

SUFFERING AND ITS BENEFITS

Preached on Lord's Day Evening, August 1, 1853, at Eden Street Chapel, Hampstead Road

"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." 1 Peter 5:10

When Peter was in the garden of Gethsemane with his suffering Lord, he was not qualified to write an epistle to the Church of God. The hand that grasped the sword which cut off the right ear of Malchus was not the hand to hold the pen of an inspired apostle. Like other good men, in the days of early profession, he had more zeal than knowledge, more fleshly ardour than deep teachings of the Spirit and rich experience of the love of God. Had he then written, he would most probably have used his pen as he used his sword; and in cutting down the foes of Zion he might unwittingly have smitten some of her choice friends. But when he had passed through affliction's fiery furnace, had the dross and tin taken from him, and had become melted and softened by the grace of God, then as the blessed Spirit breathed upon him, and touched his pen with his own sanctifying grace, he was qualified to write these epistles so full of power and blessedness, and so full of rich experience of divine truth. I know not whether you paid much attention this morning, when I read the first chapter of this First Epistle. Many seem to think the reading of God's word a very unimportant portion of the service of God, and in some chapels it is omitted altogether, much, I think, to the loss of the people. But, in reading the chapter this morning, I could not but be struck with the richness and depth of divine truth with which

that portion of God's word seemed to me full even to overflowing.

We see, then, in the case of the Apostle Peter, how he was melted, moulded, and softened by the furnace of affliction and temptation; and when grace had wrought these blessed effects in his soul, then, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he could sit down and pen this epistle for the edification of the Church of God in all times.

The grand point of the words which I have read—and from which I hope with God's blessing to speak a little this evening—is suffering and the benefit of it. But, I shall, with a desire to bring the subject more plainly before your mind, and to enforce it more powerfully upon your conscience, divide my text into four leading branches.

I.—I shall endeavour to speak a little on the **fulness and freeness of grace**.

II.—**The holy and heavenly calling** wherewith the children of God are blessed.

III.—**The necessity and nature of suffering**.

IV.—**The blessed benefits and divine fruits** that spring out of it.

You will find this chain drawn out in our text; and it will be my business, as the Lord may enable, to take up these truths and to lay them before you, looking up to the Lord to bless his own word with power to your consciences.

I.—**The God of all grace**. How sweet is the word "**grace**" to every God taught soul! But there is something, to my mind, singularly beautiful in the expression which the apostle here

makes use of —"The **God** of all grace." It is as if he would lead our hearts at once to the fountain; as if he would bid us not look at the stream, but lift up our eyes and view, in the actings of faith, the ever-flowing source of all grace.

We may view this part of our subject **negatively** and **positively**. God is the God of **all** grace; and, therefore, there is no grace but that which is of God. Many seem disposed unduly to magnify what are called "means of grace." They are good when God through them is pleased to communicate grace; but without his blessing what are they? We see sometimes as we pass along the streets the pavements broken up and pipes and tubes lying about. What are all these pipes for? To convey water; but of what use are they if there be no water to flow through them? Will iron pipes of themselves bring water? So what is all our praying, preaching, and the ordinances of God's house? They are mere pipes; and need the water of grace to flow through them if they are to be of any benefit to us. If the water of grace flow through these into the soul, what do we feel grateful for? The water or the pipe? It is the stream of mercy and grace that flows into the soul for which we are thankful, and not the mere conduit through which that grace is communicated. But positively he is "the God of all grace." But how, and in what sense? Why, of grace in all its various branches, ramifications, and developments.

1.—For instance, there is **convincing** grace; for by the grace of God we are convinced of sin. The arrow of conviction shot into our conscience, making us to feel that we were sinners, and to cry for pardoning mercy came from God. God was the Author of that feeling if it were a spiritual conviction. It was he that wounded; he that pierced; he that killed, he that brought down; and he that opened the wound which nothing but the blood of Christ could heal.

2.—But he is the God of **pardoning** grace. The same grace that led him to wound leads him to heal; the same grace that brought down raises up; the same grace that strips clothes; the same grace that preaches the thunder of the law, preaches the peace speaking gospel; and the same grace that reveals the malady and uncovers the sore, brings the balm of Gilead and reveals the heavenly Physician. Therefore he is the God of **pardoning** grace in the sweet manifestations of the Saviour's love.

