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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor Mr. J.W. Sparking-Tyler
on Thursday, February 6. 1975. at The Dickes

Lesson. Hebrews 12.

And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

1 Samuel 3. 18.

Our deeply spiritual friends and hearers will I am sure, appreciate what an extreme venture it is on my part to read before you, -before God and His people this monumental, unique, most apposite Scripture. It is a Scripture that is completely appropriate to the occasion, and one I judge is the case now in this very sad month, the beginning of February 1975 for many of our beloved friends. Let me say at once, if you open the Hymn Book to 261 you will find a far more excellent sermon on the Text than I am able to deliver. Let not that deter us from venturing on God, because it is a living and spoken word, and if our fervent cry is mercifully responded to there will be the living spring of divine truth.

It is not necessary to give an account of the background relative to the narrative: the only point that emerges is obvious. The old priest of God's was about to experience one thing that he had known through his journey, and all of us must know it, and we shall know it to the end and in the end, especially if we are the Lord's. It is this, the Lord's hand, and the Lord laying His hand on us. This term completely expresses the dispensations of God Almighty, and it has especial reference to the exclusive band, the Lord's own dear people. If I remind you, there is one wholly exclusive feature concerning all divine dispensations to a child of God, whatever they are, ending in death, and the exclusiveness, (and I must remind you of it as to the holy doctrine) is something all the people of God prove. When Christ came to the gloomy garden and partook of the cup, the curse due to our sins and gave His life voluntarily on Calvary's cross, shed His vital blood, died triumphantly, victoriously, was dead and buried, and rose on the third day, concerning all God's dispensations with His saints the bitterness, the curse was wholly extracted and removed, and from the

last dispensation which is death. There is no sting, - the sting expresses the curse, - consequently there is no bitterness: what you taste of bitterness is soon sweetened. You may soon know concerning any case or matter whether there is hope, and the way to know is, you will realise the sting has gone. This is one facet: the sting is extracted so the bitterness has gone. It means not only the curse, but as it would obtain in and with us it would be black despair: it has gone. You sink very, very, very low, but underneath are the everlasting arms. Things are so completely opposite: you think you are going down, that you will faint, sink, die. You drop into His arms, and you say; "This is something I did not realise, that I was going into His arms." So, the extraction of the sting, the curse, the bitterness: that is one facet.

Another is, there is something extracted and something injected: what it is is everlasting love. That is the secret. Every dispensation of God to His dear people is like that. He gives you an injection of all the fruits of Christ's dying love and sacred victory, so you prove and discern and appreciate and enjoy holy things in your soul, and you could give your witness and testimony concerning it. The sting has gone, love is injected: it is indescribable. (I have dilated on this from the initial point.)

Eli the priest was about to receive something from the hand of God: to know it. You may say it was terrible in relation to those mentioned. I speak to you concerning him. Let us hasten, as the Lord gives grace, reverently, prayerfully, affectionately, tenderly to the whole area of this amazing subject. I may say before I begin to lift up the rudiments of the subject, what Eli said was the fruit of a very rich grace: only under grace could a child of God say; "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." and a very large measure of divine grace the Lord gave him a communication of with all he was about to come into, and caused him under the inspiration of the Spirit to utter a monumental word for the people of God in all ages. There is no word exactly like it. Job "arose, and rent his mantle, - showing his heart was rent. - and shaved his head, - showing his glory had departed; not the glory of his soul; he felt his glory had departed in the earth. The glory of a man is his family. - and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped." He was likewise under a profound and significant degree of the exercise of faith on the Person of

Christ and rich grace was manifested in his soul. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." O my friends, it is to come into calamitous things and deep ~~distresses~~ distresses where alone you are able to prove by the power of the Spirit the efficacy of the power of God to support and help you to worship God. Only grace can do it. I remember a poor woman who came to me for treatment. She had experienced a shattering blow, and she said to me; "I have lost my faith." That was the end of her religion as she expressed herself, unless the Lord had mercy on her. Her faith was gone. God's saints do not lose living faith. Faith is at its best in the deepest, darkest hours. This is ^a proving ground; things you come into if you have got a good foundation to build your hopes on. Faith is severely tried: you do not lose it. It will ^{be} operated and exercised on Christ, His Name, nature, essence, attributes, promises and blessings of the New Covenant. You do not lose faith: these dear men did not.

Let us endeavour to bring up some of the rudiments of the subject. I purposely did not scan deeply the verses of the Hymn named to you because I did not want to have a sketch sermon from the Hymn, so I hope I am clear on that point. You have the best sermon from Mr Greene. The first obvious principle to enunciate is, - take the language; "And he said, It is the Lord." I hardly ^{need} to remind you that 'Lord' whether written in Hebrew or Greek means 'King', great, glorious King of kings and Lord of lords, supreme Ruler. "It is the Lord."

Then, second, and I suppose some of you come to the place where the Lord helps you to say the first. You are for a while unable to say the second; "let him do what seemeth him good." What is the first great and glorious principle? It is that holy, cardinal doctrine of the sovereignty of Jehovah. How shall we spell out the sovereignty of God? Divine sovereignty touches every member of the human race; all events from the first to the last. Heaven and earth it affects. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." It is divine sovereignty. What does the term 'divine sovereignty' mean? Two things, or that is how I shall give an exposition of it. The first is, He is the only great, glorious, supreme Ruler of heaven and earth and all regions, all creatures, all events and dispensations. He is King.

The second part means, if we take sovereignty as we know it in the monarchy, in the anointing of the Queen and her Coronation oath, and in presenting to her various symbols of her sovereignty, at the end of the beautiful ceremony which is based on the Word of God, - kings and princes were anointed in the Old Testament. - she was invested with a singular prerogative. This spells out the whole thing. God is King, and we could refer to our Lord Jesus Christ in relation to His people. The Trinity have this glorious prerogative, and we have named this; "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."

What flows from this? It may seem strange: Nebuchadnezzar gives the word after his terrible experience. What is our stance in relation to the sovereignty of God? Here it is given in two ways; "None can stay his hand" This will relate to all of us ⁱⁿ this House of Prayer. You cannot put up a little hand to stay the hand of God. According to the divine appointments of God none can stay His hand. When His hand does touch us, what will be our response to His hand? None can say to Him, "What doest Thou?" No: we are not allowed. The divine sovereignty of God eternally forbids questioning concerning His hand; to say to Him; "What doest Thou?"

I will give a word here that has occurred to me. For those who fear God there is a principle in the New Testament enunciated by Christ that will be of tremendous help to you, though it related to a lack of understanding and later of intelligence concerning the washing of the disciples' feet. It is a great divine principle, and it follows on; "None can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou?" The Lord said; "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." The word 'hereafter' has two interpretations or sections of interpretations. The first related to future days in your life. It may be years after certain things have taken place the Lord reveals the meaning of them: you see things falling into place in the divine pattern. The other interpretation is, there are those things we shall never understand in this world. We shall never be able to fathom them in life: we shall know within the veil; when we get to the other side; when the secrets of the divine counsels are unfolded. You will know hereafter. That answers everything with a child of God. You will have such an increased sense of the loving, gracious, kingly authority of Jesus

The government is on His shoulder. In the deepest, mysterious things of life this will satisfy you. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." This is a word of exhortation when you find a tendency to divert to reason, and you find yourself with ramifying thoughts, and call up mysterious dispensations of God. Arrest yourself: say; "I am on the wrong course. 'Faith only reign here.' My Saviour has said; "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." I can say it to you purposely because of my own path. There are things that are shrouded by God and He never allows you to pry. He gives you this; "Thou shalt know hereafter." I am certain some of you in the Sanctuary are involved in those things. Whenever your mind begins to focus on those things, the Lord has sealed ^{them} with; "Thou shalt know hereafter," and you will rest in God's perfect will in Jesus Christ. This is the great principle underlying the subject; The divine sovereignty of God. You will worship God in calamities and trials, and when He takes as well as when He gives.

I will pass to what relates to the work of the Holy Ghost in us in response and in relation to the holy principle of God's sovereignty. The first word to name to you ~~xxx~~-"And he said, It is the Lord," concerning the work of the Spirit and the activity of faith in the soul in relation to God's sovereignty in our lives,- recognition. "It is the Lord." You might say that is a simple sort of word. My friends, how many on earth recognise the hand of God? To recognise the hand of God is of inestimable value to a child of God. Do you know why? You go before me: why is it of great value? For this reason: immediately you recognise the hand of God you receive whatever He sends as from Him. Recognition. Put in ~~relation~~ an area of the functions of the brain or the body generally in relation to the dispensations of God, what becomes activated in certain circumstances and mysterious dispensations? Reason. God has given us reason to use on the earth level beneficially.

But take the classical example of the two on the Emmaus road coming together in sadness. Their sadness showed that Christ loved them and they Him. "And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned". Reason carried them along with the birth of the Messiah and their expectation of it, and when He died on the cross, reason had reached a terminus: their hopes were spilt. The terminus of reason is the grave. The

Lord soon corrected them, and He will us. It is easy to be side-tracked and reason, and there you are: it is an impasse. You never get anywhere. There is no resurrection power in reason. Christ said; "O ~~stupid~~ fools, and slow of heart to believe, - faith is the thing, - all that the prophets have spoken." And He expounded, that is the point. So recognition is the great thing. (I hope the Lord will help me to go on, because I feel free.)

In recognition there is great variation as to timing of a thing. You may recognise at once it is the hand of the Lord. There is no delay whatever: at the same moment, in the same twinkling of an eye as the hand of the Lord comes you recognise. I know it. In the same instant you recognise it is the hand of the Lord. In other cases the child of God is so upset and unbalanced and disturbed, and begins to look around to secondary causes, and is so filled with them. They say it is a complete mystery, and they do not truly recognise for a while that it is the hand of God. The day comes when they do. I know I have discerning hearers and you will follow me. When the stroke falls you do not recognise: afterwards you do. I have quoted, and I give no clue, "He hath done all things well." and some have not been able to understand. If you come and say; "I recognise." if you do you recognise the basic truth that He has done all things well. Recognition

Take those who have been stopped in a mad career, and called in tragic circumstances, and they do not initially recognise the hand of the Lord. Or they may immediately the hand of the Lord touches them recognise it is in mercy. "It is the Lord." Notice how Job did not refer once, as far as I know, to the fire or the wind, the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, or to any of the agents or media. He did not say; "What a/cruel wind to blow the house down when my children were in it, or the fire, to burn up the sheep and the servants." He said; "It is the Lord." He recognised: this is it.

What has gone with recognition? Worship: you worship God as you recognise His hand; you get flat on the earth. That soul will be blessed because you have followed your Saviour and taken your cup; and not only have you followed Him, you were made willing to drink the cup. You might go for months, - God forbid! in rebellion and resentment, and not take it. Immediately you recognise the hand of the Lord by faith, you take the cup and drink and worship God. So first is recognition, - a beautiful truth: you recognise the hand of God.

Second is holy filial submission. You recognise God's hand and you submit. I will give you a cheering word concerning this. It is one of the great hall-marks and blessed evidences of sonship, because submission is only produced by divine love. Nothing else produces it: it is not the sheer weight of omnipotence. God can compel a creature into circumstances. Submission is the pure fruit of divine love. You will know when you fall into His hands, and though the Lord takes all away, He never takes Himself. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." I have got my God. This is sweet submission.

I give you the last point. "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." I will tell you what the point is. You say; "Well, ~~xxx~~ it is the hand of the Lord. I recognised it. The Lord has given me grace to submit." Is that the end? No. There is this principle to enunciate. I will tell you what sweetly flowed into my spirit before I came into the pulpit. This soul has a prospect: do you know what? "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: - this is it.- nevertheless afterward" You have got a 'nevertheless afterward'. If I put it simply, you have got something to look forward to. "Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." That is where I leave you. The Lord help you to drop into His hand and arms and sea outright. That is the place. "And lose yourself in Jesus quite." Thanks be to God. Amen.