

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”**NO. 3244****A SERMON****PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1911****DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON****ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1870***“Our light affliction.”**2 Corinthians 4:17*

PERHAPS someone here thoughtlessly says, “Well, whoever calls affliction, ‘light,’ must have been a person who knew very little about what affliction really is. If he had suffered as I have done, he would not have written about ‘our light affliction.’ He must have been in robust health and known nothing of sickness and pain.”

“Just so,” says another, “and if he had been as poor as I am and had to work as hard as I do to maintain a sickly wife, and a large family, he would not have written about ‘our light affliction.’ I expect the gentleman who used that expression lived very much at his ease and had all that his heart could wish.” “Ay,” says another, “and if he had stood by an open grave and had to lament the loss of loved ones, as I have done, and if he had known what it was to be desolate and forsaken, as I have known it, he would not have written about ‘our light affliction.’”

Now, if you talk like that, you are all of you mistaken, for the man who wrote these words was probably afflicted more than any of us have ever been. The list of his afflictions that he gives us is perfectly appalling—“in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.” Is there anyone here who could truthfully make out such a catalog of personal afflictions as the apostle Paul endured?

“Well then,” says one, “he must have been so hardened that he took no notice of it, like the Red Indian who will endure terrible torture without a groan, or like the Stoic philosopher who concealed his inward feelings beneath an unmoved countenance.” No, you also are mistaken. If you read Paul’s letters to his private friends and to the churches, you will see that they bear abundant evidences that he was a man of great tenderness of spirit and of intense emotion—one who could suffer and who did suffer most acutely.

His education and training had fitted him for a life amongst the most learned and refined of his countrymen, yet he had to support himself by laboring as a tent-maker and to journey hither and thither in peril and privation. And though he endured all this in absolute submission to the will of God, yet there was nothing stoical about his resignation.

“Well then,” says another, “he must have been one of those careless, lighthearted people who never trouble about anything that happens and whose motto is, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’” Oh, no! The apostle Paul was not at all that kind of man. He was the most thoughtful, logical, careful, considerate man of whom I have ever read.

He knew what it was to be joyful, yet there was never any sign of levity about him. He had a grandly buoyant spirit which lifted him above waves of sorrow in which most men would have sunk, yet he was never frivolous. He wrote of “our light affliction” even when he was heavily afflicted and while he acutely felt that affliction.

The sailor forgets the storm when he is again safely on shore, and we are all apt to think less of our sickness when we have been restored from it—but Paul was in the midst of affliction when he called it “light.” He felt the weight of it, and was fully conscious of the pressure of it upon his spirit, but the elastic spring of faith within his soul was so vigorously in action that he was enabled at that very time to call it “our light affliction.”

We must not forget that Paul had afflictions which were peculiarly his own. There are afflictions which Christians have because they are Christians, and which those who are not Christians do not have. And Paul, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, had sufferings which were peculiarly his because he was an apostle. Because he was specially called to be the apostle of the Gentiles, because he was chosen to carry the Gospel to many nations, because he was called to stand even before the cruel Emperor Nero—for that very reason—he who was peculiarly gifted and especially chosen above all others to do most arduous and onerous work was also called to endure unusual trial.

He had spelt out the word, “AFFLICTION” as perhaps no other mere man had done—he had seen it written in capital letters across his whole life—so he could speak, not as a novice, but as one who had graduated in the school of affliction, and yet he wrote concerning “our light affliction.” Before I have finished my discourse, I hope that most if not all here will agree with the apostle and say, “We also call our affliction light.”

I. I am going to speak, first, specially TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

And to them I would say—Dear brethren and sisters in Christ, *our affliction is light compared with the object we have in view.*

Much of the affliction that the apostle had to endure came upon him because he was seeking the conversion of the heathen and the ingathering of the elect into the kingdom of Christ. If this is the object you also have in view, my dear friend, and you are made to suffer through your sedulous and faithful pursuit of it, I think you may truly call anything you have to endure a light affliction.

If you have ever seen a mother sit up night after night with her sick child, you must have sometimes wondered that her eyes did not close in slumber. You were amazed that she did not permit someone else to share her task, but she seemed to think nothing of the cost to herself if she might only be the means of saving her little one’s life. ’Twas love made her labor light, and he who truly loves the souls of sinners will willingly bear any affliction for their sakes if he may but bring them to the Savior.

Yes, and he will also patiently endure affliction from them as he remembers how, in his own willfulness and waywardness, he caused his Savior to suffer on his behalf. If a man could know that, all through his life, he would have to wear a threadbare garment and exist upon very scanty fare—if he were sure that, throughout his life, he would meet with but little kindness from Christians, and with nothing but persecution from worldlings—and if, at the close of his career, he could only expect to be devoured by dogs or his body to be cast to the carrion crows, yet might he think all this to be but a light affliction if he might but win one soul from the unquenchable flame.