3. But the soul often wanders from its heavenly fountain. It backslides from God; and then grace is manifested in its restoration. David speaks of this **restoring** grace when he says—"He restoreth my soul." He brings us back to the spot whence we have wandered, and manifests the riches of his pardoning love, unsealing the fountain once opened for sin and for uncleanness. He it is who applies to the conscience the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

4. But we have walked, perhaps, in temptation's fiery path, and sometimes have been well nigh overwhelmed with a sea of trouble. As one said of old—"All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me." "Then we want **supporting** grace." "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." "Underneath are the everlasting arms." As we pass through the mazes of affliction, are in the furnace of trial, or are tossed on the deep waters of sorrow, still his arm is underneath to sustain.

5. But as we have by nature a heart "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" as we live in an ungodly world, and carry in our bosom the seed of all sin, and are tempted continually to evil, we want **keeping** grace. "Kept

by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Of that too he is the Author; for none can stand a single moment except as upheld by the mighty power of God.

6. And when you come to lay your head on a dying pillow, and the cold sweats of death gather upon your forehead; when the eye strings are breaking, and you must take leave of this world, and of all that is in it, you will want **dying** grace to support you in a dying hour.

Thus he is the "God of **all** grace." All the grace that ever the church had; of all the grace the church ever needed or will need he is the God. Look at the sun, that beautiful emblem of the Holy Spirit's own choosing to represent the Sun of Righteousness. How that glorious orb of day has shone for thousands of years! Look at the thousands of harvests which have been reaped under his benignant influence; think of the millions of human beings that have been fed by the fruits that he has matured and ripened. But the sun still shines on in all his original warmth, light, and beauty. He is not exhausted; he manifests no signs of exhaustion, nor has lost anything by shining; nor have all the rays and beams that have flowed from him drained him of one jot of his light and warmth. He is still the glorious orb of day, shining and shining, and losing neither light, nor heat, nor influence. So it is with the God of all grace? Thousands of hearts he has gladdened by the beams of his grace; thousands of contrite sinners he has comforted by the pourings out of his favour; but he is still the God of all grace, which is ever, therefore, flowing in rich streams of mercy, goodness, and love to the church of Jesus. Oh! why should we be so contracted as we often are, and lose sight of the God of all grace? Why dwell so much upon the creature instead of dwelling upon him whom to know is life eternal? The God of all grace! This is a

worthy theme, and I might enlarge upon it, but I have other work this evening before me to do.

II. I must, therefore, proceed with my text. "Who hath **called** us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus."

There may, perhaps, have been this thought in the heart of some present. All this no doubt is true; but what interest have I in it? I hear of the God of all grace; but **have I grace?** Has the God of all grace bestowed his grace upon me? You may well ask yourself that question, considering how few there are, speaking comparatively, upon whom God has bestowed his grace; but just see what gives a manifested interest in it. What makes that grace my own? "Who hath **called** us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." **Calling**, our second point of consideration, manifests an interest in the grace of God, and in the God of all grace. We are told by the same inspired apostle to "make our calling and election sure." How can we make our calling sure? By wrestling with God till he make it sure in us, by sealing it with his own heavenly witness upon our breast, and making it as plain in our hearts as the sun in the sky. But it is not every child of God who can make his calling and election thus undoubtedly sure. There are some who like Belshazzar cannot read the writing on the wall, and want a Daniel to decipher it for them; but they have not an interpreter who can read one letter. Aye; there are many of God's children who cannot read their own experience; they cannot trace out their own grace, nor make manifest to themselves their own calling. They need then an interpreter, as Job speaks—"One of a thousand, who can save them from going down to the pit," by showing them how to read the work of faith in their soul. This is the benefit of an experimental ministry, to discover to you what you could not otherwise learn for yourself—opening up the work of God which is locked up from your own eyes.

There is then a being "called." This calling is "of God." It is "through Jesus Christ," and it is "unto God's eternal glory."

