

God, the Portion of His People

by James Smith

God is our Father, and he is our refuge and strength in times of trouble, and we should exercise confidence in his love and trust in his word.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Mark 9:24, John 14:1, Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 6:18

Topics: "Gods Providence", "Trusting God"

Description

James Smith preaches about the comforting assurance that God, as a loving Father, promises to be with His children in times of trouble, providing advice, supplies, and deliverance. Believers are encouraged to consult, cast their burdens, and find solace in God, who sympathizes with their afflictions and works all things for their good. The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's will, looking to Jesus for strength, and finding rest and peace in His presence, knowing that all trials are preparing them for eternal glory and endless rest in heaven.

Transcript

"I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18

Tried Christian, you are not an orphan! You have a Father! God, in all the glory of his nature and perfections, is your Father! He has adopted you for his own. He has regenerated you by his Spirit. He has called you out of the world, and has promised to do a father's part unto you. He says, "I will be a Father unto you."

Do you need advice? Consult your Father.

Do you need supplies? Ask them of your Father.

Are you tormented with cares? Cast them on your Father.

Are you alarmed at foes? Cry unto your Father.

Do your difficulties appear insurmountable? Appeal to your Father.

God is not merely a Father in name; he has a Father's nature. He not only calls us his sons and daughters, but wishes us to act towards him as such. We should exercise confidence in his love; we

should trust in his word; we should appeal to his paternal heart; we should look for our supplies from his hand.

In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, we should let our requests be made known unto God. He loves to see us confide in his care, rely on his word, expect his communications, and acquiesce in his will.

Believer, whatever trials may befall you, whatever troubles may come upon you, whatever enemies may rise up against you, whatever changes may take place in your circumstances, one thing can never befall you--you can never be fatherless; therefore you can never be friendless. You are God's child, however poor your circumstances, or trying your path. What an unspeakable mercy!

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ!" Romans 8:16-17

OUR ELDER BROTHER

"For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven--is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:50

Every relation in which Jesus stands to his people, is precious. But there are some peculiarly so, especially under certain peculiar circumstances. He is not only our Savior--but our brother. He is bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh. Possessing our nature, being part of the same family, he watches over us with a brother's eye, and loves us with a brother's love.

Jesus is the "brother born for adversity." Proverbs 17:17. He takes the deepest interest in all our affairs, and watches over us to do us good. We may go to him in all our troubles, and open our hearts to him without the least reserve. We cannot go to one who loves us more, or one who is more able or willing to help us. He laid down his life for us, thereby proving the intensity of his love to us.

He is gone into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us. My tried Christian friend, the eye of Jesus is upon you in your trial; the ear of Jesus is open, to listen to your cries; the heart of Jesus is affected with your griefs and woes; and the tongue of Jesus is employed to intercede with his Father for you!

Sweet thought! We have a brother in heaven! a brother who knows all we suffer, and who will frustrate the designs of our foes, sanctify to us our troubles and trials, and eventually make all things work together for our good! His strong arm will defend us, his merciful hand will supply us, and his tender heart will ever sympathize with us. He will guide us through life and death by his counsel, and afterwards receive, us to glory! Let us, therefore, go to him in every trouble, plead with him to supply our needs, trust him in every dark and dreary hour, and expect him to show a brother's love.

"Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers." Hebrews 2:11

THE COMFORTER

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth." John 14:16-17

The sorrows of the Lord's people are sometimes so deep, that human comforters are vain. They do but aggravate our woe and increase our distress. Jesus knew this; and therefore, having comforted his disciples himself for the space of three years, and being now about to leave them, he promises to send the Holy Spirit, to be the abiding Comforter of his people.

The Holy Spirit is a divine person. He can search the heart, pierce the clouds, penetrate all recesses, and ascertain the true cause of all our sorrows. His tenderness and love are infinite, therefore he can administer consolation in the most suitable and efficient manner. The whole fullness of Jesus is open to him, and he will select and apply the most appropriate remedy in every case of sorrow. He applies the promises; he unveils our Father's loving countenance; he reveals the suitability and sufficiency of Jesus; he witnesses to our adoption, and cries "Abba, Father!" in our hearts.

To him we are indebted for every bright ray, every cheering hope, every pleasant prospect, and every refreshing consolation. It is his work to comfort; it is his delight to comfort. Let us therefore look to him for comfort under all our trials, troubles, temptations, and distresses!

Our earthly friends may fail us, or prove miserable comforters to us; but the holy and ever blessed Spirit can and will comfort us to the end.

Blessed Jesus, send the Comforter into my heart, to comfort me with the assurances of your love and the joys of your salvation! O to realize the presence and power of the Comforter in my soul, unfolding truth, revealing Jesus, and sealing me unto the day of redemption!

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." John 16:13-14

THE APPOINTMENT

"No one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this." 1 Thessalonians 3:3

Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. Affliction does not come not forth of the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground. Trouble is the natural consequence of sin, and all trouble springs from this bitter root. But God makes our trouble--our medicine, and uses it for our present and everlasting welfare.

Our troubles are not the inflictions of an angry God--but the chastisements of a loving Father. He foresaw what we should be, and what would be necessary for us--and consequently appointed the number, nature, and length of our troubles.

He sometimes sends trials directly from himself: then we see his hand, and find it comparatively easy to submit to his will. But at other times he allows us to involve ourselves in trouble: then we cannot trace his hand, and therefore yield to temptation, depression, and grief.

