the preposition *en*, and Alford and others give it its full value, in each case translating,

“Furnish in your faith virtue, in your virtue knowledge, etc.”

It will be seen therefore that no mere mechanical addition is to be attempted. Faith must be virtuous; virtue must be informed with knowledge; knowledge must be held in temperance, and temperance must be accompanied by patience, and so on.

“If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Pet. i. 8).

Fruit is an evidence of life, and these things “make our calling and election sure” (IIPet.i.10).

Mere knowledge, unaccompanied by such evidences of grace, is no evidence of election. The Apostle speaks in I Pet. ii. of those who had escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but had afterwards become entangled and overcome, and, said the Apostle, it would have been better for them not to have *known* the way of righteousness than that, after they had *known* it, they should turn from the holy commandment. He likens such to dogs or to swine who “return” to their uncleanness, a contrast with the “sheep” of I Pet. ii. 25, who “return” to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. These were evidently “barren and unfruitful” in their knowledge. However, the main theme of this second epistle is not reached until chapter iii., when Peter deals with the postponement of the Second Coming of Christ, the attitude of the scoffers and the reason for the apparent “slackness”.

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye *know* these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness, but grow in grace, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. iii. 17, 18).

This article is but introductory and written with a view to help us to realize the important place this “added knowledge” has in the great scheme of revelation. We believe a collection of passages where this addition is a part of inspired teaching will be helpful to all our readers, and in the succeeding articles such passages will therefore form the basis of our meditation.

## **No.2. Some examples culled from the Epistle to the Romans. pp. 133 - 135**

Let us turn to the Epistle to the Romans, and see how “knowledge” is added to faith. Most of our readers are aware of the fact that this epistle presents its teaching from two points of view. There is the teaching which deals with Jew and Gentile; that appeals to the Law and the Prophets; that traces the theme of the epistle back to Abraham; and that uses the word *pistis*, “faith”, twenty-seven times in Rom. i.-v. 11, and thirteen times in Rom. ix.-xvi. There is also the teaching that deals with man, which makes no reference to Jew and Gentile as such, but traces its theme back to Adam, and makes scarcely any quotation from the Law and the Prophets. In this section (Rom. v. 12-viii.) the word *pistis*, “faith”, is not found. *Pisteuo*, “to believe”, occurs in the outside sections (Rom.i.-v.11, and Rom.ix.-xvi.), twenty times, but is found only once in the inner section (Rom. v. 12-viii.). This one reference reads:

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (Rom. vi. 8).

Apart from this one statement, “faith” and “believe” are limited to the outer portion of the epistle. Before we turn to the inner portion, and before we can “add” knowledge to faith, we must have some idea of how faith is used, and in what associations, for we cannot be said to “add” to anything which we do not already possess.

Rom. i. 16 is the first recorded act of believing, and is intimately associated with the Gospel and with salvation.

“The Gospel of Christ . . . . the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. i. 16).

This is the simple issue. The next reference is Rom. iii. 22, where the subject is the righteousness of God:

“The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. iii. 22).

Here we have advanced a great step. Between Rom. i. 16 and iii. 22 is a marvelous unfolding of the depth of human need, and the fullness of Divine provision. To appreciate this we must go back to the first chapter and look at the reference to “faith” in verse 17. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. i. 17).

Rom. iii. 22 tells us that this righteousness of God is “by faith of Jesus Christ”, and the conclusion come to is that,

“A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. iii. 28).

In some of the passages, law and its works are set aside, and in Rom. iii. 24, 25 we have the fundamental reference to “faith in His blood”. Without redemption and without propitiation (atonement) justification by faith is impossible.

Coming to chapter iv., we discover Who, or what it is that is believed:

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 3).

God is the object of faith, and particularly God as the One that quickeneth the dead (Rom. iv. 5, 17, 24). This faith is “counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5, 9, 11, 13, 16). We are therefore prepared for the summing up of Rom. v. 1, 2:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. v. 1, 2).

Rom. v. leads us up to the double fruit of faith, Justification and Access. What more can be provided or enjoyed? Nothing, for a righteous standing before God which results in peace with God, access into grace that is all sufficient for salvation, preservation and presentation, covers all our need, past, present and future. Yet, if we would experimentally enter into this grace; if we would have no lurking distrust; if we are not, at times, to be overwhelmed with the evil of the flesh; if we are not, sometimes, to despair of sanctification, we must KNOW something. We must add to our faith KNOWLEDGE.

“Knowing this, that our old man was (and is, *Aorist passive*) crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. vi. 6).

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him” (Rom. vi. 9).

