

Devotional Thoughts :: Correcting in love--not smiting in wrath! -pink

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Correcting in love--not smiting in wrath!

(Arthur Pink, "Comfort for Christians")

"Whom the Lord loves, He chastens." Hebrews 12:6

The Father's wise and loving discipline is in view here.

It is of first importance that we learn to draw a sharp distinction between Divine punishment and Divine chastisement. The distinction is very simple, yet is it often lost sight of. God's people can never by any possibility be punished for their sins, for God has already punished them at the Cross. The Lord Jesus, our Blessed Substitute, suffered the full penalty of all our guilt, hence it is written "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." Neither the justice nor the love of God, will permit Him to again exact payment of what Christ discharged to the full. The difference between punishment and chastisement lies not in the nature of the sufferings of the afflicted. There is a threefold distinction between the two.

First, the character in which God acts. In the former God acts as Judge--in the latter as Father. Sentence of punishment is the act of a judge--a penal sentence passed on those charged with guilt. Punishment can never fall upon the child of God in this judicial sense, because his guilt was all transferred to Christ, "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

But while the believer's sins cannot be punished, while the Christian cannot be condemned (Romans 8:3)--yet he may be chastised. The Christian occupies an entirely different position from the non-Christian: he is a member of the Family of God. The relationship which now exists between him and God is that of parent and child; and as a son he must be disciplined for wrongdoing. Folly is bound up in the hearts of all God's children, and the rod is necessary to rebuke, to subdue, to humble.

The second distinction between Divine punishment and Divine chastisement lies in the recipients of each. The objects of the former are His enemies. The subjects of the latter are His children. As the Judge of all the earth, God will yet take vengeance on all His foes. As the Father of His family, God maintains discipline over all His children. The one is judicial--the other parental.

A third distinction is seen in the design of each. The

one is retributive--the other remedial. The one flows from His anger--the other from His love. Divine punishment is never sent for the good of unrepentant sinners--but for the honoring of God's law and the vindicating of His government. But Divine chastisement is sent for the well-being of His children: "God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." (Heb. 12:10)

When the believer is smarting under the rod let him not say--'God is now punishing me for my sins.' That can never be! That is most dishonoring to the blood of Christ. God is correcting you in love--not smiting in wrath!

Chastisement proceeds from God's goodness and faithfulness, and is one of the greatest blessings for which we have to thank Him. Chastisement evidences our Divine sonship. It is designed for our good, to promote our highest interests. Look beyond the rod--to the all-wise hand which wields it!

Some of the saintliest of God's people, some of the most obedient of His children--have been and are the greatest sufferers. Oftentimes, God's chastenings are corrective. They are sent to empty us of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. They are given to discover to us hidden transgressions, and to teach us the plague of our own hearts. Or again, chastisements are sent to strengthen our faith, to raise us to higher levels of experience, to bring us into a condition of usefulness. Still again, Divine chastisement is sent as a preventative--to keep under pride, to save us from being unduly elated over success in God's service.

Remember, your afflictions are among the "all things" which work together for good. Learn, then, to look upon trials as proofs of God's love--purging, pruning, and purifying you.

Re: Correcting in love--not smiting in wrath! -pink - posted by enid, on: 2006/10/28 5:25

Correction. Unwanted, but necessary.

Purging, pruning, purifying?

Oh, what a painful process!

But it is the only way. God has to correct us, or else, we are perfect, right?

We are a long way from being perfect. Only God's grace keeps us in standing with Him.

Thank God.

Thank God for the blood of Jesus.

God bless.