



Not Worthy to be Compared

by James Smith (1862)

[The following was written more than 150 years ago by James Smith. His insightful perspective is timeless and eternally significant. He reminds us that sufferings of life are actually insignificant when compared to the eternal joy believers will realize in the presence of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.]

“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!” Romans 8:18

The mortification of sin *proves that we have the life of God*. The life of God *proves that we are the children of God*. Being the children of God *proves that we are the heirs of God*. Being the heirs of God *proves that our inheritance is sure!*

We shall share with Christ, being joint heirs with Him. As we shall be like Christ in His *glory*, we must be first conformed to Him in His *humiliation*. If we are conformed to Jesus when He humbled Himself, we shall suffer, and perhaps suffer greatly. But however great, varied, or long-continued our sufferings may be, we are encouraged to endure them with patience and fortitude from the conclusion of the apostle, when he says in Romans 8:18, “*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!*” Let us consider ...

The Comparison . . . Paul compares *present sufferings* with *future glory*.

Believers are exposed to all kinds of suffering. Instead of obtaining an *exemption* on the ground of their sonship or heirship, they are assured that it is through *much* tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God. How much some suffer in mind from doubts and fears, from horrid suggestions, vile insinuations, and violent temptations, from the working of corruption, and the constant conflict between the flesh and the spirit!

Some endure *inward* suffering, with which no one is fully acquainted but God Himself. They have such darkness, gloom, distress, agitation, trouble, and sorrow—as would not be easy to describe.

Some suffer much in *body*, from the stressed and disordered state of the nervous system, from chronic diseases, or deformities in the physical frame. They seldom move without suffering and for years have but little freedom from weakness and pain. They live a *life of suffering*, a kind of *dying life*, and think much of heaven as of a place where there is no more pain.

Some suffer much *financially*, scarcely anything seems to prosper with them. Losses, crosses, and opposition meet them at every turn. Though they wish to live honestly and conduct their business honorably, they are thwarted, hindered, and filled with perplexity. No one can tell what they suffer from financial trials and difficulties.

Others suffer from *reproach*, misrepresentation, strife, and persecution in the world, or in the Church, or both. No one seems to understand them or is prepared to sympathize with them. They are like “a sparrow alone upon the housetop.” False friends and open enemies unite to trouble and distress them, so that they often sigh and say, “O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!”

Others suffer in the *domestic* circle or from some of the *relationships* of life and are called to suffer long and seriously.

Whether from trouble of mind, sickness of body, business trials, family disorder, or persecution for Christ’s sake—believers suffer and many suffer *much!* But compare *present sufferings* with *future glory*—

Glory which will exclude all pain and suffering, all sin and sorrow ...

Glory beyond the reach of all foes and the cause of all trouble ...

Glory which includes happiness—perfect, perpetual, never-ending happiness ...

Glory which includes honor—the highest, holiest, and most satisfying honor ...

Glory, or splendor, which will fill the soul, clothe the body, and dignify the entire person forever!

If the face of Moses shone when he had been for a short space on the mount with God—then much more will the entire persons of the saints shine when they are forever with the Lord. As on the Mount of Transfiguration the face of Jesus shone like the sun, and his clothing was white and glistening; even so, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Filled with light, peace, and joy and clothed with beauty, brightness, and magnificence—they will appear with Christ in glory—filling them with wonder and unutterable delight!

It will be put upon us, and Jesus will be glorified in His saints and admired by all those who believe. It will be possessed by us, as part of our marriage portion and inalienable inheritance. But we can form no adequate idea of the glory which shall be revealed in us; for “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him!” (1 Corinthians 2:9). We must die to know it, or live until Jesus comes, in order to understand it. We will now look at . . .

The Conclusion . . . Paul had reasoned, compared, and weighed the *present* with the *future*.

After careful comparison Paul arrives at the conclusion, and says, “*I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*” Paul was qualified to judge, for if anyone knew what **sufferings** were—he did; and he knew what *glory* was too. He suffered much, he suffered often, and he suffered long. He could say, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:8-11).

And comparing himself and his sufferings with some others, he writes, “Are they servants of Christ? I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches” (2 Cor 11:23-28).

Here is a list of sufferings! Where shall we find a parallel? Yet this *great sufferer* says, “Our *light* and *momentary* troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal!” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

As far as sufferings are concerned, Paul was quite qualified to judge between present sufferings and future glory.

But he knew something of **glory** too; for he had been in Paradise! He had witnessed the happiness, heard the songs, observed the services, and seen the glory of the spirits of the just men made perfect. This honor was peculiar to himself. Peter, James, and John had seen the Master transfigured on the mount, and could therefore form some better idea of what glory was than the other disciples. Paul, however, had been up in the third heaven! Hear his own testimony: “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the *third heaven*. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to *paradise*. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). Having been in paradise, in the third heaven—having seen, heard, and tasted something of the joys of glory and the glorious joys of the blessed—he was qualified to judge between present sorrow and future joy.

