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THESE LIGHT AFFLICTIONS
And The Eternal Weight of Glory
By Albert Sims

A message of God's exceeding great reward
for sorely tempted and hard pressed saints.

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Toronto 6, Ontario

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FOREWORD

The First part of this book published in smaller compass has been made such a great blessing to so many of God's furnace tried ones, we have felt constrained to publish this enlarged and greatly-improved edition, feeling sure it will bring a spiritual uplift to thousands more.

The Author

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01 -- A VISION OF GLORY

"Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears;
Up there, up there, we'll understand.

"Then trust in God through all thy days;
Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand.
Though dark thy ways still sing and praise;
Sometime, up there, we'll understand."

Today many of God's people are passing through great conflicts. Heavily burdened, perplexed, pressed down, they are wondering what it all means.

A vision God gave to a friend may be a blessing to those who are in this perplexing situation.

She had been praying for friends in trouble, when the Lord said to her, "Come with me; I wish to show you something: I have been setting aside the rewards for my friends for their faithful service to me."

So in the vision she drew near, and saw that He had before Him one special prize, so dazzlingly beautiful that my eyes could not rest upon it, nor could any mortal words describe it. He called it a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and as He looked at it with satisfaction, He said: "This is one of my best, one of my rarest gifts. It can only be bestowed upon one who has been rarely tested. This is for A. B.," naming one of those of whom I had been speaking to Him; "I have prepared it specially for her, but she is not yet prepared for it. She must not see it as it is, never fully while she is on earth, perhaps not even a glimpse of it; and in that very fact will lie the severest part of her testing, the greatest part of her preparation. I must disguise the glory in store for her that she may learn to walk by faith and not by sight; to serve from love only, not for reward."

Then He took a piece of plain, coarse sacking, and in it He carefully wrapped up the treasure, afterward tying it up very securely with thick, strong cords, with so many and such tight, intricate knots that no human ingenuity could ever succeed in undoing them. Then He said to me: "Take it up." I tried; but it was so heavy that I could only lay it down with a sigh, and say, "Surely this burden is greater than she can bear." His answer was: "I have carefully tested its weight. My grace is sufficient; my strength is made perfect in weakness." Then I heard Him call A. B. by name, and saw her come gladly and cheerfully summons. He said to her: "I have a work I want you to do for me. Are you ready?" And she answered so eagerly: "Oh, yes; I have been longing for some special service, and shall be so glad to begin. What shall I do, Lord?"

At first He gave her a few pleasant errands to go for Him and sweet messages of love to take to one and another. Then, in the midst of her joyous activity, He put the burden before her, so utterly unattractive in its outer plainness and ugliness; and, as He handed it to her, He said, in a tone of infinite tenderness: "This is my love-gift to you, my special love-test. There are but few that I can trust with it. I want you to carry it everywhere you go, for my sake, even when I send you with messages, as I shall again, till the day comes -- it may be after a longer or shorter time -- when I shall call you to bring it to me, that we may open it together; then you will see what I have prepared for one who loved and trusted me. Till then you must not lay it down, nor may you know what it contains, nor why I ask you to bear it. Will you do this for me and trust me as to the reason?"

She took it with difficulty, and as she realized its weight her countenance fell and she said sadly to herself, "I thought that He was going to let me work for Him, but this is no work; it is all burden. How, oh, how shall I ever go on day after day with all this weight dragging me down, fettered and limited? O, Lord, how long?" I heard Him softly reply to her: "Fear not, for I am with thee and thou shalt glorify me." After that I saw and heard no more for a time. Yet I waited and watched. A curtain was moved and explanation day had come.

Again I saw the Lord and A. B. together. I saw her bring her burden and lay it before her Lord, with such a look of relief that the burden bearing days were over. He took the burden from her; and as I watched, I saw that at one touch of His hands all the knots were untied and the wrappings fell off, and the riches of glory prepared for her stood all revealed before her astonished gaze. I heard the Lord say to her: "This is your eternal portion, which I have prepared for you before the foundation of the world, to be enjoyed with me for ever more -- my gift to you in appreciation of what you have been, and done, and suffered for me."

I noticed that the look of delighted amazement passed off as He spoke. I saw tears in her eyes, not all of joy, as she fell at His feet and hid her face and said: "O, Lord, forgive me that I misunderstood Thee! Oh! if I had only trusted Thee, and not doubted or questioned; if only I had believed that it was all right, that it was all glory; if I could have seen! But I saw only the brown wrapping and the knotty cord; they were so ugly, and I could not see beyond; and the weight was so heavy, I was not able to count it 'all joy' for Thy sake! I fretted under it, and so never used to the full the opportunities that came my way of witnessing for Thee! And now I can never glorify Thee by trusting when I cannot see."

