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A Study of the Problem of Suffering and Chastening

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A STUDY OF THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AND CHASTENING

by

Lester A. Wetzstein

A Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	2
A. The Problem	2
Questioned from childhood	2
Confused Christians	2
Why do Christians suffer?	3
Relation of suffering to chastening	3
The problem stated	3
B. Importance of the Study	3
Suffering a universal experience	3
So many Christians are confused	4
Christians need to understand spiritual graces	4
A prepared ministry	4
C. Objectives and Limitations	4
Objectives pertaining to purpose	4
Objectives pertaining to content	5
Limitation of source materials	5
Limitation of subject inclusion	5
D. Organization	6
Terminology located and defined	6
Christian suffering experienced	7
Chastening experienced and the relation to suffering noted	7
Positive conclusions	7

CHAPTER

PAGE

II. BIBLICAL HEBREW AND GREEK TERMINOLOGY FOR SUFFERING	9
A. Introduction	9
B. Suffering in the Old Testament	10
C. Suffering in the New Testament	11
D. Summary	13
III. BIBLICAL HEBREW AND GREEK TERMINOLOGY FOR CHASTENING	15
A. Introduction	16
B. Chastening in the Old Testament	16
C. Chastening in the New Testament	19
D. Summary	20
IV. THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIAN SUFFERING	22
A. Introduction	23
The problem created by Christian suffering	23
The righteous do suffer	23
The content of the chapter	24
B. The Scope of Christian Suffering	24
Christian suffering in human experience	24
The relation of the physical to the spiritual in	
Christian suffering	25
Obedience in Christian suffering effects person-	
ality and character development	26
The duration of Christian suffering	27
C. The Elements of Christian Suffering	28
Some types of Christian suffering	28
Suffering as a human	28

Suffering as the result of practiced sin	30
Suffering as the fellowship of His sufferings	32
Suffering through false accusation	34
Some benefits of Christian suffering	35
Suffering builds character	35
Suffering turns sorrow to joy	36
Suffering provides a witness	36
Suffering becomes a means of grace	37
Two misconceptions of Christian suffering	38
That suffering implies sin	38
That a victorious Christian will not suffer	38
D. Summary	39
V. THE EXPERIENCE OF CHASTENING	40
A. Introduction	41
The goal of the chapter	41
Chastening defined	41
B. Value and Purpose of Chastening	42
The value	42
Value based on the nature and attributes of God	42
Essential nature of Love	42
Attributes of justice and mercy	43
Value based on the nature of man and his need	46
The purpose	47
Perfecting the man	49

CHAPTER

PAGE

Proving his sonship	53
Preparing for service	55
C. Chastening Implimented	59
Sources of chastening	59
God-initiated	59
Man-initiated	60
Methods of chastening	60
Positive--instruction	61
Negative--correction	63
Instruments employed	64
Love, Holy Spirit, suffering, The Word, prayer, the cross	64
D. Chastening related to Christian suffering	66
The human medium	66
The cleansing and pruning process	67
Suffering and the role of faith	67
E. Summary	68
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	70
A. Summary	71
B. Conclusions	72
C. Suggestions for Further Study	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY	75
APPENDIX	80

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

Questioned from childhood. The mid-week prayer meeting was the setting that provided the first incentive for this study. The mystery of the subject has been in the background of the writer's thinking from his early teens. As the people united in prayer, they would follow much of the usual pattern week after week. Occasionally some particular suffering of unusual severity prompted the people to unite in praying for deliverance. The writer definitely had no thought of questioning their faith. He is confident that they were sincere in the prayer they were offering. Then in the same prayer someone would pray for the grace of patience. With that prayer, the phrase of Romans 5:3, "... tribulation worketh patience," kept flashing through his mind.

Confused Christians. The years that followed only served to strengthen the questions raised in his mind. It became more evident that many Christians were confused about the matter of suffering in their lives. At least, if there were some that were not confused, they gave little evidence of their convictions by a positive witness to the value of suffering. In most cases a Christian expressed his concern by showing sympathy for the one afflicted. To the understanding of the writer that constituted the full extent of Christian responsibility. Suffering can only be endured and bring no positive blessing according to such an attitude.

Why do Christians suffer? That question became a sub-conscious puzzle. Some books were read, but the question was not answered because the writer felt that most approaches to the question tried to answer the present cause and comfort the people in it. Surely there must be a greater purpose in suffering.

Relation of suffering to chastening. As the writer began to study his Bible more deeply, the relationship of chastening to suffering seemed to be inferred from many scriptures. "... My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chaseth." Hebrews 12:5,6. In this way the problem of Christian suffering and chastening grew in the writer's thinking until it materialized in this study.

The problem stated. Therefore, the problem of this study was to show that the ideas of suffering and chastening individually are derived from more than one original term and are universal realities throughout biblical history on the basis of terminology which appears in most books of the Bible, that both suffering and chastening are realities in human experience, and that suffering comprises one of the essential instruments in the greater purpose of the experience of chastening.

B. Importance of the Study

Suffering a universal experience. The reality of suffering is one of the most universal facts of human experience. From a child's first suffering of hunger pangs to the experience of death this fact

is a recurring reality of life. People will gladly spend a fortune to remove or alleviate suffering. Some would even commit suicide to escape it.

So many Christians are confused. The fact that so many Christians are confused and disturbed about it increases the need for a better understanding of it. The believer's hope and the spiritual grasp of eternal issues should equip him to face human difficulties. The Christian possesses a faith that makes the resources of divine strength available.

Christians need to understand spiritual graces. Therefore, if there is any work of grace available in the relation of suffering to chastening, the Christian should be alerted to them and use them.

A prepared ministry. Furthermore, the writer felt the necessity for a better understanding of the problem in order to minister more thoroughly to the needs of his people. It is the moral obligation of every minister to use his full capacity in service. That implies a responsibility in searching out every spiritual grace to enrich his ministry of service.

C. Objectives and Limitations

Objectives pertaining to purpose. As already stated, the purpose of the study was to determine the significance of suffering as related to chastening. This study has shown that the scriptures clearly indicate a vital relation. It is the hope of the writer that the findings presented with their conclusions will be as great a blessing to the

reader as they are to him.

Objectives pertaining to content. The writer endeavored to make the basic background study and content scriptural with supporting evidence from other writers in the same area. Much more scriptural evidence could have been included in the body of the study. However, if the reader desires further study, the listings of the appendix will provide many hours of rewarding study.

Limitation of source materials. A limitation was imposed upon several areas of source materials. The standard sources for locating the root terms and their appearances in the scriptures are listed in the Introduction to Chapter Two. All scriptures quoted are from the Authorized Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated. The authority of the scriptures was a basic assumption for the entire study. There, no further effort was made to present argument or proof for their study and use.

Limitation of subject inclusion. Because of the nature and extent of suffering in the general field of human experience, the writer limited the study of suffering to that of Christian experience and based on scriptural evidence. However, supporting evidence was included from other writers. These findings were then used as they provide background for a fuller understanding of the problem of chastening. Chastening was studied only as it pertains to Christian discipline. If there is sufficient evidence to merit a study of chastening and the non-Christian, that would be a subject for further study.

D. Organization

Terminology located and defined. The organization of the study was inductive to the extent that the scriptural findings formed the basis of the outline as they suggested various decisions. The Hebrew and Greek terminology for suffering was located and defined in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three the Old and New Testament terminology for chastening was located and defined. It was not the intention of this area of the study to be exhaustive. Only the root words directly translated as either suffering or chastening were located and defined. Some other words were also included on the basis of close root relationship or implication.

The general use of certain terms should be oriented in the mind of the reader as he finds them throughout the study. One area involves the distinction between "suffering" and "Christian suffering." The former is a general term designating the inclusion of all humanity. The latter specifically points up that experience which is distinctive because the person bearing it is a Christian. The difference is pointed out to show that a Christian responds to a given situation in a different way from that of a non-Christian. It is because the person is different, not because the experience is different. Furthermore, Christian suffering is identified as an instrument utilized in achieving the greater aims and purposes of chastening.

The use of the term "perfecting" needs to be clarified. It was used to designate that process by which a man is groomed morally and spiritually through the use of the human element. The writer tried to show how God uses human experience to guide man's behavior or conduct.

The use of the term was not meant to suggest the work of sanctification. The perfecting as suggested in this study might be illustrated by the work of the cabinet-maker who produces a beautifully polished bowl from a piece of rough wood stock.

Christian suffering experienced. The experience of Christian suffering made up the content of Chapter Four. The scope of suffering was studied to determine the extent to which suffering is a part of a Christian's experience. Then some of the elements of Christian suffering were studied on the basis of types, benefits, and misconceptions.

Chastening experienced. The experience of chastening was the subject of Chapter Five. The value of chastening was based on the nature and attributes of God as well as the nature and need of man. Its purpose was determined as: perfecting the man, proving his sonship, and preparing him for service. The implementation of chastening was studied with regard to source, method, and the instruments employed. Finally, several additional phases relating suffering to chastening were discussed.

Summary and conclusions. Chapter Six contained a summary of the study. The conclusions are statements of some of the positive applications of the study. The writer hopes that the truths contained in them will encourage any one reading this study to submit himself willingly to God's purpose in chastening.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

HEBREW AND GREEK TERMINOLOGY FOR SUFFERING

A. Introduction

Terminology, particularly that which is clothed in technical form or phraseology, is not likely to command a high level of interest to the average layman in a study such as this. However, there is definite merit in a first-hand acquaintance with the original forms with regard to their shades of meaning both stated and implied. Since an idea is often clarified by the meaning of the terminology used to convey that idea, it was the purpose of this chapter to locate and briefly define those forms in the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament which depict in their derivatives the experience of suffering in its various aspects as found in the English Bible. Also, this revealed the universality of suffering. Since suffering observed in experience was considered in later chapters, it was the chief concern here to examine some of the terminology and the various shades of meaning in each instance.

The standard source employed for determining the location and frequency of the original Hebrew and Greek words used was Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.¹ The quoted definitions and translations are taken from the Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon² and the Analyti-

¹Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (New York: Abingdon and Cokesbury Press, 1951).

²Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (London, Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, n.d.).

oal Greek Lexicon.¹ These source references were used throughout the study. Therefore, any definitions not footnoted are to be understood as coming from these sources.

B. Suffering in the Old Testament

One family of words used in the Old Testament to convey the idea of suffering is the Hebrew root נָסָה (nasa). It occurs more than six hundred and fifty times. Some of its cognates are translated as "suffer", "bear", "spare", "wear", and "yield". Proverbs 19:19 reads, "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment". Another illustration is found in the verse, "....take me not away in thy long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke". Jeremiah 15:15.