Let us, then, when called to suffer—to suffer severely, to suffer long—let us **look forward**, by the help of the Word of God, and *compare the present with the future*.

Present good compared—with future evil. This decided Moses: “By faith *Moses*, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He *chose* to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ—as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward!” (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Let us compare present evil—with future good. This decided others: “Others were tortured and refused to be released, *so that they might gain a better resurrection*. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated!” (Hebrews 11:35-37).

Again, “You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions” (Hebrews 10:34).

Let us compare temporal good and evil—with the good and evil which are eternal, as Paul did. He looked at . . .
sufferings as from man—and glory as from God;
sufferings as earthly—and glory as heavenly;
sufferings here as short—and glory as eternal;
sufferings as light—when contrasted with an eternal weight of glory;
sufferings as very much confined to the body—and glory as including, filling, and overflowing both body and soul;
sufferings as very much from outside us—and glory as within us.

Let us look at the two subjects as we shall—if we look at them scripturally, soberly, and through a spiritual medium—we must come to the sure conclusion, “*that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!*”

Sufferings, then, are not inconsistent with *sonship*. Many of the Lord’s little ones are tempted to think that, if they were the Lord’s children, they would not be *tried* as they are, or would not feel their trials as they do. But this is a mistake. All God’s children *suffer*, more or less; and all *feel*, and feel acutely too.

No one ever *suffered* as God’s *First-born* did; nor did anyone ever *feel* suffering so acutely as He did. Reproach, He said, *broke His heart*.

Our sufferings are all connected with *sin*. Sin is the natural source of all suffering. If there were no sin there would be no suffering; there could be none. Jesus never could have suffered if God had not laid on Him our iniquities. But for sin in *us* calling for stripes—or but for sin in *others* stirring them up to afflict us—we should not suffer as we do.

But many of our sufferings come upon us for *Christ’s sake*, and are called “the sufferings of Christ,” which we are called to fill up in our bodies.

If I suffer for sin in *myself*—then I may well *abhor* myself.

If I suffer from sin in *others*—then I may well *pity* the inflictor of the punishment, and admire the distinguishing grace of God which makes me to differ.

But if I suffer for *righteousness’s sake*, for Jesus’ sake—then I may well rejoice; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon me!

Our present sufferings—are **mixed with many mercies**. What alleviations we have . . .

in the kindness of friends,
in the means of grace,
in the comforts of the Holy Spirit,
in the knowledge of our pardon,
in the sense of our acceptance with God,
in the testimony of a good, enlightened, and honest conscience!

We never have *unmixed* sorrow or *unmixed* suffering here on earth.

The *light* mingles with the *darkness*;
mercy mixes with our *misery*;
joy blends with our *sorrow*.

But our **glory** will be *unmixed*, neither with shame or pain.

In glory we shall never blush, hang down the head, or avert the face; but we shall be as fearless and bold as a lion and as unconscious of guilt as a holy angel!

There we shall feel no pain. Nothing will ever agitate the mind, trouble the soul, or pain the body.

Unmixed holiness, unmixed happiness, perfect health, and perpetual youth—will be our unfading, changeless portion!

The *present* is our only *suffering* time. As, therefore, our sufferings are but **partial**—so they must be **short**. Time, at best, is not long. But what is our time? Like the insect, we are born, flutter about—and die in a day. True, an hour's suffering—appears longer than twelve hours' pleasure; but the sufferings of all time will be as nothing—if compared with the joys of eternity!

For believers in Jesus, sufferings are **confined** to *earth*; they cannot enter *heaven*; they are confined to *time*; they cannot run forward into *eternity*.

Present sufferings—will introduce us to future glory. Our sufferings are only those of *children who are going home to take possession of the family inheritance*.

If the *inn* is not pleasant—we shall leave it tomorrow!

If our *conveniences* and *comforts* are not now first-rate—they soon will be!

If the *road* is rough—we have only to pass over it once.

If the *weather* is harsh—it will very soon be fine; *storms* are not generally very long-lived.

We get nearer *home* every day!

The last *pain* will soon be felt.

The last *groan* will soon escape us.

The last *conflict* will soon be ended.

We shall soon cross the threshold of *our Father's house*!

Soon, very soon, we shall be absent from the body—and be present with the Lord. Our glory is *prepared*; it only waits to be *revealed*. Glory and honor are to be brought unto us at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is laid up for us in heaven. It is *reserved* in heaven for us. When Christ who is our life shall appear—then shall we also appear with him in glory.

“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling!” (2 Corinthians 5:1-2). What, O what will it be—to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling! How shall we feel—when we inhabit a **body** which is spiritual, powerful, incorruptible, and immortal!

Is it not a wonder that, in this world of sin and sorrow, suffering privations and sorrows, pained as we are both in body and mind—that we do not look, long, and cry aloud for the coming of Jesus! If we sympathized with the sorrows of others—if we were properly affected with the groans of a suffering creation—if we desired as we should the manifestation of the sons of God—surely, surely, we should daily, yes hourly, cry out, “*Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!*”