

CHOICE CONSOLATION FOR THE SUFFERING SAINTS

by Manton Eastburn

Eastburn's pastoral work offering biblical comfort to Christians enduring suffering, drawing from Scripture to show how God sustains, strengthens, and ultimately blesses His afflicted people.

1 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. Choice Consolation for the Suffering Saints

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Manton Eastburn, 1867

PREFACE

The compiler of the following pages, long trained in the school of affliction, has learned, through a fellowship in suffering, to feel the deepest sympathy for "all those who in this transitory life are afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate." The power to express that sympathy by ministering in person at the couch of sickness, or in the house of the mourner, being denied to her, through physical weakness — she sends forth this book in the earnest hope it may reach and comfort many dear children of God who may be "for a season in heaviness through manifold trials." May the Lord send home its words of strong faith and "lofty cheer" with much power and sweetness to many, many sorrowing hearts.

INTRODUCTION

The following selection was made by a lady who, having found rich comfort under sorrow in the treasures of Christian thought she has here collected, and reasonably supposing they might prove a source of peace to others, has in this compilation performed a work of true sympathy and love. I have read the volume, and feel sure it will be generally regarded as having been judiciously executed. Its author has been long known and highly valued by me; and I commend her book, with fervent prayer for the divine blessing, to all those who, in this world of alternate darkness and sunshine, "are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity." Manton Eastburn

Certain it is that the saints whom God has most approved, have been most abundantly exercised in different manners for the trial of their faith; and they who are most earnest in prayer for grace, are often most afflicted, because the graces which they pray for — faith, hope, patience, humility, etc., are only to be wrought in us by means of those trials which call forth the several graces into act and exercise; and in the very exercise of them they are all strengthened and confirmed. Charles Simeon

~ ~ ~ ~ One of the best helps in sorrow and trouble, is to visit people in affliction. Thomas Adams

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Extract from a Letter Written by Henry Venn

I have found often much comfort and a rest to my soul in that Scripture, "Run with patience the race that is set before us." When men run for the prize, all the ground is measured out for them, which they are to go over. Thus it is with Christians. The Lord's people, from the womb to the grave, have all their several places, for their childhood, their youth, their riper years, to the hour of their death, as well as the cause and manner of it — appointed in infinite wisdom and in everlasting love to their souls.

There is a set time how long their friends shall remain with them; what they shall do in their favor; also, what crosses and disappointments and ill usage they shall meet with, and from what quarter it all shall come. This race, set thus, we are to run with patience; not fretting or murmuring; not desponding or doubting the goodness and love of the Great Ordainer of all our lot; not even presuming to wish there was any alteration in our circumstances, unless God is pleased to bring it to pass. It is a great part of the spiritual worship due to him, and by which we honor him, thus to commit without worry, all our affairs into his hands; and when we do so, he has promised his peace shall rule in our hearts.

~ ~ ~ The Heavenly Rest

Rest! how sweet the sound! It is melody to my ears! It lies as a reviving cordial at my heart, and from thence sends forth lively spirits, which beat through all the pulses of my soul! Rest — not as the stone that rests on the earth, nor as this flesh shall rest in the grave, nor such a rest as the carnal world desires.

O blessed rest! when we rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" when we shall rest from sin, but not from worship — from suffering and sorrow, but not from joy! O blessed day — when I shall rest in the bosom of my Lord — when I shall rest in knowing, loving, rejoicing, and praising — when my perfect soul and body shall together perfectly enjoy the most perfect God!

~ ~ ~ Letter Written by Romaine to an Afflicted Friend

What you suffer seems grievous to the flesh. I sympathize with you; but I also find the Lord is with you, supports you; yes, he comforts you — therein I do rejoice. My prayer is for much patience under his hand, and much profit from his rod.

Let me direct your attention to Hebrews 12:5-14. The whole matter turns upon the character of the person who afflicts. Is it in wrath, or in love? Does God punish as a judge, or correct as a father? Mind how the sentence begins — My son, keep this upon your heart!

You have fled to Jesus; you have taken the benefit of his atonement and of his righteousness; you are therefore the adopted child of the most high God. And you must not think that he changes his love when he changes his dispensations. He is always your Father. And say, his rod is for the present not joyous but grievous; yet, mind, (Hebrews 12:11) it only seems; the flesh seems to be hurt, but really it is not — it is only in appearance. Look nearer — and you may easily see love sending, love inflicting. Wait a little — and you will have reason to thank your Father for the blessed fruits of his love. If you live, you will find them very rich and ripe.

~ ~ ~ Growth in Grace Is Not to Be Measured by Active Service Alone

We must not measure our attainments in piety by palpable usefulness, or the stir of beneficent action, however much this may be our duty. The grand affair of life, is the building up of the spiritual temple. We may disparage the power that is operating within the soul — this is the common mistake of retired and suffering Christians. Because they are not called to public manifestations, they think there is no advancement. But knowledge may be rising in a compact and solid structure. Faith may be diffusing its mighty influence on every side. Holy devotion may be sending up clouds of incense acceptable to God. Intercessory prayer may be stretching its

arms of love to take in all the brotherhood of Christ, and all the family of man. Purity, like that of Jesus, may be rising as a picture on the soul's tablet — dim perhaps, but brightening. Submission to God's chastening hand may be gaining strength in the furnace. The world may be waning — and the attractions of Heaven waxing more luminous. Joy in the Lord may be as the fragrance of a field which God has blessed. Gentle humility, the ornament and preservative of all graces, may be growing more constant. Is all this nothing? Is it not the very process to which our Master calls us? Such reflections are needful for many a solitary believer who sighs to think that no opportunity is given for great deeds in God's behalf. "They also serve, who only stand and wait." There may be progress, even where there is no joy. Inward, inward must we go for the true elaboration of gracious virtues.

Let this be strongly impressed on those whose circle is bounded by the walls of a narrow home. Let the bereaved lonely one, let the invalid who is cut off from all social labor — know and believe that to them also is granted to glorify God — as truly as to the king or to the apostle. Let them cease to measure the work of grace, by the external standards of a human activity. James Alexander

~ ~ ~ ~ "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." John 13:7

You may not now know what God is doing with you, but you shall know hereafter. You shall see the reason of all the trials and temptations, the dark and comfortless hours, the long and tedious conflicts, and you will be convinced that not a sigh, not a single uneasy thought, was allotted to you without a wise and gracious design! Edward Payson

~ ~ ~ ~ In the time of suffering, no alternative remains but whether we will aggravate the present evil by murmuring and repining, or change it into a real blessing by receiving it as we ought.

~ ~ ~ ~ Dr. Arnold's Tribute to His Sister

I never saw a more perfect instance of the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind — intense love almost to the annihilation of selfishness — a daily martyrdom for twenty years, during which she adhered to her early formed resolution of never talking about herself; thoughtful about the very pins and ribbons of my wife's dress, about the making of a doll's cap for a child — but of herself (save only as regarded her ripening in all goodness) wholly thoughtless; enjoying everything lovely, graceful, beautiful, high-minded, whether in God's works or man's, with the keenest relish; inheriting the earth to the very fullness of the promise, though never leaving her bed, nor changing her posture. And preserved through the very valley of the shadow of death from all fear or impatience, or from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's glorious work. May God grant that I may come within one hundred degrees of her place in glory.

~ ~ ~ ~ Blessings of Sickness Who knows the blessing of full health — who has never suffered from the lack of it? And yet sickness has its blessings too; and, like all the appointments of our Heavenly Father, sickness is intended as the sowing time, to issue in a rich harvest of precious fruit. How little would we discover the difference between the temporal blessings of God, and that love of God which is the source of those blessings — unless we were at times taken from the one and cast upon the other.

It is well for the child to feel by experience, that to enjoy communion with his father is better than merely to receive a gift from him. That oneness of spirit with our Lord is a much higher blessing and proof of love, than any merely temporary good can be without it. How many of those refreshing visits does our Lord pay to his sick children! How often does he draw near their bed to comfort them with a sense of his loving presence! How many blessed angels invisibly minister to them, and watch over them in tenderest sympathy! And how many blessed spirits encompass us in those hours which seem to our eyes most desolate and lonely! Mary Anne Schimmelpennick

~ ~ ~ ~ Letter Written by Edward Bickersteth to His Invalid Daughter The sick one has the strongest claim, from her very weakness, on the absent father — and so I begin my letters with one to you. And if it be so in earthly parental love, which is only a drop from the ocean — then it must be infinitely more so in heavenly parental love, the very ocean from which all other love originally comes. My child is called to glorify God in a more difficult path than her father has to walk in; by quiet, patient, confiding, and loving acquiescence in the Lord's will, amid daily suffering. I rejoice to see how the Holy Spirit is mightily aiding her to learn the lesson, which will help her joy forever. A father's heart yearns after his afflicted child going through lengthened trials — but a better, wiser, more loving, heavenly Father directs it all. It will not last one moment more than he sees fit for the best good of my child, and, too, for a far higher object — His own glory, in buffeting Satan by a weak earthen vessel, and the perpetual expulsion of that malignant foe, from a temple which the Lord will consecrate to himself forever.

