

Romans 4:2-5 (Frederick W. Lavington) 123130

Pressure: Normal and Needed, Governmental Pressure (4:2-5)

So, in all these ways, we trace that the blessed God is effecting His intentions not only or principally governmentally. Perhaps I had better explain that a little more before I close. By "governmentally" I think the hand of God comes in upon us in pressure where the will is unsubdued and defiant to the will of God. I do not think that is true of many. I think with regard to most, speaking from observation of the children of God, they do not carry a will that is intentionally defiant of the will of God or that purposely goes contrary to what He shows to be right.

Where infirmity, failure and breakdown come in, it is generally the case that the motive is good, but the intelligence is not good and the communion with God is not good. But it is not the deliberate pursuing of a course which is contrary to the mind of God. When I say, "I am going to have that object at all costs," that is where the will is asserted against God and where the governmental dealing comes in. I think that if you follow it through Scripture, you will find that this is so. But, on the other hand, the most of those that are laid aside among us are those who, in large measure, accept the will of God. Many of those who are laid aside among us are absolutely the choicest ones of the flock. How often this has been verified! The other day I saw a dear sister in her early forties, who was afflicted with cancer, pain and suffering, knowing that very soon, a few weeks or so, she would be with the Lord. Everyone who could flocked to her bedside. One got the impression that he could not afford not to go there, to get her impressions of Christ, for she was in the hand of God.

Again, there is a similar case of a dear sister well-known to me, who has been with the Lord many long years now. She had pilgrimages to her bedside from all parts of England. It would be like sacrilege to say she was governmentally there. But why was she laid aside in the midst of her years, when so much of activity might be possible? There is plenty of activity. It is that kind of pressure which lays one aside to meditate, to pray, to bear up, it may be by name, each one individually in your own company where you are, to consider for you in all your circumstances, when you, in the bustle of your lives, have scarce time to bend the knee to God morning and night. You may have among you some laid aside to whom you go, as an act of mercy, to visit, but who are considering you profoundly. You may be the debtor to that brother or sister who may be carrying you along in prayer before God, that He may preserve you in the temptations, trials and testings you have in your activity.

So, we should not look upon pressure, affliction and the like as being calamity or misfortune, but rather a rich endowment which proceeds from springs which have their origin in the heart of God Himself, who, at the outset, moved on the line of sacrifice and surrender, who committed His Beloved Son on the line of sacrifice and surrender, and who maintains His household up to the world to come on those same lines. How beautifully it is expressed in those words, "We [also] ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"! We ought to lay down our lives for them. Consider what it means! Where is the perfection of it? In Christ! In what spirit did the blessed Lord come? In the spirit of the God who gave Him.

In view of these things, motives are clarified, actions are purified, the wholesome atmosphere of the house of God is maintained. Breathing conditions, so to speak, are preserved in a world that is full of the foul gases of hell, corruption and violence, and an atmosphere pure and sweet is maintained along the lines that "in pressure Thou hast enlarged me." So Peter addresses the beloved saints as regards their present place of trial, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:7-8).

So, may we take it home and not speak too much of misfortune — not speak too much of calamity — not speak too much of being shocked when this or that comes — but accept it in the quiet, peaceful serenity of peace with God, for it is along those lines that we reach it. You know your Saviour — He "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also" (Rom. 4:2-5, 5:3).

I just put it up to you: Do you glory — do you boast — in tribulation? Is it so? It is so if you understand it. If you see the place it has as an ordinary principle in the ways of God, you will "glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." So that link is perfect. God moved in divine love at the outset to sacrifice from Himself and the blessed Lord Jesus, and He passes us through the same line. The link — the circle — is perfect. It ends up in the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us.