

SB. 831

13683
Lap 82

LIBRARY OF THE
GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

SB/JH07

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel, Brighton by Mr J.K. Popham on
Wednesday evening 11th January 1922

Text Hebrews 12 verse 11.

*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous:
nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness
unto them which are exercised thereby.*

One of the most distinguished marks of the life of God, in the soul, is the grace of faith. It is the line that separates the world from the living church of God. It is a grace that rests on God, bends after the possession of Him, and never really rests away from God. As the needle (of the compass) is never at rest, until it is on its proper point, so faith never rests away from God. In the eleventh chapter, it is war, it is much conflict, living through all kinds of evils and troubles. It is victorious, as set forth in the beginning of this chapter. We are told how to look, where to look to, even to Him who gives this faith, and will finish it, namely, Jesus Christ. And the Apostle continues his gracious drawings to these Hebrew Christians by telling them to consider Christ.

They had trouble, they were directed, first of all to look to the great cloud of witnesses, by which they were compassed about, witnesses which told of God's great power, in faith. His condescension to faith, and the victory He gives to faith. Then above all else they were directed to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. And to consider Him, not only as now in heaven, nor immediately as there, but as a sufferer, who while here, endured contradiction of sinners against Himself. And this as they were enabled to do it, would put heart and courage into them. He says, you have forgotten a good deal, but if you look back to Him, and consider Him, you will find that weariness, that is in your minds removed. Look to Him "lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds". Your hearts are set on heaven, but the way is so rough, the difficulties are so many, and so great, within and without. That it is, but as you look to that Blessed One, who while, here had nothing but conflict, and was a man of sorrows all the time. As you look to Him, and only so, will you find yourself strengthened. He tells them, that they "have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto them, as unto children". He goes back to Old Testament Scripture, and we view it in the New Testament Scripture, and says "My son" You will find this in (Proverbs 3 verse 11), "despise not thou the chastening of the Lord;" "nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him". When chastening comes, if there is no attention of the heart to it, that is despising it. If when it comes the soul faints, and is ready to give up, that is indeed as here, fainting at God's chastening.

If you say, I shall never get through, or if you say, I am going to hold my head and behave myself as a man, that is despising. O what a mercy to be saved from these two evils. The Apostle then declares what is wonderful, when faith gets hold of it powerfully, in the heart namely, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth". (verse 6). Why my friends it is not natural, nor an easy thing to believe, that it is a great honour to be chastened, and a clear sign of being loved of God to be chastened, but faith can believe it. O if God loves us well enough to come and say "My son, I must lay the rod on you" what a favour for "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth". You need it, what child of God does not need chastening. Then He says, that if we endure chastening, God dealeth with us, as with sons. Now enduring chastening is a distinguishing mark of grace.

If one says "This is a grief and I must bear it, as well as I can, till it comes to an end," is no sign then, of God dealing with such a person. But if grace comes, if the Spirit teaches, if He gives submission, if He enables the sinner to say "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." (1 Samuel 3 verse 18). That is enduring it, not running away from it, nor fainting under it, not despising, but enduring it. Mind the difference there is, between a natural sullenness under trouble, whereby you may say, other people have trouble, and why should I not have it. They bear it as well as possible, I will do the same. Mind I say that spirit, and the different spirit, which a child of God has, whereby he says "It is the Lord", whereby he prays that the Lord will sanctify it to him, bring good out of it to his soul, and glorify His Glorious Name.

If ye endure chastening, accept it, fall under it, wait for God to come to you in it, to deliver you out of it. God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not. It is the part of a father to chasten his child. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son:" (Proverbs 13 verse 24). God loves His son and useth the rod, and if you have no chastening, "if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, (that is all sons,) then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence," (Hebrews 12 verses 8, 9). Submitted to them, did not like it, yet submitted to the rod. This is the reverence that we gave to our earthly fathers, who wisely chastened us, "shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits and live". (verse 9). Is it not infinitely more important to be chastened of God, for our profit, and to have grace to submit, to the chastening of God, and own His right, His wisdom, His love, His goodness, than to submit with whatever feeling may be in our minds, to earthly parents.

