

THE SAINT'S PATH TO ETERNAL GLORY

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"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

Philosophers tell us that every ray of light which comes from the sun is divisible into seven distinct colours. And this they shew by a very simple experiment. They cause a single ray to pass through a glass instrument of a particular shape, called a prism, and then throwing it upon a white surface, the seven colours are at once distinctly perceptible. I think we may carry this illustration into divine things. Truth as it issues from the Sun of righteousness is pure and simple, but as it passes into the mind of man, and again issues out of it, it takes the various hues and colours of each man's mind. Thus, we see that different ministers, taught we believe of God, have different lines of preaching. Some are clear and powerful in doctrine; others, deep in experience; others, led to insist on a practical walk and conversation; yet all are taught "by the same Spirit," and led into a knowledge of the same grand truths.

Nor is this less evident even in the writers of the New Testament. Though all were taught of God, and though all they wrote was by divine inspiration, yet we can clearly see a difference in them. Thus, we see Paul, an ardent, uncompromising champion of distinguishing grace, never forgetting the awful lengths of sin to which he was allowed to go when he persecuted the church of God; and, therefore, standing up with zeal and ardour to contend for the free and

sovereign grace of God. We see again John, who leaned upon his Master's bosom, and drank in large draughts of that love which dwelt without measure in the Son of God, breathing love in every line. His grand text is, "God is love"; and his whole soul seems to be imbued with the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. We find James plain and practical, speaking strongly against the empty professors of his day, and contending that faith must have its accompanying works, in order to prove that it is the "faith of God's elect."

We see Jude searching, keen, and discriminating: drawing his sword boldly against the Antinomians that infested the church, those "spots in their feasts of charity;" yet contending "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and that the elect were "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." We find Peter carrying clear and decisive marks of having been in the furnace. We see the fiery ardour which once prompted him to draw his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, tamed and subdued; we see him breathing a spirit of love, his soul having been baptized in suffering; and he writes as one who in the furnace of affliction had been purged of the tin and dross which appeared once so conspicuously in him. And yet with all these differences, one and the same Spirit taught each and all, and one and the same gospel was preached in the power and love of it by each and all.

Peter, then, as one who had been in the furnace, closes his first epistle with this affectionate prayer: "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." And as there may be some, perhaps many present, who may hear my voice tonight for the last time during this visit, I do not know that I can leave

a better text for their consideration, if the Lord is pleased to bring it home to the heart, than the words I have just read.

I will then, with God's blessing, endeavour to take up the words in the order they lie before me.

I.—The first word which demands our attention is, "the God of all grace." The apostle by this expression leads the mind up to the Source of all mercy. He does not, as a finishing stroke to the truths he had been setting forth, as a practical guard lest the doctrines of grace should be abused, exhort, by way of application, those to whom he was writing to use unceasing diligence, to cultivate active piety, and employ every exertion to maintain their Christian standing. He leaves nothing to the assiduity of the creature, but leads them up to "the God of all grace," as the only Source and Fountain of all spiritual strength. Nor is he contented with saying "the God of grace," but "the God of all grace." Everything, then, spiritually felt in the conscience; everything experimentally tasted, handled, and enjoyed; everything whereby we are separated from the world dead in sin: everything that saves the soul from the wrath to come, and brings it into the eternal enjoyment of a Three-One God is comprehended in the expression, "the God of all grace."

As the Lord leads his people into a knowledge of themselves, as he removes the veil of deceit from their heart, as he discovers to them more plainly the deep corruption that lurks and works in their bosom, he shews them more and more not only their need of grace, but opens up more and more to them what grace is. When the Lord first begins his work on the conscience, and brings us to know a measure of the truth, we are but learners in the school of grace. It is only after we have travelled some years in the way, and have had repeated discoveries of our baseness, and of God's

superabounding mercy, that we begin to enter a little into what grace really is. We learn the words first, and the meaning of them afterwards. We usually receive the doctrine of grace as it stands in the letter of truth first; and then, as the Lord leads us, we get into the experience of grace in the power of it. Thus we gradually learn what grace is by feeling its complete suitability to our pressing wants.