Such trials as these are, happily, not necessary—but if they were, we might count them as nothing in comparison with the bliss of bringing up from the depths of sin the precious pearls that are forever to adorn the crown of the Redeemer.

Still speaking to Christian workers, I have next to say that *our affliction is light compared with our great motive.*

What should be the great motive of all who seek to spread the Gospel and to win sinners for Christ? Surely there is no motive comparable to that of seeking to bring glory to God by gathering into the kingdom of Christ those for whom He shed His precious blood. Ever keep in memory, beloved, what Jesus has done for us. He left His radiant throne in glory and condescended to take upon Himself our nature, and also our sin,—

***“Bearing, that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

Saved by His almighty grace, cleansed by His ever-precious blood, living because we have been made partners of His life, how can we help loving Him who has made us what we are? When that sacred passion burns vehemently within our hearts, we feel that any affliction that we have to endure in order to glorify Christ is too light to be even worth mentioning.

O you devoted lovers of the Savior, have you not known hours when you have envied the martyrs and wished that you too might be allowed to wear the ruby crown? When you have read about how they had to lie for years in cold, damp dungeons, and then at last were dragged forth to die at the block, the stake, or the scaffold, have you not felt that your lives were poor and mean compared with theirs and that you would gladly sacrifice all the comfort you now enjoy if you might be permitted to die for Christ as they did? I hope that many of you could truthfully say to your dear Lord and Savior,—

*“Would not my ardent spirit vie
With angels round the throne,
To execute Thy sacred will,
And make Thy glory known?”*

*“Would not my heart pour forth its blood
In honor of Thy name,
And challenge the cold hand of death
To damp the immortal flame?”*

It was such a spirit as this that must have possessed the apostle Paul when he wrote concerning “our light affliction.” Let us, also, as workers for Christ, reckon as light affliction anything we have to endure by which we may glorify Him who bore such a terrible weight of suffering and sorrow for us.

II. Now, secondly, I am going to speak TO THOSE WHO COMPLAIN OF THE WEIGHT OF THEIR AFFLICTION.

Dear brethren and sisters, let me remind you that *your affliction is light compared with that of many others*. Think of the horrors of a battlefield and of the armies of the poor wounded men who have to lie there so long untended. Living in peace in our happy island home, it is difficult for us to realize the misery and wretchedness that are being endured in Paris even while I am preaching to you. [It will be seen, from the date at the head of the Sermon, that it was preached during the Franco-Prussian War.]

Some of you complain of shortness of bread, but you have not to suffer the pangs of hunger as so many of the inhabitants of the French capital are at this moment suffering. There are some who are miserable as soon as any little ache or pain seizes them, yet their affliction is very light compared with that of many who never know what it is to be well and strong.

Even if we are called to suffer pain, let us thank God that we have not been deprived of our reason. If we could go through the wards of Bethlehem Hospital, not far from us, and see the many forms of madness represented, I think each one of us would be moved to say, “My God, I thank You that, however poor or sick I am, You have preserved me from such mental affliction as many have to bear.”

How thankful we all ought to be that we are not in prison! Does it seem improbable that such good people as we are could ever be numbered amongst the law-breakers of the land? You know how Hazeel said to Elisha, “Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” Yet he did all that the prophet foretold—and but for the restraining grace of God, you and I, dear friends, might have been suffering the agony and remorse that many are tonight enduring in the prisons of this and other lands.

I need not go on multiplying instances of those who are suffering in various ways in mind or body or estate, but I think I have said enough to convince you that our affliction, whatever form it may assume, is light compared with that of many others.

Next, *our affliction is light compared with our deserts*. We can truly say, with the psalmist, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” If the Lord had not dealt with us in mercy and in His grace, we might have been at this moment beyond the reach of hope, like

that rich man who in vain begged, “Father Abraham” to send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool his parched tongue.

Yes, ungodly one, you might have been in hell tonight—in that outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Let the goodness of God in preserving you alive until now lead you to repent of your sin and to trust in the Savior. Thank God you are still out of the pit—the iron gate has not yet been opened to admit you—and then been closed upon you forever.

Yet remember that you are, as it were, standing upon a narrow neck of land between two unbounded seas and that the waves are every moment washing away the sand from beneath your feet, and rest no longer upon such an unsafe footing, lest it should give way altogether and you should sink down into the fathomless abyss.

