Hebrews 12:3 (William George Turner) 72071

Bible Treasury: Volume N10, Lest Ye Faint (12:3)

Of all the reproaches flung into the heart of our blessed Lord in the hour of His unspeakable humiliation, none probably had a more bitter sting than the words recorded in Matt. 27:43. “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God.”

The bitterness of its sting lay in the truth of the sneer, and in its apparent reasonableness. For none ever trusted in God as did this Suffering One. His whole life had been one of unwavering confidence in God, so that of no other could be said so truthfully and emphatically, “He trusted in God.”

Yet the scoffers around the cross meant an untruth what time they spoke the truth; for their taunt reproached Him with being veritably an impostor, since God's word and human experience alike affirmed that God had never failed to deliver any who really trusted Him.

So the blinded ignorance of the human heart reasoning rightly, reached a wrong conclusion; and reasonable as the taunt appeared to them the deduction drawn by their prejudiced, bigoted, superficial minds was altogether false. They were entirely ignorant alike of the true God and of Jesus Christ the Sent One.

A further bitterness was added to the reproach by the opportuneness of the moment. “Let Him deliver Him now.” Now—with hands and feet transfixed, with disciples fled, with the crowd gaping, the rulers sneering, the soldiers making game of Him, the robbers speaking insultingly, (see Luke 23 New Trans.)—now, is the moment when the perfect trust, if it exists, should surely be vindicated. So they reasoned, while He endured in meekness and silence the reproaches heaped upon Him.

For not only was He there so soon to make an atonement for the wrong which sin had done to God; to make expiation of the guilt of sin; to give His life a ransom for many, and bear their sins as the Substitute from God; to give Himself a ransom for all to express God's love for the whole world: to die the just One for us the unjust ones to bring as to God, and to fulfill the entire divine purpose for which He became the Lamb, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world and manifested at the end of the times; but He was also there to crown a life of unbroken obedience and complete trust, by a death of entire devotion,

The moment of vindication was not then; He was to be faithful unto death. Deeper waters were yet to be crossed; depths of unutterable loneliness and anguish had yet to be fathomed by the patient, spotless Sufferer, but His unbroken trust in the One who sent Him should yet find expression in those words of sublime confidence uttered at the last, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.”

Yet again, consider the sneer flung into the sensitive heart of our Lord, by the chief priests and scribes and elders, who could say, “Let Him deliver Him now, IF He will have Him.” “If He will have Him!” and with these words in His ears, the lonely Sufferer hangs in silence with no answering heavens to witness to Him then; while yet a further note reveals the actual forces arrayed against Him as the voice of Satan, in their concluding reminder— “For He said, I am the Son of God.”

Here is the echo of the old wilderness temptation— “If Thou be the Son of God;” and here also the perpetual temptation of the people of God in all ages—if—why—? If you are the child of God why is this allowed to come upon you? If you do trust Him, why are you left in this condition or circumstance?

The Lord Jesus has left us an example that we should follow His steps. God had one Son without sin, but none without suffering; and the lesson of it all to our hearts is to trust Him at all times; in spite of the enemy, in spite of misunderstanding, in spite of our own hearts. Evermore while passing through the world the suggestion of Satan will come—to act independently as though man were self-sufficient; to act recklessly, depending upon a garbled quotation of Scripture, may be; to act cautiously and so avoid the cross with its reproach. But the Lord Jesus has met them all; and, spite of appearances, spite of heart-breaking reproach, spite of loneliness and general desertion, He trusted in God, and unswervingly finished the course; leaving us an example and an inspiration, that we, considering Him, may not faint in out minds, but run with endurance the race before us, looking unto Jesus the Leader and Completer of faith.

For the cross with its shame was not the end of that life of wondrous trust and devotedness. The glorious resurrection on the third day began to answer the questions of the taunts of Calvary, for He was raised by the glory of the Father, and declared to be Son of God in power by resurrection of the dead. His joyful ascension up to where He was before, answered the taunting query “If He will have Him"; for “He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens that He might fill all things.” His coronation with glory and honor; His session at the right hand of power until His enemies be made His footstool; His return in power and great glory with His saints and holy angels; His kingdom and eternal glory; all combine to furnish an answer to the trusting devoted heart once broken by reproach.

“Beloved, now are we children of God"; and as we await the manifestation of the sons of God, let us more closely contemplate the divine perfection of our adorable Lord, so that we may gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope with perfect steadfastness in the grace which will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. For when by the grace of God we too shall sit with Him in His throne, then shall the life of trust in God be eternally vindicated in the person of Christ and His members.

Till then may we say:-

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