They chastened us for a short time after their own pleasure, perhaps with little or no judgement, perhaps with no view of the future, the future good of the child, perhaps they simply did it for the moment, something was wrong, and the parent corrected, and there was an end to it. Not so with God, when He puts on the rod, there is an intention, there is an end. When He lays affliction on, He has a purpose, and that purpose is expressed in the word. "He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness", (verse 10), that He might purge iniquity. The spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning God sends to purge away the filth of the daughters of Zion. (Isaiah 4 verse 4). You will find it so, what a worldly spirit affliction may cleanse you from, what a hard heart affliction may soften. O what good, God brings, when He lays on His chastening hand. He for our profit, that we may grow in grace. And then the Apostle looks upon us, so to speak, through the Spirit, and sees how ready we are to complain.

And how apt to look at the grievousness of affliction, and says "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous", that is there seems to be no reason for joy, for hope in it. It looks angry, it looks even vindictive. It looks as if it is sent to bring you to an end, and perhaps sometimes you may reflect, this has come to bring me, to the end I have often feared. It is not joyous, for the person, it is grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby

Now for a little time, as I may be helped, what I would notice, is first of all, this grievousness of affliction, and what we may understand by it. Affliction is grievous first of all naturally. When you get chastened, when a rod is laid on you, it comes either to your persons, or to a relative, or to your business, or your substance, and it is naturally very grievous. Who likes to have things come to interfere with his pleasure, who can naturally welcome affliction to the body or any one dear to you, or your substance about which you have had a good many thoughts about keeping it. It is grievous naturally, we are not stoics, grace does not make us unthankful, it does not make us unnatural, does not take away and destroy natural sensitiveness, sympathy and feelings of sorrow. We may sorrow, and blessed be God, we are not forbidden to do so, but this is not to be our all. Where there is nothing but grievousness in the case of the worldling it is not chastening, in that case it looks like a curse and he passeth through hardly bested and hungry and curses his king and his God and looks upward. O it is dreadful to be afflicted, and yet the affliction not to be chastening, not to be the rod of the father. If you are troubled there is a natural grief, that must be felt, it is no sign of grace to be callous.

It is no evidence of the life of God, to be careless about your relations, about your substance, or about what happens to your own bodies. Trouble is trouble, trouble is grievous, trouble to be felt, but there is a grievousness in affliction, in chastening, deeper than that. There is in the second place, conviction of sin. Ah not generally seen, only there may be that, there may be an opening of the depth, of your own depraved heart, so that you see it more than ever you did before, by means of affliction. But a rod may open to you a particular sin, it may tell you, for it has a voice, and the wise men of the city will hear it. It may tell you of some departure from God, I mean of some particular departure. It may carry your mind and memory, and conscience, and judgement, to some place, where you started aside. And that will bring conviction, chastening and, touches of sin. Chastening tells us of some sin or sins, that is grievous. You cannot sin in God's light, cannot feel it in His own life and teaching without this word grievous becoming your experience. It is grievous as some of us well know, there is a grievousness in chastening.

Also in the third place because we do not, at the beginning, often see the end. There is an end but we do not see it, and says conscience, (perhaps, I shall speak some of your own experience) perhaps conscience says, you know why this has come. You do not know what the Lord is going to do with you, even should He take you to heaven. He may never smile again, and the uncertainty of what God is about to do, of what He is doing, of the issue of the affliction, will be a grievous thing to you. It exposes you to temptation, it leads the mind again and again to consider the awful departures, of which you have been guilty.