When, for instance, we feel what numerous and aggravated sins we are daily and hourly committing, we want grace, and not merely grace, but "all grace," to pardon and blot them out. When we painfully feel how we daily backslide from God, and are perpetually roving after idols; how our hearts get entangled in the world, and how little our affections are fixed where Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, we need "all grace" to heal these backslidings, and to bring the soul into the enjoyment of the mercy and love of God. And when we see what base returns we make to the Lord for all his kindness towards us; when our rebelliousness, fretfulness, impatience, and ingratitude are charged home upon the conscience, and we feel what wretches we are, how we have requited the Lord for all his goodness towards us, we experience our need of "all grace" to forgive such base ingratitude. When we can scarcely bear ourselves, as if none were so vile, none so filthy, none so black as we, we are brought to see and feel it must be "all grace" that can bear with us. So that we not only see the sweetness and suitability of grace, but a far greater sweetness and suitability in "all grace."

For we find that unless it were "all grace" we must perish after all: unless it were "all grace," after all we have tasted and known, felt, experienced, or realized, we must lie down in sorrow, because we are so continually sinning against grace that we must needs wear it out. As, suppose by way of

illustration, a father might put into the hands of a friend, or a banker, a certain sum for his son: a certain, fixed, definite amount: so God had stored up in Christ a certain amount of mercy and grace for his children. I have no hesitation in saying, that had such been the case, such prodigal wretches are we, that long ago we should have drawn out and spent the whole stock, whatever might have been the amount; yea, had millions of grace, so to speak, been laid up in Christ, such improvident, reckless, and sinful wretches are we, that we should long ago have spent every farthing of it.

Therefore, he leads us not to look at grace only, however sweet and suitable; nor even to "all grace," though sweeter and more suitable still; but leads us up through and beyond grace to "the God of all grace." As though he might say, "Grace might be exhausted, and even 'all grace' might sooner or later be drained dry; but the 'God of all grace,' the same yesterday, today, and for ever, is an everflowing fountain." A tank may be exhausted, but a fountain is inexhaustible. So "the God of all grace" is "the fountain of living waters," ever flowing forth in streams of mercy, love, and compassion to his people in Christ. Nothing, then, less than "the God of all grace," could suit such vile wretches as they feel themselves to be. None but "the God of all grace," could bear with them. None but he whose grace can never be exhausted, whose patience can never be worn out, whose lovingkindness can never be provoked beyond endurance: but who pardons all, loves through all, and is determined, in spite of all, to bring the objects of his love to the eternal enjoyment of himself—none but such a God as he who has revealed himself in the face, person, blood, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, could ever save such guilty and filthy wretches, as some of us see and feel ourselves to be.

II.—We have taken a glimpse at the Fountain, and we will now look at the streams. The first stream that flows out in the text, and prominently catches our eye, is,

Effectual calling: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." Calling is the first step in the divine life, the first stream of ever-flowing and overflowing grace that visits the heart: it is therefore put by the apostle at the head of all blessings. But what is calling? It implies a word spoken, in a similar though not in the same way as the Lord called Samuel, when he had laid himself down to sleep in the temple, and said, "Samuel, Samuel!" So the Lord calls his people. I do not mean to say that he addresses them with an audible voice: but he speaks his own word into their conscience with the same authority and power that called Samuel when he was lying asleep before the ark. The call aroused Samuel from sleep, as the spiritual call arouses the soul from the sleep of sin; the word is felt with power in the heart: the truth comes with authority into the conscience: spiritual life is communicated: and certain fruits and effects at once follow.

But what are these fruits and effects? The first effect is, to call us out of the world; for in the world we are till God is pleased to call us out of it. He calls us, then, out of the company of the world, out of its amusements, out of its sinful practices, and out of its no less sinful and sensual spirit. By communicating a new nature, and imparting light and life to the soul, he shews us what an evil world it is; as the apostle says, "Who gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." In the world there is nothing to be seen and heard but "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" and God, touching our conscience with his finger, and raising up his fear in our hearts, calls us so effectually out of these lusts, that we can never again

intermingle with any peace of conscience with it. Until this step is taken in living faith and godly fear, there is no manifested interest in the promise, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" **2Co 6:17,18**.

