

DIVINE CHASTISEMENT

*"What? Shall we receive
good at the hand of God,
and shall we not receive
evil?" (Job 2:10)*



ARTHUR W. PINK

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CHASTISEMENT**



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(1886-1952)

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BY

ARTHUR W. PINK



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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth.

—*Psalm 60:4*

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DIVINE CHASTISEMENT



Table of Contents

Publisher's Foreword	vii
1. The Path of Tribulation	1
2. A Call to Steadfastness	15
3. Divine Chastisement – Section One	27
4. Divine Chastisement – Section Two	39
5. Divine Chastisement – Section Three	51
6. Divine Chastisement – Section Four	63
7. Divine Chastisement – Section Five	75
8. Divine Chastisement – Section Six	87
9. Divine Chastisement – Section Seven	101
10. A Call to Steadfastness	115
A Biographical Sketch of the Author	129
About <i>The Baptist Standard Bearer</i>	139



PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

“Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 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? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” (Hebrews 12:5-8).

CHISTIANS HAVE TRIALS and afflictions. This should not be a strange concept. It is an obvious fact of life. But, the idea that Christians are chastened and corrected by their heavenly Father is a concept that is not only foreign but completely contrary to what many present-day Christians are taught and the way they think every day. However, the Bible text given above from the book of Hebrews makes such a concept clearly undeniable, the Lord “*chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*” (Hebrews 12:6).

The Bible plainly states that, “*Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward*” (Job 5:7). According to this verse, all men by nature have trouble as surely as all sparks by nature fly upward. Men can no more prevent or avoid trouble, than they can prevent sparks from flying upward into the sky. All men will, sooner or

later, face adversity and endure suffering of some kind in this world. Hence, the Bible says, “*Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble*” (Job 14:1). In commenting on this verse, John Gill wrote,

“Man is born to trouble, being born in sin; trouble and sin go together, where there is sin there is trouble; sin entered into the world, and death by it, with the numerous train of afflictions and miseries which issue from it: *all men* have their troubles, some of one sort, and some of another; *wicked men* are not indeed troubled as other men, as good men are; they have not the same sort of trouble, yet they are not exempt from all; they are full of commotion, disquietude and uneasiness, as the word signifies; they are restless, and ever in motion; they are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest . . . and *good men* have their troubles besides those in common with others, they have inward troubles arising from the vanity of their minds and thoughts, the impurity of their hearts, and the power of indwelling sin in them, and especially from the breaking forth of it in words and deeds, from the weakness of their graces, from the hidings of God’s face, and from the temptations of Satan; in short, Job’s meaning is, that men in the ordinary course of things meet with . . . much trouble.”¹

Thus, in view of what the Bible says about trouble and suffering, we can say that no man lives a trouble-free life in this world. All men will, sooner or later, face adversity and endure suffering of some kind. The Bible also reveals that wickedness does not exempt unsaved men from their natural troubles and salvation

1. John Gill. *An Exposition of the Old & New Testaments*. Volume 3. (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810). Page 306.

does not exempt saved men from their troubles. But it should be noted that Christian men suffer from *two kinds* of trouble. They must endure both natural troubles and spiritual troubles. This is why John Gill wrote, “wicked men are not indeed troubled as other men, as good men are; they have not the *same sort* of trouble.” Lost men are not disturbed by the “spiritual” troubles of a Christian. So, for emphasis I say again, no man lives a trouble-free life, not even Christians. Such an idea is an unrealistic fantasy and the figment of an imagination completely uninformed by what the Bible teaches about human life in this sin-cursed world. One wonders if those who espouse such ideas have ever read the Book of Job (1:21; 2:10; 27:2; etc.) or the words of Christ in John 16:33 or what Paul said in Acts 14:22? According to what the Bible teaches, all men will, sooner or later, face adversity and endure suffering of some kind. This is especially true for Christians. They will have both natural and spiritual troubles. It was an oft-repeated saying among the old Puritans that, “God had only one Son without sin, but He never had any sons without sorrow.” If Christ was – “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*” – how can any Christian follow Him, walk in His steps and not have any trouble? How can the “head” of the body suffer, and the “members” of the body not feel it? For the Christian, some afflictions are brief, some persist for years and some may even continue throughout his entire lifetime. Often troubles come upon us one after another in quick succession. At other times we have a reprieve and enjoy an interval of peace between troubles. Occasionally we must endure physical troubles like crippling affliction or a lingering sickness, or sometimes we suffer spiritual trouble and sorrows of the soul, sometimes our families are rent asunder by death or divorce, sometimes severe financial loss or outright poverty trouble us, or sometimes we may have to endure the political turmoil that flows from war or the

oppression of a tyrannical government. But, whatever the nature of the anxiety – every Christian has trouble. The question is not, can you avoid and prevent having any trouble. The question is, do you understand: (1) the origin, nature and purpose of your troubles and (2) how you should respond to them.