I did not hear what He said in reply, only I know that He was speaking words of comfort; and I saw that He wiped all tears from her face, and that He made her sit beside Him with the glory full in view, not only of herself, but of all the worlds. I heard her say: "Is this the outcome of all those days of faith without sight?" He replied so softly, "The trial of thy faith has been much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it has been tried by fire." Beloved child of God, the explanation day is coming when every why shall be answered.

"If we could push ajar the gates of life
And stand within, and all God's workings see,
We could interpret all this doubt and strife

And for each mystery find a key!

"But not today. Then, be content, poor heart!
God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
TIME will reveal the calyxes of gold.

"And if, through patient toil, we reach the land
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,
When we shall clearly know and understand,
I think that we shall say: God knew the best."

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02 -- THREE CHRISTIANS AT PRAYER

Have you heard the beautiful story of how one Christian dreamed that she saw three others at prayer? As they knelt, the Master drew near to them. As He approached the first of the three, He bent over her in tenderness and grace, with smiles full of radiant love, and spoke to her in accents of purest, sweetest music. Leaving her, He came to the next, but only placed His hand upon her bowed head, and gave her one look of loving approval. The third one He passed almost abruptly without stopping for a word or glance. The woman in her dream said to herself, "How greatly He must love the first one; to the second He gave His approval, but none of the special demonstration of love He gave the first; and the third must have grieved Him deeply, for He gave her no word at all and not even a passing look."

"I wonder what she has done and why He made so much difference between them?" As she tried to account for the action of her Lord, He Himself stood by her and said, "Oh, woman! how wrongly hast thou interpreted Me. The first kneeling woman needs all the weight of My tenderness and care to keep her feet in My narrow way. She needs My love, thought and help every moment of the day; without she would fail and fall.

"The second has stronger faith and deeper love and I can trust her to trust Me, however things may go and whatever people may do.

"The third, whom I seemed not to notice, and even to neglect, has faith and love of the finest quality, and her I am training by quick and drastic processes for the highest and holiest service. She knows Me so intimately, and trusts Me so utterly; that she is independent of words or looks or any outward intimation of My approval. She is not dismayed nor discouraged by any circumstance through which I arrange that she shall pass; she trusts Me when sense and reason and every finer instinct of the natural heart would rebel, because she knows that I am working in her for eternity, and that what I do, though she knows not the explanation now, she shall understand hereafter.

"I am silent in My love because I love beyond the power of words to express, or of human hearts to understand, and also for your sake that you may learn to love and trust Me in Spirit-taught, spontaneous response to My love, without the spur of anything outward to call it forth."

* * * * *

03 -- THE FIERY ORDEAL

So, dear, tested, tempest-tossed child of God, get your Bible and read through your tears, it may be, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

This is so because

1. The sufferings are so "light."

2. Because they are "but for a moment."

3. Because they tend to mature, settle and establish our characters." But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," I Peter 5:10.

4. Because they work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

A silversmith was explaining to a party of ladies and gentlemen the process of refining the silver metal in which he worked. "It requires," he said, "the most constant and fixed attention. I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the surface of the molten metal, for if the time necessary for the refining process be exceeded by a single instant, the silver is sure to be injured."

"But, how do you know when the decisive moment has arrived?" asked one of the ladies.

"By seeing my own face clearly reflected in the silver," was the significant reply.

The answer of the silversmith suggests the method of the divine Refiner. How does God perfect human character? He sits down before it with all the intent, patient, loving interest and fidelity of the silversmith, and refines it. He subjects it to the refining fire; He stirs it by many a hard experience; He skims away the dross; and then, at last, when purified character reflects the divine image, He knows that it is sanctified and perfected, and He glorifies it with immortality.

What a loving process it is! How little we realize the tenderness, the kindness, the devotion of our Heavenly Father while He is subjecting us to the fire and the purification of life. As the silversmith bends over his iron basin, vigilant and full of wistful care, so the face of God bends over us, full of loving and longing, until the divine lineaments shine forth in our souls and we become like Him. Then is God's gracious labor finished. Then is His heart satisfied, and with joy He welcomes us to that perfect communion and sympathy with Himself which is life eternal.

He sat by a furnace of sevenfold heat,
As He watched by the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching gaze
As He heated it more and more.

"He knew He had ore that could stand the test
And He wanted the finest gold,
To mold as a crown for the King to wear,
Set with gems of price untold.

"So He laid our gold in the burning fire,
Tho' we fain would say Him, 'Nay;'
And watched the dross that we had not seen,
As it melted and passed away.

"And the gold grew brighter and yet more bright,
But our eyes were dim with tears
We saw but the fire -- not the Master's hand,
And questioned with anxious fears.

"Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
As it mirrored a Form above,
That bent o'er the fire, tho' unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.

"Can we think it pleases His loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah, no! but He sees thro' the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.

"So He waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure."

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04 -- "BUT FOR A MOMENT"

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17).

