

## Conviction; Discipline; Attraction; Separation

Heb. 11: 23-27; Heb. 12: 4-14; Heb. 13: 10-16.

From an Address by N Anderson.

We have had much doctrine in the course of our Bible readings, good doctrine, sound doctrine; now I desire to touch a little on the side of its application. It is not easy to make the application. It is easier to have a mental outline of words — a mental acquisition of the terms of truth, than to adopt it personally and practically.

Just a simple touch, dear brethren, on the verses we have read beginning with Hebrews 11. We would start with a word to Christian parents. It is a serious matter for a Christian parent, knowing his own background, to stand up to exhort other Christian parents. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child."

When they hid Moses we might have thought they were hiding him in view of their own personal interests, but they saw he was *fair to God*. Christian father and mother do you hold your children as fair to God? We hold them for God on the ground of the death of Christ. Moses' parents did it in figure. They committed him to the waters of death because they saw he was fair to God. We are living in the day — I refer to it sadly — of the permissive society, when there is little held for God. We are permitted to sit under the ministry of some of the richest truths — may God grant that one effect upon the Christian parent will be that the colour of that ministry will invade the family circle and that the young people may be held for God, and trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Let us keep this prominently before us that the Christ who has won our hearts, and whom we would desire to direct our lives, is absolutely adequate to govern the whole family. If the Lord leaves us here there is a need for the strengthening of the things that remain. What a blessed thing to bring our children up under the banner of the Christ, and in the atmosphere of the love and the truth of God! What a joy it is to see one's children breaking bread!

Verse 24 says, "By *faith Moses*" — not his parents now. The feature of faith which committed him to God at his birth is now manifested when he comes to years. He has a history — forty years there, forty years here, and forty years somewhere else, but that is not the point now before us. It is a history which started with committal to God, a committal which I am convinced was maintained by his parents in dependence on God. We read of his parents that a son of Levi took to himself as wife a daughter of Levi — that was a good start! Oh, young Christians, emulate both the spirit and principle — seek your companions in the Christian circle, a circle in which you enjoy the love and fellowship of divine Persons. I am sure they followed Moses with their prayers, and when he has come to years he was marked by conviction. He had to stand upon his own feet! Don't be content to be swept along in a stream. It is easy to be a Christian in a meeting like this but we need to stand, with divinely formed background, upon our own feet in the testimony of God. Moses when he was come to years refused the best the world had to offer. He was marked by definite, positive committal. Do not be among the many who do not know where they are in the things of God. Moses was a man of *conviction*, and his conviction showed itself in this way — he refused! He refused — *choosing*! The Christian does not live on a negative plane; he lives on a very positive one: —

"I've heard a sweeter story:

I know a nobler Name."

We are blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and they cannot be exhausted nor worn out — there is no deterioration; there is no diminishing.

"Let others boast of heaps of gold,  
His riches never can be told;  
Christ for me.  
Your gold will waste and wear away,  
Your honours perish in a day,  
My portion never can decay,  
Christ for me."

So this man makes his choice — refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter in the blessed, entrancing attraction and energy of choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God.

We are strangers here, we are not at home in this world. Why should Moses ally himself with the people of God in such conditions? The truth of the Christ has ever been before the mind and heart of God, and even with Old Testament worthies, whatever they may or may not have known about it, the Christ of God has put His impress upon everything that has been brought into being, and He puts His impress upon the saints of God. Here is a man who comes under the impress of Christ! He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater than any wealth that could be found in the land of Egypt, because he had respect unto the recompense — he is looking on to the end! It stops us from drifting; the anchor holds firm — it holds firm within the veil.

Christ is in reproach. The shadow of the cross is lying heavily upon this world, and the day is coming when the world will be brought to judgment for the crucifixion of the Christ of God. In the meantime we have the privilege of sharing the reproach of Christ. God would have the saints identified, not just positionally, not just doctrinally, but *practically* with the cross of Christ.

In Hebrews 12 we have the thought of *discipline*. It is not an easy thing to speak about, and it is not an *easy* thing to experience — but it is a *blessed* thing to experience. What is discipline for? It is to disciple one into the truth of what belongs to us in the calling in which God has been pleased to call us. We are scholars at school and have lessons to learn, and some of them can be pretty hard. In the school of God the lessons are moral lessons. There we learn how to judge ourselves; there we learn how we can become independent of that which at one time we thought we could not live without. However discipline may come (and there are many ways) there is no second cause for the Christian who is in this school of God. A moral formation takes place and we become strengthened; we become resolute and true to the God who called us and become, *practically*, a partaker of His holiness.

"My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" (verse 5). God desires to form us in the moral dignity of sonship even whilst down here. What a revenue of blessing can come out of discipline! — spiritual formation; likeness to Christ; the reproduction of those blessed features so delightful to God as seen in that blessed Man as He moved in His impeccable moral beauty as a Man among men. Some of us faint under it. We hang our heads; we hang our hands; we weaken our knees. We may stop praying — and the drooping of the hands is connected with the stopping of praying. Scripture says, "Lifting up holy hands."

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Timely help in the ministry of our glorious High Priest stops us from falling,

and He ministers to us all that we need. Paul and Silas knew the grace of Christ which kept them in prison circumstances, and yet lifted them spiritually. Such is the priestly ministry of Christ — it carries us through and makes us more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

It is quite obvious from the verses in Hebrews 13 that there is a difference between the heavenly order of things and Judaism. An earthly religious system gathers around men. The religious practices of today are absolutely essential to the carrying on of a worldly organisation.. So in verse 12 "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered *without* the gate." This has to do with holy purpose — that He might set apart the people for holy service; that they might serve God outside of the accredited, organised system of human religion. May this sink deeply into our souls "*suffered without the gate*"

Let us go forth to *Him* — it is the attraction found in Christ! There is the drawing power, If we are found in the outside place as the fruit of being attracted to Him, in that will be the evidence of a power that would make it attractive to others. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

The features of the camp are all around us — let us have our eyes and our hearts attracted to Christ. Separation follows conviction, discipline, attraction. *True separation is brought about by the power of attraction found in Him.*