Dear reader, have you ever seriously compared yourself with the people of God in the Bible? If so, have you not often observed that there is a great difference between these people and yourself? Beyond the miraculous, are there not some glaring contrasts between today's professing Christians and the saints of the past? In no aspect of the Christian life is that contrast and difference more apparent than in the way Bible Christians understood and responded to their trials and troubles and the way we understand and respond to ours today.

As we approach this subject, we should be careful to remember that the people of God in the Bible – even those who served the Lord in miraculous ways – were still, “*subject to like passions as we are*” (James 5:17). They too fell into sin and often failed to serve God aright. The same doubt and fear, the same self-will and inclination to seek personal ease and comfort that often plagues us, plagued their hearts as well. They too, even after the new birth, had to battle the same residual indwelling sin (Romans 7:18–24; Galatians 5:17). Hence, it should not be forgotten that the people of God in the Bible were not perfect – they were only saved sinners like ourselves. And yet the Lord obviously led them, taught them and brought them to understand their trials and troubles in manner many of us today find hard to comprehend. For example, after she lost her husband and her sons, Naomi, mother-in-law to Ruth, said, “*I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty... the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me*” (Ruth 1:21). After losing most of his possessions, all

his children, and his health, Job said, "*the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*" (Job 1:21). When Job's wife urged him to curse God for his losses, the Bible records Job's response, "*What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*" Then the Bible vindicates Job's words, "*In all this did not Job sin with his lips*" (Job 2:10). Again, in recognizing the hand of the Lord in his trials, Job said, "*the Almighty hath vexed my soul*" (Job 27:2). When David spoke of his troubles, he said, "*I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*" (Psalms 119:75). How different from today's way of thinking! Should we then just write-off our trials, troubles and afflictions as originating from blind fate, random luck, or haphazard chance? No, not if we believe the Bible. It plainly teaches us that the God of the Bible sits as "*governor among the nations*" (Psalm 22:28) and "*rules over all the kingdoms of the heathen*" (2 Chronicles 20:6) and "*doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*" (Daniel 4:35) and His kingdom "*ruleth over all*" (Psalm 103:19; 115:3). Hence, the God of the Bible "*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*" (Ephesians 1:11) and "*chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*" (Hebrews 12:6). This is exactly what Jesus himself said, "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*" (Revelation 3:19). Consequently, we are repeatedly exhorted to "*despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him*" (Hebrews 12:5-6; Job 5:17; Proverbs 3:11).

But how many of us are guilty of despising the chastening of the Lord? How many of us are guilty of thinking lightly or very little of the Lord's involvement in our trials and troubles? How many of us see the Lord as the original source and first cause of our afflictions? How many of today's professing Christians "bless" God for the things they've suffered? How many of us feel that our

afflictions are right? Don't we usually consider them unfair? Have you ever understood that God was "faithful" when He sent trouble into your life? Again, David said, "*Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*" (Psalms 23:4) and David spoke of his, "*comfort in affliction*" (Psalms 119:50). Have you ever felt any "comfort" from the afflicting rod? Do we understand "how" one finds comfort in tribulation and affliction? Dear reader, as we said before, the question is not, can you avoid and prevent having any trouble. The question is, do you understand: (1) the origin, nature and purpose of your troubles and (2) how you should respond to them.

I would ask the reader, even as you examine this book, are you not dealing with some type of adversity, are you not troubled in some way or another by something? Would you like to learn more about a Christian man's troubles and how to respond to them? There are many publications currently available that address these issues. Among the more notable we would recommend the following: (1) Thomas Boston – *The Crook in the Lot: God's Sovereignty and Wisdom Displayed in our Afflictions*; (2) Thomas Brooks – *The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod*; (3) Jeremy Burroughs – *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*; (4) John Flavel – *The Mystery of Divine Providence*; (5) Richard Sibbes – *The Bruised Reed*; and (6) Thomas Watson – *All Things For Good*. Nevertheless, we believe the following book by Arthur W. Pink is one of the very best on the particular subject of Christian affliction as set forth in the Book of Hebrews Chapter 12. It especially deals with the specific issue of God "chastening" His children. In this book the author's primary objective is to consider what the Bible says about the nature of Christian afflictions and the manner in which Christians ought to respond to their heavenly Father's correction.