~ ~ ~ ~ The Benefits of Affliction "He does all things well!" Mark 7:37

Yes, he intends to do better for you, far better than you can ever imagine. He loves you more than you can possibly love yourself — and he will send you nothing but what is for your real and best interest, and he will let you find it so. His love is almighty, and it is unchangeable. What cannot he do, what will he not do — when his heart is set upon blessing his people?

It is a common thing with him to bring spiritual good out of temporal evil. He can extract pleasure out of pain — yes, he can enrich by impoverishing, and turn losses into gain. Unto you it is now given, as a matter of his choice favor, not only to believe on him, but also to be conformed to him, by bearing his cross. This he is aiming at. He is going to advance you to great honor, and to make you comforted on every side. At this very time he is training you up for it. He is now going to confer some of his special mercies, some of the greatest blessings he has to give on earth; which he bestows in so certain and fixed a way, that I know his mind and will concerning you, as plainly here in London as if I were with you! William Romaine

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God often mingles bitterness in the cup of those, to whom he has given the purest and holiest affections; leaving them not only to sorrows without — but oftentimes to heavy sorrows within. But the Christian, whose will is entirely subdued, will drink this portion also. All he asks, and what he feels he must have, is Holiness. And if with this cup of suffering, his heavenly Father sees fit to mingle some ingredient of bitterness, to remind him of his former sinful state, and to teach him more fully the way of submission — he cheerfully accepts it. He knows, notwithstanding his afflictions, that he is dear to God; and that his name is written on the heart of infinite love. He knows that he is just in that place where God has seen fit and best to place him — and that he

endures just what God sees best he should endure. He would not even now, though thick darkness is around his path, exchange his condition for that of angels. Upham

~ ~ ~ ~ Our afflictions pierce the heart of God before they reach ours.

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Trials are hard to bear. To be reduced from affluence to poverty — to lie on a bed of languor — to pass sleepless nights of pain — to be exposed to evil tongues — to sit amid the ruins of fortune — to lay loved ones in a lonesome grave — such things are not joyous, but grievous.

Winter, no doubt, is not the pleasant season that summer brings, with her songs and flowers and long, bright, sunny days. Bitter medicines, no doubt, are not savory food. Yet he who believes that all things shall work together for good, will be ready to thank God for bitter medicines — as well as for food; and for the winter frost which kills the weeds, and breaks up the soil — as for the dewy nights and sunny days which ripen the fields of corn. May God give us such a faith! With nature weak, and imperfect grace — when there is no lifting of the cloud, and trials are severe and long protracted — oh! though it may be easy for an onlooker to preach patience, it is not easy for a sufferer to practice it. In such circumstances, how prone we are to take the case out of God's hands, and getting discontented with his discipline! How ready are we to cry, "How long, O Lord, how long? If it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Take away this bitter cup, and give me anything else to drink."

Yet let me have a firm faith in God's truth and love, let me be confident that he will do what he has said, and perform all that he has promised, and I shall discover mercy's rainbow bent on fortune's blackest cloud, and under the most trying providences shall enjoy in my heart, and exhibit to others in my temper, the blessed difference between a sufferer that mourns and a spirit that murmurs. "Call upon me in the day of trouble." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." Thomas Guthrie

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Let us try to realize that not one day of weariness will be given to the maturest saint, which is not necessary; not one sigh breathed, which has not its errand. The servant of Christ need never be useless, under any circumstances, in any place, alone, on a bed of weakness, shut out from the world, deaf even, while the heart can beat with love to a dying world, or conscious thought rise to the mercy-seat.

~ ~ ~ ~ Be more anxious for profit from your affliction — than to escape it.

~ ~ ~ ~ Submission to the Will of God

Oh what wisdom is it to believe — and not to dispute, to submit our thoughts to God's will — and not to repine at any act of his justice! It is impossible to be submissive, if we fix our thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes; as, "Oh, the place! Oh, the time! Oh, if this had been — then this had not followed!"

Look up to the master-motion and the first wheel; see and read the decree of Heaven and the Creator of men. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Samuel

Rutherford

~ ~ ~ ~ The Love of Christ in the Sufferings of His Disciples In whatever aspect we view it, the love of Christ is marvelous. The Word of God affirms that it surpasses knowledge, and no Christian has ever fathomed it. When we contemplate it as moving the Savior to visit the earth, and die upon the cross for his enemies — then we are led to exclaim, "Was there ever love like this!"

But, perhaps, the course of discipline to which the Redeemer subjects His disciples, in maturing them for Heaven, affords in some respects, the most touching proof of His love. In order to effect their purification, they need to be cast into the furnace, to feel the flames of affliction kindling about them. This is a painful, often an excruciating process, especially as it tends to awaken the latent iniquity of the heart, and occasions the most violent and distressing inward conflicts between nature and grace. In the midst of the fires, the disciple cries out, "My sufferings are greater than I can bear!"

Where, now, is the loving Savior during these painful experiences, extended it may be through long years? Is it thus that He manifests his love to His chosen ones — or has He forgotten to be gracious?

Why does He not quench those flames?

Why does He not heed these mournful cries?

Love is the answer — yes, love more than human — love so pure and strong, as to silence for the time, the suggestions of mere sympathy; love that longs to behold its own bright and beautiful image in the person of a disciple, and that can stand by and bear to see that beloved, ransomed one enduring more than tongue can express — while the dross is vanishing in the furnace!

Yes, tried and fearful soul, your Savior is ever near you! He loves you — He is touched with the feeling of your infirmity. He sympathizes with every groan you utter, for you are a member of His own body, and He well remembers the anguish of his own heart when on earth. But His love looks beyond the present moment, to future years, to the hour of death, to Heaven — and resolves to do for you what shall inconceivably augment your holiness and your bliss eternally. His love kindles the fire, and keeps it burning — and when the dross shall be consumed, and your spirit meek and quiet "like a weaned child," oh, with what double rapture will He draw you from the furnace, fold you in His arms, and smile upon you with a look that will reveal something of Heaven. And as you review all the trials you have endured, you will say, "It was all of love!" Yes, the time will come when you will regard every painful stroke as given in mercy, and bless God that there was not one less.

Human love is not equal to this. It is blind and feeble. It is sometimes untrue, by reason of its frailty. But Christ's love never fails. It infinitely transcends all human infirmity. It can bear to be considered coldness and desertion for a time, for it looks to the believer's ultimate and exceeding greater good, and well knows that the future will reveal its true intent and heavenly purity.

~ ~ ~ ~ To an Afflicted Lady When you have come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters, and to your wearisome journey, and shall see in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom — then you shall then be forced to say: "If God had done otherwise with me than he

has done, I would have never come to the enjoying of this crown of glory!"

It is your part now to believe, and suffer, and hope, and wait on. I say in the presence of that all-discerning eye, who knows what I write, and what I think, that I would not lack the sweet experience of the consolations of God for all the bitterness of affliction! Nay, whether God comes to his children with a rod or a crown, if he come himself with it — it is well! Welcome, welcome, Jesus, whatever may come — just so that we can get a sight of you.

It is better to be sick, providing Christ comes to the bedside and draw the curtains, and say, "Courage, I am your salvation," than to enjoy health and never to be visited of God. Samuel Rutherford

~ ~ ~ ~ Never be alone with your troubles. Call God into your confidence and counsels. William Jay

~ ~ ~ ~ On Affliction The benefits of a great affliction must come from the same hand who sent it. Afflictions in themselves harden and drive from God, as in the case of the ungodly; but in the case of the righteous, they draw us to God, and unite us to him.

1. The benefits of affliction will be gradual and secret; between God and the soul, and not loquacious and prominent.
2. The benefits of affliction must be sought for in earnest prayer, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit.
3. The Psalms are the afflicted soul's cordial, guide, and model.
4. A new covenant should be made with God, and written out in secret, and kept unseen by all but God.
5. There is no need to look out for any special and tangible reason for the divine chastisement. It is God's discipline with all his children, and most with those whom he most loves.
6. The sensible impression of the affliction will fade by lapse of time, but the sanctified effect will remain to the end of life.
7. Meditate on eternity — that will swallow up time. Wilson

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Grace teaches us, in the midst of life's greatest comforts — to be willing to die; and, in the midst of its greatest crosses — to be willing to live. Matthew Henry

~ ~ ~ ~ Glorifying God in Affliction

Submission to the will of God is our duty. By submission I mean the repression of all repining language, the resistance of all rebellious feeling, and the determined opposition of all hard thoughts of God, as if he had dealt unkindly or severely with us; together with an acquiescence in all he does as right and good.

Something of Christian cheerfulness should be manifested by all persons in adversity. If they would glorify God; if they would cause the light of their graces to shine forth; if they would adorn

the doctrine of God their Savior; if they would appear different from other men — then they must break the silence of submission with the words of contentment, and, if possible, with the notes of praise. They must sing like the nightingale, and shine like the glow-worm in the dark. Thus will they glorify God, when the smile of cheerfulness on their countenance looks like the rainbow upon the cloud, and they render the dark season of their sorrow a means of displaying the resplendent beauties of the Son of Righteousness.