Another family of words is that found in the root צָרָה (tsar) appearing over two hundred times in its various forms. Some of the more prominent translations are: "afflict", "distress", "sorrow", "tribulation", "trouble", "adversity", and "tribulation". An example is found in Deuteronomy 4:30, "when thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days....". And again in I Samuel 10:19, "And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations".

A third family group is that formed on the root רָדָה (rudh). It appears four times and is translated as "misery", "wanderings" or "afflictions". An example of this root form is found in Lamentations

¹Analytical Greek Lexicon (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.).

1:7, "Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old...".

The group of words built on the radicals יָגַח (yagah) is employed more than fifteen times in such as: Genesis 42:38; 44:31; Esther 9:22; Psalms 13:2; 107:39; 116:3; Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Jeremiah 8:18; 20:18; 31:13, and Ezekiel 23:33. In these instances the translation is given as either "sorrow" or "affliction". For instance, Psalms 13:2 reads, "How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?"

The last family of words for particular mention here is built on the root חָבַל (chabal). The various forms of the root appear ten times and are translated as "sorrow". These locations are in II Samuel 22:6; Job 21:17; 39:3; Psalms 18:4, 5; 116:3; Isaiah 13:8; Jeremiah 13:21; 49:24; and Hosea 13:13.

C. Suffering in the New Testament

Since the New Testament is more widely read and understood by the average layman than the Old Testament, the passages and words studied here and translated as suffering or its synonyms may be more familiar and therefore of greater interest.

The largest family of words, and in many respects the most meaningful of the terms expressing suffering, is developed from the verb form πάσχω (paschō). In its various forms it is found forty-two times. It is translated "suffer" thirty-nine times, "to be vexed" once, "feel" once, and "passion" once. Its primary verb meaning is "to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful)". In Matthew

16:21; 17:12, 15 it means "to be affected by a thing, whether good or bad, to suffer or endure evil". As an absolute in Luke 22:15 and Luke 24:26 the meaning is "to suffer death". As a noun in Romans 8:18; II Corinthians 1:5, 6 and 7; and Philippians 3:10 it refers to "what is suffered; suffering, affliction" and in Romans 7:5 and Galations 5:24 as "emotion" and "passion". The passage in Acts 26:23 expresses the idea of one that is "capable of suffering", "liable to suffer", or "destined to suffer".

A compound of the preceeding form is *προπάσχω* (propaschō) and means "to undergo hardship previously: suffer before". This form appears once in I Thessalonians 2:2. Another form similar to this is *συμπάσχω* (sumpaschō) meaning "to experience pain jointly or of the same kind - especially persecution"; that is, "to suffer with". It is used twice: in I Corinthians 12:26 "to suffer with, sympathize"; and in Romans 8:17 "to suffer as another, endure corresponding sufferings". Still another verb formed from this same root is that of *κακοπαθέω* (kakopatheō) which literally means "to suffer evil or affliction". It is used four times in the New Testament. In James 5:13 it is translated "to be vexed, troubled, dejected"; while II Timothy 2:3 means "to show endurance in trials and afflictions". The noun form of James 5:10 pertains to "a state of suffering, affliction, trouble"; or at least endurance in it.

The verb *μακροθυμέω* (makrothumeō) appears fourteen times in the New Testament: nine times as a verb, four times as a noun, and once as an adverb. In the verb form it means "to be long enduring, long suffering, indulgent, to have patience, or wait with patient ex-

pectation". The noun form portrays "patience, patient enduring of evil, slowness of avenging injuries, forbearance, and patient expectation". As an adverb in Acts 26:3, the Apostle Paul says "...wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently".

The verb form $\delta\iota\acute{\omega}\kappa\omega$ (diōkō) among other meanings is translated "to persecute" twenty times. There are yet eight major verb forms translated as synonymous with suffering that appear in various forms over one hundred times.

For the full listing of terms with their locations the reader is encouraged to consult the appendix.

D. Summary

The information presented on the preceeding pages of this chapter served to indicate in a small way the extensiveness of the problem of suffering in its many shades of meaning in root form as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew words נָסָה (nasa), צָר (tsar), רָדַח (rudh), יָגַח (yagah), and חָבַל (chabal), and the Greek words πάσχω (paschō), προπάσχω (propaschō), συμπάσχω (sumpaschō), κακοπαθέω (kakopatheō), μακροθυμέω (makrothumeō), and $\delta\iota\acute{\omega}\kappa\omega$ (diōkō) were noted with the meaning of each. Chapters IV and V have enlarged on the meaning of suffering which is observed as a part of human experience.

The terms listed in this Chapter and in the appendix indicated that suffering is not derived from one term alone. It is defined by and related to many root words. Suffering is also a universal ex-

perience through all periods of biblical history as indicated by the number of books in the Bible containing the words.

Therefore, three goals were achieved in this Chapter. (1) The various terms defined as suffering in their various shades of meaning were located, (2) that the idea of suffering is derived from many root terms was shown, and (3) that the idea of suffering is universal in all periods of biblical history on the basis of terms which are located in most books of the Bible was shown.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

BIBLICAL HEBREW AND GREEK TERMINOLOGY FOR CHASTENING

A. Introduction

The present chapter is similar in form and purpose to that of Chapter Two. The same source materials¹ were employed except where otherwise noted. The Hebrew and Greek terminology for chastening with corresponding definitions and illustrations from the Bible translations forms the content of this chapter. Those originals specifically translated as meaning "chastening" were studied. In addition to these, there were other words similar in meaning by association and/or implication which were included for their particular value and contribution to the entire study.

The reader is encouraged to consult the appendix for a full listing of the terms with their locations. He will observe that the terms are specifically represented in many books of the Bible. As these terms find expression in life experience, they are found as a part of God's total plan and purpose for His children throughout the entire Bible.

B. Chastening in the Old Testament

One of the larger groups of words translated as "chasten" in the Hebrew is the root יָסַר (yasar). It is used over forty times

¹See Introduction to Chapter Two.

and means in general: "to chasten, correct, punish, admonish, exhort", and "instruct". In the Niphal¹ it is translated once as "chastised", once as "corrected", twice as "instructed", and once as "taught". The Piel² form is used to convey the sense of "bind" once, "chasten" eight times, "chastise" nine times, "correct" six times, "instruct" five times, "punish" once, and "teach" once. Certain passages where יָסַר (yasar) occurs indicate "a lesson effected by the direct harsh action of God upon the Nation".³

Another form is that of the root אָסַר (asar), and means "to bind", "to put in bonds, to fetter, to imprison", and "to reduce to bondage". The sense of correction is derived from these shades of meaning. This root in its various forms appears over fifty times as in Proverbs 13:24 "...he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" A.S.V., and in Isaiah 52:5 "...the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed". A.S.V.

Still another series of words is built on the radicals forming the root יָכַח (yakaah) and appears about sixty times. Its most extensive use is in the translation "reprove" twenty-three times, and "rebuke" thirteen times. Still other shades of meaning are: "to reproach, convict, correct, punish, chasten, judge, and convince". A good illustration is found in Proverbs 9:8, "Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate thee: Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee." A.S.V.

¹Hebrew grammatical term indicating simple passive.

²Hebrew grammatical term indicating intensive active.

³Jim Alvin Sanders, Suffering As Divine Discipline in the Old Testament and Post Biblical Judaism (Rochester: Colgate Rochester Divinity School, November, 1955), p. 21.

The Hebrew אָנָה (anah), a primary root, means "to be afflicted, depressed, humbled". In the Piel it means "to oppress, subdue, afflict, or humble". In all its forms it appears over seventy times but is most prominent in the Piel where it is translated "afflict" thirty-seven times, and "humble" ten times. It is illustrated in Daniel 10:12, "... Fear not Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words".

Turning to another phase or approach to the subject, the root נָסָה (nasah) presents an interesting aspect. It is translated twenty times with the meaning "to prove" and twelve times as "tempt". In II Chronicles 32:31 this word is used in regard to the record of King Hezekiah, "... God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart". Of the same thought as that of (nasah) but with the added sense of "refining, purifying, or purging" is the word

צָרַף (tsaraph). It is most often related to the thought of refining or purifying metals and appears over twenty times in the Old Testament.

The last Hebrew root to be presented is בָּחַן (bachan). This word in its forms appears about thirty times in all and of these it means "try" seventeen times. Other meanings are "examine, prove," and "tempt". In Psalms 11:5 the word is translated as follows: "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth."

C. Chastening in the New Testament

There are three major classes of words to be studied from the New Testament Greek. The first is that of παιδεύω (paideuō) and appears about twenty times. Its most common shades of meaning are "to chasten, instruct", or "teach". By implication, it is used to convey "disciplinary correction" and "nurture". The verb is related to the noun παῖς (pais) which is a child in respect to parental concern. "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world", I Corinthians 11:32.

The second verb form is πειράζω (peirazō) which is translated "tempt" twenty-nine times and is used over forty times in all. Other meanings are "to examine, prove, subject to trial", and "try". This word is used in Revelations 2:2 in reference to the church at Ephesus, "... and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars".

The verb, δοκιμάζω (dokimazō), is the last word to be observed in this part of the study. Some of the various meanings are: "to prove, try, examine, scrutinize, put to the proof, judge worthy, to decide after examination, distinguish," and "discern". It conveys the thought of looking to the finished product after it has endured the test. It is used over twenty times but most predominantly with the thought of "proving" in ten locations. This is illustrated in I Peter 1:7,

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.

D. Summary

Some of the more prominent Hebrew and Greek terms used to convey the idea of chastening and the trial or affliction that so often accompanies the experience were considered in this chapter. Those words from the Hebrew were: יָסַר (yasar), אָסַר (asar), יָכַח (yakach), אָנַח (anah), נָסַח (nasah), and בָּחַן (bachan). The words from the New Testament Greek are rich in meaning even though they are fewer in number. They were:

παιδεύω (paideuō), πειράζω (peirazō), and δοκιμάζω (dokimazō).

The meaning of chastening is not derived from only one root word in the Hebrew or Greek. This fact was verified by the variety of words presented which contribute individually to the full meaning of chastening. God's use of chastening is a universal reality in all ages of His dealings with man. It is not restricted to any specific period of biblical history. The table appended listing the locations of these words shows the universality of chastening.

It is to be noted that only the simple or root meanings were presented in this chapter with a fuller explanation and interpretation reserved for Chapter Five.

