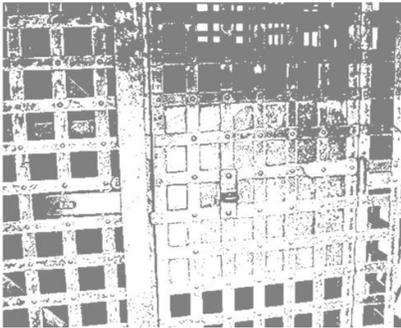


Learned Sympathy

W. M. Taylor



One night, wandering the streets of London in disguise, King Henry the Eighth was met at a bridge by some guards. Because of not giving a good account of what he was doing out at night, the King was locked up in Poultry Compter without any fire, candle, or food. On being released from prison, he made a grant of thirty chaldrons of coals and a quantity of bread for the night prisoners in the Compter.

Experience brings sympathy as it did to the King. Those who

have felt sharp afflictions, terrible convictions, racking doubts, and violent temptations will be zealous in consoling those in a similar condition. Our experience of such difficult times can help us be a blessing and an encouragement to those now facing similar trials.

Made More Compassionate

Downname, 1644

By these afflictions, we are made more compassionate unto others who endure like hardships.

Those that have been sick are apt to pity those whom they see pained with the like diseases. Those who have been imprisoned are more compassionate and helpful in relieving those who are restrained. They who have been pinched with penury and pined with hunger do pity them in the situation they once were.

This was one end why God allowed our Saviour so many afflictions so that He might have compassion on them that are also faced with tremendous trials and tribulations

“There are no crown-wearers in Heaven that were not cross-bearers here below.”

— Spurgeon

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The Bible View



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“Why, Oh Lord?”

Bill Brinkworth

“And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD



bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” Judges 6:13

When an angel of the Lord spoke to Gideon, God’s messenger told Gideon that the Lord was with him. Gideon recalled the state of his country, Israel. He knew that the enemy, the Midianites, had destroyed their crops and flocks (Judges 6:4). Gideon and his nation were in a terrible situation. After hearing the message, he questioned what the angel said to him. He wondered if the Lord was with him, then why were all the terrible things happening to him and his country?

In this situation, God’s hand

of protection was off the country because they were involved in idolatry (Judges 6:10). God used the Midianites to get Israel to a place where they would again turn to God and call on Him (Judges 6:6-7). Although the nation was involved in sin, and God was disciplining Israel, God was still with His people.

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After the Trial

Brooks

God afflicts us for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness. The flowers smell sweetest after a shower. Vines bear better after trimming. The walnut tree is most fruitful when shaken. Children of God grow and thrive when they are afflicted.

Afflictions are the mother of virtue. Manasseh’s chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther could not understand some scriptures till he was in affliction. Christ’s cross was no letter, yet it taught more than all the letters and books ever did.

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“Why, Oh Lord?”

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We need to realize this today. Although a saved person is a child of God, whom He promises never to “... leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5), a wayward Christian may get to where God has to chastise him. Also, a person’s indwelling Holy Spirit may be grieved (Eph. 4:30, I Thes. 5:19) and not working in a person’s life like He wants to, but God will not desert the person.

“For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

Prov.3:12

Too many wonder, as Gideon did, “Why is God allowing this to happen to me?” Often, they feel left alone without His help. They feel abandoned. Most of us have had times our faith was weak, and we doubted and wondered about our situation, as did Gideon.

However, there are many reasons God allows us to go through difficulties, other than being disciplined, as was Israel. Some of those reasons include:

- ◆ To be an encouraging example to others as they observe how a Christian handles an unpleasant situation.
“Blessed be God, even the

“Often, affliction is God’s shepherd dog to drive us back to the fold.”

— Megiddo

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” II Cor 1:3-4

- ◆ To put us in a position where the Lord wants us in the future. Joseph was an example of this. God allowed many misfortunes to happen in the man’s life, so he could help his family and others when famine came to their country. Many times closed doors in our life move us to the open door God desires us to go through.
- ◆ For us to see the mighty hand of God meet needs in our life. Trials and tribulations bring us to a point where we call on Him more and focus on seeing His help and intervention in our lives. When we see His help, our faith is strengthened to face future problems. Hardships are an essential method to get us to grow spiritually! Our trust and reliance grow when we see Him work in our lives.
- ◆ Being a Christian does not mean that you will not face problems. It’s just life! This is a sinful world, and all suffer because of iniquities.
“That ye may be the chil-

“It is the crushed grape that gives out the blood-red juice. it is the suffering soul that breathes the sweetest melodies.” — Hamilton

dren of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Mat. 5:45

If you are going through a difficult time and wonder as Gideon did, examine your life. Is it possible that you are in the situation because you are in a wayward condition? A first step in going through a hard time is to rule out if your behavior or spiritual condition has anything to do with your situation. If it does, earnest prayer may reveal it to you. Quick obedience to any conviction and repentance is what the Lord wants from us in such circumstances.

If no conviction is stirred or past offenses do not come to mind, your situation may be for a completely different reason or divine purpose. Not all problems are God’s judgment on your life. Sometimes God reveals the reason for the trial; sometimes, He does not. Whatever the reason, one should immediately draw closer to Him and wait for Him to do His will in your life.
“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your

hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”

James 4:8

After the Trial

Continued from Page 1

God’s house of correction is His school of instruction. All the stones that came about Stephen’s head did but bring him closer to Christ. The waves lifted Noah’s ark nearer to Heaven. Afflictions lift the soul to rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God.

God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul’s more sweet and full enjoyment of Him. When was it that Stephen saw the heavens open and Christ standing at the right hand of God, but when the stones were thrown at him? Then there was but a short step betwixt him and eternity.

When did God appear in glory to Jacob? It was in the day of his troubles when stones were his pillows, the ground his bed, the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy? Then he saw the angels of God ascending and descending in their glittering robes.

Hard times often bring us closer to God and allow us to see His power and glory.

“Sometimes God makes his people’s troubles contribute to the increase of their greatness, and their sun shines the brighter for having been under a cloud.” — Henry