As for any affliction that you ever can have to endure on earth, it is not merely light, it is absolutely unworthy of mention in comparison with the eternal woe that is the portion of the lost. Be thankful that, up to the present moment, this has not been your portion—and lest it should be—flee at once for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the Gospel.

Then next, *our affliction is very light compared with that of our Lord*. Do you, dear friend, murmur at the bitterness of the draught in the cup which is put into your hand? But what heart can conceive of the bitterness of that cup of which Jesus drank? Yet He said, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Is the disciple to be above his Master, and the servant above his Lord? Did Christ have to swim through stormy seas and—

***“Must you be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease?”***

I think there is no consolation for an afflicted child of God so rich as that which arises from the contemplation of the sufferings of Jesus. The remembrance of the agony and bloody sweat of Gethsemane has often dried up the sweat of terror upon the anguished brow of the believer. The stripes of Jesus have often brought healing to his wounded followers. The thirst, the desertion and the death on Golgotha—all the incidents of our Savior’s suffering and the terrible climax of it all—have been most helpful in assuaging the sorrows of stricken saints.

Brethren and sisters in Christ, your sufferings are not worth a moment’s thought when compared with the immeasurable agonies of Jesus your Redeemer. My soul would prostrate herself at His dear pierced feet, and say, “I have never seen any other affliction like Your affliction. I have beheld and seen, but I have never seen any sorrow like unto Your sorrow. You are indeed the incomparable Monarch of misery, the unapproachable King of the whole realm of grief. Of old, You were the ‘Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ and no man has ever been able to rob You of Your peculiar title.”

I think that such reflections as these will help us to realize that, however heavy our affliction appears to us to be, it is very light compared with that of our dear Lord and Master.

***“Sons of God, in tribulation,
Let your eyes the Savior view,
He’s the rock of our salvation,
He was tried and tempted, too;
All to succor
Every tempted, burden’d son.”***

And further, beloved, *our affliction is very light compared with the blessing which we enjoy*. Many of us have had our sins forgiven for Christ’s sake—and the blessing of full and free forgiveness must far outweigh any affliction that we ever have to endure. When we were lying in the gloomy dungeon of conviction and had not a single ray of hope to lighten the darkness, we thought that, even though we had to be kept in prison all our days and to be fed only upon bread and water, we could be quite joyous if we

could but be assured that God’s righteous anger was turned away from us, and that our sins and iniquities He would remember against us no more forever.

Well, that is just what many of us have experienced—our transgressions have been forgiven and our sin has been covered by the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Then let us rejoice and be glad all our days.

But this is not all the blessing that we have received, for we have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ and adopted into the family of God. Now we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. We even now share in all the privileges of the children of God, and there are still greater favors and honors reserved for us in the future, as the apostle John says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” We already have a foretaste of the bliss that is laid up in store for us, for—

*“The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope do grow.”*

So it is quite true that, in comparison with our blessings and privileges, our affliction is indeed light.

And dear friends, we specially realize that *our affliction is light as we prove the power of the Lord’s sustaining grace*. Some of you have never personally proved its power, but many of you do know by practical experience what I mean. There are times when, through acute physical pain or great mental anguish, the soul is at first utterly prostrate. But at last it falls back, in sheer helplessness, upon the bosom of Jesus, gives up struggling, and resigns itself absolutely to His will.

And then—I speak what I do know and testify what I have felt—there comes into the soul a great calm, a quiet joy so deep and so pure as never is experienced at any other time. I have sometimes looked back upon nights of pain—pain so excruciating that it has forced the tears from my eyes—and I have almost asked to have such suffering repeated if I might but have a repetition of the seraphic bliss that I have often enjoyed under such circumstances.

I made a mistake when I said, “seraphic” bliss, for seraphs have not the capacity for suffering that we have and therefore they can never experience that deep, intense, indescribable bliss that is our portion when, by grace, we are enabled to glorify God even in the furnace of affliction.

*“Let me but hear my Savior say,
‘Strength shall be equal to thy day!’
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace.*

*“I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there:
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While His left hand my head sustains.”*

We may well say that no affliction weighs more than a gnat resting upon an elephant when the Lord’s upholding grace is sweetly manifested to our soul in times of perplexity, anxiety, and pain. It is just then that Jesus often so graciously reveals Himself to us that we even come to love the cross that brings Him specially near to us.

I can understand that strange speech of Rutherford, as some have regarded it, when he said that he sometimes feared lest he should make his cross into an idol by loving affliction too much because of the blessed results that flowed from it. The bark of the tree of affliction may be bitter as gall, but if you get to the pith of it, you will find that it is as sweet as honey.

