

NO. 149.

"EMOTIONS"

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,
At Wattam's Restaurant, Aldgate,
31st March, 1920.

OUTLINE:-

1. Scriptural Teaching as to Deep Feeling.
2. Distinction Between that which is
of the Flesh, and that which
is of the Spirit.
3. Emotions in Relation to Enjoyment,
Prayer and Service.

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It is plain that the Scripture is not on the one hand a Book of mere sentiment, but it is not on the other a book of cold stoic-like asceticism. There is throughout Scripture the brightness of intense feeling. Living men pass before us with a living enthusiasm. We are not only dealing with a treatise of logic, though its logic is incomparable beyond all of earth; + only have we a book of legal arrangements, though its provisions are infinitely above all of men; but we have a living Book concerning living persons, written in a living style, and pleading for a living intensity. Throughout Scripture we find deep feeling, and this includes deep feeling on the part of God. In the very first book the expression meets us "It grieved Him at His heart". Nor can we be unmindful of the tender words from the prophets,- "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" and such an added statement as that of Hosea, that God, because He is God, and not man, has His heart turned within Him and His repentings kindled together. Such a statement is deeply affecting. Again, Jeremiah speaks of the Lord similarly. When the Lord is dealing with Ephraim, He says, "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still; therefore My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord". The many verses which speak of the Lord's LOVE have their definite testimony. "The

Lord hath appeared of old unto thee, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee". "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son"; and when He speaks to His people His language is not that of one who is far off without feeling. He asks, "What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone after vanity and become vain?" Yet once more, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Yet further, "O do not that abominable thing which I hate". .Such words indicate on the one hand that God is a God of feeling, and that He desires His servants to be preserved from a merely mechanical exactness, and to experience a deep affection which will show itself in many ways. One of the most remarkable cases of this with regard to a servant of the Lord is in Jeremiah 48. "Therefore", says Jeremiah, will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; my heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer". But this is the more impressive when we realise that Jeremiah was affected by what Isaiah had written. "Mine heart shall cry out for Moab" in the 15th chapter of the earlier prophecy. So we have in both the parallel cases the intense concern, even though the Scripture equally declares, "We have heard of the pride of Moab, he is very proud". Even to Cain God preached the truth regarding the way of salvation. The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah when the ark was a preparing. The glory of the Lord seemed to linger over Jerusalem, and then withdrew but slowly to the eastern height of Olivet. Every Scripture suggests that the longsuffering of God leads to repentance, and that His goodness and longsuffering and forbearance make manifest how His tender mercies are over all His works. God is not a mere distant almighty power, but He is One Who has feelings which are real and definite, and revealed in the Scripture of Truth. I am quite aware that there are many who would set this teaching on one side, or they would mis-state and misapply it. While God on the one

hand is set forth as infinitely compassionate, Whose very name contains the words "Merciful and Gracious", on the other hand He is seen in His inflexible righteousness, and with His absolute foreknowledge of all events, so that there cannot be with Him uncertainty or disappointment. Christ MUST see of the travail of His soul, and MUST be satisfied. We have no thought in Scripture of God being unhappy because of an attempt to save, which has failed. While, on the one hand, He shows His compassion, on the other hand, He made evident His sovereignty. Human logic may attempt to explain the two together. Personally I feel that I can explain neither in full. They are both separately, as well as together, beyond our feeble and limited grasp. There are not a few who try to "reconcile" different parts of the character of God, but they make the fundamental error that if you take any part of the character of God by itself you only know parts of that part. Now to attempt to bring together two parts when you are only in measure acquainted with both, is to take a further step before you have taken the initial step. The true wisdom is to acknowledge that which is beyond us, and to rejoice that the sovereignty and the mercy of God, the righteousness and the compassion of God, are both greater than our feeble appreciation.

We have seen, in measure, the Scriptural teaching as to deep feeling, but at present only in measure. Not only does God set Himself before us in this way, not only are certain prophets seen weeping; but we find the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh manifested as One having definite emotion. He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes". Again He uttered the words of pathos, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her