There are five degrees in this wonderful verse:

1. It is glory.

2. It is a weight of glory.
3. It is an exceeding weight of glory.
4. It is a far more exceeding weight of glory.
5. It is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The great comfort of these words lies in the striking contrasts.

The affliction is light; the glory is heavy; like a feather weighed against a mountain of iron.

The affliction is short-lived; the glory is eternal.

The one is excessively depressing and gloomy; the other is surpassingly brilliant and glorious.

The one is now seen, and felt, and oftentimes fainted under; the other is unseen; but marvelously real.

Levity is contrasted with that which is inexpressibly serious. Such are present sorrows in the light of our future deliverance.

Commenting on the above verse in a letter to his parents, Rev. E. Payson says: "Oh, how shall we bear such a weight of glory as this. How shall we wait with patience till we arrive at it! Oh, it seems too boundless, too overwhelming, to think of! Come afflictions, come troubles, come trials, temptations, distresses of every kind and degree; make our path through life as painful, as wearisome as you can; still, if heaven is at the end of it, we smile at all you can do. I would urge my dear father to be more careful of himself if I thought it would do any good; but it will not. The nearer he gets to his sun, his center, the end of his course, the faster he will fly, and you can not stop him. Catch hold of him and fly with him, and I will come panting after as fast as I can."

"O Christ! who once has seen Thy visioned beauty--
He counts all gain but loss,
And other things are naught if he may win Thee
And share with Thee Thy cross.

"And he on whom its shadow once has fallen,
Walks quietly and apart;
He holds the master-key of joy and sorrow
That opens every heart.

"The burdened souls that pass him on the highway
Turn back to take his hand,
And murmur low, with tear-wet eyes of anguish,
'You know -- you understand.'

"And yet his heart no other can interpret
His life is hidden, lone;
A holy seal is set upon his forehead,
And he is not his own.

"O Cross of Christ! on me thy shade is resting,
Thy sacred marks I bear;
Earth holds for me no more of grief or gladness,
No anxious thought nor care.

"Only, henceforth, the bliss and pain commingled,
Of sharing woes Divine,
Of knowing I am called to eat His portion,
To drink His bitter wine.

"Keep me forever, Lord, beneath that shadow,
Lest, haply, I should lose
My life for something less than Thy sweet service,
Or one dear pang refuse."

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05 -- VICTORY THROUGH SUFFERING

A certain writer relates the following deeply impressive incident:

I kept, for nearly a year, the flask-shaped cocoon of an Emperor moth. It is very peculiar in its construction. A narrow opening is left in the neck of the flask, through which the perfect insect forces its way, so that a forsaken cocoon is as entire as one still tenanted, no rupture of the interlacing fibers having taken place.

The great disproportion between the means of egress and the size of the imprisoned insect makes one wonder how the exit is ever accomplished at all, and it is never without great labor and difficulty. It is supposed that the pressure to which the moth's body is subjected in passing through the narrow opening is a provision of nature for forcing the juices into vessels of the wings, these being less developed at the period of emergence from the chrysalis than they are in other insects.

I happened to witness the first efforts of my imprisoned moth to escape from its long confinement. Nearly a whole forenoon, from time to time, I watched it patiently striving and struggling to get out. It never seemed able to get beyond a certain point, and at last my patience was exhausted. I thought I was wiser and more compassionate than its Maker, and resolved to give it a helping hand.

With the points of my scissors I snipped the confining threads to make the exit just a very little easier, and, lo! immediately, and with perfect ease, out crawled my moth, dragging a swollen

body, and little, shriveled wings. In vain I watched to see that marvelous progress of expansion in which the wings silently and swiftly develop before our eyes, and as I traced the exquisite spots and working of divers colors which were all there in miniature, I longed to see these assume their due proportions, and the creature appear in all its perfect beauty, as in truth it is one of the loveliest of its kind.

But I looked in vain; my false tenderness had proved its ruin. It never was anything but a stunted abortion, crawling painfully through that brief life which it should have spent flying the air on rainbow wings.

The lesson I got that day has often stood me in good stead. It has helped me to understand what some call the "Hardness of God's love." I have thought of it often when watching with pitiful eyes those who were struggling with sorrows, suffering or distress, and it has seemed to me that I was more merciful than God, and I would fain have cut short the discipline, and given deliverance. Short-sighted fool! how know I that one of those pains and groans could be spared? The far-sighted, perfect love of God, which seeks the perfection of its object, does not weakly shrink from present transient suffering. Our Father's love is too true to be weak. Because He loves His children He chastens them, that they may be "partakers of His holiness." With this glorious end in view, He spares not for their crying. "Made perfect through suffering," as Christ was, the sons of God are trained up to obedience, and brought to glory "through much tribulation."

"If we are going to make wine from grapes, the grapes must be crushed. Grapes are only wine when they have been crushed -- and only ripe grapes make wine."