O how is God honored by the Christian in adversity, when all his conduct as well as his words seem to say, "I have lost much, but I still possess infinitely more than I have lost or can lose. With Christ as my Savior, God as my Father, salvation as my portion, and Heaven as my home — how can I be thought poor and wretched?" J.A. James

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They are blessed who suffer and sin not — for suffering is the badge that Christ has put upon his followers. Samuel Rutherford

~ ~ ~ ~ Proofs of Sanctified Affliction The proof of a sanctified affliction begins to show itself WHILE the trouble lasts. A striking proof of sanctified affliction, is a deep concern, a studious effort, and much earnest prayer that it might be blessed for the good of the soul. Those who are really benefitting by affliction, recognize the hand of God in it. Yes, they do not wander about amidst the briers, torn and lacerated, seeking after second causes — but go and lie down at once on "the soft green" of the doctrine of providence. Then as they recognize the hand that smites, they are equally forward to acknowledge the design of their afflictions. "This is for my good, I know, because I am told that 'all things work together for my good.' I do not see how, but that is not my business; all I know is, it will be so, for God has said it. He intends to make me holier by this affliction — He is bent upon my improvement." A readiness to dwell upon our mercies, especially our spiritual blessings, is a fine evidence of a holy state of mind. It is delightful to hear the sorrowful believer talking of his mercies, and thus setting one thing over against another.

I now go on to set before you those proofs of a sanctified affliction which are furnished by the conduct AFTER the trial is removed.

1. If when the hand of God is withdrawn, and prosperity again returns, the views, feelings and purposes remain which the soul entertained in the season of darkness; if, for instance, there is the same solicitude for spiritual improvement, if there is a still prayerful and anxious desire not to lose the benefit of trouble but to be made more holy and heavenly — there is every reason to believe that the visitation of God has left a blessing behind.

2. Increasing deadness to the world, and growing spirituality of mind — are another proof of the same result.

3. A more entire consecration of the soul to God's service in general, and to some special service in particular — is also a proof of sanctified affliction. When the Christian is seen giving himself afresh to the service of God in a more devoted attendance upon all the means of grace, private, domestic and public; when he seems anxious, inventive and laborious to show his gratitude and love by new acts of devotedness — it is a convincing evidence that he has derived benefit from tribulation.

4. Increased sympathy for others in their affliction — is a proof that our own has done us good. It is a delightful exhibition of a mind softened and sanctified by affliction, to see a person, on recovering from it, still holding in remembrance the wormwood and the gall, and instead of giving himself to selfish enjoyment — going forth with quickened sensibilities to support the distressed. J.A. James

~ ~ ~ ~ A Dark Present and a Glorious Future

There is hardly so splendid a promise, so radiant a revelation of grace and future glory, even in that book of "exceeding great and precious promises," the Bible — as that contained in Isaiah 54:11-12 : "O afflicted, tempest-tossed and not comforted — Behold! I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones." No such promise is made to the prosperous in all the Word of God. None, in fact, to any other, than the soul in the deepest humiliation and affliction.

How powerful the contrast! "O afflicted, tempest-tossed and not comforted!" Thus, word for word, the object is addressed. And no words could heighten the picture of utter desolation drawn in these few words. "Behold! I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones."

"Beauty, magnificence, purity, strength, and solidity," says Lowth, "are the import of these expressions."

It is enough to make one in love with affliction that God has made such promises to it, and to it only.

Law, somewhere in his "Serious Call," says: "Rejoice and adore God with uplifted hands, when you fall into any sort of shame or trouble, seeing the fruit it is to work in the soul and the sequel that is to come after it, according to the sure Word of God." That seems an extravagant sentiment — yet it is not. Has not our Lord said as much and more? "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy." And Paul, too, "We glory in tribulation." "I take pleasure in persecutions, necessities, distresses!" And James, "My brethren, count it all joy, when you fall into manifold trials." For, "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life." A crown of life! Can our earthly existence have a more glorious result than that? — and all for "enduring!" There is, then, no higher form of holy heroism than patience, no surer path to the abode and company of those who are arrayed in white robes and bear palms in their hands — than that which lies through "much tribulation." This is a comforting thought to those who are "afflicted from their youth up," whose lot in this life it seems to be especially to suffer, and who can combat for the heavenly glory only by "a great fight of afflictions."

It is a contrast which the church of God and the particular believer should ever have in view. The "Dark Present" must be looked at not only in contrast with the "Glorious Future" — but as instrumental and preparatory to it, if we would "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end."

~ ~ ~ ~ Divine Providence in Sorrow and Affliction

Let it be understood, then, that while sin is the first cause of all suffering and affliction — yet to many who have not sinned most grievously — nay, to many of the very best and purest of humanity — the dispensations of sorrow come most heavily, and in various ways and kinds.

Beautifully and sweetly has it been said, "When the freed spirit shall ascend from its shackles of clay, in the clearer light of a better world — then it will be seen how necessary was this compulsory training, to bring forth and ripen to perfection, the willing fruits of obedience and love. Those who are called, in the economy of God's providence, to some important sphere of use in this life, but more especially with reference to the life to come, are proven, even to the seventh time if need be, in the purifying furnace of affliction."

How great a truth, and how comforting, have we here! We know not, any of us, for what uses in the spiritual world we are now being trained, nor how much our present trials and afflictions are necessarily connected with the nature of that use. I often think, when I read the accounts of terrible and mysterious sufferings, how most befitting such persons may become to minister to those who may suffer in like manner, and how sweet and high will be the satisfaction of doing it.

Oh, it is beautiful to think, amid the terrible and confused scenes of this world, how surely the whole experience connects with eternal things — and how our most severe and bitter trials may be preparing us for our sweetest offices of love and tenderness, from which we shall derive the most heartfelt pleasure!

What can an untried person do or realize, who has passed through this life indifferent or insensate, not keenly alive to its joys and sorrows, and not greatly susceptible to either — compared to a soul who has most sensitively mingled in its great experience, and been mellowed and affected by its many changes. Here, again, is the compensating law, which will eventually reconcile all conditions, and equalize all fortunes, that to the very,

"Height of this great argument,

We may assert eternal providence,

And justify the ways of God to men."

~ ~ ~ ~ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *On Affliction* The good of affliction is not often perceivable as the result of one trial — but rather as the aggregate of several afflictions. The artist who would bring out the beauty of a precious piece of wood, seems to harass and torture it in various ways. And if the wood were a rational creature, it might well complain, as the saw, and plane, and the harsh pumice-stone pass successively over it — and each varnish is scraped and rubbed. Not until the last touch has been given, does one see the final result.

Just so, with afflictions. Some are like strokes of the axe and hammer — splitting and ripping the heart of the soul.

Others are wearing and long-continued, like the slow work of the file and polishing-stone. Very seldom, under the process, does the soul recognize their use — but after long years, a softened melody of soul is produced as the result of all. Could a diamond speak when the lapidary is filing away its glittering particles, and vexing it with many rubbings and polishings, it might say, "I could bear a good hammer-stroke — but ah, this is wearing my very soul away!" Nevertheless, the

artisan knows that it is not the hammer, but the constant rubbings and polishings that the diamond must have, to make it glitter royally at last in a royal diadem!

Such are some of the most common, least valued of our afflictions — a slow, wearing, heart-eating process — a long affliction, oftentimes known and recognized as such only by God who orders it, and knows the precise moment when it is possible to let it cease.

Then let the soul deeply engrave in its belief, this answer to its oft-recurring question, "Why am I thus tried?" Because this affliction and no other could benefit you. The Great Father is an economist in all His lavish profusion of riches, but of nothing is he more beneficial, than of the sorrows of His beloved. Not one tear too much, not one sigh, not one uneasiness too many — is the lot of the lowest of His chosen people.

~ ~ ~ ~ The main of a Christian's duty lies in these two things — patience in suffering, and avoidance of sin — and they have a natural influence upon each other. Affliction sweetly and humbly carried, purifies and disengages the heart from sin — and weans it from the world. Holy and exact walking keeps the soul in a sound healthful temper, and so enables it, by patient suffering, to bear things more easily. Robert Leighton

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There are in this world, blessed souls whose sorrows all spring up into joys for others; whose earthly hopes, laid in the grave with many tears, are the seeds from which spring healing flowers and balm for the desolate and distressed. Harriet Beecher Stowe

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It is a mighty blessing indeed, if God makes use of any affliction whatever to bring us nearer to himself, and to make us know more of ourselves, and to become acquainted with his providential dispensations towards us. Richard Cecil

~ ~ ~ ~ The Christian's Home To be with the Father — no cloud of doubt, and no unforgiven sin to hide the brightness of his unveiled presence — but with a child-like spirit to trust forever his mercy, truth, and love; to be with Christ, the Savior of the soul, the sympathizer and helper in every trial and sorrow of the earthly life, to rest in his reconciling love, and to have him still as the Shepherd and Guide among the green pastures and beside the still waters of the Paradise of God; to meet with apostles and prophets, and with the true and holy of every age; to rejoin the loved of our own home-circles who have preceded us thither, and who wait to receive us with a deeper and purer affection than when we dwelt with them on earth; to have all fear and sin cast out by perfect love; to join the great company of the redeemed in ascribing "Blessing and honor and glory and power unto Him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" — is not this home, the believer's only true home!