Therefore, the following goals have been achieved in this chapter: (1) some of the terms related to chastening were located and defined, (2) that the idea of chastening is derived from many root terms was shown, and (3) that chastening is observed as a universal

reality in all periods of biblical history on the basis of terms which are located in most books of the Bible.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

A. Introduction

The problem created by Christian suffering. To read the Bible and fail to see the record of human suffering both endured and promised is to leave the Bible a closed book. The Old Testament is hardly opened before the record of the Fall is seen with sorrow and suffering the promised lot of every human being who enters this earthly journey. The New Testament is written in a world of suffering. It was written by men who had felt the lash of persecution and the cold chains of imprisonment, and written to Christians who were constantly facing the same hazards. The ministry of Jesus was so crowded with healing the blind and deaf, the demon-possessed, and the lepers, that He had difficulty finding opportunity in the pressing crowds to preach and teach His disciples concerning His Kingdom. The problem of suffering still looms as a mystery and challenges the faith of every human even after the noisy clamor of the novice in suffering; after the veteran adds his weighty philosophy; after the more or less pained and afflicted people add their feelings of sarcasm, cynicism and bitterness; and after the slanderous attacks of Satan against God and the faith of His children.

The righteous do suffer. The New Testament reveals the truth of the reality that the righteous do suffer. One cannot escape the dark face of tragedy perpetrated in the death of the Prince of Righteousness on the most cruel cross the sadistic mind of man could devise.

It might be that to try to explain suffering is a clear indication that one has never suffered himself. It is not necessarily a problem of the mind but rather a fact of life, a mystery that can only find satisfaction through faith in God.

Believing that there is merit and hope in a study of the biblical record concerning suffering, this study has been undertaken in the hope that through it may be seen some of the deeper and more precious truths of the disciplined Christian life in the chastened believer.

The content of the chapter. To this end, the writer endeavored to examine the scope of Christian suffering. In this area an attempt was made to see the extent to which this problem enters into human experience, the relation of the physical to the spiritual, and the responsibility of the individual in his own personality and character development. The elements of Christian suffering were studied in order that a glimpse into this area of human experience might be provided to prepare for the later study and relationship of God's plan and purpose in chastening.

B. The Scope of Christian Suffering

Christian suffering in human experience. It is quickly seen that suffering is the heritage of the bad, the penitent, and the righteous. Each one came to the cross. The bad thief was crucified, the penitent thief was crucified, and the Son of God was crucified.¹ By

¹Oswald Chambers, The Discipline of Suffering (London: Simpkin Marshall, Limited, 1941), p. 21.

this is clearly seen the widespread heritage of suffering. The Apostle Paul sets forth the Christian's attitude toward suffering in II Corinthians 6:3-5, "Giving no offense in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the minister of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings...".

Relation of the physical to the spiritual in Christian suffering.

The life of Christ is striking evidence of this relationship. The Bible says that He became sin who knew no sin. He suffered - the righteous for the unrighteous.

Christ's endurance of the contradiction of sinners was out of consideration to them. He might have saved Himself, and have made them to feel His contradiction against themselves. But He suffered Himself, instead of making them to suffer

.....
In love He endured seeing them the opposite of that which He could love.¹

The record of Genesis clearly indicates that sorrow came in the wake of sin, not as the companion and ally of it. Sorrow is seen as a deep sense of loss or marring of the image of God in man. It is a deep sense of lack, by the consciousness of a God-forsaken life. It is the mark of judgment against the wilful disobedience in the heart of man. Sorrow, then, is the result of sin. But at the same time it is the benevolent, tender, purposeful messenger of God's love.²

¹Joseph S. Exell, Hebrews (The Biblical Illustrator. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.), II, 477.

²G. Campbell Morgan, Discipleship (London: Alleson and Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 76.

Obedience in Christian suffering effects personality and character development. The letter to the Hebrews sets forth the key to enduring the conflict and suffering of life. The writer says,

. . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.¹

Here it is faith that enables one to endure; it is faith that conveys the hope of eternal life through the promise of the Father.

Faith as a hope of the future is a faith to endure in the present conflict against men. The reverse of this is equally true and important: that faith as a strength to endure the gainsaying of men is the faith that presses on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.²

Christ, Himself, set the pattern for obedience as recorded in Hebrews 5:8, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him". This obedience, in a very real sense, involves discipline. It is that discipline or divine education as presented in the Greek paideuo and is more worthy of obedience from mature Christians than even the parental discipline to which, for all its faults of temper, they submitted dur-

¹Hebrews 12:1, 2.

²W. Robertson Nicoll, Hebrews (The Expositor's Bible. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), p. 275.

ing childhood.¹ The Christian life is not necessarily the competition of rivals. It may involve enduring shame at the hands of evil men which is a discipline.

The duration of Christian suffering. Every individual in his humanity cries out for deliverance from the sufferings and afflictions of this present day. Again and again the question is lifted, Why? There is nothing imaginary about the fact of experienced pain and suffering.

. . . the true place of the agony of bodily suffering is, to man at least, in the conscious and reflecting mind. Physical pain in a civilized and sensitive man is not simply the same as in an unreflecting animal.²

Again the question comes to the mind of the Christian, Why is this suffering of these present days such a necessary part of the Christian life? E. Stanley Jones says, "Christ being what he is, and the Christian being what he should be, he is bound to know suffering as the result of following that Christ".³ But, however severe the afflictions of life might be, the assuring words of God's presence are echoed in Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not thou, for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

¹James Moffatt, Epistle to the Hebrews (International Critical Commentary, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 204.

²R. C. Moberly, Sorrow, Sin, and Beauty (New York: James Pott and Company, 1939), p. 18.

³E. Stanley Jones, Christ and Human Suffering (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933), p. 38.

C. Elements of Christian Suffering

For the sake of convenience in studying the various aspects of the elements of Christian suffering, the author took the liberty to classify them into three groups: (1) Some types of Christian suffering, (2) Some benefits of Christian suffering, and (3) Two misconceptions regarding Christian suffering. This kind of division is not intended to imply that the experience of Christian suffering may be classified in the life situation. Such would be an impossibility because man experiences in his whole being and responds as a whole. Therefore, these areas necessarily overlap. It is observed that there is inherent in those elements of Christian suffering studied as to "types" also that which would qualify them as beneficial to the Christian life, et. cetera.

Some types of Christian suffering. They are: suffering as a human, as the result of practiced sin, as the fellowship of His sufferings, and through false accusation.

Suffering as a human. One of the very obvious areas of Christian suffering is that which involves the human element. It is that experience which is the common lot of all humanity. Faith in Christ and the new birth do not lift the individual above his essential humanity and physical limitations.

The great sorrows of humanity are personal and self-centered. Some loss experienced, some injury inflicted, some disappointment realized - these are the common causes of sorrow.¹

¹G. Campbell Morgan, Discipleship, p. 79.

The Christian will be subject to the pain and mental anguish that come from fatigue and physical injury. The Christian athlete on the gridiron will experience the same muscular discomfort after that first workout as the non-Christian. The carpenter who hits the wrong nail will experience a like response to that of the non-Christian. The person who becomes a Christian will possess no greater physical or mental capacity as the result of some mysterious accompaniment to his decision, though a better ordered and disciplined life may enable him to utilize to a higher degree of efficiency those capacities which he had all the time.

The Christian will always find himself bound by limited judgment. He may not experience any greater ability to order his business affairs, though he may be able to exercise Godly wisdom and patience. The individual with a limited mental capacity will not necessarily qualify as a financial genius or a business executive after experiencing salvation.

The Christian farmer will find his crops the victim of the hail and flood just as much as his neighbor who is not a Christian. The earthquake will destroy the Christian's home as completely as the non-Christian's. The Christian and non-Christian who neglect personal health and hygiene will fall prey to the same diseases and dangers of neglect. The Christian will suffer the same effects of hunger, privation, and personal loss during the war as any man. His mind can be prejudiced by the trickery and propaganda of unscrupulous individuals along with the non-Christian if he fails to practice caution and examine every philosophy by the standards of truth and justice.

Christians have the same curtain drawn on the exact nature and incidentals of life after death as the non-Christian. However, he may possess certain spiritual realities through the enlightened understanding imparted by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In every area of human experience related above, the Christian will experience varying degrees of physical, mental or emotional, and spiritual suffering which are his to bear as a member of the human race.

Suffering as the result of practiced sin. Another type of Christian suffering is that which results from the immoral act in practiced sin. The Christian may suffer not only from the immediate result of the sin, but also from the mark it may leave. One does not have to look very far in the ranks of Christendom to see the evidences of a former life of sin and the indelible mark it leaves. Not only does sin leave its mark in the flesh of man, but it stamps its print in the moral nature and behavior of man.

There is the consciousness of guilt, the sense of responsibility for the evil we have done. There are also the actual effects of evil in ourselves and in the lives of those who have been hurt or influenced by our sin.¹

Hoffman says:

It becomes us also to bear in mind that many of the ills that come into our lives are of our own making, though later they may be overhauled for our improvement. Sin is the fertile mother of much of life's misery.²

¹James Reid, Facing Life With Christ (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1940), p. 53.

²H. S. Hoffman, The Gift of Suffering (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1912), p. 28.

The Bible speaks clearly on the relationship of suffering to the sin involved. I Peter 4:15 says, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." The suffering of such sin is born by the guilty involved; but all too often, the innocent and generations to follow bear the shame and results. This fact is verified and expressed through literature of all ages. It involves a suffering that works as cruelly as the grave, and is as undying as eternity. "The sense of the irrevocable wrings the human spirit with the awful suffering of 'what might have been'".¹

Many friendships have seen the beginning of their ruin by the meddling busybody. Suffering as a busybody and listening to slander as well can only end in heart-rending pain. Too often men will believe the lie of the busybody and gossip, and thereby sever friendship with God.

From talking in the wrong mood springs
a suffering so keen, so stinging, so belitt-
ling, so hopeless, that it debases and drives
the suffering one still lower.

.....
The suffering which springs from being a
meddler in other men's matters is "humiliat-
ing to the last degree".²

Surely Peter must have felt the pangs of remorse as he was rebuked for his concern about the 'other disciple'. "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." John 21:22.

¹James Moffatt, op. cit., p. 9.

²Ibid., p. 10.

Suffering as the fellowship of His sufferings. The certainty of this experience as a thing to be expected is taught by many passages of scripture.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.¹

The fellowship of His (Christ's) suffering may be experienced in many ways. The Christian may suffer for the sake and reproach of the gospel. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God". II Timothy 1:8. We can only suffer deeply for those we love, and the extent of our suffering goes only as deep as the extent of our love. The Apostle Paul desired to enter the agony, the distress, the soul crushing burden of Christ because of his intense love for Him. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Philippians 3:10. It may be the part of the Christian to suffer and be hated for His name sake. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Philippians 1:29.