Rev. A. B. Simpson says: "Even after we receive the Holy Ghost we are content to move on in small planes and small circles, and we do not want to be disturbed or pushed out to harder, higher things; therefore, the Holy Ghost has to come and just compel us by His love to develop into spiritual strength and energy of which we thought ourselves incapable. And so He stirs up our nest and pitches us out in mid-air, helpless and defenseless orphans, and we think that it is to destroy us; but it is only to constrain us, that we may strike out the little wings of faith and learn to fly into the great unseen. And when we get a little weary, He stretches out His mighty pinions and bears us up again until we are ready for another lesson. And so through hardship, through the discipline of trials, through new circumstances into which He brings us, through difficulties for which we feel unequal. He is developing us, throwing us upon Him, teaching us to claim His grace and educating us for the higher energies, and the nobler manhood of the life to come. Oh, how He delights in us when we yield to Him! How disappointed He is in us when we refuse! How sad when the clay will not let the Potter fashion it. and He has to throw it aside! Beloved, let us trust His love, and yield to His high and holy purpose of love and blessing."

"Sainthood springs out of suffering. It takes eleven tons of pressure on a piano to tune it. God will tune you to harmonize with heaven's keynote if you can stand the strain.

"Unless a violin string is stretched until it cries out when the bow is drawn over it, there is no music. A loose string with no strain on it is of no use, it is dead, has no voice; but when stretched till it strains, it is brought to the proper tone and then only is it useful as a music-maker."

Polish comes through trouble. All the difference there is between what looks like a worthless stone and a gem is in the cutting and grinding. All the difference between bullion and coin stamped with the king's face is in the smelting and the minting. All the difference between a wilderness and a garden is wrought by weeding and pruning. All the difference between a block of marble and a statue is produced by the mallet and the chisel. This principle in nature and art is no less controlling in human life. The best and truest and most sympathetic men and women are the ones who have denied themselves, and have suffered. Since God knows what niche we are to fill, trust Him to shape us to it. Since He knows what work we are to do, trust Him to drill us to the proper preparation.

The following grand and glorious hymn, by Rev. C. Wesley, forcibly illustrates the deep truths enunciated in the foregoing pages.

"And did my Lord on earth endure
Sorrow, and hardship, and distress,
That I might sit me down secure,
And rest in self-indulgent ease?
His delicate disciple, I
Like him might neither live nor die?

"Master, I have not learnt thee so;
Thy yoke and burden I receive,
Resolve in all thy steps to go,
And bless the Cross by which I live,
And curse the wisdom from beneath,
That strives to rob me of thy death.

"Thy holy will be done, not mine;
Be suffered all thy holy will.
I dare not, Lord, the Cross decline;
I will not lose the slightest ill,
Or lay the heaviest burden down,
The richest jewel of my Crown.

"Sorrow is solid joy, and pain
Is pure delight, endured for Thee;
Reproach and loss are glorious gain,
And death is immortality;
And who for Thee their all have given,
Have nobly bartered earth for heaven.

"Saved is the life for Jesus lost,
Hidden from earth, but found in God.
To suffer is to triumph most,
The highest gift on man bestowed;
Seal of my sure election this --

Seal of my everlasting bliss."

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06 -- STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT -- Between a Christian and His Master

Audited by Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, tent maker:

Debit: -- The Sufferings of this Present Time

In labors more abundant -- II Cor. 11:23
In stripes above measure -- 11:23
In prisons more frequent -- 11:23
In deaths oft -- 11:23
Five times forty stripes save one -- 11:24
Thrice was I beaten with rods -- 11:25
Once was I stoned -- 11:25
Thrice I suffered shipwreck -- 11:25
A night and a day in the deep -- 11:25
In journeyings often -- 11:26
In perils of waters -- 11:26
In peril of robbers 11:26
In perils by mine own countrymen -- 11:26
In perils by the heathen -- 11:26
In perils in the city -- 11:26
In perils in the wilderness -- 11:26
In perils in the sea -- 11:26
In perils among false brethren -- 11:26
In weariness and painfulness -- 11:27
In watchings often -- 11:27
In hunger and thirst -- 11:27
In fastings often -- 11:27
In cold and nakedness -- 11:27
Sundries, care of the churches -- 11:28

Total -- Our light affliction which is but for a moment -- II Cor. 4:17

Credit: -- The Glory to Revealed in us

There remaineth a rest -- Heb. 4:9
If we suffer we shall reign -- II Tim. 2:12
The glorious liberty -- Rom. 8:21
The gift of God is eternal life -- Rom. 6:23
Not be hurt of second death -- Rev. 2:11
Salvation with eternal glory -- II Tim. 2:10
With Christ in His throne -- Rev. 3:21