Divine calling is a special work of God upon the soul, separating from the world, profane and professing, bringing down high looks, piercing the conscience with convictions, and raising up longing desires after Christ, with a going to him for mercy; leading the soul with weeping and supplication to the feet of the Mediator; and then in God's own time and way making Christ precious, revealing his person, blood, and righteousness, and shedding abroad the love of God in the heart by the Holy Ghost. To know anything of this divine teaching is to be made "a partaker of the heavenly calling," and to experience a saving work in the soul. And consider those striking and heavenly words, "to his eternal glory!" "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." To be called then unto God's eternal glory, to view it hereafter in its full blaze on the heights of Zion, to enjoy it with a soul rendered capable of bearing its full and eternal weight, and the body made a fit treasure-house and immortal companion for the glorified spirit; to be enraptured with the manifestations of God's presence and love throughout a boundless, glorious eternity—what prospects of heavenly bliss are opened up and revealed in these words! What the full enjoyment of this unutterable weight of glory will be is beyond all present human conception, beyond the apprehension of the wisest saint, or the experience of the deepest taught saint of God. At the best, we can only have a faint glimpse of the glory which God has prepared for them that love him. But it is not so of our calling. No matter how desponding some of the Lord's family may be, they are called unto his eternal glory,

to the preparation for it here, and to the rich enjoyment of hereafter.

III. But let us pass a little further onward. We have not yet got into the marrow of our subject; we are still but at the vestibule—we have not yet penetrated into the inner court. We must pass the entrance before we get into the apartments of the palace. There is no entering into glory except through **suffering**; nor is there any getting into the rich experience of grace without affliction and trial. Was it not so with Jesus? What did he say to his disciples? "Ought not the Son of man to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" And has not the Lord Jesus led the way in which we are to tread; and must we not be conformed to his suffering image here that we may be conformed to his glorified image hereafter? "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." If we have no union with Christ in suffering, we shall have no union with Christ in glory; and therefore there is a necessity of suffering with the Lord Jesus. Now it is this suffering which so deeply tries the minds of God's exercised family. If they were not so heavily weighted, they could get on, or at least they think they could; if the road were easy and the path smooth, if there were no trials and temptations, they, at least in their own apprehensions, could travel cheerily on. But when they come into temptation's fiery furnace, and are baptized into a flood of suffering and sorrow, then their faith seems to give way, and their hope to stagger; they reel to and fro like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end to believe there is a grain of grace in their heart.

There is a necessity then for suffering; but though there be this necessity, yet one thing is very evident, that all God's people do not suffer in the same way, or to the same degree. God chooses our afflictions for us. He knows what peculiar trials are needful for every one of those who fear his name.

We differ in bodily constitution, education, habits of life, powers of mind, and natural disposition. We differ as widely within, as we differ without; the features of our mind are as various as the features of our face; and therefore my suffering would not be your suffering, nor your suffering mine. We have each our own peculiar path of trial and suffering which God has appointed us to walk in. Some suffer in mind, others in body; some in their family, others in their circumstances; the trials of some are chiefly in things temporal; others suffer a fiery baptism in matters purely spiritual. But in addition to all other sources of trial, there is one common to all the redeemed family, a daily, hourly conflict with the body of sin and death, and the workings of evil in the carnal mind.

But time will not admit of a minuter detail of the various sufferings which are appointed for the family of God. Some may be deeper, others shallower; some shorter, others longer; but each is designed, to work a like purpose—the conforming of the soul to the suffering image of Jesus.

You will observe that in this chain there is a beautiful proportion and harmony. Suffering does not come at the beginning of the chain. First, we have, "the God of all grace," the overflowing, overflowing fountain of goodness and mercy, being the source of all. Then we have the "calling," whereby this grace is made manifest to the soul, and of which Christ is the blessed Subject, Object, sum, and centre. And then comes "suffering," the third link of the heavenly chain. Grace, first; calling next; and suffering third. If, then, you have not this link, the link of suffering, there is a breach in the chain. If the God of all grace be your God, he has called or will call you; if he has called you, he has appointed unto you a certain measure of suffering by which you will be, as the apostle speaks—"filling up that which is

behind of the sufferings of Christ," that is not his vicarious sufferings, but his afflictions in his members.