To suffer from the hatred of men, to be separated from their company, to be reproached of men, to be considered as having an evil name, is not necessarily to have fellowship with His sufferings. We only have fellowship with Him if we

¹I Peter 4:12-13.

suffer "for the Son of Man's sake".¹

In a larger sense one may suffer 'as a Christian'. To suffer as a Christian is to suffer because there is an essential difference between the Christian and the world which arouses the contempt of the world. To have no answer when the ridicule of the world is turned against the Christian as it was against Christ when He hung on the cross, when His words were turned by the crowd into jeers and mockery, is to suffer as a Christian. As Christ gave no answer, neither can the Christian. This was a hard lesson for Peter to learn. His first impulse in the garden when Christ was taken prisoner was to strike the high priest's servant only to be reproved for defending his Master.

Finally, there is need to draw a contrast between suffering that is endured when one sees his work fail or fall in ruins, and suffering that is a fellowship. It may be that a Christian suffers because of another's deeds. The natural response is for the Christian to take it to the Lord in prayer concerning the other person because the Christian is distressed, because it hurts, makes him desire to be released and the guilty punished or corrected. If so, such is not in fellowship with Christ's suffering nor anything like it. But if the soul, out of love for God, longs for the other, that is, the guilty party, and bears with him in a voluntary, vicarious way, then the Christian knows the fellowship of suffering.

The relationship of a soul to Jesus Christ is capable of being interpreted in

¹Oswald Chambers, The Discipline of Suffering, p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 34.

varying ways, but our Lord seems to imply that there is an end to discipleship, an end to learning the pace, and a point is reached where the disciple emerges as the friend of God; carrying with him the swinging stride of the mountains of God, and the atmosphere of the eternal hills.¹

Therefore, to the Christian there is available an area of service in suffering, and even a consolation under suffering. His suffering is that of a partnership with Christ. Hebrews 4:15 says,

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Suffering through false accusation. If there is any root of bitterness left in the heart, any area of the life that is not fully yielded to the Lord, a false accusation against such a Christian will invariably invoke a response of anger. The standard for behavior in such a situation is given in I Peter 2:20 "For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Jesus was accused of conspiracy with Satan - He was accused of being a blasphemer, an evil doer and yet he refused to speak a word in His own behalf or defense.

. . . to suffer as a Christian is a shameful thing in the eyes of the societies of this world. The friends who in your hour of trial and slander, gather round to support and stand with you, are first amazed, then dazed, and then disgusted, when they find that you really do not mean to stand

¹Ibid., p. 30.

up for yourself, but meekly to submit.¹

Some benefits of Christian suffering. The second classification in the study of the elements of Christian suffering pertains to the benefits. The practicing Christian should be constantly aware of God working in his life. This working through the experience of suffering will result in certain additives in his life. It would be well to note here that a Christian should never permit himself to exhibit a selfish motive in desiring the experience of suffering for the sake of rewards promised because of it.

Suffering builds character. Perhaps this would more correctly be called a by-product of suffering. Suffering, of whatever sort it may be, if borne patiently for Christ's sake will be followed by many benefits. "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, and suffering is the basis of solid character and endless felicity to God's true people."² It is the men who have conquered deep sorrows in life that become great men of spiritual power. There is no one who can calm the troubled heart of one who suffers as the one who himself has endured the same experience.

Suffering is the emery wheel upon which the cutting edge of Christian character is sharpened. It is by our patience, patience under trial, that we are to "win our souls."³

¹Oswald Chambers, The Discipline of Suffering, p. 12.

²H. S. Hoffman, The Gift of Suffering, p. 19.

³F. O. Stockwell, "Beyond Job", Christian Century, February 11, 1953, p. 160.

Suffering has many rewards when patiently endured. Pain may be turned into joy. The hearts of the disciples grieved deeply at the prospect of Christ leaving them. However, it was necessary that Christ must leave in order that the Holy Spirit might come.¹

Victory, fellowship, and a new and more abundant life - these are the essentials of the Christian hope that blossoms forth in the midst of trial and pain. For, unlike Job, the N. T. writers had learned to use suffering for the erection of the temple of the Holy Spirit.²

Verily, Verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.³

Identification with Christ in His death and life will bring certain rewards now and in time to come. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." II Timothy 2:11, 12. If Christ was made perfect through sufferings, how much more should the Christian stand in need of such spiritual exercise. Hebrews 2:10-11.

Suffering provides a witness. Christian suffering works as a powerful witness in the life of the believer. There is power to be of use to others which can be won in no other way than through suffering. Dr. Schaff, quoted by Dr. Hoffman, says:

To these protracted and cruel persecutions the Church opposed no revolutionary

¹See John 16:7

²Mrs. Fannie Erb, Gold Tried in the Fire, 1936, p. 161.

³John 16:20.

violence, no carnal resistance, but the moral heroism of suffering and dying for the truth. This heroism was her fairest ornament and staunchest weapon. In this very heroism she proved herself worthy of her Divine founder, who submitted to the death of the cross for the salvation of the world.¹

In much the same way that the Christian takes the first step into newness of life in Christ by faith, so shall every victory in suffering strengthen that faith. Every one who comes to God receives a measure of faith (see Romans 12:3). God, who knows the heart of men, gives to each as it pleases Him. Those with the greatest faith will stand to receive the greatest test of that faith. However, the assurance of God's sustaining grace is always promised and available according to I Corinthians 10:13,

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye might be able to bear it."

Suffering becomes a means of grace. One of the greatest benefits from suffering is its provision as a means of grace. Faith and suffering are alike gifts from the hand of God:

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction; Yet shall not the teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.²

¹H. S. Hoffman, The Gift of Suffering, p. 13.

²Isaiah 30:20-21.

The fact of suffering which is the result of sin in the life may be used to bring the sinner to realize his sinfulness. Conviction of sin is one of the first steps to entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Two misconceptions of Christian suffering. They consist of the ideas that suffering implies sin, and that a victorious Christian will not suffer.

That suffering implies sin. The danger of misconceptions regarding Christian suffering constitutes the last element to be considered. Raised eyebrows and wagging tongues give mute evidence of much misunderstanding regarding Christian suffering. How many saints have been wrongfully accused of some secret sin in their life when an affliction overtook them, we may never know. Therefore, it is essential to note that suffering does not always imply the presence of sin, "but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." I Peter 4:16. It was in the throes of this binding, amazing problem that Peter staggered. To see Christ so falsely accused and afflicted and still do nothing about it completely overshadowed his former boast of being willing even to die for his Lord.

That a victorious Christian will not suffer. There are yet some who believe that suffering is not to be experienced by the victorious Christian.

We err when we regard pain as being always the minister of justice or as the merited recompense for wrongdoing. Of the suffering which is meted out to humanity, how small a part falls upon the specially guilty. How much seems to seek the good.¹

¹H. S. Hoffman, The Gift of Suffering, p. 7.

The Apostle Paul's life stands as one of the great illustrations to contradict this misconception.

D. Summary

In this chapter it was noted that Christian suffering is a conscious reality in human experience. Through the experience of Christian suffering the physical and spiritual aspects of man's nature are brought into close relationship. However severe the suffering may be, it is found to be the promise of humanity from birth to death. But through it all, the promise of God's presence undergirds and strengthens the believer's faith.

The elements of Christian suffering were studied with regard to types, benefits, and misconceptions. A Christian will experience suffering as a human, as the result of sin, through the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and by false accusation. Some benefits of suffering were identified as character building, sorrow turned to joy, the witness it provides, and suffering as a means of grace.

Two misconceptions regarding Christian suffering were noted. The most outstanding was that the presence of suffering automatically implies the presence of sin; the other that a victorious Christian should not experience suffering.

This chapter, depicting a very familiar aspect of the Christian life, leads directly to consideration of a less familiar study of the chastened believer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

THE EXPERIENCE OF CHASTENING

A. Introduction

The goal of the chapter. The overall goal of this chapter was to study the actual life experience of chastening with respect to the aspects revealed in Chapter Three. Specifically, they were that chastening is a universal human experience, that chastening exhibits many shades of meaning, and that suffering plays an essential role in the greater purpose of chastening. This latter aspect was a part of the total purpose of the study. The value and purpose of chastening were studied in this chapter: the value of chastening as it is concerned with the two principle persons involved who are God and man, and the purpose which is observed in the end result. Next the matter of chastening was taken up directly in a study of its sources, the methods by which chastening is experienced, and the mediums through which it is administered. Finally, some of the practical relationships existing between chastening and suffering were studied. These were concerned with the involvement of the human element, the application of the process as it involves suffering, and the element of faith as it pertains to the experience of suffering.

Chastening defined. The general meaning of chastening involves the thought of punishment by inflicting pain for the purpose of correction or recalling from disobedience. In the biblical sense it is also recognized by a discipline for the purpose of child-training. This discipline reveals certain ulterior aspects which are not evident in the actual life experience.

B. Value and Purpose of Chastening

The value. It is based on two considerations: the nature and attributes of God, and the nature of man and his needs.

Value based on the nature and attributes of God. An estimate of the value of any consideration must be based upon certain pertinent issues. The value of a material possession may be based upon monetary, service, or exchange potential. Value of a given manufacturing process may be determined by the productive quantity realized from its use. In much the same way there are various criteria for determining the value of chastening as it is realized in the life of the child of God. However, before one can fully appreciate the value of chastening as it is applied in life, it would be well to consider the principle persons involved, God and man. To a great degree, the benefit that man is to receive from chastening will be affected by man's understanding of the nature and purpose of God in His relationships with man. Also, man's understanding of his own nature and its inherent needs with regard to his responsibility before God will determine how he will receive chastening in his life.

Man's understanding of the motivation of chastening as found in God's love provides great appreciation for its administration. The Bible says, "God is love." I John 4:8. Whereas justice and mercy are the attributes of God, love is found to be of the very essence or nature of God. As such, it permeates every phase of God's relationship with man.

It is the nature of God to impart Himself

to a dependent universe ... that perfection of the divine being which moves Him to complacency and delight in His intelligent creatures, and prompts Him to impart Himself to¹ them in order to promote their highest good.

Nevertheless, a study of the messages of the Hebrew prophets reveals that they continually warned the people that the wrath of God was to be experienced if they chose to disobey and walk contrary to the way God set before them. However, along with this warning, a corollary idea accompanied it to the extent that while God may afflict or punish the people, it was always in accord with a definite purpose for their repentance. The more people ponder such situations, they begin to establish attitudes toward or about God. They attribute certain characteristics concerning the nature of God which are based upon God's revelation of Himself and His dealings with man. These are called attributes.