Our body like His body -- Phil. 3:21
Equal unto the angels -- Luke 20:36
An abundant entrance -- II Pet. 1:11
Reign on the earth -- Rev. 5:10
Glory, honor, immortality -- Rom. 2:7
A crown of righteousness -- II Tim. 4:8
A crown of glory, of life -- I Pet. 5:4
An inheritance incorruptible -- I Pet. 1:4
An inheritance undefiled, unfading -- I Pet. 1:4
Inherit all things -- Rev. 21:7
I shall be satisfied -- Psalms 16:15
There shall be no more pain -- Rev. 21:4
There shall be no night -- Rev. 22:5
Hunger and thirst no more -- Rev. 7:16
Right to the tree of life -- Rev. 22:14
Put on immortality -- I Cor. 15:53
Ever be with the Lord -- I Thess. 4:17

Total -- A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory -- II Cor. 4:17

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." -- Rom. 8:18, 37-39.

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07 -- THE TRIAL OF FAITH

The unspeakable blessings which "the sufferings of this present time" are intended to bring to us both here and hereafter, are most impressively set forth by Rev. S. C. Rees, as follows:

When God has needed a strong character, a choice instrument for some noble or important service, He has nearly always sent them, for a time, to a school of hardship and trial. It is here that the sterling qualities of strength and energy and Christian manhood are developed. It is here that the strongest qualities of the soul are brought out. All of God's great men of sterling Christian worth have obtained their parchment from some school of suffering and trial.

A glance over the past will remind us that the Holy Spirit, has always developed the tallest characters through pain and suffering. Abraham was never the "father of the faithful," until after that awful tragedy on Mount Moriah.

Jacob is remembered for his endurance, until, between two millstones, the meanness was ground out of him.

And even Joseph, the most faultless of characters, had to reach his throne through the sorrow and shame of Egypt's prison cell.

See Moses starting his career like a waif upon the bosom of the Nile; and, before he could enter upon his eventful public life, he had to go to school to God at the back of a mountain for forty years, and feed sheep for his board; and when his public service began, it was marked by all kinds of testing and hardships until he became the Divine pattern of weakness through the things which he suffered. It was not so with Saul. He mounted a throne without a struggle; but his life was a failure, and his sun set behind a cloud as black as night. Solomon came to his place of highest honor with ease and splendor, and six hundred million dollars laid at his feet; but his life ended in disastrous failure. David was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains of Judah; but God said he was a man after His own heart.

Paul's great life was one long stretch of endurance, affliction and trial. He said: "To this present hour we both hunger and thirst, are naked, are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place."

He says: "We are counted as the filth of the world." But instead of complaining, he saw in it a privilege to rise to higher heights of spiritual blessedness, where he could "see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off." "Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me." He was looking at our great pattern and Captain of our salvation, who is our highest Example of heavenly character and also of deepest shame.

Beloved, if we are ever qualified for soldier-life, we shall have to take the rugged way, and accept gladly the painful discipline which will develop strength. Who are the men to day who stand out as the heroes of the world? They are not the slick and self-indulgent society dolls and dudes, but the men who have courted the places of highest peril, hardship and exposure.

"The trial of your faith, being much more precious." Beloved, our trials are not accidents or calamities, but opportunities for learning profound lessons and preparing for nobler service in the battles of this holy war.

1. Trial and hardship reveal to us our selves. It is in a trial that I get acquainted with myself. It is here I learn my insufficiencies, and find out just how much grace I do have. We would never know how much we can endure but for the test. It may be severe, but let us thank God for it. They are often God's air-drills in his blasting processes for spiritual excavation, and this must precede the erection of a tall character. We have no more real grace or salvation than stands the test of a hard strain. We may seem to have more in camp-meeting or on Sabbath, or when emotions run high, but we do not have more than we practice at home and in trial.

2. The trial of our faith reveals the resources of God. It is here we come to know His all-sufficiency.

If he commands Israel to stand still when it would be easier to go forward, it is that they might see the salvation of God. When they were still, He could reveal His power. So when trials

are too great for us, and we see it, and give it up, He comes in and performs the impossible. It was when Joshua resigned in favor of the Captain of the Lord's host that victory was assured. If He leads Israel through a wilderness where there are no natural supplies of any kind, it is that He may teach her to lean upon His arm, and that He is adequate to all her needs. And if He leads us through a barren wilderness where there is nothing in sight, it is that He may teach us to lean heavy on his arm and walk with an unseen God.

Our deepest sorrows may be only water-pots for him to fill to the brim with the best of wine. Our most insurmountable difficulties are only opportunities for Him to show forth His matchless grace and power. If my trials are greater than yours, I have a greater opportunity to put on exhibition the Divine Christ. We have been exposed to things indescribable, that the power of Christ might rest upon us.