~ ~ ~ ~ Choice Consolation As it is in the Church, compared to other societies — so it is in a congregation or family; if there is one more diligently seeking after God than the rest, he shall be liable to meet with more trials, and be oftener under afflictions, than any of the company. Either under contempt or scorn, or poverty and sickness, or some pressure or other, outward or inward. And yet all these, both outward and inward, have divine love — unspeakable love, in them all; being designed to purge and polish them, and, by the increasing of grace, to fit them for glory.

Robert Leighton

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"Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." 1 Peter 4:19 The true principle of Christian patience and tranquility of mind in the sufferings of this life lies in this, committing the soul unto God! There are in this verse, two grounds of quietness of spirit in sufferings.

1st. It is according to the will of God. The believing soul, subjected and leveled to that will, complying with his good pleasure in all, cannot have a more powerful persuasive than this — that all is ordered by God's will. This settled in the heart, would much settle it — not only to know, but wisely and deeply to consider, that it is thus that all is measured in Heaven — every grain of your troubles is weighed by that skillful hand of him who does all things well — by weight, number, and measure. And then consider him as your God and Father, who has taken special charge of you and of your soul — you have given it to him, and he has received it. And upon this consideration, study to follow his will in all — to have no will but his. This is your duty and your wisdom.

Nothing is gained by spurning and struggling, but to hurt and vex yourself; but by complying, all is gained — sweet peace. It is the very secret, the mystery of solid peace within — to resign all to his will, to be disposed of at his pleasure, without the least contrary thought. And thus, like two-faced pictures, those sufferings and troubles, and whatever else, while beheld on the one side as painful to the flesh, has an unpleasant usage; yet, go about a little, and look upon it as your Father's will, and then it is smiling, beautiful, and lovely. The other ground of quietness is contained in the first word which looks back on the foregoing discourse, "Therefore." What? Seeing that your reproaches and sufferings are not endless, yes, that they are short, they shall end, quickly end, and end in glory — be not troubled about them, overlook them. The eye of faith will do it. A moment gone, and what are they? This is the great cause of our disquietness in present troubles and griefs: we forget their end. We are afflicted by our condition in this present life, as if it were all — and it is nothing. Oh, how quickly shall all the enjoyments and all the sufferings of this life pass away, and be as if they had never been! Robert Leighton

~ ~ ~ ~ Could the veil which now separates us from futurity be drawn aside, and those regions of everlasting happiness and sorrow, which strike so faintly on the imagination, be presented fully to our eyes — it would occasion, I doubt not, a sudden and strange revolution in our estimate of things. Many are the distresses for which we now weep in suffering or sympathy — which would awaken us to songs of thanksgiving. Many the dispensations which now seem dreary and inexplicable — which would fill our adoring hearts with thanksgiving and joy! John Bowler

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Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins — but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces! Matthew Henry

~ ~ ~ ~ Extract from a Letter of Mr. Cecil to his daughter

We may compare an afflicted believer to a man that has an orchard laden with fruit, who, because the wind has blown off the leaves, sits down and weeps. If one asks, What do you weep for? Why, my apple-leaves are gone! But have you not your apples left? Yes. Very well then, do not grieve

for a few leaves, which could only hinder the ripening of your fruit.

Pardons and promises which cannot fail, lie at the root of my dear daughter's profession; and the fruits of faith, hope, and love, that no one can question, have long covered her branches. The east wind sometimes carries off a few leaves, though the rough wind is stayed; and what if every leaf were gone? What if not a single earthly comfort remained? Christ has prayed and promised that her "fruit shall remain," and it shall be my joy to behold it through all eternity. The morning comes, a morning without melancholy. Tomorrow morning, you and I shall walk in a garden where I hope to talk to you about everything but sadness; and if I even forgot, and began upon the subject, you would immediately reply, "Sorrow and sighing are fled forever!"

~ ~ ~ ~ Extract from the Diary of Mrs. Hawkes

I will, as far as I am enabled, consider that dispensation, trial, or affliction, sweet — which brings Christ more sensibly to my heart. I have had many deep troubles; many painful disappointments; many unseen but severe sorrows — yet not one of them, increased tenfold, is so much to be dreaded as the suspension of the comforting, life-giving presence of my Savior. What it is to "come up out of the wilderness, leaning on the Beloved" — no one will ever know but by happy experience. And they can best estimate the comfort, who have been left to travel ever so short a part of the journey alone.

~ ~ ~ ~ The afflictions, conflicts, and temptations through which the children of God are called to pass, produce not only patience, but also gain experience and acquaintance with the inward evils of the heart. When reflecting upon the pain with which this experience has sometimes been wrought out in others, we may perhaps think that, in similar circumstances, we would have felt less, mourned less, repined less. But it should be remembered that the measure of suffering attendant on any dispensation, is a part of the appointment; and that God registers the believer's conflict and sufferings as real. "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book." Psalms 56:8. Richard Cecil

~ ~ ~ ~ By long afflictions, God many times prepares his people for temporal, spiritual, and eternal mercies! Thomas Brooks

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Sometimes the Lord honors his people by appointing them a great trial. So far as he enables us to endure affliction with cheerful submission, patience, and hope — so far the post of trial is a post of honor. Thereby the reality and power of religion, the power and faithfulness of our Lord in supporting and relieving, is exhibited to his glory, for the encouragement of believers and the conviction of gainsayers. And we ourselves are taught more and more of the vanity of creature-dependence and the all-sufficiency of our great and unchangeable Friend, who has promised, that, "if we suffer with him — we shall also reign with him." John Newton

~ ~ ~ ~ As long as the confident hope and expectation of the soul is from Christ, (however little comfort or enjoyment there may be in looking to him) — the soul is exercising true and living faith. And perhaps faith is never so strong as when it clings to him in the dark — I mean without sensible enjoyment. Adelaide L. Newton

~ ~ ~ ~ Religion in Sickness In few events of life does religion exhibit itself in a more impressive manner, than in sickness. Now, as in the days of miracles, the sick are often made the agents of displaying the truth and power of the Christian faith. The sick-bed as a means of grace is beneficial, and it is frequently the case that the Christian is there blessed with unusual religious enjoyments. He there tastes the sweetness of the Savior's promise, "I will not leave you comfortless — I will come to you." He is there brought to a state of submission to the will of the Chastener, and his feelings are molded by him. His circumstances and condition naturally center his thoughts on heavenly things, and frequently prompt him to heavenly communion, and his mind becomes heavenly. Seasons of spiritual refreshing, such as he has not enjoyed before, and such as he has not previously been prepared to receive — come to him during times of adversity. Notwithstanding his physical suffering, it is sweet to linger by his side.

"As a man, who, during the day, descends into a deep pit, sees the stars of Heaven, invisible to others," wrote Henry Mowes during a lingering indisposition, following a period of terrible physical distress, "So, when God allowed me to fall into the depths of suffering and woe — I saw, through the dense darkness around me, the bright star of the Father's eternal mercy in Christ our Savior shining over me. And this star was my polar star, never setting but ever growing brighter. Oh, it is a high and holy joy to be with our Savior even in Gethsemane; to bear with him a crown of thorns, and, in such an hour, strengthened by him, to say, 'The disciple is not above his Master.' To follow him in bright days, and to sun ourselves in his love and glory, is sweet indeed — but in days of sorrow to see him near, to prove his faithfulness, is a precious addition to the happiness of communion with him. There the bond is drawn yet nearer, there the heart presses yet closer to him, there the soul lays herself down at his feet with fuller love and trust. For every trial, the Christian has a heritage of comfort, and in every event of life, he has a mission to perform. In weakness it is his to show the power of God."

~ ~ ~ ~ "There Were No Feeble Persons among All Their Tribes."

One midsummer Sunday, I was sitting in one of the famous churches in England. The worshipers had assembled, the tones of the grand organ had stilled my soul to quietness, when the door opened again, and an invalid was wheeled in a wheel-chair down the aisle. Others followed, until the aisles were filled with the infirm. As I saw how eagerly they came to get a draught of the water of life, these words of the Psalmist came to my remembrance: "There were no feeble persons among all their tribes."

How wonderful was the care of the great King in exempting Israel's army from the embarrassments attendant on the removal of "feeble persons" from a land of bondage. Doubtless this very servitude had braced their frames to endure the coming hardships; their captivity and work had made them strong and vigorous. Thus the good Lord provides compensations for every situation.

"No feeble persons." At once I remembered the great army of afflicted souls now living, who understand "the fellowship of his sufferings," who are never able to join in public worship. I do not refer to those occasionally detained by illness, or to those nearing "the swellings of Jordan" — but to the long-trying, who are purified in a "slow furnace." In every town, in every village, can be found life-long invalids, prostrated by incurable maladies, with crippled, deformed, and languid bodies — who are being made "perfect through suffering." From their secret retirement, they cry unto God —

their houses have become temples of prayer and praise. I recalled rooms, made attractive by the ingenuity of friends, which are tenanted by the languishing children of sorrow. I should rather call them children of joy, for often are the inhabitants "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." To my remembrance came a pleasant, sunny room, filled with fragrant flowers from a bow-window of carefully-watched plants; the walls covered with well-selected cheerful pictures, a music-box of sweet harmonies, and hosts of gifts bestowed by pitying friends. Here is a living sacrifice, a temple of the Most High God. Here, surrounded by tenderest care, waiting "for this earthly tabernacle to be dissolved," dwells one of those saints who come up through "great tribulation," making melody in her heart unto the Lord. Sabbath-bells thrill her soul with pleasure. While hundreds are bowing down in the courts of the Lord, prayer from these feeble lips is helping to fill "the golden vials."

