

## Lessons from Afflictions Ways

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"Take as an example, brethren, of suffering and having patience, the prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed who have endured. Ye have heard of the endurance of Job, and seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is full of tender compassion and pitiful" (James 5: 10, 11).

The Lord may discipline His servant; if so, it must be for his good. One lesson is the teaching of self-judgment, the opposite of self-confidence. How many, alas! have broken down just here. If we learn to distrust self entirely we shall learn to rest in the sufficiency of God. How interested He is in us to take us in hand to educate us, and with what blessed results. How useful is that servant who has so learned as to say truly, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers . . ." ( 2 Corinthians 3: 5, 6).

Psalm 4: 1 (N. Tr.) ". . . In pressure thou has enlarge Me" (Psalm 4:1, N. Tr.). Pressure — the crushing down — the narrowing of the way, all make (in the compensating mercy of God, where He is acknowledged as the God of circumstances, and where the circumstances are accepted as His ordering) for a broadening of the spiritual vision; an enlarging of the heart toward others; and an increase in the knowledge of God. Such was truly evident in the experience of those who could say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions, and God of all encouragement; who encourages us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to encourage those who are in any tribulation whatever, through the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged of God."

". . . We were excessively *pressed* beyond *our* power, . . . that we should not have our trust in ourselves, but *in God* who raises the dead, who has delivered . . . does deliver . . . will also yet deliver" (2 Corinthians 1: 3-11).

Hebrews 12: 6-13 "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

His hand of discipline is guided by His heart of love. That love found us in a condition obnoxious to Him. Praise His Name! He will not leave us as He found us. So He chastens us that we may judge ourselves and that condition in which we were, that we might be rid of that which attaches to us of a world contrary to God and where Christ resisted unto blood.

Neither will that love have us deficient as to the new position which is ours ". . . and scourges every son whom He receiveth."

He disciplines us that there may be formed in us the feelings and desires which belong to sonship. Consequently, we need not to faint under that chastisement, nor to despise it — it is intended neither to crush nor to harden us — but that, being exercised by it, we may reap the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Not only shall we be formed for the world-to-come, but we shall be set as landmarks amongst the brethren — guideposts, so to speak, which shall mark out straight paths for the feet; paths which shall be safe for any who would follow.