IV. We are now then prepared to pass on, by the blessing of God, to examine our fourth and last point—**the benefits, blessings**, and divine fruits that spring out of suffering, which adds the last link to the chain.

But observe the expression, "After that ye have suffered **a while**." Suffering is only for a while. Say at the most, that suffering should run parallel with the whole course of your life; say that you live to be ninety, and have day after day suffering and sorrow; say that every hour brings you pain of body or grief of mind, trial of spirit, or temptation of soul. Say it shall be so, which however is not very probable, for you are not likely to live till you are ninety, nor are you likely to have every day a day of trial, temptation, and suffering; but say it were so appointed, then when your soul is set at liberty from your enfeebled body, to soar upward into the regions of light and love, and drink in rivers of peace and joy at the fountain head, it would, after all, be only "a little while." Measured by eternity, what is time? It is but a point, a thing only of a moment's duration. "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But even in a world like this we are not always suffering. It comes and goes—it is brought today and is taken away tomorrow. When the furnace has done its work, then the gold is taken out. But it is **after**, not **before**. You perhaps say you want to enjoy a clear assurance of interest; to be established in the liberty of the gospel; to walk as an enfranchised child of God; to be favoured with fresh and fresh manifestations of his mercy and love; and have your soul sweetly enjoying the presence of a beloved Lord. But have you been ever tossed on a sea of suffering? or do you

think always to be in London Dock without ebb or flow? Does the extent of your spiritual voyage reach no farther than Gravesend, where the scarcely salt river is still far from the sea? You fresh water mariners who sail on so jauntingly in your river built yachts are not fit to do business in deep waters, nor can you see the wonders of the Lord as those do in the great deep. But if you have been long tossed on the stormy main, how welcome does the shore beam on your straining sight; and how then you will drop anchor with an inward peal of joy. It is not **before** then, but "**after** ye have suffered a while" that real soul profit, satisfaction, and joy are realized or experienced within.

But perhaps you are saying—"May not persons be Christians and yet not be much tried or afflicted?" Now, I believe it holds in grace as in nature—whatever is easily got is rarely worth having. As a general rule, a man gets nothing easily that is really valuable; neither knowledge, nor power, nor learning, nor even glittering gold dust; nothing even that this world values is obtained without labour and pain. And sure I am that no spiritual man gets a rich experience of Divine mercy and love without passing through more or less of soul exercise. He is not fitted for it; his soul has not yet the capacity to enjoy the fulness of the love of God. In order to this he must, like a vessel, have ample tonnage. There must be capacity made in the soul, as in the hold of the ship, to receive the fulness of God's mercy. Self must be baled out before the Lord of grace and glory will come in; the cargo of rubbish must be heaved overboard before the rich treasure of heavenly mercy can find room in the bosom.

It is, then, after we have suffered awhile, and only after we have suffered a while; been exercised in our soul, tried in our mind, tempted of Satan, and gone through more or less of this inward strife and affliction—this sea of storms, that these

other links of the heavenly chain are brought, into the heart, of which the apostle speaks—"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."

Oh that these words might sound in your ears. Oh that they might be graven as by the pen of God in your hearts.

I. But let us look at these blessings in their order. "**Make you perfect!**" What word have we here? Does not this look like perfection in the flesh? Perfection in the flesh! The Scriptures know nothing of this kind of perfection, nor does any experienced child of God. In what sense, therefore, may we understand the word used by the Holy Spirit here? "Make you **perfect.**" The terms have a meaning; we will not dislocate and distort God's sacred word by putting on it a forced construction. Far be that from our wish or thought. I may observe, then, that there are two senses in which the word "perfect" is used in Scripture as regards the saints of God. The first meaning of the word is perfection in Christ—"Ye are complete in him." The church of God is represented as being "without spot or blemish or any such thing," a view of which draws forth from her divine lover those striking words—"Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." In that sense the church of God is perfect—perfect in Christ, comely with the comeliness which he himself has put upon her, and so stands perfect in his perfection, holy in his holiness, glorious in his glory.