The former we “know” (*ginosko*), the latter we “perceive” (*eideo*). Unless we both “know” and “perceive” this glorious truth, our own unsanctified, unregenerate, unaltered old nature will continue to cause us alarm, anxiety, and possibly lead us either to despair or to attempt some means of improving, chaining, or eradicating the old man, all of which is impossible and wrong. We must “know” that in our flesh, even though we are justified and at peace, there dwelleth no good thing:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. vii. 18).

We must “know” that the flesh cannot render satisfactory obedience to the law of God:

“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. vii. 14).

Further, we should add to our faith the knowledge that, even though we are saved, justified and accepted, this does not exempt us from sharing the groans of a suffering creation. Salvation from sin does not mean exemption from the troubles of this life and unless we “know” this we may entertain doubts regarding the validity of our salvation.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 22, 23).

This knowledge is most essential to our peace.

Again, even though we “have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand” (Rom.v.2), it does not follow that we shall always have such an understanding of the Lord’s will, or of the hundred events that go to make up our daily experiences, that we shall be able at all times, to be sure what to ask in prayer. This “knowledge” is vital, for we shall either, in our mute anguish, blame ourselves for lack of spirituality, which may be untrue, or we may force ourselves to a fluency in prayer which, if heard with the ear of an angel, would sound perilously near blasphemy. For our peace of mind we should realize that sometimes, this uncertainty, is our sanity.

“For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered and He . . . . knoweth what is the mind (or bent) of the Spirit” (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

Though saved, we are yet subject to “infirmities” (Rom. viii. 26), and it is an unspeakable comfort “to know” that, though words fail us, the “bent” of our spirits is understood. The Holy Spirit fulfils His blessed office as the “other Advocate”, and to know this is to enter into peace.

Again, and in conclusion, the Apostle directs the mind of the believer away from the flesh, in which will be found no good thing; away from this creation, with its groan and travail; away from our own ability to pray, through lack of knowledge; away to the Lord Himself, Who does know, and Who will perform.

“And *we know* that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. viii. 28).

Here, then, in the epistle to the Romans, is a glorious example of the blessed results of adding to faith knowledge, and so of reaching the “persuasion” with which this inner section of Romans finishes (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

### **No.3. “Added knowledge” associated with the Prize (Philippians). pp. 193, 194**

Let us give our attention for a while to the bearing of the teaching of the Epistle to the Philippians on this subject. There we find Paul speaking of faith not only doctrinally, but also in a practical sense. Had he been free to think only of himself, he confesses that he would have been glad to depart and to be with Christ, but realizing that the churches still needed his ministry, for a time at least, he was willing to abide in the flesh for their sakes:

“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith” (Phil. i. 25).

This ‘furtherance and joy of faith’ however is an active expression and not merely a passive reception. The Philippians were exhorted to:

“Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. i. 27).

“For”, continued the Apostle,

“unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only *to believe* on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. i. 29).

But Paul was not the man to enjoin endurance upon others, while he himself went free. Throughout his ministry he was able to appeal to his ‘manner of life’ as a living example of the doctrine he taught and professed, so that we are not surprised to find that the next reference to faith alludes once more to his endurance for the gospel:

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all” (Phil. ii. 17).

The only other occurrences of ‘faith’ in Philippians are in that wonderful summary of the doctrine of justification by faith, which is found in Phil. iii. 9. After the Apostle had

enumerate all the advantages which he had as an Israelite under law, and how he had counted them all as refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he continued:

“and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (iii. 9).

On either side of this verse, he speaks of knowledge:

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . . That *I may know Him*, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection, out from among the dead” (Phil. iii. 8-11).

Here is something beyond salvation for sin and the gift of life; here is something toward which the Apostle pressed as for a prize (Phil. iii. 14).

In Rom. vi. 6, there is a conformity to the death of Christ that has been accomplished by grace, without our effort, a conformity which lies at the root of our acceptance. In Phil. iii. 10, however, there is a voluntary association with that death, consequent upon a fuller knowledge of the Lord, and the *power* of His resurrection. By using the same word in Phil. iii. 10 and 21, translated in A.V. “conform” and “fashion”, Paul links the out-resurrection, the prize and its “conformity” with the body of His glory, with the “conformity” of the believer here and now in the body of this humiliation, and with the rejection for which the Cross of Christ stands in the experience of the believer.

As an extension of this added knowledge, the Apostle says in the closing chapter:

“*I know* both how to be abased, and *I know* how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 12, 13).

So Paul adds to faith, knowledge, and knowledge of a very precious and searching sort. An experience not to be lightly sought, and one that is fraught with many trials. He had a goal in view, and moreover found strength in Christ for all things, and so his faith IN Christ, led to fuller knowledge OF Christ, and, while retaining to the full his glorious acceptance in the Beloved, he pressed on to “win Christ” and to attain unto that for which he had been apprehended (Phil. iii. 12).