Oh we cannot regret the feeble ones among our tribes. They help us in fighting the good fight; they encourage us to lay hold on eternal life. Can we afford to lose the example of those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises?"

There is a land where can be found "no feeble persons," for there the inhabitants shall never say, "I am sick." Then will our feeble ones lift up their heads in everlasting blessedness. Such anguish on earth will be joy in Heaven, for there they rest not day nor night. For "one of the elders answered, saying unto me, "Who are these who are arrayed in white robes — and whence have they came?" And I said unto him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are those who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."

~ ~ ~ ~ When sickness comes, and grace can meet it — oh what a just representation do they make to the soul concerning the poor honors, riches, cares and pleasures, of this transitory world! How unimportant do all the struggles for power, splendor, titles, wealth and preeminence, which have employed the past and present ages, appear! How childish and base these objects pass before us, for which men have lavished their time and thrown away their souls! On the contrary, how inexpressibly great and tremendous do the things of God and eternity rise in full view to the mind! Oh the worth of worlds — what are they, in some of these soul-searching moments! How is the mind astonished with the grandeur of God, and with the deep and wide importance of all that belongs to him! Enrapt in the solemn contemplation of unutterable glories — how does the mind tremblingly examine and carefully inquire into the truth and extent of its interest in them! And if grace seals an answer of peace upon the heart, how does it flutter with gladness at its safety — and how will the whole frame be agitated with a new delight, in the sure prospect of an eternal concern in these valuable, these only valuable things. The Christian will be wakeningly alive to all this and more, if his disorder is such as can admit of reflection. Blessed be God, however, whether he can thus reflect or not — yet, being a Christian, his state is equally safe with God through his gracious Redeemer. Whatever is his frame of mind — the promise is sure, the covenant of God is ordered in all things and sure, and sure and faithful is God himself to perform it.

If we cannot think of Christ, through the power of disease — oh what an happiness is it to be assured that Christ thinks constantly and effectually of us! He "makes all our bed in our sickness" — that is, he turns the whole frame of our condition in it for our best advantage.

O Lord, leave me not, poor and helpless sinner that I am, in my most healthful state. Leave me not especially, I beseech you, in the low, the languid, the distressing circumstances of infirmity and

disease! Jesus, Master, you have borne our sicknesses, because you bore the sins which occasioned them. Take away from my conscience, the guilt which brought disease, and then the worst part of its misery shall be done away too. And when, through my feebleness and disorder, I cannot act faith upon your love — oh catch my drooping spirit, carry me as one of your own lambs in your bosom, enfold me in your gracious arms, and let my soul wholly commit itself and give up its all, in quiet resignation to you! If you raise me from my sickness, grant that it may be for the setting forth of your glory among men. If you take me by sickness from this world, O hope and life of my soul — receive me to yourself for my everlasting happiness — to be another monument of sovereign grace before the great assembly of saints and angels in your kingdom of Heaven!
Christian Remembrancer

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We cannot be stationary in our feelings towards God in times of great sorrow. We either go back from him, and are cold toward him, which is a dreadful sign. Or we cling to him, and say, "Whom have I in Heaven but you?" Nehemiah Adams

~ ~ ~ ~ The long afflicted Christian has the fullest and the greatest trade — and in the day of account will be found the richest man. Thomas Brooks

~ ~ ~ ~

Upon Death

Oh, how sweet is the smile of that Christian, who, dying in the body, feels himself just upon living forever! He is not sick unto death, but unto life indeed. He leaves his cares, his sorrows, his infirmities, and all that could distress or distract his spirit here — and looks calmly into the world before him, where he can meet with nothing but concord and joy, in the society of his Redeemer and Savior, throughout eternity. He is weaned from the earth — and therefore can part with it easily. He is fitted for Heaven — and therefore longs for it earnestly. He cannot but desire that which is congenial with his own renewed mind — and nothing of that sort can truly and perfectly be found outside of the regions of glory.

O blessed Savior of poor sinners like me, on you, and on you alone, my eyes are fixed! In the solemn last hour of my pilgrimage below, oh let my eyes of faith be yet more steadily and more ardently fixed upon you! In the tender compassion of your heart, which can sympathize with all your people's woes — look down in my departing moments on me. Oh stand by me, my dear and only Lord, in my drooping and needful moments. Make all my bed in my sickness, and overcome the sorrows of nature by the lively joys of your grace. Soothe the pangs of death with your rich consolation and care. Receive my spirit, which I commit unto you, as yours alone; for truly I am your entirely, your by purchase, your by grace, your by promise — yours by the immutable oath of all your holy attributes. Oh carry me to the regions of peace, to the Church of the first-born, to the city of God, and to Jesus my Lord, my life, and my only Redeemer! Whom have I in Heaven itself but you; and what can I desire, throughout all your works, in comparison of you! My heart and my flesh may fail; but you, you, even you, are the strength of my heart and my portion forever! O my God, thus to die, would not be dying — but only departing to live and to be happy forever. Christian Remembrancer

~ ~ ~ ~ The Preciousness of God's Children The precious children of God are known by their submission to Him. It is for this that they are chastened and disciplined, tried and purified — that, comparable to fine gold, they may emerge from the furnace a pure and holy reflection of the Divine image. This is the great secret of repose amidst restlessness, calmness amidst agitation, confidence amidst dark providences — the will brought into complete subjection to the Divine will — the heart beating in unison with Christ's heart. The moment you are led to see that all is right, that God has done it, and that it must be well done — you are happy. There is no happiness — not for a moment — in opposing God. Fretting against his dispensations, murmuring at his disposals, fighting against his dealings, resisting his providences, tossed amidst the waves of second causes — is just the uplifting of the floodgates of all distress into the soul. But to lie down at his feet, as the wheat his hand has sifted — to repose in his heart, as the child his rod has smitten — to drink the cup his love has mingled, exclaiming, "Not my will, O my Father, but may yours be done!" — this is happiness indeed!

O tried, afflicted sons of Zion — not less precious to the heart of Jesus are you because you are chastened. You have argued against yourselves, and have rebelled against the afflictive dispensations of God's providence. You have deemed yourselves cast out of his heart, and out of his mind — and out of his sight, "reprobate silver," and not "fine gold" — because he has cast you into the "furnace that is in Zion."

Listen to the language of one who thus reasoned, but soon discovered how false that reasoning was, "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before your eyes: nevertheless, you heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto you," (Psalms 21:1-13. Psalms 22:1-31) Be not hasty in the conclusions you draw from God's dealings with you. Wait patiently until he unveils the purpose, and clearly shows you the end of the Lord. "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord." Oh the blessedness, the quietness, the perfect peace of a cheerful acquiescence in the will of God! To have a blended will, a united heart, a submissive spirit with him in his government of you, is to be like God. There is nothing more divinely assimilating and Christlike. To be like Christ in Gethsemane, is to be like Christ in the glory of his throne. To drink the cup in his spirit of profound submission, is to reign with him forever and ever! Octavius Winslow

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Sick believer! you are not alone — Christ is ever with you. He knows all your weaknesses, infirmities, and pains. He understands perfectly, the mysterious relation of mind and body, and can enter into all those delicate shades and subtle distinctions in the mutual operation of the one upon the other, which escape the eye even of the most skillful and vigilant. What is purely mental, what is simply physical in your case, and how they sympathize and often seem to blend — is to him who bore our sicknesses when he took our sins, and who heals all our diseases now — an object of the intensest interest.

Suffering one! Christ is bearing that suffering with you. The burning fever, the writhing pain, the faintness, the languor, the sinking — all is known to him. The difficulty of concentrated and consecutive thought, your inability to meditate, to read, to pray, the absence of spiritual enjoyment, the dimmed evidences, the beclouded hope, the fears and tremblings — all, all are entwined with your Redeemer's sympathy. His "grace shall be sufficient for you." His "strength shall be made

perfect in your weakness;" and thus you shall be enabled to "glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you!" Octavius Winslow

~ ~ ~ Letter of William Romaine My dear Friend,

Wave after wave, trouble after trouble. There is no ceasing until we get into the haven. I do not wish you out of afflictions, but to profit by them. The furnace is to refine gold. Just so, faith is proved, improved, yes, perfected by trials. Mind what the great Refiner says, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

O blessed furnace! What! is this the effect of being put into it? Does the Son of God appear for and with his suffering members? Does he keep off the evil of suffering — give patience under it, profit from it — deaden the life of sense — quicken the life of faith — and thus bring more real good to his people from their trials, than from all the comforts that ever they had? Do you say that it is a great, an uncommon great trial; the furnace is heated seven times more than it was accustomed to be heated. Still this is not to destroy faith, but to refine and exalt it. Our Lord knows the needs-be for suffering. He loves you too well to deprive you of your profitable portion. He himself went, and all his people go — the same way to glory. They drink of the brook in the way; and they drink it out of the cup of salvation. True, it is bitter. I find it very bitter and unpalatable. But I am praying it may prove more beneficial to you and to me; and this it cannot do while we murmur and complain. It is sent to stop this working of self-will. The flesh is impatient, and frets; the spirit stops its rebellion, and says, "Not my will, O Lord, but may your will be done." Amen! May this be the end of all your trials! May you come out of them like gold purified from the fire!