Two of the attributes of God are of particular interest in this area of the study. They are the attributes of justice and mercy. Justice is closely related to the moral question of right and wrong. When a discussion is raised about the sense of right or wrong, the meaning might be illustrated in a situation where a man with a sound mind contemplates the moral quality of any deed, thought, or impulse. There naturally arises the distinction between right and wrong in his consciousness.² Man's response or behavior in such a situation sets the stage for an entry in man's relationship to God. If his response

¹S. J. Gamertsfelder, Systematic Theology (Harrisburg, Pa.: Evangelical Publishing House, 1952), p. 206.

²Ibid., p. 51.

to such consciousness is in the positive vein so far as God's standard of righteousness is concerned, he has a clear record. But if he responds negatively, a moral charge of sin is brought against the individual, and he must account for it.

Justice is sometimes defined as being God's righteousness manifested in the punishment of sin.

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Although the Bible makes mention of God's anger and wrath, yet God's anger is never selfish, nor His wrath malicious. His justice is never vindictive, but always vindicative. The penalties God inflicts express the revulsion of His moral nature to all forms of sin, and His rewards are the expression of His approval of righteousness.¹

The question is then raised concerning the character of the chastening administered by God in view of the attribute of justice. As stated above, the administration by God is always vindicative, that is, avenging, and not vindictive or revenging. Man's confidence or trust in this truth enables him to receive chastening as the evidence of a purpose which may be known only to God. In addition, Gamertsfelder makes a further qualifying statement by saying that the justice by which God rewards the obedient is sometimes known as remunerative justice, while that by which He punishes the guilty is retributive or vindictive justice. But whether as legislator or judge, God is eternally just.²

The other attribute which is closely related is mercy. Gener-

¹Ibid., p. 203.

²Ibid., p. 388.

ally speaking, mercy may be defined or distinguished by the application or extension of compassion, forgiveness, leniency, or forbearance to refrain from inflicting punishment. Pertaining to the attribute of God, mercy is,

. . . that tender quality in God's nature which leads Him to seek the highest good of those that oppose His will. It is kindness exercised toward those who through their rebellion against God have rendered themselves unworthy.¹

Then uniting the concepts of justice and mercy, it is noted that "justice can never be necessary and mercy optional, but are always conjoined; and in the redemptive economy holiness and mercy are supreme."²

It is further noted that by the very inherent nature of mercy, it can only be exercised where actual guilt is involved which would provide just cause for administration of judgment. Thus, when the child of God comes to understand that the chastening of God is to be administered according to mercy as well as justice, he can appreciate it all the more and rest assured of proper consideration as he submits himself to God's will. There is one note of caution that should be stated. It is quite easy while discussing the attributes of God in a detached way such as this to compartmentalize God in our thinking, and transfer this over to the area of God's behavior. Therefore one must remember that God is one whole personality and behaves as such

¹Ibid., p. 204.

²Ibid., p. 383.

with every attribute complimenting every other in every contact or relation with man.

It was observed that the value of chastening is grounded in the very nature and expression of God. Likewise, the degree to which man understands that purpose expressed or revealed in God's chastening may determine somewhat the effectiveness of that chastening.

Value based on the nature of man and his need. It is now noted that man's understanding of his own nature and inherent need may also determine the effectiveness of chastening.

In the Genesis record of man's creation, man was created in moral innocence but with a command for obedience.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying,
Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely
eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good
and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the
day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely
die.¹

When Adam chose to disobey the command that God had given, judgment fell to the extent that the world was cursed and the nature of man was judged. This fallen nature then became the lot of every child born to the human race. Now a question might be raised concerning the validity of man's religious nature.

If man naturally puts forth forms of
activity that have religious characteristics,
we must conclude that he is endowed with a
religious nature,

.
it remains a fact that the idea of the super-

¹Genesis 2:16-17.

natural and an impulse to worship are native human activities and are religious in their character.¹

Two aspects of the nature of man have now been presented: that man has a fallen nature, and that to a certain degree it is a religious nature. The Bible indicates that ever since man disobeyed and fell from grace, God has been endeavoring to reconcile man to Himself. There are some people who do not believe that God either orders or permits all things, at least they do not care to think so. They like to believe that they have at least a little to say in regard to their concerns and in the managing of their affairs, so they can rule out all that hurts and is unpleasant to them. Such people have difficulty reconciling some of the trials and difficulties that come into their lives. They fail to see that those experiences are part of the discipline of life. Without them there can be little character development, nor can faith and trust in God be brought into vigorous exercise.²

Therefore, the value of chastening is found in man's understanding of the nature and purpose of God, and also his understanding of the nature of man and his inherent needs.

The purpose. A consideration of the purpose of chastening brings the study to a more practical trend of thought. The idea represented by the words translated as chasten in the Old Testament

¹Ibid., p. 46

²H. S. Hoffman, The Gift of Suffering, p. 31.

and the New Testament fills a considerable space as observed in Chapter Three. The most outstanding words are the Hebrew יָסַר (yasar) and the Greek παιδεύω (paideuō). The etymological connection of παιδεύω (paideuō) with παις (pais) suggests that education, in the widest sense of the word, including reference to the means as well as to the end of the process, is the main idea involved. This is the Christian discipline of character, as it ought to be enforced in the Christian family.¹

Just how this process is to be accomplished may be revealed in many different ways. "It is dangerous to our salvation, unworthy of God, and of ourselves, and destructive even of our peace of mind, to desire to remain always in our present position."² The Apostle Paul sets forth the purpose of God in chastening. God is endeavoring to fashion us according to His image by afflictions, as a statue is cut. He chooses to bring us into varied temptations to try our faith, to work patience in us, to mortify our carnal desires, to break the bonds that have us chained to the earth.³

The illustration of the potter's hand forming the vessel provides a vivid picture of God's hand in chastening His child. The process begins when the clay has been taken in the potter's hand. His

¹J. Denny, "Chastening, Chastisement, Tribulation," A Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, editor, James Hastings, n.d.), I, 374.

²Mrs. Fannie Erb, Gold Tried in the Fire, p. 59.

³Joseph S. Exell, Hebrews, p. 483.

hand is everywhere. It is round about it, in it, forming, shaping, widening or narrowing it, and his eye is continually watching to see if it pleases him. For the process, the potter uses the choicest clay. Just so, God takes some of the strongest wills and breaks down their unyieldedness until they become chosen vessels. Likewise the potter, before he can use a portion of clay and use it on the wheel to turn out a vessel, must take that clay and beat all the air bubbles out of it lest the vessel be marred on the wheel.¹

Perfecting the man. The end of the chastening process may give evidence of itself in many benefits to the one involved. For this study, three such ends will serve to illustrate the extent and high aim. They are: perfecting the man, proving the sonship, and preparing for service. It is a mystery at times to understand the response of individuals to chastening. It is a disciplinary force that continually aims at drawing the heart more and more toward God as it creates or brings to light the hollowness and uncertainty of all that may have once been held so dear. For instance, consider two individuals that experience the same occasion of affliction. In one case the spirit becomes embittered, hard, and callous. The character met a trying situation and disintegrated under the test. In the other, gentleness, love, humility, and tenderness appear; the face radiates a new glory and beauty. The one defiantly faces sorrow, and, while looking upon it as an enemy, attempts to destroy it or reject it from his life. In so

¹Mrs. Fannie Erb, Gold Tried in the Fire, p. 28.

doing he is seized by hardness and hatred. The other is drawn to God and finds the pain endured only God's fire for destroying the dross of the life, and from the experience arises a new revelation of God's Love.¹

The idea involved is that the chastenings which come to the children of God are not to be read as elements of His hostility, but rather of His paternal care.²

"What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" Hebrews 12:7. In a larger sense than this, the grace of God is spoken of as having appeared in saving power "teaching us παιδεύουσα (paideuousa) that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Titus 2:12. In this case "teaching" may suggest too little to our understanding while "disciplining" or "chastening" may be too narrow. The idea of the Christian life in this passage is that of an "education under a power which is at once gracious and severe."³ Once again this illustrates the fact that God's justice compliments His mercy, and vice versa. The grace that brings salvation to all men employs resources of all kinds to put them in full possession of every phase of that salvation. There may be times when painful correction may be necessary as in the abuses that developed concerning the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11. Because of these abuses, many were weak and sickly among the people and some even died. Paul tells them that they are eating and drinking

¹J. Denney, "Chastening, Chastisement, Tribulation," p. 374.

²Ibid., p. 375.

³Ibid.

judgment to themselves. I Corinthians 11:29. But if they would judge themselves, they would not be judged of God. However, if they are judged *κρινόμενοι* (krinomenou), "we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." I Corinthians 11:32. Even though the experience of God's correction may be painful, it is meant for their good.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.¹

In this passage the substantive, *παιδεία* (paideia), appears and implies "discipline" or "strong training". It is such working that provides for the perfecting of the child of God. It is significant to note that the word "peaceable", *εἰρηνικόν* (eirenikon), is used. When children are being trained, *γεγυμασμένον* (gegommasmaenon), or exercised, the discipline does its perfect work and there is no friction between the soul and God.²

Another sense of the perfecting is in working or accomplishing righteousness. This righteousness is not that which is through faith in Christ and pertains to the justification of the child of God: but rather, it is that righteousness that is through conforming to the will of God. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that we have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." I Peter 5:10. The cleans-

¹Hebrews 12:11.

ing process is noted in Isaiah 1:25, "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin."

Character building is one of the prominent results of the perfecting process. Obedience is learned by the application of affliction in Psalms 119:67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." Patience is one of the godly characteristics that is achieved through the administration of tribulation.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulation 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 Spirit which is given unto us.¹

Tribulation *θλίψις* (thlipsis) is the chastening instrument for perfecting the character in this instance. It carries the stronger meaning of a distressing circumstance. It is an experience that compresses or bears one to the ground and causes him to be unable to stand. The idea of being pressed in from every side, which restricts the freedom is also present here. The whole succession of benefits is received in a confident attitude by the prevailing presence of the love of God through the administering agency of the Holy Spirit.