But that is not the sense meant by the word "perfect" here. She is that already; but the making of her perfect "through suffering." Perfection, then, as here spoken of is not that through Christ's righteousness; **that** is an outward perfection; but an inward, an experimental perfection as

wrought in the soul by the grace of God through suffering. What then is this inward experimental perfection? There is an expression in Heb. 5:14, which, to my mind, much clears up the whole subject—"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The apostle is speaking here of the difference between those who are weak and ignorant and those who are strong and established. He says that some were babes, and did not even understand the elements of divine truth; but that others were "of full age." It is in the margin, which is the more literal rendering, "**perfect**." Those, then, are, in an experimental sense, "perfect" who have arrived at the meridian of full age, whose senses are exercised by long and deep experience to discern both good and evil. This, then, is the scriptural definition of experimental perfection. It does not consist in the absence of sin nor in progressive sanctification; nor in being made any better as regards our carnal mind; but it consists in this—in being ripened and matured in the Divine life; in being no longer a child, and ever in want of a tutor of first principles; but "a man in Christ," grown up in him and having a ripeness of Christian experience. This is Christian maturity; and this divine ripeness of soul is only to be obtained through suffering. It is "**after** you have suffered a while" that God thus "makes you perfect"—in other words, matures you, so that you bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and become an adult man in the knowledge, enjoyment, and experience of spiritual things. The tried soul comes forth from the furnace with the dross and tin of self taken away, and thus becomes a vessel of honour fitted for the master's use.

2. But the apostle goes on to pray that the God of all grace would, after they had suffered awhile, "**stablish**" them. This extends somewhat widely. It implies an establishing of our understanding, conscience, judgment, and experience not

only in our views of divine truth, but also of our own interest in "the truth as it is in Jesus;" that we may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine, but be so established, rooted, and grounded in the truth of God, as never, by any consideration be moved from it. How is this desirable thing to be attained? Suffering, suffering, is still the channel: and the furnace is still the means. It is only "**after** we have suffered a while"—suffered from Satan, from sin, from persecution of enemies, and the unbelief and abounding corruption of our own hearts—it is only after such an experience of personal, inward suffering that we get to be thoroughly established in the truth. Growth in grace is like growth in nature. It is the mushroom that springs up in a night; but the oak is the growth of centuries. We are to grow like the oak, not like the poplar; be a cedar of Lebanon, not a willow by the brook. We have also to take root downward as well as to grow stout and strong upwards—to spread deep and wide roots in the soil as well as to spread forth sturdy branches in the air. And it is that we may thus take root and become established that we are subjected to affliction and sorrow. No instance was ever known of an established Christian who had not become so through the medium of deep and sanctified affliction; and God will not alter his ways to please our vain fancies, "for he is in one mind, and who can turn him?"

3. The next fruit of suffering for which the apostle prayed was that God might thereby "**strengthen**" them. But what a strange way of being strengthened! You feel your weakness; do you not? "Yes;" I may speak for some here—"I do indeed; oh if you did but know how weak I am!" I know it very well, for I know how weak I am myself. If I can read any thing it is my own heart; and in reading mine I can read yours. But you say, "How weak I am." Well, will you ever be anything else? Would you wish to be anything else? "I would be strong," you reply. So you are. "When I am weak," said

Paul, "then am I strong." There is the true secret of all strength! What makes us strong?

Weakness. Weakness make us strong? "That is a flat contradiction." No; it is not. Because when you are weak then the Lord Jesus works strength in you, and thus you resemble the worthies spoken of in Heb. 11, who "out of weakness were made strong." No other strength is worth a straw. Suppose I came here this evening, and into this pulpit all strength in myself. Should I be worth hearing or listening to? But I come all weakness; if I have strength God gives it me. So if you come strong to hear, you will not want for Christ to bless the word and communicate strength to your soul; but if you come weak as one seeking strength from him; if you come as an empty vessel for God to pour his love and grace into, then the Lord will answer you. Was it not so with David? "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." But you will say, "I have had a great deal of trial lately; I have had affliction in my body, or trials in my family, or my circumstances have been very distressing, and to make it worse, I have had such darkness of mind and many powerful temptations to grapple with. Under all this my wicked heart has rebelled against God; and I have had hard work, I can assure you, to stand my ground at all." What has that taught you, and to what point has it brought you? It has made you a hearer of the gospel, it has made you to long for the God of all grace to manifest unto you the riches of his mercy; it has weaned you from the world broken the arm of self; destroyed your creature confidence; and rendered you a fit subject for the Lord Jesus Christ to work upon, and in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure. All this good suffering has done, if it has been sanctified to your soul. Look at Moses! How weak he was. He replied, when sent on his mission to Pharaoh, "I am slow of speech;" but God qualified him to