~ ~ ~ No Sorrow There!

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:4 "God," says Augustine, "had one Son without sin — but He has had no son without sorrow."

Look back on the way by which God has led you, O traveler to Zion, through the wilderness! If sometimes you have walked in sunshine, and with the free elastic step of hope and joy — how often, how quickly, have clouds gathered above you, and left you to go onward in heaviness and gloom! You have had to cleave your way through a "great fight of afflictions." The "Man of Sorrows" has marked you with the sign of suffering. He has made you feel the weight and sharpness of the spiritual cross. And how often has it been from the red letters of your trial, that you have slowly deciphered the new name, "Son!" Would a Christian be without that chastisement whereof all God's children are partakers? Has he not seen affliction sealed and bound up with the blessings of the Covenant, learned how great a privilege it is to hear the Father's graver voice, and feel his correcting hand?

Oh blessed affliction! Who deserves you? Not everyone attains to the great preferment of trial. For the iron chain of suffering links with the golden chain of glory! Not only is it suffering — then glory; but suffering — therefore glory. "This light affliction works a weight of glory." These are the rough steps by which faith climbs upward to the throne.

Why, then, are you filled with vexing thoughts? Look forward to the end, when patience shall have "its perfect work," in this trial, its bright reward. The toilsome stages of your journey end on the border of the better country! No sorrow, no crying, no pain are there! No anguish of temptation, no shrinkings of fear, no tears of penitence, no agony of prayer. The cross is lifted off of you. The bitter cup is taken from you. The refining and the pruning are over, and on every branch of the tree which felt the knife, cluster with "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," the pleasant grapes of the vineyard of God.

There we are past the preface and first pages of the Covenant, which teach us what the discipline of Sonship is. We are now in the heart and core of its blessings, knowing how glorious are the privileges of Sonship, how unspeakable its joys. We shall cry out no more for sore bereavement or besetting sin. We shall watch no more against an enemy, nor see some evil shadow lurk in every pleasure, and feel it steal upon our sleep. Our Father's hand has wiped away our tears! The Savior's voice says, "Weep not, the days of your mourning are ended!" And the thought of past grief and trouble will come to us only to sweeten every moment of our rest. For sin, our deepest sorrow, comes not here. There, O Christian! "the evil heart of unbelief" throbs no more, and the poisoned garment of the flesh has fallen from you forever.

It will be your blessedness there to think you have borne pain and trial for your Lord. For every wound of your warfare, for every talent of your service, your Lord will say, "Well done!" For there the martyr, who had the baptism of blood, stands next the Prince of Sufferers — him, who thinks the crown of thorns not the least among his "many crowns."

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross." Hebrews 12:1-2 James Drummond Burns

~ ~ ~ ~ "I, even I, am He who comforts you!" Isaiah 51:12 How does God comfort us? Suppose you are in some great trouble — how will God comfort you?

God comforts us by showing us the necessity of that trouble. Do you ever think of this — that there is NO CHANCE? Not a pang can pierce the heart of His redeemed child for which there is not a needs-be! Not an ache can gnaw the frame;

not a grief can pierce the heart;

not a shadow can darken the soul —

which is not permitted because there was a needs-be!

It is comfort to know that no affliction is random, that no bereavement is accident — but that each is sent because it was a medicine essential for our spiritual health and happiness. Thus God comforts us.

He comforts us in trouble by revealing to us what is the source of trouble. We are told that not a trouble can befall us that has not been first in God's bosom; that not a tear can start in the eye that He has not first planned, and estimated, and weighed, and pronounced to be expedient for us.

Admit for one moment, that CHANCE is the parent of your troubles — that accident is the author of your bereavements — and what a gloomy place must the grave be! What a sad heart must the

mourner's be! What an unhappy man must the victim of trouble be! But when we know that the blow that strikes the heaviest, is from our Father's hand; that the sorrow that pierces the heart with the keenest agony, lay in His bosom before it received its mission to touch us — then surely it is a truth, "I, even I, am He who comforts you!"

God comforts us by showing us the end of that trouble. If the sorrows, bereavements, disappointments, griefs, secret and open, had no end, and no grand object, and no great purpose to accomplish — then they would be intolerable. But He tells us, "Though no tribulation for the present seems joyous, but grievous — yet afterwards it works out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby." He tells us that "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." And therefore the necessity, the source, and the end of our troubles, revealed to us by God, take away the edge of them, and make at least tolerable that which, if inexplicable, would be altogether intolerable.

Lastly, He will comfort us by delivering us from all our troubles, and introducing us into a glorious rest, and more bright and beautiful than eye has seen, or ear has heard, or man's heart in its happiest imaginings has ever conceived! John Cumming

~ ~ ~ The Service of Suffering

There are many who are ready, like the sons of Zebedee, to take seats on the right or left of Christ in his kingdom. To be identified with God's glories and judgments, is something that may well attract and satisfy ambition. To come in with the conqueror, sharing his triumph, and the established strength and glory of his kingdom, may well befit the highest merit, or reward the noblest services. For a few, this distinction is appointed. But how many there are, who, by unnoticed toils and sufferings, must prepare the way! Over how many unknown names must the tide of victory roll! It is so in every conflict, whether temporal or spiritual. It is so with the victories of kings; it is so with the triumphs of the King of kings; it is so in the outward life, and in the inward experience of every soul of man. This is the unseen service. To this service, however, God calls "every son whom he receives," and by this, perfects him for higher services and privileges. God would have every one of his soldiers a hero, and well he knows the discipline they need. It is certain that he imposes it for no other purpose. There is no such thing as an arbitrary sentence of suffering against any creature. In a world filled by sin, with toil and pain — God's children fare with the rest. But, whereas to others the disabilities born of sin are for "death unto death," to them they are for "life unto life." Not a hair of their heads falls to the ground without their Father! To this solace, if we are his children, we are entitled. Over time, care, disappointment, poverty, sickness, and death — we have a right to triumph. We are heirs to "the kingdom and patient endurance of Christ." The service of suffering — how few of those who are thus endowed understand the great calling, and take its experience with constancy! God calls us: "Come up to my service — are you ready?"

"Yes, we are ready."

"But wait, there is a condition: Can you drink of the cup that Christ drank? Can you be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with?"

"Yes, we are able."

Then God begins to allot us, his recruits, our high positions:

to one, poverty;

to another, bereavement;

to another, long wasting disease;

to another, betrayal;

to all, disappointment and trial in the various forms of human experience. Is it any wonder that some weary of the service? But to those who persevere, there comes, at last, a time of great peace. It is not long before Jesus, who was near, though they saw him not, makes himself known. The brow that is no longer mangled with thorns — beams on them divinely. The hands that were nailed to the cross, take hold of their fainting arms. The voice that came through the storm, is again heard in the tempest of their calamities, saying: "Be of good cheer, be not afraid — it is I!"

Then the soul, in the grace of his help, begins first to take upon itself the sweet uses of suffering. Then the "present affliction, which was not joyous, but grievous," begins to bear "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Then the purified soul begins to see what dross of sin the fires have burned out. Then the strengthened spirit begins to feel what divine vigor, is springing in the limbs that were so full of the weary way. For the service of suffering is not forever. But the glory, and the reward, and the crown are eternal. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

~ ~ ~ ~

Resignation!

How touchingly beautiful was the parting scene between Cotton Mather and his wife. Observe his own account of it: The black day arrives. I had never seen so black a day in all the time of my pilgrimage. The desire of my eyes is this day to be taken from me at a stroke. Her death is lingering and painful. All the forenoon of this day, she was in the pangs of death, and sensible until the last minute or two before the final expiration. I cannot remember the discourse that passed between us, only her devout soul was full of satisfaction about her going to a state of blessedness with the Lord Jesus Christ. As far as my distress would permit, I studied to confirm her satisfaction and consolation. When I saw to what a point of resignation I was called of the Lord, I resolved, with his help to glorify him. So, two hours before she expired, I kneeled by her bedside, and took into my hands that dear hand, the dearest in the world, and solemnly and sincerely gave her up to the Lord. I gently put her out of my hands, and laid away her hand, resolved that I would not touch it again. She afterwards told me that she signed and sealed my act of resignation; and before that, though she had called for me continually, after it, she never asked for me any more. She conversed much until near two in the afternoon. The last sensible word that she spoke, was to her weeping father: "Heaven, Heaven will make amends for all!"

~ ~ ~ ~

It is sublime to bear the fearful strokes of God's providence with meekness and firmness. I have felt that terrible calamities are great blessings to the spirit of a man who knows how to suffer. To such a man, a great affliction from God is like a great blast in a quarry — it throws out great treasures, or it opens a way for great projects. I revere a man who is in great affliction. God seems to have selected him for an important work. It is not every one who can be trusted to suffer greatly.
Dr. Adams

~ ~ ~ On Bereavement

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Praise the name of the Lord! Job 1:21 When a holy and beloved object of our affection is removed by death, we ought to sorrow — humanity demands it, and Christianity, in the person of the weeping Jesus, allows it. The man without a tear, is a savage or a stoic — but not a Christian.