chickens under her wings, and ye would not . Again, He it was Who wept at the grave of Lazarus. "The Man of Sorrows", as He is named, is thus set forth in His deep feeling, so that even the onlookers said, "Behold, how He loved". That deep feeling is manifest in various ways, when, for example, He was indignant at those who questioned His right to heal a man on the Sabbath day; and when He felt the terrible unbelief, or incompleteness of belief, of His followers, and sighed as He said, Oh faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you . But many waters would not quench His love. The feeling of the Song of Songs is beyond any question, and that describes His unparalleled love. Can you possibly read a stoic's heart in the Song of Songs? Can you possibly make that book icy? Surely not, any more than you can make a flame to freeze. God has set forth, in wonderful love, the glorious compassion and delight of His beloved Son, and we call to mind the gracious words, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end". The same feeling was seen amid intense agonies upon the cross of Calvary, when He cared for Mary, and spoke words of comfort to the dying thief. Nor is He without feeling as revealed in the Psalms. For His love men were His adversaries, but He gave Himself unto prayer, and set Himself in the way of perfect obedience. He was concerned for those who were evil, in such a way that reproach broke His heart. Very tender are such words. They are put in a very definite context. Amid all the opposition He still loved, and nothing could change His grace. Not only so, but the Holy Spirit sets forth His approval of real sentiment among the people of the Lord. "He that goeth forth and WEEPETH, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with him . Or if you take the CORRESPONDING part of deep feeling, the Holy Spirit has COMMANDED believers to REJOICE in the Lord alway. The words are not merely a suggestion. They are a command, and if a child of God is strict

in obedience as to other arrangements, but omits to rejoice in the Lord alway, that child of God is disobedient in the same way as if he were a thief. Oh, you say, there is not the same open defiance. But there is equally a FACT of disobedience. The Lord's commands, which are exceeding broad, penetrate to our FEELINGS and COMMAND their condition. Hence we have a fourfold witness in favour of deep feeling, and the Holy Spirit has caused this to be written that we may seek to illustrate that which is well pleasing in God's sight. I need hardly add that the NEGATIVE evidence is equally strong. There is no command to restrain appointed feeling. There is no approval of an absence of feeling. And what we may call the inferential argument is definite. If the grace of God is that which it is set forth to be, if salvation is that which it is revealed to include, if judgment is so solemn as the picture graphically drawn, surely the inference of these things must be a depth of feeling, and anything else would be dishonourable and out of harmony with the unveiling of truth.

But it is so important that we should distinguish between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and does not rise higher ~~than~~, and in this sense that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and we are to pray in the Spirit, and to rejoice spiritually, and to walk spiritually. We all know that there are actions of the flesh which are deadly counterfeits of that which God has appointed. We find that Israel could weep all night when they had been disobedient against the Lord, and yet no word of repentance escaped their lips, - yea, their weeping was part of their disobedience, in Num. 14. And it is the same to-day. We know that a Herod can hear gladly the testimony of John the baptist, and a Felix may tremble, and yet these feelings are only of the flesh. The stony ground hearer may with joy receive the word, and there may seem the evidences of reality of delight, but

yet there is something lacking. The joy of the Holy Ghost is not there. Surely such words bring Before us the solemn fact that there are TWO kinds of emotion, and we need to beware lest ours be simply natural and not spiritual. The natural man may do much. The history of devotees to all religions will prove this. One may be full of buoyant enthusiasm and have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Saul of Tarsus, before he was quickened, thought that he OUGHT to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth, which also he did. Then he was alive without the law, a man of intense religious devotion. Feeling is not enough. Sincerity is not enough. Love is not enough. The Holy Spirit has approved of love IN THE TRUTH. It is very solemn to know that there may be impulse, and impulse may carry a man a long way, whether with the vigour of a Jehu, or the generosity of a Saul the son of Kish, or the apparent willingness to give up of a Demas at first, and yet all the while there may be no evidence of a new birth. The Galatians would gladly have plucked out their eyes to give them to Paul, but afterwards he was afraid of them lest labour had been bestowed on them in vain. He would not infer from their past that their present was right. It was rather from their present he would doubt their past, and wonder if that which seemed to be the fruit of godliness was but the overflowing of temporary sentiment. All flesh is grass and all the godliness thereof as the flower of the field. There is the godliness of the flesh. I want us to be clear upon this point, beloved friends. Before God there is human depravity, and no man has ever produced any action which is acceptable in the sphere of law where perfection and perfection only can be acknowledged. But within the sphere of providence, and relationship to God as moral Governor, there are many gradations between sinners, and one sinner produces flower-like actions of piety which are by no means acknowledged in law, but which certainly have a temporary