3. The trial of your faith is precious because trial provokes trust. Opposition is a Divine incentive to faith. The eagle teaches her young to fly by tearing up her nest, hurling them out in mid-air, where, thrown upon their own resources, they must either fly or fall. It is then that they find the undeveloped power in their little wings. It is then they discover the secret of a new life. But for this trial they would never learn to beat their way through the pathless firmament and ride upon the wings of the wind in the very face of the sun.

So many times God takes away most desirable props and throws us out where we must either trust for larger things, or go down. How easy it is to lean upon things that we can see and feel; how hard to stand seemingly alone, or walk with an unseen God!

4. Trials send us to our knees in closet prayer. We are driven to pray. Trial sent Jacob to his knees at the fords of Jabbok. It pressed David to find the secret-place of the Most High. Trials have always constrained the saints to pray much. Did you ever have it harder than now? If so, did you not pray more?

5. Trial develops patience. "We glory in tribulation, also knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Many have, sought patience at the altar when they should receive the Holy Ghost and let Him produce patience in His own way.

We never would have heard of the patience of Job but for the awful trials he endured. This grace sparkles only under high pressure.

6. It is in trial and pain and suffering that we take on courage. In severest trials we lose our fear of suffering and dread of pain.

We come to welcome conflict, and think more of scars and victories than of ease and comfort. It is here we are made object-lessons for the help of others and for the glory of God. It is here we show to the world what Christ can do for His children -- "Spectacles unto the world, to angels, and to men."

When Paul witnessed to the power of God to uphold him in a hard place on his way to the block, three young men were converted and died the same death for the same faith. It was when Mary Dore was on the scaffold that God was glorified by her triumphant victory.

When we have endured and suffered, we are better prepared to assist others. When we have found comfort in hard places, we can comfort others with the same comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted.

Again, trials acquaint with a real Christ. Our trials are real trials, and not triumph. We may be triumphant in the midst of them and we may have the assurance of faith that perfect triumph will come; but for the time the trial is real, and our pain is real, and our tears are real tears, and these press us to the side of and to know a real Christ.

7. Trials are more precious than gold because they wean us from this world. While gold has the effect of making us settle down and be satisfied with this world, this world is not our home, and God lets trials come to remind us that we are strangers and pilgrims in the earth. Mr. Rothschild was the richest man in the world, but he lived and died in an unfinished mansion. He had power to frighten a nation by calling for gold. Yet one of the cornices of his house was purposely unfinished, to bear testimony that he was a pilgrim in the land. He was an orthodox Jew, and every Jew's house, according to the Targum, must be left unfinished. The unfinished cornice says, "Beautiful as this is, it is not my home. I am looking for a city."

Beloved, does the unfinished cornice appear in your life? Does it appear in your business, in your pleasure, in social and domestic life? Do people know that you are a stranger, as were our fathers? Men build now and finish the house, as if they meant to stay for ever. You can almost always tell a stranger from the way he acts. There is something about a man's bearing, his movements among men, which indicates whether he is a stranger here or a naturalized citizen.

Beloved, let us ever testify that our citizenship is not in this world, but from above.

8. Trials increase our longing for the coming of the Lord. A minister, when asked about the "coming of the Lord," said: "When I was a young man in school, struggling for an education, and I could not pay my bills, and I had a hard time to get on, I used to lie on my face and cry and long for the coming of Christ; but now I have a good appointment and large salary, with bright prospects ahead, I do not want to see Him come." Many a preacher fights the doctrine of the coming of the Lord because he hopes some day to be bishop, or to go to General Conference, or fill some other place of prominence.

Those who are in deep sorrow or protracted trial would be glad to see Him come.

9. In conclusion, let me say that trials and hardships and persecutions endured without complaint will win for us eternal crowns. The heroic soldier craves a post of honor, though reached through great peril, because he knows it will bring the applause of a nation and the lasting fame of history. He may be a true hero and win a great prize, but the time will soon come when his name will be forgotten and his chaplet will have faded forever. Not so with the Christian soldier. He may win a crown which will never fade and a fame which will never be forgotten. When the

history of this country is forgotten, and the records of time are obliterated, when the stars have fallen and the suns are all cinders, and the new heaven and the new earth are sweeping in their orbits of immensity, these lives shall shine and burn and blaze forever.

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08 -- GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MAN

The lofty theme of this chapter, by D. B. Strouse, is but rarely mentioned, and but little understood, but it is tremendously inspiring and just what is needed to enlarge our vision of God's grand and glorious purposes for man in the ages to come, and to succor him while passing through the increasing conflict of these last days.

Rev. 1:6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God."

May the blessed Spirit help us to have some little conception of God's conception and purposes for men!

Under the influences of Satan, men discount themselves, and greatly magnify the importance of the things of this life, and minify heaven, hell and eternity.

On this sin-cursed earth God is starting millions of immortal spirits in mortal bodies, for the purpose of testing and developing them for His infinite purposes in eternity.