But God, in calling his people, does not merely call them out of the world dead in wickedness, but he calls them, sooner or later, out of the religious world, the world dead in profession. Not that, for the most part, we are immediately called out of this world within a world; for the Lord does not usually open our eyes at first to see the miserable deceit and hypocrisy of the great bulk of professors. In our ignorance, we think at first that every one who talks about conversion and regeneration is a child of God: and even our heart perhaps has flowed out with love and affection to some whom at the time we thought Christians, but whom we afterwards found to have neither part nor lot in the matter.

But after a time, as the Lord leads the soul into a deeper knowledge of itself, and into a spiritual acquaintance with the law and gospel; as his word of truth is felt with more power in our hearts, and he brings the soul into a more experimental knowledge of his kingdom of grace, we find no more communion with the great bulk of the religious world than with the profane world. We want the power, whilst they are satisfied with the form; we want realities, whilst they are contented with shadows; we want life, and a feeling experience of the love and goodness of God in the soul; they are satisfied with mere doctrines, as they stand in the letter of truth.

Again: We are often sad, and feel that none but the Lord can speak comfort; we are often cast down by sin, tried in our minds, and exercised in our souls; we feel at times heavy burdens, and suffer under painful and oozing wounds; but they are dead to all life and feeling, either of spiritual sorrow or joy; they are cheerful, easy, and light-hearted, and satisfied with a name to live. Sooner or later, therefore, we come out of the professing world, with as clear a call and as good a conscience as we came at first out of the world dead in trespasses and sins; and set our faces against hypocrisy and a lifeless profession, as much as against vice and open profanity.

But in calling us, first out of the profane, and then out of the professing world, God calls us to the experimental knowledge of certain blessed truths, which can only be spiritually known by the power of the Holy Ghost.

1. He calls us, first, to repent of our sins. "Repent, and believe the gospel," was the first proclamation that issued from the lips of incarnate Truth: and that same word is still spoken as the first call to the heart of all the subjects of God's kingdom. This call, not merely reaches their ears outwardly, for "many," in that sense, "are called." but its power reaches their heart, and they are brought to genuine repentance for sin. How many people there are who begin with religion, and leap over repentance! who adopt into their creed certain doctrines which they hear from the mouths of ministers or gather from books, and leap out of the world into the highest assurance, without ever passing through the "strait gate" and "narrow way!" But Christ has placed repentance as the first step into his kingdom: so that he who never knew what repentance unto life was, is not a partaker of the life of God in his soul. But wherever there is repentance as a fruit of the Spirit, there will be a sense and

sight of sin, a knowledge of its dreadful evil, a feeling of guilt before a holy God, a mourning and grieving on account of it, and a deep sense of inward vileness before the eyes of Infinite Purity.

2. But God calls his people not merely to repentance, but to confession also. When the Spirit works repentance in the heart, it does not lie there dead and torpid; but it issues forth from the lips in genuine and honest confession. The spiritual penitent tells the Lord, with tears rolling down his cheeks, with sobs heaving from his bosom, with repeated expressions of condemnation, what a wretch he has been, how vilely he has behaved toward him, and what a base, horrible, and filthy creature he has been in his pure eyes. And this, not once or twice in his life, not once or twice a year, but continually as the Lord works a feeling of repentance in the heart, and brings it forth in godly confession, does he honestly tell him, **though he knows it all**, the sad tale of self-condemnation.

3. But the Lord calls his people not merely to confess, but also to forsake those sins of which they repent. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" **Pr 28:13**. There is a forsaking of evil, a turning away from idols, a leaving of broken cisterns, and a fleeing out of those sins which are laid upon the conscience. And this takes place, in a greater or less degree, when God chastises his people with inward rebukes for sin, and his frown is felt in the soul. There are many that act, as Bunyan speaks of the mother that calls her child a little slut and all sorts of names, and then the next moment falls to hugging and kissing it. Many who stand high in a profession speak of themselves as sinners, and profess to hate sin, yet the next moment plunge without a pang into the very iniquities of which they profess to have repented.