attractiveness, and make the life of others around far easier in and by the removal of many difficulties. The goodliness of the flesh is NOT pictured as something ugly. Do you tell me, beloved friends, that the unselfishness of the man of the world is ugly? I deny it. Most definitely would I set forth that that man is a depraved poor lost sinner, lost when he is unselfish as when he is selfish, but I cannot say that there is an ugliness in that unselfishness. It is as the FLOWER OF THE GRASS. It is not acceptable before God. To day it is, and to-morrow it is cast into the oven, but it is not ugly. It makes life easier for God's children, and gives many blooms in the flowers of this passing world. Nor is God, in the sphere of His arrangement, unmindful of these facts. There shall be more terrible judgment for some than for others, - retribution is according to works. In like manner, Ephraim is thus addressed, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth ~~away~~. The morning cloud is in itself, in measure, useful, but it has no permanence. "If ye CONTINUE in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". Only those who continue are disciples indeed. Only such know the truth, only such are free. But there are certain actions which are morning cloud and early dew goodness which God notices as such, and though the very next verse says "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets", just as the wind bloweth upon the flower of grass, though God indicates that He cannot receive these things in law, or abate His claims one iota to suit the actions of a man, yet these are reliefs in the world's dreary wilderness, and have TEMPORARY lengthening of tranquility, as would have been the case with Nebuchadnezzar had he continued to break off his sins in their outward arrangement by earthly righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.

God's governmental arrangements of earth must be carefully distinguished from the legal position of a man with respect to wrath; and DEGREES of punishment must be distinguished from the fact that all are by nature members of a ruined race over which there stands the sentence of ETERNAL doom. We do well to notice the wages of one sin would be death, but the Lord will with strict rectitude judge every man according to his works.

To return. Though we notice with a measure of encouragement some of the emotions which are linked with the flesh, and though we hope that where there is some tenderness there will be the encouragement at least of a Nineveh's repentance, yet we do not wish to manifest this ourselves. Though we are relieved when the world shows certain emotions, we do not wish to bring OUR emotions down to their level. We do not stand before God in the sphere of providence, but in the sphere of grace, if so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and in that sphere we are commanded to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and we cannot produce a morning cloud of a natural emotion in the Name of the Lord Jesus. We have received the Spirit of God that we might be able to do that which is well pleasing in God's sight. Let us be clear upon this point, beloved friends, for as to HUMAN emotion we cannot always decide what is the TRUE value and what will be the goal, inasmuch as sometimes there is a reaction; sometimes a man experiences temporary human emotion only to deaden his feelings the more afterwards, and the unclean spirit that is gone out from the man returns with seven other spirits worse than the first. We are not always encouraged by emotions, but yet, in measure, we do hope when we see any apparent tenderness, and long that there may not be the treasuring to oneself wrath against the day of wrath in accord with the hardness of an impenitent heart. The goodness of God leads a man to repentance, and though spiritual repentance is because Christ

is exalted to GIVE it, yet there is a national and a natural repentance which are Divinely noticed, and which we would fain see, even in the land where God has privileged us to dwell. But, beloved friends, we do not, (let me repeat this, we do not) want to limit ourselves to natural emotions. We want, by grace, to make manifest that we have something far, far deeper, that having been born of the Spirit we are those who are led by the Spirit of God, and live and walk in the Spirit.

How then can we distinguish between that which is natural (or soulish), and that which is of the Spirit? The Word of God is living and inworking, and pierces to the dividing asunder. THIS is the testimony of Heb. 4. If we judge sentiment by sentiment we shall come to a wrong opinion. If we test by feelings we shall come to a wrong result. Feelings must be tested by truth. I am not pleading for truth without feelings, nor for feelings without truth, but for truth and feelings combined. "The truth in love" is the Scriptural witness, and "Love in the truth". "Hereby we know that we love the children of God" - when we FEEL love? Not at all: this is an unsafe criterion. 'Tis "When we love God and keep His commandments", that is the Divine statement. You tell me you love the children of God, and therefore are afraid to rebuke them? You tell me you love the children of God because you "feel" a desire toward them, and therefore you agree to differ because you are afraid that you will tread on some of their fancied opinions? Where is the love that will suffer sin upon a neighbour? You tell me you love the children of God while you break the Lord's arrangements and are careless about HIS purposes? No, beloved friends, we are faltering in our love to the extent we falter in obedience. Do not think I am pleading for a rigid orthodoxy without the power of godliness. Bare outward obedience is not obedience from the Scriptural standpoint. You may go through the routine of the Lord's commandments so far as the body is concerned.