Once more, affliction—*sanctified affliction*—*becomes very light when we see to what it leads*. Sin is our great curse and anything that can help to deliver us from the dominion of sin is a blessing to us. It seems that, in the constitution of our nature and in the divine discipline under which we are being trained, our growth in grace is greatly assisted by affliction and trial.

There are certain propensities to evil that can only be removed in the furnace—as the dross is burnt away from the pure metal—and surely, brethren, you who know the exceeding sinfulness of sin would not think any affliction too severe that should humble your pride, or subdue your passions, or slay your sloth, or overcome any other sin that so easily besets you. You will not merely acquiesce in the Lord’s dealings with you, but you will devoutly thank Him for using the sharp knife of affliction to separate you from your sin.

A wise patient will gratefully thank the surgeon who cuts his flesh and makes it bleed—and who will not allow it to heal up too quickly. And when God, by His gracious Spirit’s operation, uses the stern surgery of trial to eradicate the propensity to sin, we do well to kiss the hand that holds the knife and to say with cheerfulness as well as with resignation, “The will of the Lord be done.”

*“It needs our hearts be wean’d from earth,
It needs that we be driven,
By loss of every earthly stay,
To seek our joys in heaven.”*

Now, lastly, *our affliction is light compared with the glory which is so soon to be revealed to us and in us*. Some of us are much nearer to our heavenly home than we have ever imaged. Possibly, we are reckoning upon another twenty or even forty years service, yet the shallows of our life’s day are already lengthening although we are unaware that it is so.

Perhaps we are anticipating long periods of fightings without and fears within, but those anticipations will never be realized, for the day of our final victory is close at hand, and there doubts and fears shall never again be able to assail our spirits. In this house tonight there may be some who are sitting on the very banks of the Jordan—and just across the river lies the land that flows with milk and honey—the land which is reserved as the inheritance of the true children of God. Their eyes are so dimmed with tears that they cannot see—

*“Canaan’s fair and happy land,
Where their possessions lie.”*

They even imagine that they are captives by the waters of Babylon and they hang their harps upon the willows, for they fear there are many years of banishment still before them. Yet the King’s messenger is already on the way with the summons to bid them to appear before Him very soon. Even if the call does not come to some of us at once—if the Master has need of us in this world a little longer—how soon our mortal life must end!

What is our life? “It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” “As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.” But does the brevity of life cause us any anxiety? Oh, no! “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”.

And when once we reach that blest abode of all the saints, and look back upon our earthly experiences, we shall feel that any affliction we had to endure was light indeed compared with the unutterable bliss that shall then be our eternal portion. We are pilgrims to Zion’s city bound and we necessarily have certain privations and difficulties—but when our journey is at an end,—

***“One hour with our God
Will make up for it all.”***

If we have not this good hope through grace, we may well say that our affliction is *not* light. I cannot imagine how any of you, my hearers, can go on living without a Savior—you poor people, you hard-working people, you sickly, consumptive people—how can you live without a Savior? I wonder how those who are rich and who have an abundance of earthly comforts, can live on year after year without any hope (except a false one) of comfort and blessing in the life that is to come?

But as for you who have so few earthly comforts, you whose life is one long struggle for bare existence, you who scarcely know what it is to have a day without pain, how can *you* live without a Savior? Remember that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

So, “seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” May the Lord give you the grace to come to Him this very moment, and to Him shall be all the glory forever, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

2 CORINTHIANS 4

Verse 1. *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;—*

We are sometimes ready to faint, but we cast our fainting spirits into the arms of God and our strength is again renewed. At times, the very importance of an errand first weighs down the spirit of the messenger, yet afterwards it seems to impel him to more than ordinary exertion. So is it here—having been divinely entrusted with this ministry, and being ready to faint under the tremendous responsibility that it involves, we are yet roused to action by the very pressure which seems to deprive us of the power to act, and therefore “we faint not”—

2. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*

Far be it from the teacher of truth to ever use words in a non-natural sense, or to dissemble or equivocate, saying to the ear what he means not in the sense in which the hearer understands it. Far be it from us to mix with the Word of God anything of our own as vintners mix various kinds of wine, for such is the import of the word that the apostle here uses.

Let none of us ever handle the Word of God deceitfully. There is no deceit in it—it is all pure unmixed truth. An honest mind is needed for the understanding of it, and then a truthful tongue for the telling of it to others. If we preach undiluted, unadulterated truth, we must not expect that the natural heart of man will commend our honesty.

We are to commend ourselves to every man’s conscience, not by cutting and trimming the Word so as to make it palatable to our hearers—leaving one truth out to please this man, and dwelling too long upon another truth so as to please some other hearer—but by bringing out the whole teaching of the Scriptures in clear truthfulness that shall command the approval of the conscience even of those who may not accept the truth that we proclaim.

3. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:* [See Sermon #1663, The True Gospel is No Hidden Gospel]

It is not hidden under the flowers of our oratory, not hidden under the darkness of our speech, not hidden through the fog of our philosophies—if it be hidden at all, it is hidden “to them that are lost.” If

they had any spiritual perception or apprehension at all, if they were not utterly lost to everything that is spiritual, they would be able to receive the Gospel that we are bidden to preach and which therefore becomes “our gospel.”

4-5. *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,* [See Sermon #2304, Blinded By Satan] *lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,* [See Sermon #2077, The Gospel of the Glory of Christ] *who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves,—*

What a miserable topic we would have if we preached ourselves! But we do not set up ourselves as “priests” having authority to administer “sacraments” to a lower order of beings who do not possess sacerdotal sanctity. We do not claim to belong to a ministerial caste—we regard ourselves as simply on an equality with the rest of the Christian brotherhood, and therefore, “we preach not ourselves,”—

5-6. *But Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,—*

We cannot, therefore, darken the Gospel, or cover it up, “for God hath shined in our hearts,”—

6-7. *To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,—*

The most earnest and faithful minister of the Gospel must ever remember that humbling truth. He has this precious treasure of the Gospel entrusted to his charge. He knows he has it and he means to keep it safely, but still, he is nothing but an earthen vessel, easily broken, soon marred—a poor depository for such priceless truth. Yet God has a good reason for putting this treasure into earthen vessels,—

7. *That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

If angels had been commissioned to preach the Gospel, we might have attributed some of its power to their superior intelligence. And if only those had been called to preach the Gospel were men of great intellect and of profound learning, we might have considered that the talent of man was the essential qualification for a preacher. But when God selects—as He often does, nay, as He *always* does—earthen vessels, and some that seem more manifestly earthen than others, then the excellency of the power is unquestionably seen to be of God, and not of us.

In Paul’s case, the earthiness of the vessel appeared in the trouble which he had to bear.

8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;—*

He is not so far gone as that. He sees the stormy billows raging around outside the ship everywhere, and the ship is tossed hither and thither upon the waves, yet she does not leak, there is no water in the hold, and the waves will not sink the ship as long as she can keep them outside—and trouble will not distress us as long as we can obey our Lord’s injunction, “Let not your *heart* be troubled.” “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;”—

8. *We are perplexed, but not in despair;—*

We scarcely know what to do, but by His grace we have not given way to despair. We are perplexed, but hope has not gone from us. *Dum spiro spero*, was the old Latin proverb—“While I live, I hope.” But the Christian proverb is a still better one, *Dum expro spero*—“Even while I die I still have hope,” for “the righteous hath hope in his death.”

9. *Persecuted, but not forsaken;*

For there is One who, when we are persecuted, is persecuted with us, and persecuted in us, who has promised that we shall not be left desolate. He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”—

*“Should persecution rage and flame,
Still trust in thy Redeemer’s name;
In fiery trials thou shalt see
That, ‘as thy day, thy strength shall be.’”*

9. *Cast down, but not destroyed;—*

Even if the adversary is able to cast us down, he is not able to destroy us, for “underneath are the everlasting arms.” “Cast down, but not destroyed”—

10. *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

Thus did these apostolic saints in a very high sense die daily, and so must we, when called to suffer for the truth’s sake, bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

11-12. *For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*

The unselfishness of Christian affection is here seen, in that Paul was willing even to be delivered unto death if only the church in Corinth and other Christians might receive more of the divine life. This is the motive that actuated our blessed Lord Himself. He saved others, but in order to do so, Himself He could not save—and he who would be a blessing to others must expect that just in proportion to the good that he is able to impart to them must be the cost to himself.

13-16. *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish,—*

As, in the case of most of the apostles—it did absolutely and literally perish by martyrdom.

16. *Yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

As our body, through pain and disease, is constantly sinking towards the grave, here is our continual consolation—that our inner man is renewed day by day.

17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

This is one of the most remarkable verses in all Scripture. The contrast here drawn is perfect and the language is in the highest degree pertinent to the subject. When the apostle speaks of *affliction*, he contrasts it with glory. The affliction he calls a *lightness* of affliction, but the glory he calls a *weight* of glory—and while he describes the affliction as *momentary*, he rightly says that the glory is *eternal*.

And then, as though he would make the contrast still more vivid, he says that this momentary, light affliction, “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” He can scarcely find words big enough to express the contrast between what believers now have to endure and what they shall forever enjoy.

18. *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.