But every Christian has his cup of trials--it is mixed by his Father's wisdom, and put into his hand by his Father's providence. He should therefore take it, endeavor to acquiesce in it, and say with Jesus, "The cup that my heavenly Father gives me, shall I not drink it?" Every trouble comes from God's appointment, is intended to do us good, and will be overruled for our real welfare! Every trial is labeled "Love,"--if only we

could but read the writing! And in every affliction God calls to us, saying, "Come near unto me, my son--that I may bless you."

Let us, then, draw near unto God, and show our trouble to him. Let us entreat him to sanctify it to us, that it may wean us from earth, consecrate us to Jesus, and fit us for heaven. All is love--which comes from the God of love!

"But He is unchangeable; who can oppose Him? He does what He desires.

He will certainly accomplish what He has decreed for me, and He has many more things like these in mind." Job 23:13-14

THE LIMIT

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials." 1 Peter 1:6

Trials, and are intended to test our principles, try our profession, and prove the strength of our graces. The trials of the believer are manifold. They come from various quarters, they affect us in various ways; but they are all 'limited'. They are but for a season:

"In the day of adversity consider."

"The hour of temptation."

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment."

"For a small moment have I forsaken you."

Thus they are limited sometimes to "a day," "an hour," "a moment," "a small moment."

God fixes the limit of every trial; and however long that limit may be, it is confined to the present time. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us!" Beloved, however severe the trial may be--it cannot be long! However heavy the burden--you have not far to carry it! We shall soon lay down our cross--and ascend to receive our crown. If our Father frowns upon us now--he will smile again soon. "His anger endures but for a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night--but joy comes in the morning."

Your present trouble is but for a season, and that season will soon close! Therefore bear it patiently, prayerfully, and hopefully. Yield not to despondency, listen not to Satan; but hope in God, for you shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance. The darkness of night will soon be chased away by the rosy light of morning; the limit of your trouble will soon be reached; and then joy, everlasting joy, will be upon your head, and all sorrow and sighing will flee away forever!

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast!" 1 Peter 5:10

THE LEGACY

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid!" John 14:27

Jesus knows from experience what his people need. His life on earth was a life of trial, trouble, and grief. He was the "Man of Sorrows--and acquainted with grief." Yet, in the midst of all, he enjoyed peace. His spirit was generally at rest. His faith was in lively exercise, and his repose on his Father's love was perfect. When all was confusion and strife without--he had full peace within. And when he departed out of this world to go unto his Father, he left us this as a legacy, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."

Our souls may be peaceful, let our outward circumstances be whatever they may. By the exercise of faith in Jesus, by staying the mind on Jesus, and by acquiescing in the will of Jesus--we shall have peace. So it is written: "You will keep him in perfect peace--whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."

My soul, I charge you to cast every care on Jesus. Submit to his will, nay, prefer his will to your own. Let the word of Jesus be your rule and comfort, let the glory of Jesus be your aim and object, and let the legacy of Jesus be taken to the throne of grace, that it may be paid you by his heavenly Father! Pray, pray for holy tranquility of mind, amidst all the storms of time--and expect an inward calm of heart both in life and death. Believe, and the legacy is yours. Pray in faith--and the legacy will be paid you. Your Savior, who left you this legacy on earth, lives in heaven to see it paid to all applicants. Therefore, present it in confidence, expect to receive it--and you shall soon enjoy it. We who believe do enter into rest.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

THE SOLACE

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble." Psalm 46:1

God is whatever his people need. All that he is--he is to them.

Are they in danger? He is their refuge. Here they are safe from the avenger of blood, the justice of God, and the threatenings of a violated law.

Are they weak? He is their strength. He will strengthen them for conflict with the foe, strengthen them while in the engagement, and bring them off more than conquerors.

Are they in trouble? He is a help, a very present help in trouble. He will help them to bear trouble; he will help them to improve trouble; he will help them out of trouble. He will deliver them in six troubles, and in seven shall no evil touch them. Christian, in every danger run to your Father, God. His arms are open to receive you; his heart is a refuge for you. He will screen you; he will shelter you; he will defend you. He will be your protection in adversity and prosperity, in life and death.

In all your weakness, go to him for strength; in all your infirmities, repair to him for grace. He is the strength of the poor, and the strength of the needy in his distress. He has strengthened thousands of poor feeble ones--and he will strengthen you!

In all your troubles go to him for solace and support. He will help you. Hear his own precious words, addressed to his people when in deep trouble and distress: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand!" Isaiah 41:10

He is your shield in danger, and your very present help in trouble. He is always at hand, always ready to help, always willing to bless you.

"Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time!" Hebrews 4:16

THE COMMON LOT

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all." Psalm 34:19

The Lord's people are all righteous. To them the glorious righteousness of Jesus is imputed. In them the righteous work of the Holy Spirit is wrought. By them the righteous precepts of God's Word are observed. The obedience of Jesus is their title to heaven. The work of the Holy Spirit prepares them for glory. Their practical conformity to the moral requirements of the gospel, proves them to be justified before God, and sanctified by his grace.

All the righteous are afflicted: some more, some less; but none are exempt. Nor have they merely one source of affliction; for "MANY are the afflictions of the righteous." There has been more than one Job, or one Lazarus, in God's family; though all suffer not as severely as they did. Every son is scourged. But however numerous, however great their afflictions may be--they are more than a match for them. As their day--so is their strength; and they ever find that the grace of Jesus is sufficient for them. "The Lord delivers him out of them all."