Well these things do make affliction grievous, not joyous, but grievous. If you meet professors, who because of their great confidence and joy can, if I may use the word, snap their fingers at trouble, and tell you, that they live above it, and you ought to live above it, be suspicious of them, and turn away from them. They will do you harm. "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Corinthians 15 verse 33). If affliction is on you, God give you power to humble yourselves, to accept the punishment, to pray that it may be a Father's rod, that it may be the cup your Father has prepared for you. And that He will give you grace to drink it, but beware of a careless indifferent spirit. When trouble comes, it is no good sign, it is no evidence that God loves you. If you are more or less, in and under affliction, well that is the first thing, what this grievousness consists in. Now the Apostle says "Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Unto them that are concerned about it, whose minds are exercised. Whose thoughts dwell upon, first, the thing that has come, and second, the reason for its coming, and third, the God who has sent it. There is plenty for your faith to be exercised upon. What it has come for, you wont look far perhaps, before you find that God gives us grace to be very careful in searching for causes of chastening, they are not always on the surface. If we search for them, the Lord will show them to us. He may give us grace to ask Him to do it. "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me" (Job 10 verse 2). Now the exercise as far as I judge, and can speak this evening is, first, the exercise of faith, faith in God, faith that enables the soul to say, "I have sinned, I have departed". You look at this point for the unbeliever, who has no faith, no such exercise, either toward his own condition, or toward God. Depend upon it, if you have faith in your heart, when trouble comes you will begin, to look at it and say "I have sinned" and God will accept it, because it issues in honest confession. And, the second point, is that there is confession in exercise. Look at the prodigal, what a case for us to consider, in his rags and poverty, his hunger, his shame, his mind was directed to his old home, and to his father. Then it came into his heart, to return to his father's house, and also into his heart, what to say, he would confess. "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Luke 15 verses 18,19). Do you know that spirit ? It is a great spirit, a godly spirit, it belongs to that word of the Apostle Paul "repentance to salvation not to be repented of:"(2 Corinthians 7 verse 1).

It brings the repenting sinner away from his sins. It brings him from the swine, and the field, and from the distance to his fathers house. If you have the same repentance, the same effect will be in you, certainly it will. Confession is part of the exercise, and many an hour may be spent by you, looking at your wretchedness, and your rags, wants, and your hunger and shame. The heady professor will say, O but that is legal. Well it would be good, for me to be filled with it, if it is legal to confess sins. The Lord give us power, to be confessing it always, but especially when any chastening of God is on our souls, and on, or in our circumstances. Confess, confess, confess, said the Lord to Jeremiah. "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, and thy transgressions against the Lord thy God," (Jeremiah 3 verse 13). Want of confession may be a bar, and may be the bar, between you and God, for a time. It wont destroy the relationship, but it will cut off communion. Another part of the exercise is this, faith looking to, and pleading the precious blood of Christ. There is need for it, yea, if you can ask the Lord, to moderate His dealings with you, in providence, for the sake of Jesus Christ, it will work well.

Looking into your own horrible sinfulness, you may be ready to give up, but when you are enabled to look to the precious blood of Christ, it will greatly strengthen you, to plead for mercy, in providential things. Nothing in providence will be hopeless as to the issue, if your eye is fixed on the atonement. And I would, that I could remember it, and that you might be enabled to consider it, that no trouble, no providence, with respect to the issue of it is hopeless, in your case, when your eye is fixed on the atonement. The doctor might say, well your health is ruined, you are nearly finished, but as to the issue, if your eye is on the atonement, it won't be a hopeless case. Nay you will see profit, great profit, but above all, when faith is on the atonement, for the soul's salvation, for the easement of a guilty conscience, for the comfort of a troubled mind, and for the support of a burdened sinner. That will be very wonderful, in the effect of it. So in these three things is the exercise of a child of God, after the affliction and chastening "it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." That is by trouble, by the chastening rod, exercised by that, the Holy Ghost sanctifying the trouble, brings these exercises about. And this is an answer to people who say, you should not be so troubled about these things.