You may gather with believers regularly. You may break bread Scripturally as one who has been Scripturally baptized, and yet all the while there may be something lacking, there may be an externalism; - THAT is not the Lord's commandment. The Lord's commandments are none of them without love, and you cannot obey a single portion without the heart. We need to grow up into Christ in ALL things, and to have that spiritually twofoldedness which involves the blending together of that which pleased Him. The Pharisees tithed mint, anise and cummin, but omitted mercy, and the Lord spoke sternly as to this. Shall I rather say a fourfoldedness of love, with all the heart, the soul, the mind, and the strength. The love of the MIND must not be developed beyond measure without the equal development of the love in the heart and soul. I am not pleading for illogical absence of clear thinking, but there is a dread danger if a child of God develops his brain more than his heart, even as there is a dread danger if the child of God develops his feelings more than his mind. He is to love God with BOTH. They are both part of that which He presents to God as a living sacrifice, and all his members are to be instruments of righteousness. He is not his own, and if there is a dwarf-like condition of any part of that which God has entrusted, there is an unfaithfulness in stewardship, and there will be a serious loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I would speak to myself as well as to you, for nothing is easier than to grow up into Christ in ONE thing, and to neglect another. We must be like Him who was pictured by the foursquare altar, - those who have an equalness of all sides, and who live a balanced life, to the praise of God's glory. But you will say I am not dealing with the subject. How can we distinguish between the two? Beloved friends, you will not misunderstand me if I say the Holy Spirit does not so much give us fixed rules to distinguish, but rather leads us to be distinguishERS. He does not give us a treatise so that we can apply some spiritual

chemicals to find the constituents of this act, and the analysis of that deed. Rather He brings us to the position of being those who are spiritual distinguishers to know the difference, who, by reason of use, have their senses EXERCISED to discern both good and evil. Again you see in that context the growth by the word first as the milk, and then as the strong meat. Let a believer grow up into Christ. There will be a sensitiveness, and he will perceive that which is of the Lord and that which is not. As the ear tries words and the palate tastes food, so the believer will become conscious of that which is the will of God, because ABIDING in the presence of the Lord he will have that which the Holy Spirit in Phil. 1 beautifully sets forth in this very connection. In that chapter we read, "This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all PERCEPTION, that ye might try things that differ". The perception of a growing love, the perception of an abounding love to FEEL that which is of the Lord, and to feel that which is not. In general we may say that when actions are not continued, but are spasmodic and jerky, we may feel them to be rather of the flesh. Secondly when they show a carelessness as to PART of truth, we may doubt their reality, for the blessing is on holding forth the whole truth, and sighing and crying for ALL abominations. I do not mean we have reached this knowledge, but a carelessness as to part of truth makes one doubt the spirituality; and let me say, and I think many will bear me out in this connection, that deep FEELINGS are possible which are apparently "spiritual", particularly in connection with disobedience itself. In other words, if a child of God is in a condition away from the Lord in measure, and has a tendency to excuse disobedience, he can usually "produce" certain feelings and accompany that disobedience with acts of apparent loving concern for souls to SOOTHE his conscience in disobedience. This is most remarkable, but it is sadly true. It is the devil's attempt to lead us away from the Lord. If a child of God has

been exercised upon a certain point, and tries to smother that conviction, it is remarkable how just as the world will engage in wickedness and salve their conscience that it is for a hospital carnival, so the believer will try while in a wrong path to do certain acts of concern for the world and love to poor guilty sinners, to flatter himself that he is near the Lord, and he will have dreamy emotional feelings of happy obedience which are not in accord with that deeper clear-headed obedience which pleases Him Who has called us by grace. Such mysticism is very dangerous, and we need to be guarded in this connection. The tendency toward feelings apart from the truth is utterly ruinous. We see its DEVELOPMENT where one stated how he was led of the Lord till he finished with the DEVELOPMENT of the agapemore, and a claim to Messiah-ship. But with what did this evil begin? With a profession of spirituality as to being led by the Lord: - and whenever you have a believer who, instead of producing Scripture for acts of obedience, says "I feel led to do this" or "I was guided of the Lord in it", who is more willing to refer to feelings than to what the Holy Spirit has said, and rather shelves the appeal to the Scripture because Scripture arguments cannot be found to support his or her action, you may be sure that a believer in that position, if a believer at all, is on an inclined plane which will have a deadly end, unless God mercifully prevents it. Do be guarded, beloved friends, against this deadly thought of claiming the Lord's leading instead of being guided by that One Holy Spirit which is set forth in the Scriptures of truth. Furthermore, when there is a selfishness in emotion, you may doubt its spirituality. If a believer with deep feelings becomes careless for "others'" needed comforts, causes inconvenience to "others", omits to do that which is honourable and right, showing an impulsive desire to be enthusiastic for the Lord at the expense of an employer's time, and so forth, causing inconvenience to others in any way where

responsibility is entrusted, you may be sure that this giving unto the Lord of that which is not one's own, is abhorred by Him Who hates robbery for burnt offering. Surely such selfishness would indicate that if there be spirituality in the action, it is very much overgrown by some parasitic plant which will sap its strength.