God has undertaken to sustain us in, to bring us through, and deliver us out of--all our troubles. God's deliverances are always perfect. He delivers every one of his children; and he delivers every one completely and forever. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." No believer ever perished in his affliction. No Christian ever found his burden greater than his strength. We have often doubted, often feared, often questioned our safety; but we, even we, can testify that God is faithful, that his promise is true, and therefore we have persevered until now!

"You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but you will restore me to life again and lift me up from the depths of the earth." Psalm 71:20

THE FOOTPRINTS

"These are those who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!" Revelation 7:14

Nothing is more common than for the Lord's people to be tempted to think that their troubles and trials are peculiar. But a careful perusal of God's Word, and communion with the Lord's people, will soon convince them that this is a mistake. All the Lord's family have gone home to heaven by the same road, and have all experienced more or less the same trials. All have to experience a conflict within--and a rough road without.

Look at the prophets; theirs was a most trying path. Hence says the apostle, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." Just so the Corinthians. They imagined that their trials were singular, therefore Paul wrote them: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let

you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." Just so the Master also: "He was in all points tempted like as we are;" and "in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able also to support them that are tempted.'

Tried Christian, you are in the footsteps of the flock; look attentively at your road, and you will discern the footprints of the great Shepherd, and also of his little flock. It is of the path of trial that Jesus says, "This is the way--walk in it." Cheer up, then, for present troubles--lead to future glory. The weary way will sweeten the rest at the end. The horrors of the wilderness--will make Canaan appear more lovely and pleasant. Press on, for home is just before you!

"Knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world." 1 Peter 5:9

RELATIONSHIP PROVED

"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons." Hebrews 12:7-8

Afflictions are often divine chastisements. They flow from a Father's love, and are intended to correct us for our faults. Consequently when brought into trouble, we should ask, "Is there not a cause?" and say with the prophet, "Let us search, and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."

All the Lord's children need correction--and all are corrected. If allowed to sin without stripes, or to become conformed to the world without chastisement, our sonship is at best very questionable. But when our consciences are made and kept tender, when our follies are followed with trials, troubles, or painful convictions--our sonship is proved.

God will not allow his children to wander from him far--or to wander from him long. "The rod and reproof give wisdom;" and we shall be smitten and reproof often--if we go astray from the right ways of the Lord. If I cannot sin without remorse, if I cannot rest until I confess it to the Lord, if I cannot be happy until I receive a renewed sense of his pardoning love--then there can be no reasonable doubt of my relationship.

God is my Father; and however fickle, feeble, wayward, and unworthy--I am his child. He uses the rod of a father, that he may not use the sword of a judge. I will therefore arise, and go to my Father. I will plead with him for grace, that I may approve the discipline, kiss the rod, and bless the hand that strikes me.

O my Father, let your child lay his aching head on your bosom; soothe me with one of your sweet words, assure me of your love, and enable me lovingly to accept of your correction! O Lord, correct me; but in mercy, not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing!

"As many as I love--I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent." Revelation 3:19

THE GRACIOUS DIRECTION

"Cast your burden upon the Lord--and he shall sustain you. He shall never allow the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22

Troubles in the flesh--are often heavy burdens to the spirit. Nor have we a friend, a relative, or foe--but sometime or other lays a burden upon us. We cannot always prevent burdens being laid upon us--but we

may refuse to carry them. Indeed, we ought not to carry any burdens; for it is not befitting in the King's children to act like porters!

We have a great Burden-bearer--one who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows--one who bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Now he bore our sins--the guilt and the punishment of them--that we may never bear them. He sighed--that we may sing. He sunk under the weight of our sorrows--that we may rise and taste his sweetest joys. And now, when he sees us burdened with care, grief, anxiety, or worldly trouble--he sweetly says, "Let me take your burden and carry it for you. My strength is greater than yours. Bring it to me. Cast it on me. Leave it with me."

O Christian, what a Savior you have! He so cares for you, that he desires you not to care; and he so loves to see you happy, that he proposes, yes, asks, to be allowed to carry your burden for you. More than this, he will not only carry your burden--but he will carry you! He will place his everlasting arms beneath you, lift you up out of every difficulty, and set you before his face for ever!

Take your present burden to Jesus--and let him bear it for you. If you do not, you will find it too much for your patience, and you will soon begin to think that the Lord deals hardly with you. But if you take it to Jesus, he will not only bear it for you--but endear himself to you by doing so.

"Call on Me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor Me!" Psalm 50:15

THE GROANING

"For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened." 2 Corinthians 5:4

The body is a poor residence for the soul. It was at first a noble structure; but it is now like a poor canvas tent, affording few accommodations, and letting in all kinds of annoyances. It is the seat of pain, the medium of temptation, and often a great hindrance to us in our spiritual course! We groan in this tent, because of what we feel we need, as well as from what we positively suffer.

Nor will our groaning cease--but with our breathing. We shall have to groan over our carnality, worldliness, lust, dullness, deadness, darkness, and unbelief. We shall groan for liberty, holiness, and perfect, uninterrupted peace.

We do groan now, as some of us have for years; and we shall groan until mortality is swallowed up of life. We shall go down to the grave groaning; but from thence the ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads! They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

My brother, is your poor body the seat of disease, of strong pain? Do you feel fettered by it, and pent up in it? Are you groaning as a poor prisoner for freedom? Lift up your head--for your redemption draws near! The resurrection morning will soon break on this groaning world, and then the last groan of God's Church will be lost in everlasting songs. Jesus is coming; and when he comes, then will come the world's jubilee. Every fetter will then be knocked off, every prison-door will be opened, every sufferer will enjoy freedom from pain, and every form of disease will flee away. The poor tent will--become a building of God, a glorious residence, a magnificent mansion for the soul.

"Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Romans 8:23

THE COMPLAINT

"O What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death!" Romans 7:24

As Christians, we have not only troubles without--but we have trials within; and soul troubles are the greatest troubles. Every believer feels, that when he would do good--evil is present with him; that he has a law in his members warring against the law of his mind; that, like the Roman criminal, he has a dead body fastened to him!

The old man of sin and the new man of grace inhabit the same soul; and between them there is a perpetual warfare.

From the one proceed evil thoughts, vile lusts, carnal desires, corrupt inclinations--and a number of evils too vile to enumerate!

From the other flow holy aspirations, spiritual desires, heavenly affections, and earnest pantings for perfect holiness.

The flesh works, and mars our very best performances.

The Spirit works, and prevents our yielding to its base inclinations.

We would do good, only good; but evil, powerful evil, is present with us! The body of death hinders us in duty, and often spoils our enjoyment of our privileges. Thus, like the Shulamite, we have in us two armies; and these armies are perpetually at war; and if at any time there seems to be an truce, then is the time of our greatest danger.

Oh, for grace to crucify the old man with his deeds; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness! But, blessed be God, the warfare will soon be over, the conflict will soon cease. We shall soon be perfectly holy--and then we shall be perfectly happy. The old man must die--he is under the sentence of death now; and the new man must reign, and rule one whole person without a rival. Oh, glorious prospect of eternal freedom from all sin!

"For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want." Galatians 5:17

THE PRAYER

"Have mercy upon me, O Lord--for I am in trouble!" Psalm 31:9

Prayer is always a privilege--but it is a special privilege in the times of trouble. What would we have done sometimes--but for prayer? When the heart was overcharged with grief, when the body was reduced by disease, when property melted like snow, and the grave closed over our loved ones--what would we have done, but for prayer! Then we poured out our hearts before the Lord, then we appealed to the almighty Ruler, then we cried to the Disposer of all events, then we sought fellowship with the Resurrection and the Life! And in prayer we were comforted, and in answer to prayer made a match for our troubles.

Christian, in your trouble appeal to your God, appeal to his mercy. Mercy always sympathizes with misery, and feels for the distressed. The mercy of your God is as vast as infinity, and tenderer than the tenderest mother's heart! He will listen to you, sympathize with you, appear for you, and bring you to bless him for

the very trouble that now makes you groan!

How often is it repeated in his Word, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble--and he delivered them out of their distresses!" Pray on therefore, though the more you pray, the more your troubles may seem to increase--for this is sometimes the case; yet prayer, if it is the prayer of the heart, will certainly prevail. God cannot refuse to hear the cries of his afflicted ones, or to answer the prayers of his children in trouble! His word is passed--and cannot be recalled. His heart is love, and cannot be unaffected. His resources are infinite--and cannot be exhausted. He will therefore be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry. When he shall hear you--he will answer you.

"For the glory of your name, O Lord, preserve my life. Because of your faithfulness, bring me out of this distress." Psalm 143:11

AN ANTIDOTE

"None of us lives to himself." Romans 14:7

The tried Christian should never dwell on his troubles. Trouble comes to furnish him with a message to the Lord, and to drive him out of his present state and condition; therefore many of the Lord's people have found great relief in trouble--by actively engaging in the Lord's service.

My tried friend, go, if you can, to the chamber of the sick, and speak of Jesus to them. Go to the desolate home of the widow, listen to her tale of sorrow, and endeavor to dry her tears. Take her fatherless children by the hand, and speak loving words to them of a Father in heaven. Go to the poor laborer's cottage, where there are many needs and few comforts, and represent Jesus there, speaking of him and acting for him. Look at the sufferings of others, and try to relieve them. Look at the needs of others, and try to supply them. Look at the ignorance of others, and endeavor to instruct them. It is by doing good--that we get good. Be active for your Savior, and you shall be comforted by your Savior.

The way to increase sorrow--is to dwell upon it; and the way to obtain relief from sorrow is to act for Jesus notwithstanding it. The action of fresh air on the nerves, the action of God's truth on the mind, and the action of another's sorrow on your heart--will relieve, reanimate, and restore to comfort those who go forth as messengers of mercy; while those who confine themselves at home, dwelling on their griefs and woes--will continue depressed and sad. While, therefore, you rely on the Lord's promise, be active in the Lord's service, and energetic in the Lord's cause. "The hand of the diligent makes rich; but the slothful soul shall suffer hunger." This is as true in spirituals as in temporals.

"We should not henceforth live unto ourselves--but unto him who died for us, and rose again." 2 Corinthians 5:15

DIVINE SYMPATHY

"In all their distress--He too was distressed, and the Angel of His Presence saved them. He redeemed them because of His love and compassion; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of the past." Isaiah 63:9

How sweet is sympathy! Yet human sympathy is very often feeble--it may soothe--but cannot help. The kind visit, the loving word, is at times precious; but they do not reach our case--they bring us no permanent relief. Human love is often without power to assist the beloved object.

Not so when God loves; for then His loving heart moves an omnipotent arm, and opens His infinite resources. But there is something astounding in the thought, that the afflictions of a worm--a sinful worm--should afflict the heart of the Infinite--the heart of God! Yet such is the testimony of his own Word. What an expression of love is that! "They put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." What exquisite tenderness is manifested when the God of the universe declares, "He that touches you--touches the apple of his eye!"