Then too, the perfecting that is realized through the pressures of life serves to strengthen the believer's trust in God. The Apostle Paul testified to this fact regarding their experiences while in Asia,

For we would not brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure,

¹Romans 5:3-5.

above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.¹

There may even come a time when the child of God will reach out for the chastening which God provides because his love for the Lord, and desire to be thoroughly equipped for His use, drives him on to that perfection which comes only through that means. In Romans 5:3 Paul says, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." One is not given to glory in or anticipate that which is undesirable, at least, not the average person. A personal friend of the writer made the following statement in a written testimonial:

I knew that something in me was not perfect. I would literally dream of being chastened and long for it and several times even asked God to put the rod to me so that my failures would disappear and strength would be made perfect and my heart would become like iron with determination and readiness to obey at the point of His command.²

Proving his sonship. The proof or trial of sonship should be an experience anticipated by the child of God. It has the idea of a proof by testing to determine the quality or genuineness of the relationship. Primarily, it is a Father-Son relationship. "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts." Proverbs 17:3. The idea of trying the hearts is derived

¹II Corinthians 1:8-9.

²Personal correspondence of Rev. Ezra Budke, Waseca, Minnesota, to the writer December 5, 1955.

from the Hebrew בָּחַן (bachan) and the Greek πειράζω (peirazō).

They also convey the idea of examining, testing, putting to trial to prove that which is in question. The Father-Son relation is clearly indicated in the Hebrews 12:6-7 passage,

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If
ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as
with sons; for what son is he whom the father
chasteneth not?

The severity of this relationship is presented in the meaning of the word scourgeth μαστιγοῦν (mastigoi) which carries a much stronger meaning than the Greek παιδεύω (paideuō) meaning "teach" or "instruct". To scourge is to apply the whip or afflict as by a disease. Such a trial or testing is to be expected by every son. If perchance there has been no chastening, then the individual is a (nothos), not a true source, a counterfeit. There is a superficial likeness, but morphologically unrelated. No Christian is exempt from the appointed afflictions of God. The very best and the most spiritual Christians are appointed to affliction and suffering.¹ "It is for chastening that ye endure," is the rendering of the R. S. V. It is the purpose and end that sufficiently justifies God in such dealing with His sons, and that sustains His sons in the experience of His dealing.

The sufferings of the believer are intended to be disciplines of life and ministries of character . . . these sufferings, being disciplinary, are the proofs and the results of divine love.²

¹Anthony Zeoli, Why Do Christians Suffer? p. 18.

²Joseph S. Exell, Hebrews, p. 490.

The Hebrew children wandering in the wilderness knew the chastening of God to prove them.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.¹

One of the main thoughts of the New Testament passages is that chastening is a rod in the Father's hand, and an instrument by which the purposes of the Father's love can be effected.

God was so faithful and He did not let me go until my heart was perfect toward Him. Without chastening, I could not order my thinking, my loving, my living, nor my activity. Now I am geared to God's work, and sustained in it, and kept to it by His mighty power. Prayer, the reading of His Word, and giving, are three things now that are as natural as eating -- a part and habit of my life.²

There are two very real dangers to which the child of God should be continually alerted. One is the danger of despising chastening by murmuring against it as did the Hebrew children by doubting the use of it, by thinking it dishonorable to be chastened, by not seeking to amend under it, and by despising those whom God chastens. The other is the danger of fainting under chastening by giving up courage under it, by doubting whether he is a child while under chastening, and by doubting deliverance from the trouble.³

Preparing for service. Preparation for service is a school

¹Deuteronomy 8:2.

²Rev. Ezra Budke, Letter.

³Joseph S. Exell, Hebrews, p. 483.

from which one never graduates because he is always learning. It might be said that chastening is accomplishing its purpose of training from the cradle to the grave, from the new birth to the death of the saint.

The trial and affliction of Job provides one of the most striking illustrations of preparation for service in the Bible. God had said of him that he was perfect in his generation, one that feared God and abhorred evil. Yet he was subjected to a series of deep, soul-crushing ordeals in order that he might serve as an example to all generations to come, might learn some lessons he needed to learn, and might glorify God.

The challenge of Romans 12:1 is that every child of God should present his body a living sacrifice to God which is a reasonable service. This offering is to be holy, and acceptable to God. The child of God does not just enter the faith and fold his arms as if to say he has arrived. He is then ready to be sent to the training school. Every child of God must go through the refiner's fire to learn obedience and character development which are essentials for Christian service.

That the trial of your faith being 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.¹

A tried faith provides one of the most glowing and effective testimonies of praise to the grace of God. The world will give little attention to lip service that goes no deeper, but the testimony backed up by a proven life is possible because it has attended the school of

¹I Peter 1:7.

chastening. A military soldier who has not had some training on the field of assimilated battle will stand little chance of survival in actual battle. A soldier of the cross of Christ should be well acquainted with the spiritual weapons and the warfare involved. He should know the value and purpose of his armor and how it is to be used. Then when the battle goes hard against him, he will be able to ". . . endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." II Timothy 2:3. The more he has been seasoned by affliction and suffering, the more valuable will become his service and dependability. "Suffering has its power to equip us, to make us strong and tender for the help of others."¹

Suffering in the preparation for service is a commonly experienced discipline. Suffering for Christ was the path of essential discipline and not to be by-passed. In the garden when Peter had taken his sword and severed the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus said to him, "Put thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18:11. Paul was conscious of the fact that because of his detention in bonds, his own ministry was enlarged, and also many fellow Christians were bold to speak without fear.

But I would ye should understand, brethren,
that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel:
So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in other places;
And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing

¹James Reid, Facing Life With Christ (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 115.

confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.¹

The last aspect of a preparation for service to be considered in this study is that typified by the pruning process. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:2. There are several items of special interest in this verse. First, it is noted that the fruitless branch is cast off -- destroyed. It is the purpose of the branch to produce new life. If it fails in this purpose, judgment is meted out. Second, those branches that are now bearing fruit are purged, that is, they are pruned, trimmed down. Excess growth that would sap the strength and prevent the branch from utilizing full capacity is cut away. This cutting always makes a wound, but the end result always is better. Likewise, the child of God who is now growing and producing new life must be purged. Such purging always involves suffering. Third, the branch is purged so that it may bring forth more fruit. The husbandman purges the branch for increased service. Just so, the Father chastens the child for increased service though for a time that chastening may be painful, and suffering be the experience.

Many Christians have their eye set on the eternal goal of everlasting life so firmly that they fail to see the need for a purged life here and now for service. While it is true that God has an eternal goal or purpose in the salvation of every soul, it is also true that a part of that eternal plan involves an immediate purpose and responsi-

¹Philippians 1:12-13.

bility for service in every life now. Only as the child yields and bears the chastening for service now will he realize the full benefit of that later and eternal reward.

C. Chastening Implimented

Sources of chastening. The study of the sources or directions from which chastening originates is not extensive, but nevertheless it is fruitful. The weight of scriptural evidence bears out the fact that the greater part of chastening is initiated by God either directly or indirectly. A lesser part is self-initiated; that is, by the child of God.

God-initiated. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, ever since the Fall of man God has initiated attempts toward reconciling man with Himself. The scriptures bear the record of a changing administration or pattern of the attempts at reconciliation made necessary by the perpetual failure of man to comply with the commandments and covenant relationships. As a result of man's continual failure, it was necessary for God to maintain a disciplinary program for instruction and correction. Much of that program involved chastening with the desired end result being man's good. Though the contemporary experience most often involved affliction and suffering, God's purpose was always for the benefit of man.

The scriptures provide the best reference for determining the source of chastening. In the large majority of the occurrences, God is the speaker. In II Samuel 7:14 when David is directed through the

prophet Samuel to build a house for God's name, God says, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men." The psalmist declares in Psalms 118:18, "The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death." Again in Hebrews 12:6, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Ecclesiastes 7:14 affirms that God sends both prosperity and adversity because He "sets the one over against the other."

Afflictions are God's appointments for God's children. God has appointed the Christian to suffer and the Christian should not be moved by these afflictions which God appoints for him.¹

Therefore, it is well to keep deeply impressed upon the mind that chastisement is heaven-sent. It does not arise from the dust, nor is it a result of chance.²

Man-initiated. However, there is a chastening that man performs upon himself. This is not from God though it may be blessed of God and work for the good of man. Daniel 10:12 reads:

Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Methods of chastening. A study of chastening under the caption of method is only a technique for emphasizing two aspects of the

¹Anthony Zeoli, Why Do Christians Suffer? p. 19.

²H. S. Hoffman, The Gift of Suffering, p. 55.

problem. They might be called the positive and the negative: chastening that involves instruction, and chastening that involves correction.

Positive -- instruction. The two words, chastening and chastisement, corresponding to the Hebrew מִּסָּר (musar) and the Greek παιδεία (paideia) are distinguished in English use in that "chastisement" is applied to the infliction of pain as punishment, while "chastening" as a wider term, indicates the discipline or training to which one is subjected without reference to the means employed.¹

Chastening for instruction is to be most clearly understood by the circumstances involved. It is possible that a given instance of chastening may serve both to correct and instruct. A detailed study into the use and meaning of the Hebrew יָסַר (yasar) defines it as the learning or teaching of a lesson.² It was found that the lesson might be learned in three different ways: through the experience of suffering, through accepting verbal instruction which involves no suffering, and through observing a given situation, another person, group or nation, or God's works.

. . . the expressions musar, paideia, and yissurin came to be used to explain God's afflicting His people, even His most faithful and righteous adherents. He smote them to draw

¹James Orr, "Chastisement," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947), I, 598.

²Jim Alvin Sanders, Suffering as Divine Discipline, p. 41.

them yet closer to Him.¹

An examination of the life of the Apostle Paul and the trial of his faith provides a rich illustration of chastening that serves to instruct or teach. He was beaten, buffeted, in danger of death, homeless, in distress, humiliated, hungry, naked, persecuted, in prison, reviled, shipwrecked, stoned, stripped of all things, and still he could praise his Lord in all his afflictions. II Corinthians 4:8-10 is one passage where he speaks of this trial,

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;
we are perplexed, but not in despair;
Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down,
but not destroyed;
Always bearing about in the body the dying
of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus
might be made manifest in our body.

The more one studies the chastening methods of God, the more evident is the fact that every step God makes, every Word He speaks, every testing He permits, contributes to the progress and development of all. It affords a moving commentary of Romans 8:28 wherein even the iniquity in the heart and life of man is made to serve God's purpose. That is not to say that iniquity effects any likeness of good, but rather, that God overrules it, and, by revealing its true nature, shows the need of dependence upon Him in a close walk. Any chastening process that has brought the child closer to God than he was has fulfilled its mission.