But God's people, under the powerful teachings of the Spirit, not merely repent of and confess, but forsake too those sins that are laid upon their conscience, and cry unto the Lord to keep them from the power of evil.

4. The Lord, in calling his people, calls them also to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "Repent, and believe the gospel," he says to them with power. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." He opens their eyes to see a crucified Jesus, and draws their hearts to come unto him, as "mighty to save." He reveals to their understanding the Mediator between God and man, the great High Priest over the house of God, "Immanuel, God with us!" He brings into their souls a taste of his dying love, and a sight by faith of his atoning blood. Thus he enables them to believe in the Son of God, and to receive him into their hearts as all their salvation and all their desire.

5. He calls them too, to eye his only-begotten Son as a suffering Jesus; to look upon him whom they have pierced, and to mourn for him; to behold the evil of sin in the bleeding, agonizing Saviour; and thus to be melted down into godly sorrow, that their sins should have caused the sweat to issue from his sacred body, and the groans of agony to burst from his dying lips.

6. He calls them also to walk as becometh the gospel, to live consistently and uprightly, and to "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things;" to exercise themselves to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man; and thus manifest that they are "living epistles, written not with ink," in the mere letter of truth, "but with the Spirit of the living God." He calls them also to walk in "his ordinances

blameless," and not, under the pretext of greater spirituality, to despise any of them.

7. But, above all, he calls them "unto his eternal glory:" that when this short life has passed away, when "time shall be no longer" to them, they may see Jesus as he is in the realms of endless, day, may eternally partake of that bliss which is laid up for them at God's right hand, and behold and be partakers of Christ's glory.

III.—But the next step in the kingdom of grace laid down in the text, the next stream that issues out of the everflowing fountain of grace, is, suffering: "After that ye have suffered a while."

In calling his people, God calls them all to suffer. "Unto you," says the apostle, "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" **Php 1:29**. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" **Ro 8:17**.

Thus, after the Lord, by his special work on the conscience, has called us to repentance and confession of sin, as well as to faith in Jesus: after he has called us to godly sorrow; to live according to the precepts of the gospel: and to walk in the ordinances of his church; he then calls us to suffer for and with Christ. But we cannot "suffer according to the will of God," that is, in a gospel sense and from gospel motives, till the Lord enables us in some measure to look to him. The same Spirit, who calls the believer to walk in a path of suffering, strengthens and enables him to do so.

To suffer then aright, we must walk in the steps of the great Captain of our salvation, who "though a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." The Father in this sense spared not his only-begotten Son, but led him into

the path of tribulation. If the Lord of the house, then, had to travel in this dark and gloomy path of suffering, can his disciples escape? If the Captain of our salvation was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" must not the common soldiers, who occupy the ranks of the spiritual army, be baptized into the same sufferings, and taste in their measure of that cup which he drank to the very dregs? Thus, every child of God is called, sooner or later, to "suffer with Christ;" and he that suffers not with Christ, will not reign with him **2Ti 2:12**. But the Lord, who sees what we are, as well as what we need, apportions out suffering to our several states and necessities. All certainly do not suffer in the same way, nor to the same extent, though all travel, in their measure, in that path. Paths of different length, and different depth and height, branch out, so to speak, of the great highway of tribulation, and in one or other of these paths all the redeemed must walk.

Thus, some of the Lord's people suffer more than others from the depths of their own dreadful nature being opened up to them with greater clearness and power; they are more distressed by painful convictions, are more exercised with distressing doubts and fears, and spend most of their days in a gloomy desponding state.

Others, again, of God's people suffer more from Satan's fierce temptations; he is permitted to hurl his fiery darts with greater violence into their souls; and, as a roaring lion, he seeks to rend the very caul of their hearts. Others of the family of faith suffer more from the hidings of God's countenance; they have to mourn His absence whose presence they have felt and tasted to be their heaven. Others, more sensibly feel his chastening hand in their conscience. Others, again, suffer more from open persecution; the world is allowed to vent its spleen and

malice more upon them; their friends or relations are more bitter against them; and thus their tribulation is more in the way of outward persecution than in those inward trials into which God leads others of his people. Again, others are more harassed by the workings of inward sin; more snares seem spread for their feet; they are more violently assailed by secret lusts, and feel the power of sin more sensibly raging for dominion in their carnal mind. But however the suffering may differ, all have to suffer, all have to pass through the furnace: for the Lord bringeth "the third part through the fire." All have to walk in the footsteps of a self-denying and crucified Jesus; all have painfully to feel what it is to be at times under the rod, and experience those chastisements of God, whereby they are proved to be sons, and not bastards.