speak and act too. Look at Abraham, and the course of God's dealings with him. How the strength of God was made manifest in his and Sarah's natural weakness! Look at David, the beardless boy, going out against the giant. So your weakness is but the needful preparation for God out of it to make you strong. I hope that some of you here, this evening, if not many, are poor and needy, weak and helpless. So many as are such, are so many cases for God to strengthen.

4. The last blessing for which the apostle prayed as following suffering was, that God would thereby "**settle**" them. I was speaking this morning about a building. Now you know a building must **settle** before it will stand. It is so with every structure. A bridge has to settle sometimes some inches and time for the most part must be given for every edifice to settle before you can be sure that it will stand firm. It settles by sinking, and becomes firm by losing somewhat of its original height; it drops that it may stand; it sinks that it may not fall. So must you be settled, if you are to stand; not settled on yourself, but upon the work of Jesus, the living stone which God has laid in Zion. To be settled is not to be settled down in vain, presumptuous confidence, but to have a firm standing in Christ by the Spirit's teaching and testimony, and so to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. There must be a settling down into and upon the Lord Jesus; a resting the entire weight of the soul's salvation wholly and solely upon him who is mighty to save. And the more the soul is thus settled upon the foundation, the firmer, closer union it has with it.

Now, look at these things, for they will bear examination. I am not afraid of my doctrine being examined. Not that the things I have uttered are worth anything, so far as I am the speaker of them; but the points I have advanced and dwelt upon are solid truths; and I know them to be such. They are

in strict accordance with the word of God; and I believe in accordance with the experience of God's saints. Weigh them up then, and weigh yourselves too at the same time. Put yourselves into the scale, and see whether God has stamped good weight upon you. Who is it that has reason to tremble when the surveyors come round to examine their weights and measures? It is the deceitful, dishonest tradesman who fears to see their face. The honest tradesman boldly brings forth his weights and measures, and does not slink into the back shop with fear and trembling. So the teaching of God in the soul will bear examination. You may be very weak—the tradesman's weights and measures are not all of the same size and dimensions. There is the gill and the quart, as well as the pint and gallon; and there is the quarter and half ounce as well as the stone; but they must be all lawful weight and bear the queen's stamp. So that if you say, your grace is small, I reply, "It may be none the worse for that." If we have gardens, and are fond of flowers, we admire the little shrub as well as the larger one; and there is as perfect a life in the tender flower as in the stronger plant. So, if you are planted into the heavenly garden, the Divine Husbandman will water and make you grow. I would much sooner have a little living shrub put into my garden bed than a dead lofty tree. All the trees of righteousness planted by the hand of the Lord are living, growing, trees, watered and nourished by the dews and rains of the Spirit. See, therefore, whether you cannot find something like the grace of God in your heart. O what a mercy to have one grain of grace! What a mercy to be a living soul! You may be tried, tempted, and exercised; but if you are one of the Lord's people, all this will eventually be for your profit. But always remember that there is a furnace to go through to bum up self-confidence, and bring you forth a vessel fit for the master's use. The trials you are called to experience, and the sighs and groans you utter are spiritual sacrifices, acceptable in God's sight.

These things are designed to mature you in the things of God, to establish you in the truth, to strengthen you in faith, hope, and love, and to settle you down into sweet confidence in the Lord Jesus. O, you will say, if this be the case, thank God for every trial; bless his holy name for every temptation; thanks for every furnace, every exercise, and every affliction; they have brought my soul to a firm standing; they have made Christ precious; they have endeared his love; they have led me more fully into the "truth as it is in Jesus," and given me richer and more blessed views of Immanuel, God with us. Now this is the main thing the heart desires; not that we desire the furnace, but we desire the great benefits produced by it. O, may "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus," in the words of our text—"after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."