A wrong attitude regarding chastening may adversely affect God's whole purpose. I Peter 4:12 says, "Beloved, think it not

¹Ibid., p. 4.

strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." God's will is best realized when total submission is given. I Peter 4:19 says, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

Negative -- correction. Negative chastening as correction is usually intended to bring the individual to repentance. At a time when the children of Israel were severely disturbed about the problem of suffering, the idea came into common usage that God's punishing His people for their sins did not indicate total destruction. Rather, it provided an opportunity to return to God. It was the very difficult task of the prophet who loved his people to find some way of telling them that God who was punishing them severely also loved them and was still in control of events. He had to tell the people that God had a purpose in afflicting them so hard, and that they must accept it as God's way of bringing them back by way of repentance.¹

The working of repentance involved a two-fold relationship. First of all, it meant turning away from great apostasy and iniquity. Secondly, it meant turning unto God for the purpose of forgiveness, and, by learning His laws and statutes, gaining a new appreciation or understanding of His demands and purposes. Such a decision was no easier to make then than it is today. Often it required severe affliction in chastening before men would be brought to see their need.

¹Ibid., p. 47.

A statement by Dr. Kenneth Wesche sums up simply and rather candidly the practical impact of God's entire chastening program as known to man: "Through these hard experiences, God is sandpapering us -- smoothing us off."¹

Instruments employed. This look at some of the instruments used in the implimentation of chastening is not for the purpose of study, but rather, to observe a few of the many means by which God carries out His program.

Love. Love should not be considered entirely as an instrument. It is more correctly the manifestation of the very essence or nature of God and as such must permeate and influence all that He does. Through His dealings with man, God sheds His love abroad in the hearts of men. In this relationship it may be said that love suffers.

When love increases in our hearts, owing to the Holy Spirit's increasing activity, it must come into conflict with all that pertains to the world's spirit and seeks to maintain itself in the soul.

God also disciplined those near to Him, as a father his son, to draw them yet nearer; such discipline was called the "discipline of love."²

The Holy Spirit. As the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the one through whom God deals with the hearts and lives of individuals either in commendation or conviction, and as such qualifies as God's agency of chastening.

¹ A quote from Dr. Kenneth Wesche's chapel comments given at Western Evangelical Seminary March 6, 1956.

² Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit, p. 565.

. . . legal holiness is the gift of Jesus to every soul that asks for it in His name. The moral, actual holiness is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit using the discipline and sufferings of this earthly life.¹

Suffering. Suffering is the tool that provides the contact and molding influence in human behavior. Suffering makes man aware of his own need, causes him to look outside of self for assistance, and serves as the medium in developing the spiritual qualities in life. Briefly stated, suffering tries, purifies, and teaches.

The Word. The instrument of chastening by the Word is the manifestation of the Eternal logos. It is the Written Word and the Word become flesh in the person of Christ. The person of Christ chastens by His presence in the life, by the gospel of His coming in death and resurrection, and by the Word of His mouth, the Written Word.

Prayer. Prayer as an instrument of chastening is a silent but powerful ally. Prayer in itself is communion with the Father. Broken fellowship or communion is a chastening rod to the child of God. The blessing of fellowship is never more appreciated than when it is deprived of the one in whom it has been such a source of strength. Then too, the burden of prayer is a chastening rod that tries the faith. Prayer that has never reached through the barriers of indecision and doubt to arrive at complete trust has never fulfilled its purpose in life. The air is never purer and the light never brighter than when one soars through and above the clouds.

The cross. The chastening capacity of the cross is exercised in many areas of life.

¹Jim Alvin Sanders, Suffering As Divine Discipline, p. 116.

The cross, by its nature, is a yoke and burden, but it is only the flesh, or nature that feels it. Therefore, while the outward man is perishing on the cross, the inward man may be living, growing, and rejoicing.¹

People speak of many types and varieties of crosses to be born by the child of God. There is perhaps none more trying or demanding than that cross formed where the will of God intersects the will of man. Until the will of man is brought into conformity with His, the burden of that cross will be a constant chastening rod.

D. Chastening Related to Christian Suffering

The inter-relationships of chastening and Christian suffering have been discussed, studied, and inferred all through the study. It is not the purpose of this inclusion to review all those inter-relationships again. There are only three particular areas of this relationship that need special mention, and this in a very brief way. They are: the human element, the cleansing or pruning process, and faith in view of suffering.

The human medium. The human medium constitutes one of the major factors in the relationship of chastening and its ultimate purpose in the whole life of man. The capacities of human experience thus become the channels through which God reaches in to the spiritual man. The body is the raw material. The sensations of that body are

¹Dr. Kirk, The Cross Bearer, p. 150.

the means, with suffering one of them. This whole area of inter-relationships is one of the great mysteries of life. Because of that, many professing Christians have not been exercised by it to receive the blessing which can be derived from it.

The cleansing and pruning process. The cleansing and pruning process usually involves suffering. It is this factor that excludes so many from receiving the benefits available. It seems to be a human tendency to shun every occasion of suffering as though there were some fearful and sinister evil involved. The child of God who submits himself soon finds that it is one of the richest means of grace.

God has used various methods of chastening. One thing in every method that was outstanding was the tenderness with which He applied the rod to my back. I had to learn to obey through suffering. As I look back, nothing was so grievous, so heart-rending as His chastening rod.¹

How true it is that no suffering for the present time is experienced as a thing of joy. However, a later counting of the many blessings derived from it should cause one to breathe a humble prayer of thanksgiving.

Suffering and the role of faith. The relation of faith with regard to its place in both chastening and suffering comprises one of the most misunderstood areas of Christianity today. Faith-healing, if misunderstood and carried to its logical extreme, requires the elimination of all suffering. If this does not occur, it is believed

¹Rev. Ezra Budke, personal letter.

that the faith of the individual is weak and ineffective. Such an interpretation also eliminates the whole area of the benefits derived from suffering in the chastening process. A swimmer can easily go down the stream with the current, but his strength and endurance are severely tested in the upstream course. Likewise, it is relatively easy for a Christian to have faith when all goes smoothly and his needs are all met, but when he experiences hardships and trials, his faith often falters and he cries out for deliverance. If the Christian's faith cannot endure the loss of all things, it is not securely founded. God's servant, Job, endured, and believed Him. The Apostle Paul asks,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

.
For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹

And again, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." II Corinthians 12:9.

E. Summary

The objective of this chapter was chastening experienced. The value of chastening was determined according to man's attitudes toward the attributes of God, particularly the attributes of justice and

¹Romans 8:36, 38, and 39.

mercy as they are expressed by God's essential nature of Love. A proper understanding of the nature and needs of man also determines the value. The purpose was studied with regard to perfecting man, proving his sonship, and preparing him for service. The implimentation of chastening was studied with regard to its sources as God-initiated and self-initiated. The methods of chastening were instruction and correction. The instruments employed in chastening were Love, the Holy Spirit, suffering, the Word, prayer, and the cross. Finally, three particular thought were discussed concerning the inter-relationships of chastening and Christian suffering. They were: the place of the human medium, the cleansing and pruning process as it involves suffering, and the relation of faith to suffering as a part of chastening.

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

This study presented evidence for the following statements in summary:

1. The ideas of suffering and chastening are derived from many root words in the Hebrew and Greek.
2. The ideas of suffering and chastening are universal by virtue of their presence in all periods of biblical history.
3. Christian suffering is a conscious reality in human experience.
4. Through the experience of suffering the physical and spiritual aspects of man's nature are brought into close relationship.
5. A Christian experiences suffering as a human, as the result of sin, through the fellowship of His sufferings, and by false accusations.
6. Some of the benefits of suffering are: character building, turning sorrow to joy, it provides a witness, it strengthens and tries faith, and is used as a means of grace.
7. Suffering is often misunderstood as implying the presence of sin in every case.
8. It is mistakenly believed that a victorious Christian will never endure suffering.
9. The value of chastening is grounded in the nature and attributes of God as well as the nature and needs of man.

10. Some purposes of chastening are: perfecting the man, proving his sonship, and preparing him for service.

11. Chastening is placed into effect by both God and man, but primarily by God.

12. Two methods of chastening are the positive and negative which provide instruction and correction.

13. The instruments of chastening are: Love, the Holy Spirit, suffering, the Word, prayer, and the cross.

14. Some additional ways suffering is related to chastening are in the human element, through the pruning process, and the purpose of chastening with regard to Christian faith.

B. Conclusions

1. There are many more shades of meaning inherent in the ideas of suffering and chastening than are expressed in the English translations. This is verified by the large number of Hebrew and Greek terms related to them by translation.

2. Both suffering and chastening were universal realities through the periods of biblical history. However, suffering and chastening occupy places of special concern for the Christian because of the filial relationship with God. God uses various means to train and discipline His children. He uses the experience of suffering as one instrument for chastening. It is possible for a Christian to be so grieved and preoccupied with the problems that are a part of suffering that he fails entirely to see and profit from the greater purpose which may be intended through the use of suffering.

3. A Christian is still committed to ask God for relief from physical and spiritual affliction because God does want to answer prayers of that nature. However, However, the Christian's chief concern should reach beyond the self-centered thought for immediate convenience. It is essential that the Christian recognizes the possibility of a greater purpose than is immediately evident in the experience of suffering as a part of chastening.

4. The imperatives of chastening eliminate a doctrine of faith-healing or an interpretation of the atonement in which all afflictions are to be removed on the basis of faith alone.

5. The chastening process most often uses the human element.

6. The chastening process invariably involves suffering.

7. Chastening is always to be found with a purpose. It is for man's benefit in improvement or good.

8. An uncooperative attitude on the part of man may limit the effectiveness of the purpose of chastening.

9. The full understanding of Christian suffering and chastening must be determined by a thorough study of all synonyms and shades of meaning in every area of life.

C. Suggestions For Further Study

Some suggestions for further study are as follows:

1. Man's moral responsibility in view of needless suffering which is the result of mental and social evils of our day.

2. The moral and spiritual effects of faith-healing in relation to God's promise of sufficient grace.

3. A comparison and contrast of Christian suffering and all of human suffering. Does the Christian hold any kind of favored position over the non-Christian?