IV.—But this suffering is for a while, "after that ye have suffered a while." It is only for a time that God's people suffer; though they suffer at different times of their pilgrimage, there are occasional remissions. There is a certain needful time for suffering to last, as there is a certain "needs be" for the suffering itself. And when they have suffered the time needful to purge away their tin and dross, God takes them out of the furnace:

V.—And this leads us to the fruits and consequences of this suffering, "After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

There is no Christian perfection, no divine establishment, no spiritual strength, no solid settlement, except by suffering. But after the soul has suffered, after it has felt God's chastising hand, the effect is to perfect, to establish, to strengthen, and to settle it. Let us look at these several points in their order.

1. "Make you perfect." What perfection does the Holy Ghost speak of here? Certainly not perfection in the flesh: that is but a wild dream of free-will and Arminianism. But perfection here and elsewhere means a being well-established and grounded in the faith, as we find the apostle speaking **Heb 5:14**, "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age **literally, as we read in the margin, "perfect"**, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Christian perfection does not then consist in perfection in the flesh, but in having arrived at maturity in the divine life, in being what I may call a Christian adult, or what the apostle terms, "a man in Christ." When Paul, therefore, says, "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect," he means being "no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," but favoured with a measure of Christian wisdom and strength. It is this Christian maturity, which is called in scripture, "perfection," and it is only obtained by suffering. It is only in the furnace that the tin and dross of pharisaic righteousness is purged away; and the soul comes out of the furnace "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use." The Lord of life and glory was made "perfect through sufferings;" and there is no other way whereby his followers are made spiritually perfect. Until a man is led into suffering, he does not know the truth in its sweetness. We are full of free-will, pride, presumption, and self-righteousness. But when the soul is baptized into suffering, it is in a measure established in the truth, strengthened in the things of God, and conformed to the image of Christ.

2. The next fruit and effect of suffering is, establishment. The soul by sufferings and deliverances becomes established in a sense of its own interest in divine things: it becomes more delivered from doubts and fears. Suffering makes a man established in the truth, by causing him to feel and realize

more of its power, sweetness, and unction in his heart. But till a man goes into the furnace, to have his fleshly wisdom, strength, and righteousness burnt off from him, there is no divine establishment of soul. He scarcely knows what he believes, and scarcely discerns the difference betwixt what God has taught him, and what he has learned from man: he is not brought to feel clearly and accurately the difference between form and power, substance and shadow, letter and spirit. But when afflictions and troubles come upon him, he becomes not merely established in his judgment in a knowledge of the letter of truth, but established in his soul by an experience of it.

3. The third fruit and effect of suffering mentioned in the text is, strength. Until a man goes into the furnace of affliction and suffering, to have his own fleshly strength burnt out, he is never divinely strengthened in his soul.

Having, therefore, as yet a measure of creature strength, he does not need the strength of Christ to be "made perfect in weakness." But when he has been in the furnace, and suffered awhile, and found his own strength like tow before the flame, and feels utterly unable to resist sin and Satan unless God is pleased to strengthen him with strength in his "inner man," he comes to the Lord as a poor needy supplicant for a measure of divine strength. He is no more looking to the flesh, no more going down to Egypt and Assyria, and leaning on a reed that runs into the hand, and pierces it; but is brought, in a measure of believing simplicity, to look to the Lord to perfect strength in his weakness.

