

Psalms - Commentaries by Frederick W. Lavington

Pressure: Normal and Needed, Pressure (4:1)

"In pressure Thou hast enlarged me" (Psa. 4:1 JND).

My desire is to speak on the verse, "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me." It is a principle of the ways of God which is unfailing in its application from the beginning right up to the world to come. The word that is used for pressure carries with it the thought of tribulation, suffering or trial. We are all familiar with those words, and we are familiar with the things themselves. I desire to see if we can get help in seeing the application.

There are certain things which would not have come in had sin not come in. If man had not asserted his will in defiance of the will of God, certain things would not have come in—for instance, redemption, judgment, and the capacity to sift and discern so as to put good on one side and evil on another. Had not sin come in, the occasion for these and many other things would not have arisen. But, sin having come in, then God, the God who loves us and whom we love, has established a principle on the line of which He moves and under the influence of which we come. The first mover on that line was God, so the blessed God would say that if sin, and with sin death and many other things, has come in, then the divine activities must move in certain ways. If God would say that, we must not be surprised if the whole cast of things which embraces the manner of life and the very purpose of the people of God being upon earth should follow along those same lines. So, the first movement of the blessed God, sin having come in, is the indication on the part of God that He was prepared to suffer. He was prepared to move on the line of suffering that He might affect recovery in a manner of glory which transcended all possibilities, had sin not come in.

And so the first word from the blessed God is, "The woman's seed"-Christ-on the line of suffering, love and sacrifice. If that be so with the blessed God, then we are prepared that the same shall be true of the Son of His love, for they go "both of them together." From the moment that God announced "the woman's seed," everything from that moment up to the cross indicates that the divine mind had brought itself to this-suffering, sacrifice and surrender. The Lord Jesus Christ has passed by the way of death. Thus the Old Testament is replete with those things which suggest to us the love of the Lord in suffering, the pathway of the Lord under pressure and then, finally, that supreme pressure of the garden of Gethsemane, of the cross and of the tomb. It is on that line that God inaugurates the principle, "In pressure Thou hast enlarged me," He Himself giving the character to it and carrying it through. If that be so, we must not be surprised if we come in on the line of pressure.

One can see, I believe, that in the ways of God pressure, trial and testing are the elements which preserve the wholesomeness and the purity of the body. It is a wonderful thing how it works out from beginning to end. Take, for instance, in the first words that the blessed God addresses to the woman, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Just think how that has worked out in the myriads of those who have come into the world! "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." It is inevitable that God should be on that line; it could not be otherwise. And what I would like to suggest to you is that we should not look upon pressure or suffering or trial or affliction as abnormal—as the unexpected or that which carries with it the sense of shock or surprise, but that, in the spirit of our minds, we accept it as a principle of the house of God that enlargement comes in proportion to the pressure.

I might put it in another way: The enlargement carries with it the thought of the manifestation, or expansion, of the light of the glory which will shine out in the world to come. If there had been no sin, there would not be any "world to come." I suppose the occasion for it would scarcely exist. But what it is in its essence is that the blessed God reserves that in the millennial day, in which He will give the answer to all the pressure, affliction and knowledge of Himself gained in these things, He will give that day to the manifestation of light, which consists in the knowledge of God that has been learned in the place of affliction and trial.

I think it would help us very much if we could cease to look upon tribulation, affliction and the like things as calamity, misfortune or the unforeseen and embrace in the spirit of our minds that it is a normal element of the house of God. One could go so far as to say that God maintains a certain amount of pressure or suffering in His house among His people as a necessary component, without which we could not get on. And if we view it that way, then I think we shall, perhaps, become the subjects of it or witness it to others, without the sense that something unforeseen or calamitous had happened. We would view it rather in this way, that there is one—this brother, that sister, myself—who is under the tender and gracious handling of God as an essential part of that which has to be maintained in His house, which is pressure.

Pressure: Normal and Needed, Education (119:71-75)

Beside being preservative, I think we can see that pressure is educational. How do we learn God? We learn God through His handling of us. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." That is how we learn God. Therefore, it seems that those of us who have been longest on the way, upon looking back, are prepared to say that the things which have been our definite blessing and which have done the most to mold us in the knowledge of God have been our trials. David-like, we can say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (Psalm 119:71). "Before I was afflicted I went astray" (vs. 67). "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (vs. 75). So it is of great blessing to the soul to be able to say of the things that come upon us, "Here is my education; God is educating me." Take it up on that line.