The Holy Ghost says, why it is profitable when these things exercise you "exercised thereby" by the thing that God has sent, the chastening rod that is on you. When that exercises you, then afterwards the peaceable fruit of righteousness is sure to come. You look at this point brethren, take all the notice that God enables you to take, when the enemy says, O you have had good things, do not be concerned, nor mind them, he is trying to make you turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. He is trying to make you do that, as Hart says:

And turn the very grace to sin. (790 verse 6 Gadsby's)

It is a mark of a hardened spirit, a mark of an ungracious spirit, when a person says "I will pass this by, I know something of God, and I wont be troubled about these things." God is not in that spirit, God has nothing to do with that spirit, except to reprobate it.

Now a few words about the peaceable fruit of righteousness. The peaceable fruit of righteousness, first of all, consists in this, the Father falling on your neck and kissing you. Getting an heavenly welcome back again to a gracious God, from whom, by sin you departed. One of the most remarkable effects, of the love and mercy of God, when a child of God is chastened by Him, is the restoring love of God, that he can say with the Psalmist, "He restoreth my soul." (Psalm 23 verse 3).

The blood of Christ will make all things new. The bright inshining of Christ, will turn your winter into summer. "The rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come," (Song of Solomon 2 verses 11, 12), and you will say, It is well with me, as the peaceable fruit. God comes, and says, "It is enough." You remember in the case of the discipline, of the church, being inflicted on the wicked person, of whom Paul speaks, in the Corinthians, and of whom, he says to them "put him away". When repentance had come to this person, and what did Paul say Restore him, "comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow". (2 Corinthians 2 verse 7). Now if the Spirit would move Paul to write that to the church, and say comfort this repenting sinner, what will God do ? Will He do less ? If he sees you repenting, will He not most graciously, comfort our heart. " I says He, will "restore comforts unto unto him," (Isaiah 57 verse 18). He does it, and He does it like God only can do it. He pours in, His oil and His wine.

O repenting sinner there is a good thing awaiting you, the gracious restoration of your soul. Love in your heart, blood on your conscience, will give you the peaceable fruit of righteousness in your soul, it is peaceable, trouble disturbs everybodys peace. As it comes you cannot have trouble, and not have your peace in some way disturbed, naturally it is so, and spiritually it becomes the same. But now when God restores you, there is peace. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble ?" (Job 34 verse 29). If God speaks peace, trouble must go. If it please Him graciously to call you His child, whom He has loved, so as to chasten you, then you will have peace in your soul, the peaceable fruit of your exercises, the peaceable fruit of Christ's atonement, of Christ's righteousness, of Christ's precious blood. You will enjoy it, you may think now, being under the rod, and under a frown, you never can rejoice again. It may seem to you, as if it would be wrong, for you, such a sinner, ever again to rejoice, but when the day comes, when the Lord kisses you, when the blood of Christ cleanses you, it will be quite another thing. Then you will enter into it, new peace and new joy, new comfort, new satisfaction, and a new sense of the goodness of God to your poor soul, so unworthy, so vile, yet so favoured and blessed of God.

Therefore there is to be an afterwards. The Apostle Paul says to the Galatians, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6 verse 9). Our time is long often, yes due season may seem long in coming to you, but it will come. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5 verse 7).

And you will find that though your patience has been very tried, the due season will come, and all will be well with you. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."(James 5 verse 11). Now may the Holy Ghost, graciously help us, to look at this. Remember my dear friends that chastening is in this chapter, given as a sign of sonship, as a token of the love of God. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Remember too that enduring chastisement is different from natural sullenness, or what people may call natural courage. It is a falling into God;s hands, a humbling of ourselves under His mighty hand. It s a looking for mercy, the mercy of God unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ. But no chastening can be, other than grievous for a time, it cannot be otherwise than a very grievous feeling, but notwithstanding that to all exercised souls, afterwards there is a reaping, afterwards, there is a peaceable fruit of righteousness. When rendered to all exercised by the affliction, by the chastening hand of God.

Now I cannot go on any longer, I am afraid some of you have not been able to hear me, I have done my best, to make you, and I hope beyond all that, that the Holy Ghost may make this truth, spirit and life in us.

Amen.