4. The fourth and last fruit of suffering mentioned in the text is, divine settlement. This intimates a freedom from wandering here and there, and wavering to and fro, from

being "driven with the wind and tossed," as James speaks **Jas 1:6**, "like a wave of the sea." By suffering a man becomes settled into a solemn conviction of the character of Jehovah as revealed in the scripture, and in a measure made experimentally manifest in his conscience. He is settled in the belief of an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure:" in the persuasion that "all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose;" in the firm conviction that everything comes to pass according to God's eternal purpose: and are all tending to the good of the church, and to God's eternal glory. His soul, too, is settled down into a deep persuasion of the misery, wretchedness, and emptiness of the creature; into the conviction that the world is but a shadow, and that the things of time and sense are but bubbles that burst the moment they are grasped; that of all things sin is most to be dreaded, and the favour of God above all things most to be coveted; that nothing is really worth knowing except Jesus Christ and him crucified; that all things are passing away, and that he himself is rapidly hurrying down the stream of life, and into the boundless ocean of eternity. Thus he becomes settled in a knowledge of the truth, and his soul remains at anchor, looking to the Lord to preserve him here, and bring him in peace and safety to his eternal home.

These are the fruits of suffering. They are not to be learnt by reading them in the word of God, or by hearing ministers preach about them; nor are they to be obtained from books, or from any source, but the teaching of the Spirit of God in the soul. Where God then teaches, he "teaches to profit;" he writes his truth with "the point of a diamond" on the heart, and engraves them as "with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever."

But if you took at the form in which the text is couched, you will perceive that the apostle, in using these words, utters them not so much as an exhortation, as a prayer offered up to God in their behalf; for he knew well that the God of all grace could alone do all these things for them. He speaks as an "elder;" and while writing to the people of God, his whole soul and affections seem warmed towards them: he therefore lifts up his heart unto the Lord, and beseeches "the God of all grace" to do this blessed work on their conscience, and to make them "perfect, to stablish, strengthen, and settle them."

We see then here, my friends, the path in which God leads his people. All we have and are, everything we know and feel, comes from "the God of all grace." We have nothing spiritually good in ourselves; all therefore that we have is the free gift of his hand, and comes from the everflowing Fountain of mercy and truth. It will be our mercy then, as the Lord may enable us, to be ever looking to him, not looking to books, not looking to ministers; these are only instruments, and in themselves but poor instruments. The soul must look through all and above all to "the God of all grace." Since I have been in Town this visit, hundreds perhaps may have heard my voice, but you must not look to me, or any man to teach and bless your soul. The Lord enable you to look to him alone as "the God of all grace," to seek him in secret, to pour out your hearts before him, and to call on his blessed name, that he would lead your souls into a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." The Lord enable you to examine every truth as it is brought before you by the light of God's Spirit in your heart, to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

And however deeply some here may feel the vileness of their hearts, remember this, my friends, there is "the God of all grace" to go to. If you feel yourselves the vilest of sinners,

he suits you the more as "the God of all grace." If you feel dark, stupid, and barren, it is the greater reason that you should call on "the God of all grace" to revive your drooping soul. If any here have lost past enjoyments, and are now "walking in darkness" that may be felt, it is the more reason they should seek "the God of all grace," that he may supply their wants out of Christ's fulness, as the covenant head. Yea, whatever trials, perplexities, and temptations may harass your soul, it is only to open the way for "the God of all grace" to appear. In whatever affliction you may be, it will be your wisdom, as it will be your mercy, to be looking up unto him, that he may comfort your soul; and, turning from man, as Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, commit your case to him.

Remember this then, if "the God of all grace" has indeed "called you unto his eternal glory"—if he has indeed touched your heart with his blessed finger—remember you will have to walk, from beginning to end, in a path of suffering: for the whole path, more or less, is a path of tribulation. And, while walking in this path, and suffering from sin, Satan, the world, and the evil of your own heart, it is only to lead you up more unto "the God of all grace:" it is only that God may, in his own time, "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." And when your soul has passed through these trials, you will see God's hand in all praise him for all, and will perceive how good it was for you to have been afflicted, and to have walked in this painful path: that having suffered with Christ Jesus, you might sit down with him in his eternal glory!

May "the God of all grace," then who hath called some of you to "his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." And into his blessed hands, with sincere desires for your

spiritual welfare, do I desire now and ever to commit both
you and myself.