4. A study of the problem of chastening as it affects the non-Christian.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

A. SUFFERING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT

1. נָסָה (nasa)
 Psalms 88:15 ...I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.
 Proverbs 19:19 ...great wrath shall suffer punishment.
 Jeremiah 15:15 ...that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.
2. צָרָה (tsarah)
 I Samuel 10:19 ... of all your adversities and your tribulations.
 I Samuel 26:24 ... and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.
 Judges 10:14 ...deliver you in the time of your tribulation.
 Deuteronomy 4:30 When thou art in tribulation...
3. חָבַל (chabal)
 II Samuel 22:6 ...sorrows of hell compassed me.
 Job 21:17 ...God distributeth sorrows...
 Job 39:3 ...cast out their sorrows.
 Psalms 18:5 ...sorrows of hell compassed me.
 Psalms 116:3 ...pains of hell gat hold upon me.
 Isaiah 13:8 ...pain as a woman that travaileth.
 Jeremiah 13:21 ...shall not trials take thee.
 Hosea 13:13 The sorrows of a travailing woman...
4. יָגוֹן (yagon)
 Genesis 42:38 ...with sorrow to the grave.
 Esther 9:22 ...from mourning into a good day.
 Psalms 13:2 ...having sorrow in my heart daily?
 Psalms 107:39 ...through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.
 Psalms 116:3 The sorrows of death compassed me.
 Isaiah 35:10 ...and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
 Isaiah 51:11 ...mourning shall flee away.
 Jeremiah 8:19 ...comfort myself against sorrow.
5. מָרַד (marud)
 Lamentations 1:7 ... remembered in the days of her miseries.
 Lamentations 3:19 ...remembering my misery.
6. πασχω (paschō)
 Matthew 16:21 ...suffer many things of the elders.
 Matthew 17:12 ...also the Son of man suffer of them.
 Mark 8:31 ...the Son of man must suffer many things.
 Luke 22:15 ...this passover with you before I suffer.
 Luke 24:46 ...and thus it behooved Christ to suffer.
 Acts 3:18 ...that Christ should suffer.
 Acts 9:16 ...how great things he must suffer.

I Corinthians 12:26 ...whether one member suffers.
 II Corinthians 1:6 ...same sufferings which we also...
 Philippians 1:29 ...but also suffer for his sake.
 I Peter 2:20 ...when ye do well and suffer for it.
 I Peter 4:15 ...let none of you suffer as a murderer.
 I Peter 4:16 ...if any man suffer as a Christian.
 Matthew 27:19 ...for I have suffered many things...
 Acts 17:3 ...that Christ must needs have suffered.
 Galatians 3:4 Have ye suffered so many things...
 I Thessalonians 2:14 ...suffered like things of your...
 Hebrews 9:26 For then must he often have suffered...
 Hebrews 13:12 ...suffered without the gate.
 I Peter 2:21 ...because Christ also suffered for us...
 I Peter 2:23 ...when he suffered he threatened not...
 I Peter 3:18 ...hath once suffered for sins.
 I Peter 4:1 ...Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh.
 I Peter 5:10 ...that ye have suffered a while,...

7. ἀτιμάζω(atimazō)
 Acts 5:41 ...counted worthy to suffer shame.
8. συμπαύω (sumpascho)
 Romans 8:17 If so be that we suffer with him...
9. ὑστερέω(hustereō)
 Philippians 4:12 ...both to abound and to suffer need...
 I Thessalonians 3:4 ...we should suffer tribulation...
 II Thessalonians 1:5 ...kingdom of God for which ye also suffer.
10. κακοπαθέω(kakopatheō)
 II Timothy 2:9 ...wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer...
11. ὑπομένω (hupomenō)
 II Timothy 1:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign...
12. ζημιόω (zemioō)
 Philippians 3:8 I have suffered the loss of all things...
13. μακροθυέω(makrothumeō)
 I Corinthians 13:4 Love suffereth long, and is kind...
14. πάθημα (pathēma)
 Hebrews 2:9 ...the angels for the suffering of death...
 Romans 8:18 ...reckon that the sufferings of this present...
 II Corinthians 1:5 ...as the sufferings of Christ abound in us.
 Philippians 3:10 ...and the fellowship of his suffering.
 Colossians 1:24 ...now rejoice in my suffering for you...
 Hebrews 2:10 ...their salvation perfect through suffering...
 I Peter 1:11 ...testified beforehand the suffering of Christ...
 I Peter 4:13 ...as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering.
 I Peter 5:1 ...and a witness of the sufferings of Christ...

15. ὑπέχω (hupechō)
Jude 7 ...suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
16. θλίψις (thlipsis)
Matthew 13:21 ...for when tribulation or persecution ariseth...
John 16:33 In the world ye shall have tribulation...
Acts 14:22 ...through much tribulation enter into...
Romans 5:3 ...knowing that tribulation worketh patience.
II Corinthians I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation...
Revelation 2:9 ...thy works, and tribulation and poverty...
Revelation 7:14 ...they which came out of great tribulation...
Romans 5:3 ...only so, but we glory in tribulation also.
Ephesians 3:13 ...that ye faint not at my tribulation for you.
II Thessalonians 1:4 ...persecution and tribulation that ye endure.

B. CHASTENING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT

1. יָכַח (yakach)
II Samuel 7:14 I will chasten him with the rod of men.
Job 33:19 He is chastened also with pain upon his...
2. יָסַר (yasar)
Psalms 38:1 ...chasten me in thy hot displeasure...
Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope...
Psalms 118:18 The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he...
Psalms 94:12 Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth.
Deuteronomy 8:5 ...as a man chasteneth his son, so...
Deuteronomy 22:18 ...city shall take that man and chastise...
Leviticus 26:28 ...and I, even I, will chastise you seven...
I Kings 12:11 ...but I will chastise you with scorpions.
I Kings 12:14 ...with whips, but I will chastise you with...
Hosea 7:12 I will chastise them as their...
Hosea 10:10 ...in my desire that I should chastise
I Kings 12:11 ...my father hath chastised...
Jeremiah 31:18 Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised.
Psalms 94:10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not.
3. בָּחַן (bachan)
Job 7:18 ...and try him every moment...
Job 23:10 ...when he hath tried me...
Jeremiah 12:3 ...and tried mine heart toward thee...
Zechariah 13:9 ...will try them as gold is tried.
I Chronicles 29:17 ...that thou triest the heart...
Jeremiah 11:20 ...that triest the reins and the heart.
Jeremiah 20:12 ...that triest the righteous, and seest the...
Psalms 7:9 ...the righteous God trieth the hearts.
Psalms 11:5 The Lord trieth the righteous
Proverbs 17:3 ...but the Lord trieth the hearts...

4. סָרַף (tsaraph)
 Daniel 11:35 ...to try them and to purge...
 Psalms 26:2 ...try my reins and my heart.
 Psalms 12:6 ...as silver tried in a furnace of earth...
 Psalms 105:19 ...the word of the Lord tried him.
 Daniel 12:10 ...purified, and made white, and tried...
5. מָסַר (musar)
 Proverbs 12:24 ...he that loveth him chasteneth him.
 Job 5:17 ...therefore despise not thou the chastening...
 Isaiah 26:16 ...a prayer when they chastening was upon.
 Job 34:31 I have borne chastisement, I will not offend.
 Isaiah 53:5 ...the chastisement of our peace was upon...
6. παῖδεύω (paideuō)
 Revelation 3:19 ...many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.
 I Corinthians 11:32 ...we are chastened of the Lord, that we...
 Hebrews 12:10 ...for a few days chastened us after their own...
 Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...
 Luke 23:16 I will therefore chastise him, and release...
7. πειράζω (peirazō)
 Hebrews 11:17 ...when he was tried offered up Isaac.
 Revelation 2:2 ...thou hast tried them which say they.
 Revelation 3:10 ...try them that dwell upon the earth.
8. δοκιμάζω (dokimazō)
 James 1:12 ...for when he is tried, he shall receive.
9. περιδύω (peideuō)
 Hebrews 12:5 ...despise not thou the chastening of the
 Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with...
 Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present.
 Hebrews 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof.

THE REFINER'S FIRE

He sat by a furnace of seven-fold heat,
 As He watched by the precious ore,
 And closer He bent with a searching gaze
 As He heated it more and more.

He knew He had ore that could stand the test
 And He wanted the finest gold,
 To mold as a crown for the King to wear,
 Set with gems of price untold.

So He laid our gold in the burning fire,
 Tho' we fain would say Him, "Nay;"
 And watched the dross that we had not seen
 As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter and yet more bright,
 But our eyes were dim with tears;
 We saw but the fire - not the Master's hand,
 And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
 As it mirrored a form above,
 That bent o'er the fire, tho' unseen by us,
 With a look of ineffable love.

Can we think it pleases His loving heart
 To cause us a moment's pain?
 Ah, no but He sees through the present cross
 The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,
 With a love that is strong and sure,
 And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat
 Than was needed to make it pure.

- Selected

GOD'S WAY IS BEST

Did you ask the Lord for patience?
 Did you plead for it in prayer;
 Then tribulations great befell you
 And you thought He didn't care?
 Oh, my child, He heard and answered,
 Answered full your prayer;
 "Tribulation worketh patience,"
 That's the gem you longed to wear.

Did you ask Him for submission?
 Did you plead for it in prayer,
 And such sufferings great o'ertook you
 That you thought He didn't care?
 Ah, my dear, He heard and answered
 That true prayer with bitter tear;
 For we learn obedience
 By the things we suffer here.

'Twas unselfishness you wanted,
 Asked for it in prayer;
 And the sacrifice He asked for
 Seemed too great for you to bear.
 Ah! He heard, He cared, and answered,
 Answered full your prayer;
 For we learn to be unselfish
 By the sacrifice we bear.

Did you ask to be made humble,
 And for strength its fruit to bear;
 Then the way you were tormented
 Made you feel He didn't care?
 Well, my child, He heard and answered,
 Answered deepest prayer;
 Humility, and strength to bear it,
 Come to those who know life's care.

Did you pray for life abiding,
 Wholly in His care;
 Then He severed you from loved ones,
 Till you thought He'd missed your prayer?
 Ah! my child, He heard and answered,
 Answered His child's prayer;
 For we learn the life abiding,
 If His loneliness we share!

Ah! you asked His love He'd show you,
 Plead in earnest prayer;
 And He sent you bitter chastenings,
 Till you thought He didn't care!
 Dear, dear child, He heard and answered,
 In pure love, your prayer;
 "Whom He loveth, him He chasteneth,"
 But He gives the strength to bear.

Did you ask the Lord for victory,
 Plead for it in prayer;
 And life's battles surged around you,
 Hid His face so fair:
 Ah, my child, He heard and answered,
 Answered your own prayer;
 For we learn to be victorious
 By the daily cross we bear!

Transitory things these all are,
 But above there's recompence;
 Honor, glory, peace e'erlasting,
 From eternal death defence!
 For this moment's tribulation
 Is working out for you and me
 Age-abiding weights of glory,
 Throughout all eternity!

So we count not things we're seeing,
 But the things which are above;
 For the things we see are fleeting,
 But above is God, and love.
 The big things beyond this earth-life
 Are unseen by us today;
 But there everlasting beauty
 Will be ours to keep for aye!

- Josephine Hope Westervelt