God intends when He bestows His gifts — that they should be received with smiles of gratitude; and when He recalls them — that they should be surrendered with "drops of sacred grief." Sorrow is an affection implanted by the Creator in the soul, for wise and beneficent purposes; and it ought not to be ruthlessly torn up by the roots — but directed in its exercise by reason and piety. The work of grace, though it is above nature — is not against it. The man who tells me not to weep at the grave — insults me, mocks me, and wishes to degrade me! Tears are the silent, pure, sincere testimony of my heart to the excellence of the gift He gave in mercy; and in mercy, no doubt, as well as judgment, He has recalled.

But, though we mourn — we must not murmur. We may sorrow, but not with the passionate and uncontrolled grief of the heathen who have no hope. Our sorrow may flow as deep as we like — but noiseless and still, in the channels of submission.

It must be a sorrow so quiet as to hear all the words of consolation which our Heavenly Father utters amidst the gentle strokes of His rod.

It must be a sorrow so reverential as to adore Him for the exercise of His prerogative in taking away what and whom He pleases.

It must be a sorrow so composed as to prepare us for doing His will, as well as bearing it.

It must be a sorrow so meek and gentle as to justify Him in all His dispensations.

It must be a sorrow so confiding as to be assured that there is as much divine love in taking the mercy away, as there was in bestowing it.

It must be a sorrow so grateful as to be thankful for the mercies left, as well as afflicted for the mercies lost.

It must be a sorrow so trustful as to look forward to the future with hope, as well as back upon the past with distress.

It must be a sorrow so patient as to bear all the aggravations that accompany or follow the bereavement, with unruffled acquiescence.

It must be a sorrow so holy as to lift the prayer of faith for divine grace to sanctify the stroke.

It must be a sorrow so lasting as to preserve through all the coming years of life, the benefit of that event, which, in one awful moment, changed the whole aspect of our earthly existence. J.A. James.

~ ~ ~ The Happiness of the Christian

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

Let us consider how happy they are who are in Christ, who are taken out of the first Adam, and made true members of the second Adam, who in Him are created unto good works, and so made new creatures. These are as happy as the others are miserable, as happy as God Himself can make them; for in that they are in Christ — in Him they have all things that can any way possibly conduce to make them happy. In Him they have infinite merit, whereby their sins are all pardoned and done away, as if they had never been guilty of any. In Him they have most perfect righteousness, whereby they are truly accounted righteous by the most righteous Judge of the whole world. In Him they have all the graces of God's Holy Spirit to make them like Himself, holy in all their conduct. In Him they have wisdom to direct them in all their ways, and power to protect them against all their enemies. In Him Almighty God Himself is well pleased with them, and become their friend, yes, their most loving and indulgent Father. In Him they have all the blessings that He has purchased for them with His own most precious blood, that is all they can ever need or desire to make them completely blessed.

Christian! What your condition is, as to the things of this world, I know not — but this I know, that whatever it is, it is the best, the happiest you can be in! Yes, God Himself knows it, otherwise He would never have brought you into it; for He has that special love for His own children, as all new creatures are, that He allows nothing to befall them that can do them hurt, nothing but what shall one way or other do them good.

If the things of this life are good for you — you shall have them; if they are not good for you — you shall not have them, for that only reason, because it is better for you to be without them. So that you may rest fully satisfied in your minds, that all things work together for your good; and that nothing can, or ever did befall you since your new birth but what was and shall be a blessing to you.

You are blessed in all you have — for it all comes from the special love and favor of God to you!

You are blessed in all you do — for it is all acceptable to God, through Him in whom you are!

You are blessed wherever you are — for God is always present with you, to guide, assist, and comfort you!

You are blessed in your souls, blessed in your bodies, blessed in your going out, blessed in your coming in, blessed while you live!

You are blessed when you die — for, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. They will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." You will then rest from your labors,

from everything that is troublesome or uneasy to you, from everything that can any way interrupt or disturb your peace and quiet. And your works, all the good works you now do in Christ — shall be then rewarded with an unfading, incorruptible, undefiled inheritance — reserved in Heaven for you where you will live with Him, and behold the glory which the Father has given Him — where, in Him, you shall be advanced to the highest degree of bliss and happiness that you can be made capable of — where, in Him, you shall see God face to face, and enjoy all those infinite perfections which are in Him — where, in Him, you shall thus live in light, in glory, in joy itself, not only now and then, but continually; not for some time only, but to all eternity! William Beveridge

~ ~ ~ ~ God denies a Christian nothing, but with a design to give him something better. Cecil

~ ~ ~ ~ On Submission to God's Will in Sickness

Seek this day, and every day you live, to suffer all weariness and pain — and that through patience to please the Lord your God. Should it please God to send you serious illness, receive it from his hand with resignation, and be submissive to his will in all things. Do not give way to impatience, grief, and sadness; rather endeavor to retain great peace and tranquility in your soul. Take cheerfully all prescribed remedies, and await calmly, by God's blessing, the success of these remedies — and be not disquieted should they not effect your cure as promptly as you desire. He who has sent you the disease, loves you too well to withhold your restoration to health, if it is necessary to his glory and to your salvation. Leave him, therefore, to deal with you. To submit ourselves to the hand of God during the time of sickness is to make a very praiseworthy act of love to God — besides which, it is the only means to maintain peace ourselves. He alone is in security, who reposes in the hands of God's mercy, because then are fulfilled the words of the Holy Spirit, "There shall no evil happen to the just;" he is always in peace.

~ ~ ~ ~ In our hours of sickness, of prostration, or of weakness, let a childlike trust in God through Christ be ever the foundation of our comfort and hope. We look on, and all is dark before us — but to the faithful man, that very darkness is a blessing. It is but the pillar of a cloud which guides him by a way he knows not. What may meet him as he walks along that path, he cares not to forecast. Bodily sufferings, or earthly sorrows, or death itself, may all be in ambush for him — as to all this, he knows nothing; but he does know "in whom he has believed;" and to him he trusts himself and his with a calm confidence for all that unknown future. "The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore will I trust in him." The root of stillness is trust in God; it consists in looking always to God; and so quieting the anxious spirit within us, which otherwise must tremble at the edge of that mist wherein are floating obscurely, for the eye of every man who peers into it, forms of insupportable loss and sorrow. Wilberforce

~ ~ ~ ~

"I know your works, and your labor, and your patience; how you have borne, and for my name's sake have labored, and have not fainted." In the epistle before us there is a word for you who are patient sufferers, whether from sickness, or sorrow, or sin — for the Lord's sake. He says to you, "I know how you have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have labored, and not fainted." Your Lord has known many a secret trial, many an hour of sorrow and affliction, through which you have passed, and which the world has never known. For these are sorrows which cannot and ought not to be communicated, but to God alone. Of all these, he says, in the language

of commendation, "I know them!" I know your every prayer for guidance! I know your every effort to bear well and patiently what I have laid upon you — and to profit by the visitation! I know your every endeavor against evil. And while those around us may blame us that we have advanced no farther and no faster on the heavenward road — he, that merciful Redeemer, commends us that we are still upon the road, and have not fainted. Blunt

~ ~ ~ ~ Suggestions to the Invalid

Besides the personal virtues, the great Christian duty of Charity is in its best sphere of operation during sickness — that Charity, of which perhaps it is the noblest attribute, that it 'bears all things.' It requires no muscular strength or activity to perform this duty in its utmost perfection; but it demands a moral effort which few can estimate. In repressing discontent and ill-humor — in being gentle, and considerate, and patient — virtues are exercised which, weighing their difficulty, may be termed heroic. To bear and forbear, will, in sickness, require greater efforts than in other circumstances. All are appreciated by your Father in Heaven. "Though no one sees, God sees you!"

~ ~ ~ ~ Streams in the Desert

It was a new thing in the world when Paul said, "Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." But it is no new thing now. Ever since Paul wrote these words, it has been the peculiar merit of the Gospel of Jesus to increase strength to those who have no might. Strong people, in days of gladness, when the spirit is yet unbroken, may be living inwardly by faith in the Son of God — but it is hard to know it. Other men look as strong who have no faith at all. It is when the body is weak and sore, or when all one's own comforts are drowned in the bitterness of a great sorrow, that the power of Christ is seen — yes, plainly seen — upholding where else the poor one would sink, and giving a strength and cheerfulness that are nothing less than supernatural.

Places of suffering; sick-rooms where invalids linger; long, weary night seasons of pain; times when death and the fear of it darken our door — these are the times and places which make the name of Jesus precious, and test the worth of his grace. But, for all we have so often seen or heard tell of this blessed "power of Christ," and how "it rests upon" his afflicted people until they grow strong — yet, whenever we see it again, we cannot help wondering. For there is something so admirable in the weak flesh getting the better of tribulation, rejoicing in it, overcoming it, and mounting up to Heaven through it all — something so past the power of human nature, that we feel his presence to be very near and very glorious.