Tried fellow-traveler, when your road is rough, when your strength is small, when your heart is pained, when your sighs are heavy--God sympathizes with you. His eye sees, his ear hears, and his heart feels! For "as a father pities his children--so the Lord pities those who fear him; for he knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust." Believe this--and be sad if you can! Believe this--and complain if you dare! Believe this rather--and go on your way rejoicing! What more can you desire? God your father--God, as a father, pitying you--pitying you as his beloved child! The sympathy of God should be your solace, your comfort, and your joy!

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are!" Hebrews 4:15

THE PERSUASION

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble--You revive my life!" Psalm 138:7

Some of the Lord's family are peculiarly tried. Trouble seems to come upon them from every quarter. They appear to be surrounded by it. They have trouble in the world--business tries them. They have trouble in the family-- children try them. They have trouble in the Church--fellow-members try them. They have trouble in their own souls--for Satan, doubts, fears, and inward corruption try them! They must go forward--but they walk in the midst of trouble! Onlookers wonder how they bear up, how they persevere.

But there is a secret, which observers cannot see. The Lord preserves his tried ones. Sometimes some precious portion of his Word falls on the heart--like the dew upon the grass. At other times the Holy Spirit breathes on the soul--like the breezes from the everlasting hills. Now Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, breaks out and shines on them--like nature's sun on the stormy day. Then in prayer the soul is drawn out, and mounts upward, and holds such communion with God--as resembles bathing in the river of pleasure. The ordinances of God's house are really means of grace; and reading God's Word is like walking with unfallen Adam in his paradise.

These revivals are precious. They cause faith to fasten on the promise afresh, hope looks forward to the rest that remains anew, and love ascends and finds its center and its solace in the perfections of the Most High. O for more of these reviving seasons! My God, you have said, "I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall revive as the corn." Fulfill this precious promise daily in my soul.

"He will come to us like the rain--like the latter and former rain to the earth!" Hosea 6:3

THE DESIGN

"Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness." Hebrews 12:9-10

Believer, are you afflicted? Are you severely tried? Does trouble after trouble roll over you? What is the cause? There must be one. What is the design? Have you inquired? If not, inquire now.

Why does God try me so? Does he hate me? No.

Is he wrathful? No--he has sworn that he will not be wrathful with you.

Why then is it? God intends to make you holy--to make you like himself! He is weaning you from the creature. He is wearying you of earth. He intends to raise your thoughts, desires, and hopes--to heaven. He is detaching and separating you from what pollutes and defiles--that he may polish and brighten you, to catch and reflect the rays of his glory in his presence forever.

You have prayed to be made holy. God has heard your prayer. He approved of it--and he is answering it. By his present dealings, which he will sanctify by the power of his Holy Spirit--he will prepare you to glorify him on earth, and make you fit to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. His design is most gracious, every way worthy of himself; and you will see by-and-by, that divine love and wisdom appointed and arranged every trial you are now passing through. Submit yourself, therefore, unto God; accept his corrections, nor ever complain of his dealings. He treats you as his child. He corrects you for your good. He prepares you--for what he has prepared for you. He will make you a vessel of mercy, prepared unto glory. In eternity you will bless him for the discipline of time.

"He stays his rough wind--in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." Isaiah 27:8, 9

THE CALCULATION

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time--are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18

The sufferings of the Lord's people are often severe and protracted. But, however severe, however protracted that the sufferings of the believer may at present be--there is no comparison between them and the glories which await him. He is now under training. He is a child preparing to take possession of a glorious inheritance. The discipline he is now under is painful--but the result will be seen in the future. He is being educated for eternity. There is a hope laid up for him in heaven. There is a weight of glory in reserve for him! "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love him."

There is a glory for the body--like that which shone forth in the body of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. There is a glory for the soul--which will very much consist in perfect knowledge, perfect holiness, exact conformity to the soul of Jesus, and the beatific vision of God. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."

But words are lacking, thoughts fail, when our attention is directed to the glory that shall be revealed in us. Even John knew not what was comprised in it. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is!" Let this calm your mind and quiet your spirit--that glory is prepared for you, and will be revealed in you; and that there is no comparison between what you are suffering now--and what you will enjoy then!

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear--then shall you also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:4

GOD'S DETERMINATION

"My counsel shall stand--and I will do all my good pleasure." Isaiah 46:10

God never acts at random. His plan is drawn. His purposes are fixed. He steadily pursues his end. Resistance is vain--it is sin! It brings punishment on the sinner, and correction on the saint. Submission is at all times a duty. Resignation ought ever to characterize us. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." His omnipotence is engaged to carry out His designs; and "He does according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: no one can stay His hand, or say unto him, What are you doing?"

Believer, the Lord takes pleasure in your person, and in your spiritual prosperity. He is pleased with whatever advances your spirituality, perfects your character, increases your real happiness, and adds splendor to your crown. Hence said the apostle, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

You wondered at the afflictions of the saints; do you wonder now? They are to add weight and brilliance to their crowns. Sanctified afflictions are among our choicest blessings. Let us, therefore, pray that our afflictions may be sanctified; and to be kept from striving with our Maker, reflecting upon His wisdom, and grieving His love. In our best moments we can thank God for the immutability of His counsel, and the changeless nature of His decrees. A God of love can only pass loving decrees respecting His children; and such are all God's purposes respecting you. O Lord, fulfill in us all the good pleasure of Your goodness, and the work of faith with power!