The human body was always mortal. Frailty and death are in its every fiber.

"The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," was spoken of the soul.

Our physical bodies will perish and never be raised as such. Paul says, the seed we sow is not the grain that shall be -- it is sown a natural body, and raised a spiritual body, and that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that the saints who are alive when Christ comes shall be changed, and be caught up to meet the Lord. Our vile bodies shall be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body.

Again and again we are told that Satan and all his allies shall be cast from the earth into hell, where they will be imprisoned forever, nevermore to tempt God's people.

Thus it appears that this earth is the only stopping-place for Satan and his allies between heaven and hell. None of them can ever go to any other world.

When God asked Satan, on two occasions, where he had been, he answered, "From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it." This is the only world cursed by devils of sin. All other worlds are pure and holy.

After Satan and his allies had been confined to earth, God created Adam and Eve.

God knew they would sin, and before man was made on the earth, God tells us that He had provided a Savior for man.

God could in an instant destroy the world and put an end to all this evil, sorrow and sin, but He does not, because he has great purposes which are being wrought amid all the carnage of earth.

Our astronomers estimate that there swing around the sun within the range of our telescopes more than ten thousand millions of worlds like ours.

That this world is an object lesson to all the non-fallen worlds is, I think, beyond question. Angels doubtless hold communion with them and tell them of all the hatred, treachery, wars, murders, suicides, prisons and death agonies, occurring here; and of hell with its remorse, as the result of sin against God; and those pure and holy multitudes, in amazement and horror, turn from the contemplation of such scenes, with renewed purposes of eternal love and fealty to God. What a thrilling inspiration of soul must come to them from this contrast between a holy and sin-cursed world. And herein is the necessity for an infinite continuance of that place (which is an actual place) called hell.

With God only are the past and future one eternal present. All created beings live in the present, and as time recedes, events which at the time of contact affected us much, more and more lose their effect. This world, as it now is, will be of very short duration. The race of men will soon pass away, and all remnants of sin will be destroyed, and there will be a new earth, a new heaven (atmosphere), and all here will thenceforth be holy. Then there will be no longer a fallen world. The place called hell will be the only remaining place of sin in the universe. Now, if that ceased to exist, as the ages roll away, the awful consequences of sin would lose their effect upon the universal mind, and possibly many thousands of worlds, ceasing to realize the enormity of any act that would contravene the majesty or authority of God, might fall and bring upon themselves the wreck and ruin that have cursed the earth.

In a sermon on "Hell an Evidence of God's Love for the Universe," Clarence Strouse says: "God will be very considerate to those who prove true to Him amid the trials and temptations of this sin-cursed earth, and it is His purpose that they shall be with Christ, and with Him have the freedom of the universe, with the right and power to go at will from world to world. It must be apparent that God could not permit any unholy being to come in contact with any pure world and contaminate it with his unholy touch. Hence, all who are impure and unholy must be confined so as never to spread the contagion of sin in other worlds. And this place of confinement is called hell."

As in this world there are different degrees of suffering, so will it be in the place called hell.

God tells us plainly that he is a just God, and that every one shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body; that some shall be beaten with many stripes, and some with few stripes, but when those who have gone to hell from Christian lands remember their sinful lives, their great opportunities lightly and forever thrown away, and how they had trodden the blood of the Son of God, that would have made them pure and holy, under their feet, such memories and

remorse which they will bring, and the hatred of all that is pure and holy and good, will surely help to fill their cup of suffering.

Another and perhaps far the greater purpose which God is working out in the world is to prepare men and women, under Christ, to whom all things are subjected, to rule the universe. (This theory was ably maintained by the learned Dr. Dick.)

This wonderful truth is, I think, clearly taught in the Word of God.

This being the only fallen world where sin abounds and devils oppose God and His kingdom, it is a place of great testing and trial. The disposition to sin, which man in his natural state finds within himself, inherited from Adam, the current of the world, which is always against godliness, and the influence and power of the evil spirits, one or more of whom pursue every man, woman and child in the world, form an array of evil tendencies and influences which do not only afford great trials, but wonderful opportunities for the development of men, and to fit them for more exalted stations.

On no other hypothesis is it possible to account for the fact that God permits the conditions to exist as they are in this world, and the trials of men to be so severe that He Himself declares that only a few will be faithful. But when we come to consider the exalted stations of honor and responsibility, for which God is preparing men, we see the necessity for such a place and such conditions for the trials, testings and developments through which men and women must pass before God can commit to them the great responsibilities which they are to assume in eternity. Here we have not only to contend with the worldliness and sin about us, our own passions and dispositions and temptations ("the world, the flesh and the devil"), but we are continually seeing the ravages of sin in its hatred, envy, jealousy, malice, treachery, greed, dishonesty, falsehood, duplicity, fighting, lust, debauchery, murder, suicide, war, and death.

