

# CHRIST—PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS

## NO. 478

A SERMON  
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 BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
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*“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”*  
*Hebrews 2:10.*

BELIEVING that God foreknows all things, we cannot but come to the conclusion that He foreknew the fall, and that it was but an incident in the great method by which He would glorify Himself. Foreknowing the fall, and foreordaining and predestinating the plan by which He would rescue His chosen out of the ruins thereof, He was pleased to make that plan a manifestation of all His attributes, and, to a very great extent, a declaration of His wisdom. You do not find in the method of salvation a single tinge of folly. The Greeks may call it folly, but they are fools themselves. The Gospel is the highest refinement of wisdom, ay, of divine wisdom, and we cannot help perceiving that not only in its main features, but in its little points, in the details and the minutiae, the wisdom of God is most clearly to be seen. Just as in the making of the tabernacle in the wilderness not a single loop or clasp was left to human chance or judgment, so in the great scheme of salvation, not a single fragment was left to the human will or to the folly of the flesh.

It appears to be a law of the divine action that everything *must* be according to the fitness and necessity involved in perfect wisdom—“*It behooved that Christ should suffer,*” And in our text we find, “*It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*” It seemed to be but the order of natural fitness and congruity, in accordance with the nature and character of God, that the plan of salvation should be just what it is. Oh! how careful should we be who have to preach it, never to alter it in the slightest degree. How should we lift our prayers to heaven that God would give us a clear understanding, first, of what we have to teach, and then a clear method of teaching what we have learned, so that no mistake may be made here, for one mistake here would mar that express image of God which shines in the Gospel, and prevent our hearers from seeing the beautiful fitness and proportion which are so adapted to reveal the perfect character of God.

We say the plan *must* be what it is, it could not be otherwise so as to be in keeping with the divine character, and therefore, it is imperative upon us that we make no alteration in it, no, not of a word, lest we should hear the apostle’s anathema hissing through the air like a thunderbolt from God—“If we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that you have received let him be accursed!”

Our text invites us to the consideration of three particulars: first, *that Christ is a perfect Savior*. Secondly, *that He became so through suffering*. And thirdly, *that His being made perfect through suffering, will ennoble and dignify the whole work of grace*. “It became Him”—it seemed fitting—that “in bringing many sons unto glory” He should “make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

**I.** To begin, then, first of all with the joyous thought, so well known to you all, but so necessary still to be repeated, that THE LORD JESUS IS A PERFECT SAVIOR.

**1.** For, first, *He is perfectly adapted for the work of saving*. The singular constitution of His nature adapts Him to His office. He is *God*. It was necessary that He should be so. Who but God could sustain the enormous weight of human guilt? What but Divinity was equal to bear the awful load of wrath which was to be carried upon His shoulders? What knowledge but Omniscience could understand all the evil,

and what power but Omnipotence could undo that evil? That Christ is God must ever be a theme for grateful admiration to His people. They who reject the divinity of Christ can have but a poor foundation to rest upon, the fickle sand would seem to be more stable than the basis of their hope. It is enough for one man to work out his own obedience, more than enough for one man to bear wrath for himself, how then, could he do it for others, and for those countless multitudes whose ruin was to be retrieved? But, beloved, we know that had He only been God, yet still He would not have been fitted for a perfect Savior, unless He had become *man*.

Man had sinned, man must suffer. It was man in whom God's purposes had been for a while defeated, it must be in man that God must triumph over His great enemy. He *must* take upon Himself the seed of Abraham that He may stand in their room and stead, and become their federal head. An angel, we believe, could not have suffered on the tree, it would not have been possible for an angelic nature to have borne those agonies which the wrath of God demanded as an expiation for guilt. But when we see the Lord Jesus before us, being verily the Son of Man, and as certainly the Son of God, we perceive that now Job's desire is granted, we have a daysman that can lay His hand on both, and touch humanity in its weakness, and divinity in its strength, can make a ladder between earth and heaven, can bridge the distance which separates fallen manhood from the perfection of the eternal God. No nature but one as complex as that of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, would have been perfectly adapted for the work of salvation.

And as He was adapted in His nature, so, beloved, it is very clear to us that He was also adapted by His *experience*. A physician should have some acquaintance with disease, how shall he know the remedy if he be ignorant of the malady. Our Savior knew all because "he took our infirmities and he bore our sicknesses. He was tempted in all points, like as we are." He looked not at sin from the distance of heaven, but He walked, and lived in the midst of it. He did not pass hurriedly through the world as one might hastily walk through a hospital without clearly understanding the disease, but He lived His more than thirty years in the very center of it, seeing sin in all its shapes, yes, seeing it in shapes that you and I have not yet seen. He saw it in demonic forms, for hell was let loose for a season, that the combat might be the more terrible and the victory the more glorious. He saw sin carried to its most aggravated extent, when it crucified God Himself, and nailed Jesus, the heir of heaven, to the accursed tree. He understood the disease, He was no empiric, He had studied the whole case through, deceitful as the human heart is, Jesus knew it, fickle as it is in its various appearances—Protean as it is in its constantly varying shapes, Christ knew and understood it all. His life-long walking of the hospital of human nature had taught Him the disease.

He knew the *subjects too, upon whom to operate*. He knew man, and what was in man, yes, better than the most skilled surgeon can know by experiment. He knew by experience. He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sorrows. He was Himself the patient, Himself the medicine. He took upon Himself the nature of the race He came to save, and so every feeling made Him perfect in His work, every pang instructed Him, every throb of anguish made Him wise, and rendered Him the more accomplished to work out the purposes of God in the bringing of the many sons unto glory.