"The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Psalm 33:11

THE DESIRE

"May Your will be done in earth--as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

God's will must be wise and holy, therefore God's will should rule. God wills nothing for us but what is consistent with his love to us and concern for us. Nor are we at a loss to know the turn that God's will takes towards us: "For this is the will of God--even your sanctification." God wills, first--his own glory; and in subordination to that--our present and everlasting welfare. It is therefore our wisdom to pray that God's will may always, everywhere and in everything, be done. And it is our happiness to acquiesce always, and in everything, in God's will.

Indeed we can never be happy if our wills run contrary to God's will, or if they run beside it. We must be little children. We must endeavor to ascertain what is our Father's will, and be pleased with that. If God wills me poverty or plenty, health or sickness, pleasure or pain, publicity or obscurity, life or death--I should be satisfied with it; I should approve of it; more, I should be pleased with it--so pleased with it, that if the turning of a straw would make the least difference in it, I should refuse to turn that straw.

This would be to treat God as God, and to act just as a simple, ignorant, inexperienced child should act. Lord Jesus, send the blessed Comforter, to direct my will into the channel of God's will, and to keep it there. I can never be happy while my will crosses your will: teach me, therefore, to give up my will; and bring me into that state, that I may not have a wish--but just to be, to do, to enjoy, or to suffer--just as God

wills. O for that depth of holiness, that I may ever cry with you, "Not my will--but your be done!"

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will--but as you will."
Matthew 26:39

AN EXAMPLE

"He endured--as seeing him who is invisible." Hebrews 11:27

Moses had much to suffer; and who has not, if loved and honored by God? Satan and the world are leagued against God's children. In Egypt, they are persecuted and ruled by their carnal neighbors. In the desert, they are tried by a variety of vexing dispensations. And in Canaan, or the Church of God, they often meet with enough to make them weary of life.

But Moses endured; he bore his trials patiently. He pressed on, notwithstanding difficulties; he courageously faced a proud and angry monarch at God's bidding. How was this? He realized the presence of an invisible God. He kept his eye fixed on the Most High God. He feared his frown; he dreaded his displeasure; he sought his favor; he prized his blessing. If God is with us--all will be well. But God is with us--though unseen. Let us, therefore, endeavor to suffer, with the eye of faith fixed on God as our heavenly Father, who will support us; on Jesus, as our great pattern, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame; and on the Holy Spirit, as our present, perpetual, and powerful Comforter.

Troubled Christian, God is with you--only your natural eye cannot see him. He is supporting you at this moment. He has promised never, never to leave you, nor forsake you. He is faithful to his Word, therefore patiently endure until he set you free. It will not be long before he will appear for you, set you on high from affliction, and make you full of joy with his countenance. The present is your worst condition. Once over the Jordan of death--and all will be peace, prosperity, and pleasure!

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him!" James 1:12

A PRESCRIPTION

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us--and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus!" Hebrews 12:1-2

The world is a race-course, life is a race, and every one of us are racers! A mark is set up, at which we are to aim, and a prize is promised to every overcomer. But there are many difficulties in the way, and we have many weights hanging about us. Those difficulties must be mastered, and those weights must be laid aside.

We must run with patience the race set before us, keeping our eye on Jesus. Jesus is our example--we must copy him. Jesus is our leader--we must follow him. Jesus is our sovereign--we must submit to him. Jesus is our Savior--and we must confide alone in him. We must look to his blood for pardon, to his righteousness for justification, to his Spirit for strength, and to his fullness for all our supplies. We must make use of Jesus every day, every hour, every minute.

Christian, look to Jesus! When discouraged--it will animate you; when timid--it will embolden you; when feeble--it will strengthen you; when weary--it will stimulate you; and when dying--for it will give you the victory. Let your last look--be a look at Jesus!

He says, "Look unto me--and be saved, all you ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." No one ever looked to him in vain; but as every one was healed who looked to the brazen serpent, so is every one saved, sanctified, and sustained, who looks to Jesus. Look to him for all you need, and from all you fear. Keep your eye fixed on Jesus; doing so, you will conquer the world, overcome Satan, reach the mark, and obtain the prize!

"Those who look to Him for help will be radiant with joy." Psalms 34:5

THE SANCTUARY

"In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock!" Psalm 27:5

Times of trouble--are times of danger. But when the child is in danger, the parent is most watchful and concerned. So, believer, your heavenly Father pays special attention to you in the time of your trouble. He will not only keep his eye on you--but he will hide you! Where will he hide you? In some house, or fortress, or granite rock? No! but in his pavilion.

The pavilion is the royal tent, and is placed in the center of the army, surrounded by the strongest and most courageous soldiers. Here the king dwells, and here, if anywhere, safety is to be found. Sweet thought this for you, poor tried one--God will take you to his own tent! He will make you as safe as himself! In the pavilion of your God, you will find supplies for your wants, balm for your wounds, and solace for your sorrows.

Many a Christian has seen more of God, and enjoyed more of the presence of God, in one week's affliction--than in years beside. In his pavilion God communes with His troubled ones; He opens His heart to them, he lifts up the light of his countenance upon them, and he gives them peace.

Blessed Lord, in all times of my trouble bring me into your pavilion, hide me in the secret of your tabernacle; that I may know the blessedness of having my life hid with Christ in God. My soul, in every time of trouble or of trial--repair to your God, plead with him, and let this be your prayer: "Keep me as the apple of the eye! Hide me under the shadow of your wings!" Then you will have to exclaim with joy, "How priceless is your unfailing love! May I find refuge in the shadow of your wings!"