In closing, What should be our relation to emotions with regard to enjoyment, prayer, and service? Surely we ought to be HAPPY, for the Lord has said so. "O the happiness^{es} of the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly", "O the happinesses of all them that trust in Him", "Happy are the poor in spirit", and so forth. We are bidden to rejoice. Can you have joy WITHOUT emotion? No more than you can love without love. Does not the Song of Songs show that we are called to have our inward affections moved for Him Whom our soul LOVETH? The Lord desires us to have an enjoyment which is an enjoyment. Can you be happy without feeling it? Can you have an emotion without an emotion? Surely we must recognise that emotions are part of happiness, though not the whole. True happiness is not a surface emotion; it must stand the strain of a consciousness of sad facts as well. "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing". It is that deep, real rich happiness which God has appointed. The happiness of the surface may be shattered by changing experiences, and the believer who is bright one moment may be gloomy the next; but let there be the hidden Source and the hidden repose, and there will be a victory over the variable circumstances in increasing measure.

What are we to say as to Prayer? I feel, beloved friends, very weak, and ashamed, in speaking of this subject. We read in Eph. 6 of the wrestling that there should be against evil powers in prayer. But who of us knows what this means? Oh how we fall short! There should also be delight in prayer. Our beloved Lord

rejoiced in Spirit and said "Father, I thank Thee". He also was in an agony when He prayed, stretching out His hands. Do we not need to know both in our prayers? I do not mean we are not to pray when we feel a measure of weakness and dullness, but let us pray that our prayers may be increased in its spiritual vitality, and that our feelings may be more real, though even then we must be on our guard, because every believer knows that when his feelings are most ^{excited} ~~excited~~ with a holy intensity in things of the Lord, Satan will try to bring a counterfeit on the line of feelings in order to deceive and to carry us away from the truth so that we are merely borne along by impulse. Whatever be our spiritual progress Satan will come disguised as an angel of light on the line of that spiritual progress to delude if it were possible the very elect.

With regard to service, should there be emotion in this? Should a brother stand when he is speaking as though he has no feelings at all? or should he manifest an intensity which seems to well over from every part of his physical frame? I need hardly say that we are not "actors". To aim at being dramatic in order to make an impression is a dangerous counterfeit; but it is not the cure of much of our failure largely in a deeper knowledge of the truth? The most stoical becomes in measure concerned if he sees a loved relative in a house on fire, and if we feel the power of truth we shall find a measure of concern and earnestness which we have not experienced before. We should feed our emotions by meditation on truth, thus will they be helped. Ofttimes we do not have, or make, opportunity for meditation. We have time for work, time for study, time for witness, but we need to have meditation sometimes when going along the street; and yet how often we fall short in this connection. The Psalmist meditated on the Lord even in the night watches, and found that the darkest hours were illuminated by His bright presence, and that the Lord's love was a song in the night. I suppose that apart from the various mannerisms of brethren which manifestly depend

on lack of love to the Lord, there are temperamental mannerisms and nervous mannerisms. One brother is nervously excited and another brother is nervously quiet, and so we all bring something of ourself into our activities. What then Shall we wait till we are perfect before we continue service? or shall we rather be bowed before the Lord that He may cause us to GROW more rapidly? If we do not FEEL enthusiasm shall we draw back? We are not to force ourselves and offer a burnt offering when it is unappointed, but the Lord did not say when a man did a sin, that when he feels in a mood to bring the sacrifice he can bring it. The Lord Who has appointed the path of obedience has emphasized the importance of the condition, and can deal with both, and so is it with respect to prayer, and so is it with regard to certain forms of service. I am not saying that a brother is always in a healthy condition to pray. There may be a leaving of the gift on the altar before there can be the drawing near unto God. If we REGARD iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us. And so, furthermore, if we have a Mark-like holding back the Lord may be pleased to put us away from the foreground for a considerable period. Yet it is so easy for some temperaments to persuade themselves that the Lord has put them away from the foreground when this is only a gratification of their "natural" tendencies. And the VICE VERSA is true for others. What we need is grace to discern things that differ, even in this matter. And so we come back to the precious working in a circle which is a circle around one glorious Centre. All our perception of the will of the Lord in all these things is as we grow in grace. We cannot draw up fixed rules and make a treatise on how to distinguish physical emotions from spiritual, but what we can do is instead of spending the time in bringing out such a treatise, to desire fervently to behold in a glass the glory of the Lord, and as we are being changed to the same image from glory to glory, as we become like unto Him, not only in His light shall we see light, but in His love shall we feel love.