Another condition that enters into life in this world is man's right or power to choose for himself good or evil; whether his life shall be in accord with the will of his God, or whether he will refuse that accord. God has given every man, woman and child on the earth the right to choose or reject Him, and God has decreed that neither men nor devils shall prevent man from making the choice he wills to make, and in His mighty majesty He says, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Now, if under all these influences to evil, temptations, trials, suffering, persecutions and discouragements, man will choose God and prove true to Him, that loyalty will establish him with God, and He will so develop and purify him that God can entrust a world or worlds of pure and holy beings to his sovereign care and control. Not only this, but his knowledge of the awful consequences and ravages of sin, with the moral and physical wreck and ruin that it brings, will enable him to instruct his subjects as to the consequences of any sin against Jehovah; and the fact of his having lived amid all these ravages, and having himself been in actual contact with wicked men and devils, and having been himself degraded by sin, will give such touching realities to his teachings as to produce in them a horror for sin, and inspire in them a holy and eternal allegiance to God. Then, too, the perpetual presence of a ruler, who has been redeemed from all these

conditions and pollution, and purified and made holy by the blood of the Son of God, will perpetually shield and protect them from committing any sin.

It is true that all who are saved will not be rulers. Those who die in childhood, those of unsound mind, those who die soon after conversion, and many who believe, and cling to Christ, but cannot endure trials and hardships, will be saved (the last-named class "so as by fire"), but they, not having stood the trials and persecutions necessary to fit them for rulers, will not be rulers. The Bible tells us that some shall live again on this earth after it is purified, and different rewards are clearly set out in the Bible. But that those who stand the tests, and are developed so as to fulfill God's requirements, will be rulers, is, I think, abundantly taught.

Rev. 1:6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God." God never mocks or deceives His poor suffering children. What He promises He will do. He will not disappoint us. The word "king" has but one meaning, and there can be no king without a kingdom.

Here the man is represented as the king of a kingdom, and a priest, standing between his subjects and God.

John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." This Scripture shows that each will have his own realm.

Rom. 8:17: "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The word "heir" is a technical term, and has only one meaning, and that is, one who receives an inheritance from another.

II Timothy 2:12: "if we suffer we shall also reign with Him" Here is another technical term. It means nothing else but to be a supreme ruler, if we suffer, that is, if we stand the test.

Matt. 25:21: "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Here again is God's distinct declaration that the faithful shall rule. How can one rule unless he has that over which to rule?

Luke 19:17: "And he said unto him, Well, thou good" servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Here it is taught that the faithful shall rule, and shall have separate and definite cities or worlds over which to rule.

Matt. 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Here the words inherit and kingdom are used, both specifically declaring individual rule.

I Cor. 6:3: "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?"

This does not mean that ye shall judge angels who sin. They will not sin. It seems clear that the reference is, ye shall judge or decide between the angels who shall be placed as ministering

angels under your authority, as to which shall execute this command, which shall have charge of this commission, and, in short, have them solely under your control and direction.

But some may ask, is not this conception of God's purposes for man too great?

God is not the author of sin; but surely He is permitting these conditions of sin, of suffering, and of blood and death to exist.

If God had no purpose but that man should live a little while in a body of clay, and then go into eternity, would He have sent Satan with his myriads of evil spirits -- fallen angels -- to this earth to curse the race whom He created and loves?

It is believed by our greatest and best men that we are now approaching the end of the world as it now is. Granting this, this awful condition has existed for nearly six thousand years, during which time God has looked on the sin, the carnage, the bloodshed, and death throes of the world, and this, though He could at any moment have put an end to it all.

Not only this, but think of the Father making provision for men through Christ, looking upon His own Son, abused by men, and in the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary.

God is economical, and would not permit a greater expenditure of suffering, either in degree or in duration, than is necessary for His eternal purposes.

Now, considering the extent and duration of the sufferings of humanity in this world, which must be necessary not so much for an object lesson as for the training, testing and development of men and women for God's eternal purposes, what must be the grandeur and magnitude of the purposes for which God is preparing them, when God must see in them the mighty destiny and achievements which He intends them to fulfill throughout eternity, a full return or equivalent for all that humanity has suffered in this world? If it be true that God will have a full equivalent in the work and lives of the faithful whom He is training for all that the teeming millions of human beings have suffered on the earth, who can have any conception of the offices and majesty of the lives of those who are to reign with Christ? Surely any possible conception of ours must fall very far below the real.

Now, reader, considering these things, will you place yourself in God's hands that He may accomplish His great purposes and will with you?

Can you afford to oppose the will of God and defeat the purposes for which He created you and preserves your life?

If you have not done so, will you now enter into an eternal covenant with your God, that from this moment, by His help, you will live only in His will, gladly doing and suffering all that He may see necessary to prepare you to fulfill His great purposes with you?

Can you afford to refuse to do this? God help us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE END