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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves on 2. 3. 53 at "Ebenezer" Clapham
Hymns: 300, 385. Reading: James 1. 1 Peter 1 v. v 1 -9

This Epistle was addressed to the scattered tribes and not as was usual to a particular church, and it is evident that the reason of their dispersion was the persecution and suffering they were called upon to pass through which was a great and sharp trial of their faith. Evidently the Apostle here refers to this when he says, "My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations". It is not according to nature to walk this way, neither is it always or often according to the Lord's people but there can still be occasions when grace is given and prevails, when His people can and have rejoiced even under the cross.

The purpose of these sufferings or afflictions or trials, of whatever nature they may be to us, was evidently to work patience. This may seem somewhat of a contradiction because ordinarily, according to the effects of these things upon us naturally, they work impatience and can stir up resentment and rebellion of spirit. But we have to see that it is the Lord's way that the fruits or effects of His grace in us should work oppositely to nature, as indeed it is His grace in us that desires things that are opposite to the appeals of nature. So the Lord has purposed that there shall be certain trials, afflictions, sufferings or crosses in order to produce this or to bring it into more clear view in the experience of His people.

We understand the Apostle James where he refers to patience, and also the Apostle Paul, to mean endurance, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience", that is brings us to some practical experience of endurance, by walking in the things where by the grace of God we become inured to trials. It may be noticed how this word is used in the Hebrews in the 12th chapter. It is used three times, for the Apostle says in verse 2, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross", endured it; and in verse 3, "For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners" and in verse 7, "If ye endure chastening". It is noticeable that much importance appears to be put upon this

word, which indicates a gracious exercise of patience in waiting upon God, whereby by the trial of faith in this way we become more mature; or it is designed for the development of patience in us or to strengthen us in this experience. So the Apostle says "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing".

This perfecting of the work of patience may be said to consist in two or three things. It may consist in walking in or enduring the trial, whatever it may be that may be laid upon us until the Lord appears to us in it for some deliverance; or it may consist in perceiving or receiving the design or purpose of the Lord in the trial; and in another sense in submission or obedience to His divine will in these particular things which would appear in walking them out. It may consist very considerably in many things in our lives that come home very closely to us. Tribulation works patience and patience has its perfect work. Patience would appear to have its perfect work then, when by the exercise of the trial in us, and as sanctified to us, we are enabled unreservedly to fall into His hands, submitting to His will and receiving the teaching He designs to us thereby. This is a hard, a difficult path, and an impossible one to flesh and blood; but still there is this point of teaching in the Scriptures, as in the 5th Romans where the Apostle says, "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience, and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."