"Lord, You have been our refuge in every generation!" Psalm 90:1

THE BEST COMPANION

"When he calls out to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble. I will rescue him and give him honor." Psalm 91:15

Believers sometimes imagine themselves to be alone in their troubles, and they feel sad and solitary. Christian friends forget or neglect to call on them, and this grieves them. And if this page meet the eye of such an one, I would say--"My friend, grieve not; refreshing as the presence and spiritual communications of a fellow Christian may be, you can do without them. For surely the presence of the Master is far better

than the visits of the servant; and he has said of every tried believer, "I will be with him in trouble."

Precious words! But mistake not--the Lord's presence can only be realized by faith. The benefit of his presence is received--even when the pleasure of his presence is not enjoyed for the want of faith. He never fails to fulfill his promise, though for want of faith we may fail to enjoy it. His presence supports us--even when it does not comfort us; and keeps us back from evil--even when it does not fill us with joy.

Blessed Lord, you have ever been with your people in all their trials and troubles, and you are with every tried believer now; and not only so--but you will deliver them in six troubles, and in seven you will not forsake them! We find that your grace is sufficient for us; and as our day--so is our strength. Be especially with us in our present troubles; and not only so--but let us realize and enjoy your presence. We want to feel your love, to enjoy the light of your countenance; and, as the result, to glorify you in the fires. O Jesus, as you were with the Hebrews in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace--so be with us in every fiery trial!

"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

PRESENT REPOSE

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you: because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26: 3

Confidence in God will keep the mind steady in the wildest storm, and under the heaviest trials. God's covenant character is the repose of the soul; in that we are to trust--on that we are to stay ourselves. And he who believes that God is gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth, and that he intends to display and illustrate these glorious perfections in his experience--will find his mind calm, and his soul enjoying repose, under all the changing circumstances of time.

Taking the eye off creatures, circumstances, and SELF, and fixing it intently upon God as revealed in Jesus, and as working all things after the counsel of his own will, will bring rest to the soul, and preserve the mind in peace. Let the spirit be but stayed on God as love, and let the heart trust in God's truth, faithfulness, and immutability--and there will be "peace, peace." But the moment it is taken off the Lord, there will be agitation, fear, and painful perplexity!

Like Peter on the water, so long as he kept his eye on Jesus, he was safe--he could tread the waves under his feet; but the moment he began to listen to the winds, and look at the billows--that moment he began to sink. Just so it is with us; let us therefore seek grace, to trust in the Lord at all times, and stay ourselves upon our God.

Gracious Savior, you stretched forth your hand to catch sinking Peter; let your hand hold us, and let your loving voice cheer and refresh us under all our changing frames and sinking feelings! Underneath us, place your everlasting arms.

"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest." Isaiah 32:18

THE LOVING LOOK

"Surely the Lord has looked upon my affliction!" Genesis 29:32

So said Leah, when the Lord granted her a son. Barrenness had been her trial; but now the Lord looked upon her--and blessed her.

The Lord's look performs wonders. It filled the Egyptians with perplexity and distress--but it brought Israel relief and comfort. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."

Sufferer, the eye of God is upon you! He knows where you are, what you are suffering from, and the degree of your pain and sorrow. "He never takes his eyes off the righteous." Job 36:7. You cannot be concealed from him. The eye of his mercy lingers over you--until the hand of his power is stretched out to deliver you. His eye affects his heart, therefore he sympathizes with you. He is looking upon your affliction now, and only waits the fittest time to appear for your rescue. Look up to him--as he is looking down upon you, and let the eye of your faith--meet the eye of his mercy! Look up through your tears, for there is eloquence in the tears of his children; and as you look, cry, with David, "Look upon me, and be gracious unto me, as you always do to those who love your name." Psalm 119:132.

Think how Jesus looked on backsliding Peter, until he looked him into penitence and prayer; and how he looked on dying Stephen, until he looked him into meekness and courage. The look of Jesus will strengthen your faith, animate your hope, inflame your love, brighten your graces, and increase your courage.

O Jesus, let me daily realize that your eye is upon me, that you are watching over me to do me good, and that your loving eye will preserve me from hidden evils and crafty foes!

"So God looked on the Israelites--and was concerned about them." Exodus 2:25

CHANGELESS FRIENDSHIP

"From six troubles He will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you!" Job 5:19

Friend, has not the Lord often delivered you? Aged believer, you can bear your testimony to the fact that "the righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." Past deliverances insure future interpositions. Your troubles will be successive--but God's deliverances will be successive too. Seven is the number of perfection, and is designed to teach us that the Lord will deliver us, until deliverance is no longer needed. Having delivered us when dead in trespasses and sins, having brought us into an experimental acquaintance with himself, and having set us apart for his glory and praise--is it not ungrateful, is it not very sinful, especially as we have his positive promise to the opposite, if we doubt that he will yet deliver us?

With our God there can be no difficulty; for infinite wisdom and omnipotent power prevent it. With our God there can be no lack of love; for his love is from everlasting to everlasting, without variation or change. With our God there can be no reason why he should not deliver us; for he has made us his children, and bound up his own glory with our present and everlasting welfare. The Psalmist points us to one case, as a sample of the whole: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." So will it be with every praying soul--there will be a last trouble and a final deliverance. At death, the soul will be delivered from sin, Satan, and the world; and at the first resurrection, the body will be delivered from corruption. And so shall we be ever with the Lord!