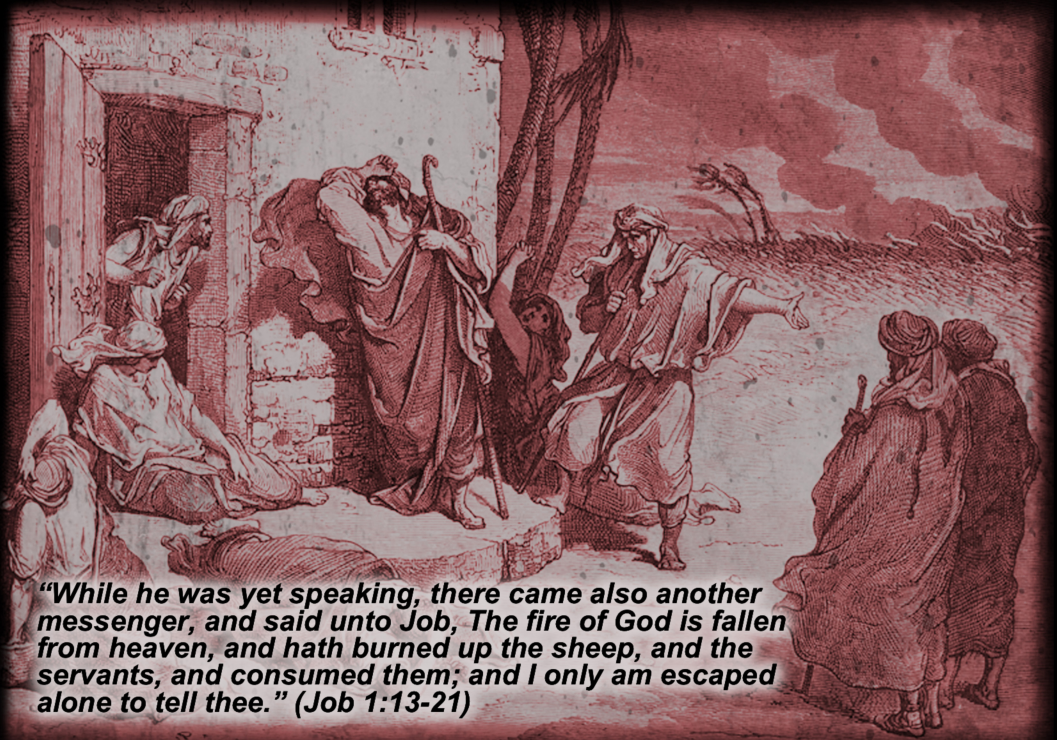
The content of this book was extracted from A. W. Pink's book – *An Exposition of Hebrews* and, from our research, we understand that this is the first time this particular material has ever been

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

published by itself in separate book form. We pray the Lord will be pleased to make this book a blessing to all those into whose hands He providentially sends it. Through printing and distributing this book, the publisher hopes to, "*comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God*" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

DIVINE CHASTISEMENT

No man lives a trouble-free life in this world. *"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward"* (Job 5:7). Thus, men can no more prevent or avoid trouble, than they can prevent sparks from flying upward in the night sky. *"Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble"* (Job 14:1). Hence, all men will, sooner or later, face adversity and endure suffering of some kind. Furthermore, the Bible reveals that just as wickedness does not exempt unsaved men from trouble, so salvation does not exempt saved men from trouble. In fact, Christian men suffer *two kinds* of trouble. They must endure both *natural* and *spiritual* troubles. But lost men are not disturbed by the "spiritual" troubles of a Christian. To repeat, no man lives a trouble-free life, not even Christians. Such an idea is an unrealistic fantasy and the figment of an imagination completely uninformed by what the Bible teaches (John 16:33; Acts 14:22, etc.). One wonders if those who espouse such ideas have ever read the truths set forth in the Book of Job and depicted in the cover pictures of this book (Job 1:13-21; 2:10). Therefore, the question is not, can you prevent or avoid having trouble. The question is do you understand: (1) the origin, nature and purpose of your troubles and (2) how you should respond to them. Under the blessing of God, Arthur W. Pink's book will assist you in both.



"While he was yet speaking, there came also another messenger, and said unto Job, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." (Job 1:13-21)

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