

Faint Not

by G.D. Watson

The sermon 'Faint Not' encourages believers to find strength in Christ and not to faint in the face of spiritual weakness and adversity.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:29, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Galatians 6:9, Hebrews 12:3, Hebrews 12:5

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Endurance"

Description

G.D. Watson preaches about the experience of soul-fainting, likening it to the fainting of the body, and highlights various feelings that may lead a Christian heart to faint, such as loneliness, feeling caged in, a heavy bearing down in the soul, and paralysis of faculties. He emphasizes the importance of considering Jesus who endured, not despising the chastening of the Lord, and seeking the manifestation of Jesus to the inner spirit as remedies to prevent soul-fainting.

Transcript

There is an experience of soul exactly like the fainting of the body. When a person faints there is an utter loss of strength accompanied with a real sickish feeling, paleness and a clammy sweat, causing the body to get limp, beyond the control of the will, and fall away in an unconscious swoon. There is a real fainting of the soul which we are admonished against in the Word, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, for which cause we faint not." "Faint, yet pursuing."

Some of the feelings which may lead the Christian heart to faint are the following:

A feeling of loneliness of soul, as if we were isolated from all other spirits, and especially shut off from the souls that are around us. We seem to be a castaway on some ethereal and desert island, with all intelligible communication with other souls cut off. We sometimes think we would like to open all our inner feelings to a fellow-spirit, but if the opportunity occurs to do so, an invisible yet powerful check is laid upon us. We seem to be more in fellowship with the souls of far-distant ages than with those near by. We seem to pace the boundless shore of our solitary island, waiting for any sort of a change to break upon our experience, until we feel like sinking down under sheer sameness and monotone of soul.

Another feeling is that of being caged in, hampered and tied in an inextricable manner. Providence seems to go off and leave us to the heartlessness of a thousand petty demons who pervade every little circumstance; who seem, like the fabled Lilliputians, to tie our hands and feet while we sleep; who snap all

the threads in our financial looms; who upset our ordinary plans; who turn anticipated joys into ashes; who bother us with a host of mental perplexities too subtle to define and too numerous to count. There are times when a current of such things seems to set in; times when everything seems to weave itself into a network of crippling environment, and any effort to extricate ourselves only bruises us. At such times the question is shot into the mind, "What's the use?" Another feeling is that of a strange pressure and a heavy bearing down in the soul, it seems we cannot get low enough to slip out from under the weight; the floor or ground is entirely too high for us.

Another feeling is that of paralysis. The faculties seem benumbed and unable to exert themselves. Prayer is not versatile and fluent, but is reduced to a heart groan or the simple cry of the woman in the gospel, "Lord, help me." This inertia of the faculties is accompanied with a sense of weariness in the soul; the Holy Spirit recognizes this state of experience and distinctly mentions this heart tiredness, "Lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." The Spirit has given us three remedies to prevent soul-fainting: One remedy is, "Consider Him who endured lest ye be weary and faint." When prayer is inert, when every pinion of heart and mind is bound, we are to quietly fix our consideration on Him who endured; spread out before the mind how He was cramped, limited, contradicted; His inner feelings fettered and smitten in a thousand inconceivable ways; how the normal yearnings of His heart were denied and snubbed; how the whole of His outward environment was at such horrible disagreement with the fitness of things in His soul; to consider all this, and much more which will occur to a meditative soul, will bring a sense of fellowship with Him which is excellent medicine for faintness of spirit.

Another remedy is, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord." God arranges, or permits, for our chastening to come to us in such strange and unlooked-for ways, in such mortifying and disagreeable circumstances, by such undignified and outlandish agencies that we are apt to "despise the chastening."

We think we could take the scourging much better if it were applied with a more dignified and beautiful whip. Our chastisement often occurs by things in which we see no semblance of divinity. The trials, the besetments, the persons, the events, the gnarled and knotty annoyances, which God employs to correct or rebuke us, seem often so low and mean and out of harmony with the fitness of things that we are liable to despise the correction. Now, if we can discover the hand of God in all these ugly things, if we can see the divine presence under all this network of unpleasantness, it will at once throw a new light on them, and the recognition of His presence will keep us from fainting. "Despise not the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked by Him."

Another remedy for soul-fainting is the manifestation of Jesus to the inner spirit. Paul tells us in second Corinthians, fourth chapter, that God hath shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and says this manifestation is a treasure which we have in earthen vessels, then, after alluding to our peculiar sufferings, concludes by saying, "For which cause we faint not." So the best cure for heart-fainting is the blessedness of Jesus revealed in us by the Holy Ghost. The dear, deep apprehension of Jesus as a personal, sympathizing, indwelling Saviour is a soul tonic, an invigorating balm to the spirit which nothing else can be.

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