He has told us that he dwells in his own saints as in a temple, and surely it must be true; for when the saint's body breaks down and crumbles — do we not see his glory shining through in a solemn and beautiful manner, until even a very careless on-looker must say: "How awesome is this place! This is none other but the house of God!" This is what makes it better a great deal to go to a Christian house of affliction — than to the merriest house of feasting. This is what gives such a charm to the little book we have named below. It is all about affliction and illness; it never leaves the sick-room, but goes from death-bed to death-bed all through; and yet it is brimful of holy, gushing, tender joy. For it tells of the "power of Christ," and opens so many springs of comfort in his sympathy, his presence, his promises, his heavenly home — that it truly makes the wilderness

of tribulation to run with rivers of refreshment. "They thirsted not," these afflicted followers of Jesus, "when he led them through the deserts, for he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he split the rock also, and the waters gushed out!"

~ ~ ~ ~

How much is suffering better than sin; "and victory over temptation better than not being tried; and the haven after a storm — than to have had no experience of the power, wisdom, and loving-kindness of the Lord in carrying us safely over every stormy wave.

~ ~ ~ ~ Thoughts for Sad Hours To the invalid it seems hard to be doing nothing, when work is on every side — souls perishing, the labor of others progressing, and at times the conscious mental and spiritual power to work swelling high in your bosom. But what is your God himself doing? Is he not restraining you from work? Is he not withholding his Gospel from perishing nations, permitting the best efforts of his children to be crossed, apparently not working when a mighty work is to be done? It is not lack of love — it is Infinite wisdom, seeing that that work cannot, consistently with decrees stretching far beyond our reach, yet all-wise, all-gracious — be done. All that you think you would do belongs to this work — or, if it does not, it will be done without you.

Meanwhile you have your work — there is one plant on which the Heavenly Gardener desires to lavish especial graces; and while you would gladly be sowing seed broadcast among the furrows — he bids you lie indolently, as it seems, beside it, pick off each dead leaf, brush away every invading insect, train each springing shoot. Are his views narrow? It is but one plant. No, it is a plant that is to bloom for ages! Thousands in brighter worlds may rejoice in it, and none will say too much pains was bestowed on its earliest growth. This plant is growing in your heart — rejoice over it, and wait God's time patiently.

~ ~ ~ ~

"We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 In all the catalogue of promises or declarations which the Word of God contains, there is none richer than this, none more direct and absolute in its terms, yet none so difficult heartily to believe. As a speculative proposition it is very pleasant; but when it comes to parting with what we most love, one as beloved as our own soul, or all earthly comforts — we ask: "How can this be for my good? Impossible — it is evil, and only evil!" But this was Paul's judgment after a long catalogue of sufferings and miseries, famine and sword included, and such as few now encounter in the worst of times. He says, "In all these things we are more than conquerors!" To have been simply conqueror would have been a marvelous triumph, but he was more. It takes great faith to believe great promises, and great trials to make this faith a truly effective and all-conquering principle. Those, therefore, who are called to pass through such trials, should not regard themselves as the most unhappy and most unfortunate on that account. Chastisements, though very grievous for the present, are the means of salvation and higher seats in Heaven to multitudes. "Preserve me, O God, for in you do I but my trust."

~ ~ ~ ~

"Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Patience may be said to "have her perfect work" when, in suffering circumstances, inward

murmurs are silenced, as well as outward complaints.

~ ~ ~ ~ Suffering, a Higher Path than Doing

Paul had anxiously inquired, "What would you have me to do?" Our Lord sends his minister to tell him, not what great things he shall do — but what far greater things he shall suffer. Sufferings are, after all, the great achievements of the Christian. Where one man is permitted to effect mighty things for his Lord, by carrying the words of the everlasting Gospel over the burning sands of Africa, or the frozen mountains of the north — thousands and tens of thousands are called to the high privilege of the Philippians of old "not only to believe, but also to suffer for his name's sake." To sit on his right hand and on his left, are not now to be given. But to drink of his cup of suffering, and to be baptized with his baptism of affliction, are still among the choicest blessings which he bestows upon his people! Be not, then, disappointed, if, with every desire to do great things for your Divine Master, you are denied the power or the opportunity. If, as has been beautifully said, "They also serve, who only stand and wait," how much more do they serve who are called upon to endure and to suffer! Yes, in the chamber of sickness, upon the bed of pain, you may as greatly glorify your Redeemer, as amid the tortures of the stake. And often does it please your Heavenly Father, that while you are meditating what great things you shall do for Christ — he is preparing the great things you shall suffer!

~ ~ ~ ~ Trust in God Brings Peace

Here is the true secret of peace in this world of trouble:

to yield ourselves always meekly, as the redeemed of Christ, to the hand of God, as of a loving Father;

to know that this is the especial character of our lives, that we are not under a grinding rule of blind necessity, nor under a harsh rod of vindictive infliction — but in a process of restoration;

to know that joy and sorrow are mingled for us, as he sees best for us;

to know that our joys are but his love — and our sorrows are but the deeper tones of that same love;

to know that we are safe while he bids the sun still to shine around us, for we are his;

to know that he will keep us in the dangerous sunshine. Nor do the clouds on the horizon trouble us, for they cannot dim that sunshine, so long as he sees that it is best for us to walk with him in its glad brightness. It may be he will accept our quiet waiting on him, and so teach us through it, that we shall hardly need the rougher discipline of sharp affliction. Or, if our sun threatens to go down in darkness — if the clouds gather over it in gloom — still we are with him. And to be with him is, for every child of his, the most really to be at peace. In the storm, he whom we love more than life, comes oftentimes the closest to us; and by the blessed power of that divine Presence, the world, when it is the barest to the eye of sense, abounds the most richly in the truest consolation. And the sharp edge of earthly anguish grows into the serene reality of heavenly joy!

~ ~ ~ ~ Who can imagine, by a stretch of the imagination, the feelings of those, who having died in faith, wake up in heavenly bliss? The life then begun, we know, will last forever — surely that will

be a day much to be observed unto the Lord, through all the ages of eternity. We may increase, indeed, forever in knowledge and in love; still that first awakening from the dead, the day at once of our birth and our espousal, will ever be endeared and hallowed in our thoughts. When we find ourselves, after long rest, gifted with fresh powers, vigorous with the seed of eternal life within us, able to love God as we wish, conscious that all trouble, sorrow, pain, anxiety, and bereavement, is over forever; blessed in the full affection of those earthly friends whom we loved so poorly, and could protect so feebly, while they were with us in the flesh; and above all, visited with the immediate, visible, ineffable presence of God Almighty, with his only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his co-equal, co-eternal Spirit — that great sight in which is the fullness of joy and pleasure for evermore!

What deep unfathomable and unimaginable thoughts will then be upon us! What depths will be stirred up within us! What secret harmonies awakened, of which human nature seemed incapable! Earthly words are indeed all worthless to minister to such high anticipations. Let us close our eyes, and keep silence.

~ ~ ~ ~ Extract from a Letter of Mrs. Hemans

Better far than these indications of recovery, is the sweet heavenly peace which I feel gradually overshadowing me with its dove-pinions, excluding all that would exclude thoughts of God. I wish I could convey to you the deep feelings of repose and thankfulness with which I lay on Tuesday evening, gazing from my sofa upon a sunset sky of the richest colors — silvery green and amber kindling into the most glorious tints of the burning rose. I felt its holy beauty sinking through my inmost being, with an influence drawing me nearer and nearer to God.

There comes a time when we feel that God has drawn us nearer to himself by the chastening influence of such trials, and when we thankfully acknowledge that a higher state of purification, the great object, I truly believe, of all our earthly discipline — has been the blessed result of our calamities. I am sure that in your pure and pious mind, this result will before long take place, and that a deep and reconciling calm will follow the awakening sense of God's parental dealings with his child.

~ ~ ~ ~

Tearless Eyes!

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!" Revelation 21:4 The expression is one of exquisite tenderness and beauty. Of all the descriptions of Heaven, there is no one perhaps that would be better adapted to produce consolation than this. This earth is a world of weeping — a valley of tears! Who is there who has not shed a tear?

What a change it would make in our world, if it could be said that henceforth not another tear would be shed, not a head would ever be bowed again in grief!

Yet this is to be the condition of Heaven! In that world there is no pain, no disappointment, no bereavement.

No friend is to lie in dreadful agony on a sick-bed;

no grave is to be opened to receive a parent, a wife, a child;

no gloomy prospect of death is to draw tears of sorrow from the eyes. To that blessed world, when our eyes run down with tears, we are permitted to look forward — and the prospect of such a world should contribute to wipe away our tears here — for all our sorrows will soon be over!

Amidst the trials of the present life,

when friends leave us,

when sickness comes,

when our hopes are blasted,

when calumnies and reproaches come upon us,

when, standing on the verge of the grave and looking down into the cold tomb, the eyes pour forth floods of tears

— it is a blessed privilege to be permitted to look forward to that brighter scene in Heaven, where not a pang shall ever be felt, and not a tear shall ever be shed! Albert Barnes

~ ~ ~ ~ In pain, sickness, trouble, methinks I hear God say: Take this medicine, exactly suited to the case, prepared and weighed by my own hands, and consisting of the choicest drugs which Heaven affords! T. Adam

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