"He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us!" 2 Corinthians 1:10

THE CERTAIN RESULT

"We know that all things work together for good--to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

What a blessed assurance is this! All things, whether painful or pleasant, spiritual or temporal, all things are overruled and directed to do us good. They work together. They are connected as the links in a chain. As different ingredients in one medicine, they mutually act upon and assist each other.

For our good--our present and everlasting welfare: to prevent sin, and deepen our sanctification; to wean from earth, and qualify us for heaven; to exercise our graces, and mortify our lusts; to employ our gifts, and extend our usefulness.

Trials lead to triumphs; and conflicts to conquests! The good Lord purposed to call us by his grace, and according to his purpose he did so. He has shed abroad his love in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and we love him in return. Now, as his beloved and loving children, his heart is set upon our best interests. And he so works, by his providence, his Word, and his Spirit, as not only to prevent our being injured--but that we shall be really benefitted, by all that happens to us. So that, in reference to every trial, exercise, pain, pleasure, loss, or acquirement, we may say, "This shall work for my good; this will fit me for heaven, and fit me to glorify God more and more!"

My soul, never forget, in the dark night of sorrow, desertion, sickness, and pain--that all things are working together for your good, even when you are suffering most! The present is connected with the future; time runs into eternity; and your present sufferings in Christ's cause work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "Say to the righteous, that it shall be well with them!"

"I also know that it will go well with God-fearing people, for they are reverent before Him." Ecclesiastes 8:12

ENDLESS REST

"There remains therefore a rest to the people of God." Hebrews 4:9

How sweet is rest to the weary! Yet how little rest do some of the Lord's people enjoy here! But the troubled spirit shall rest in the presence and enjoyment of its God; and the poor, wearied, and diseased body shall find rest in the grave. Weariness is limited to time--but our rest will be lasting as eternity. There are no weary heads, or weary limbs, or weary hearts--on the other side Jordan. The rest of heaven will be the sweeter for the toils of earth; the value of eternal rest--will be enhanced by the troubles of time. Jesus now allows us to rest on his bosom--he will soon bring us to rest in his Father's house. His rest will be glorious--a rest from sin, a rest from suffering, a rest from conflict, a rest from toil, a rest from sorrow--the very rest that Jesus himself enjoys. We shall not only rest with him, we shall rest like him. How many of earth's wearied ones are resting in his glorious presence now!

It will be undisturbed rest. Here the rest of the body is disturbed by dreams, and sometimes by alarms; but there are no troublesome dreams or alarming occurrences there. Thanks be unto God for the rest we now enjoy in Christ! Ten thousand thanks to God for the rest we shall soon enjoy with Christ! Wearied one,

look away from the cause of your present suffering, and remember there is a rest remaining for you. A little while--and you shall enter into rest! A little while--and you shall see Jesus as he is, be filled with his love, and enjoy uninterrupted rest in his presence! Weariness, languor, and pain are for time; rest, peace, and pleasure are your eternal portion!

"You have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you!"
Deuteronomy 12:9

PREPARATION

"All of you be ready!" Joshua 8:4

The Christian should be ready for every event. Provision is made for him, promises are given to him, examples are set before him, and exhortations are delivered to him. The Master's word is, "Be ready!" Be ready to meet, endure, and derive benefit from your troubles; ready to meet your foes, especially the last enemy. Death will come--but we know not when, where, nor how; therefore we should be always prepared, having our accounts settled, our work forward, and our affections set on heavenly things.

We should be ready for the coming of Jesus. He will come in like manner as he went into heaven. We must meet him, face him, and be presented to him. The appearing of Jesus should be the object of our liveliest hopes, warmest desires, and sweetest anticipations. We should look for the coming of Jesus as the wandering traveler for his path; as the Eastern watchman for the morning; as the bride for the expected bridegroom; and as the slave for the morning of emancipation.

My brother, let me at parting say to you, "Be ready!" Jesus is coming. Soon, very soon, the cry may be heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes, go out to meet him!" Oh, to have our loins girt, our lamps burning, and our hearts crying out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" In this state we are prepared for labor or for rest, for life or for death, to remain here or depart to be forever with the Lord. Holy Spirit, daily anoint your people; that they, experiencing your renewings, may look, long, watch, and pray for the coming of their Lord! Thrice blessed event! may the Lord hasten it, for my soul longs to share in it!

"You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected!" Matthew 24:44

THE EXCEPTION

"They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued as other men." Psalm 73:5

The tried Christian sometimes looks around upon the ungodly, and wonders at God's dealings with them. Judging by sense, he stumbles, until, like Asaph, he repairs to the sanctuary, or the Word. Yes, how often it is the case: that the saint is poor--and the sinner rich; the saint is sickly--and the sinner healthy; the saint is deformed--and the sinner is well shaped; the saint struggles but cannot succeed in temporal things--while the sinner seems to get wealth without difficulty!

How is this? Is there not a divine providence? Does not God love his people? Yes! But God deals with saints in time--in reference to eternity. The present--is preparatory to the future. Do not envy the sinner, and choose none of his ways. The present is all the pleasant he will have. He has his good things now--and the believer has his evil things. He may write after every day's sinful pleasure, after carnal amusement, and after acquisition of property, "But after this--then the judgment!"

The rich man died, and was buried--and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment!

The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Contrast their ends, and their eternal portions--and then you will bless God if he has put you among his poor, tried, and afflicted people.

Dwell not on present appearances--but remember that the wicked stand on slippery places, and will soon be cast down into destruction. Sinner! your prosperity is your snare! You have your best now; and dying outside of Christ, all that remains for you is an eternity of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! Flee, oh, flee to Jesus for life and peace!

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

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