If you will add to His perfect experience *His marvelous character*, you will see how completely adapted He was to the work. For a Savior, we need one who is full of love, whose love will make Him firm to His purpose, whose love will constrain Him to yoke every power and talent that He has to the great work. We want one with zeal so flaming, that it will eat Him up, of courage so indomitable, that He will face every adversary rather than forego His end, we want one, at the same time, who will blend with this brass of courage the gold of meekness and of gentleness, we want one who will be determined to deal fearlessly with His adversaries, who will put on zeal as a cloak, and will deal tenderly and compassionately with the disease of sin-sick men—such a one we have in Christ.

No man can read the character of Christ with any sort of understanding without saying, "That is *the man* I want as my friend." The argument which Christ used was a very powerful one—"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me." Why? "*For I am meek and lowly in heart.*" The character of Christ

qualifies Him to be the world's Savior, and there is something in His character, when properly understood, which is so attractive, that we may well say—

*“His worth if all the nations knew,  
Surely the whole world would love Him too.”*

If we had to make a Savior ourselves, and it were left to a parliament of the wisest senators of the race to form an ideal person who should just meet man's case, if the Divine One had lent us His own wisdom for the occasion, we could only have desired just such a person as Christ is. In character, we should have needed just such traits of nature and of Spirit as we see in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. We think, therefore, we may safely say to every unconverted man, Christ is adapted to be a Savior to you. We know that the saints, without our saying it, will respond, “Ay, and He is just fitted to be a Savior to us.” Man, yet God, bone of our bone, and yet counting it no robbery to be equal with God, sufferer like ourselves, bearer of all the ills of manhood, and yet, unlike us, free from sin, holy, harmless, undefiled: qualified in all respects to undertake and accomplish the great work, Jesus, You are a perfect Savior to us.

2. Furthermore, as Christ is thus perfectly adapted, *so He is perfectly able to be a Savior*. He is a perfect Savior by reason of ability. He is now able to meet *all the needs* of sinners. That need is very great. The sinner needs *everything*. The beggar at the door of Christ asks not for crumbs or groats, but needs all that Christ can give. Nothing short of all-sufficiency can ever meet the wants of a poor son of Adam fallen by sin. Christ Jesus has all fullness dwelling in Himself. “More than all in Christ we find,” pardon in His blood, justification in His righteousness, wisdom in His teaching, sanctification in His Spirit. He is the God of all grace to us.

Deep as our miseries and boundless as our sins may be, the mines of His unfathomable love, His grace, and His power, exceeds them still. Send a spirit throughout all nations to hunt up the most abject of all races, discover, at last, a tribe of men degenerated as low as the beasts, select out of these the vilest, one who has been a cannibal, bring before us one lost to all sense of morality, one who has put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, light for darkness and darkness for light, let that man be red with murder, let him be black with lust, let villainies infest his heart as innumerable and detestable as the frogs of Egypt's plague—yet Christ is able to meet that man's case. It is impossible for us to produce an exaggeration of the work of sin and the devil, which Christ shall not be able to overtop by the plenitude of His power. “He is able to save *unto the uttermost* them that come unto God by Him.”

That divine word which made heaven and earth, is able to make a new creature in Christ Jesus, and that power which never can be exhausted, which after making ten thousand times ten thousand worlds could make as many more, is all in Christ, and is linked with the virtue of His merit and the prevalence of His blood, and therefore He has all power in heaven and in earth to save souls.

As He has this power to meet all needs, so He can meet all needs *in all cases*. There has never been brought to Christ a man whom He could not heal. If born blind, a touch of His finger has given sight; if lame, He has made men leap like a hart; ay, and though dead, the voice of Christ has made Lazarus come forth from his tomb. Some troubled consciences think their case is not in the list of possible cures, let us assure them it must be. I would like to know who is the vilest sinner, for if I knew him I should feel delighted to behold him, since I should see a platform upon which my Lord's grace might stand to be the more gloriously resplendent in the eyes of men. Are you the vilest of the vile this morning? Do you feel so? Does Satan say you are so? Then I pray you do my Master the honor to believe that He is still able to meet your case, and that He can save even you. Though you think yourselves the ends of the earth, the very ravelings of the garment of manhood, yet “look unto him and be you saved, all you ends of the earth, for he is God, and besides him there is none else.”

As He can meet all cases, so He can meet all cases *at all times*. One villainy of hell is to tell sinners that it is too late. While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner that returns shall find mercy in Him.

At the eleventh hour He saved the thief, let not this be a reason for your procrastination—that were ungrateful, let it, however, be a cause for hope—that were reasonable. He is able to save you *now*. Now, at this hour, at this very moment, if you do trust Him you are saved. If now, without an hour's delay to retire to your chamber, without even five minutes' time elapsing in which to prepare your soul for Him, if now you can believe that Christ can save you, He will do it, do it at this moment. His cures are instantaneous, a word, and it is done. Swift as the lightning's flash is the accomplishment of His purpose of grace. As the lightning flashes from the west even to the east, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be at His last great advent, and so is it in His marvelous advent into the hearts of sinners whom He ordains to save.

Able to meet all cases, able to meet them at this very hour is Christ. Sinner, Christ is perfectly able to save you, and to save you perfectly. I know the will and wit of man want to be doing something to begin salvation. Oh, how wicked is this! Christ is Alpha, why would you take His place and be an Alpha to yourselves?

I have had this week two cases in which I have had to hold a solemn argument with troubled souls about this matter. Oh! the "ifs" and "buts" they put, the "perhaps," and "and," and "peradventures," and "Oh, I don't feel this," and "I don't feel that!" Oh, that wicked questioning of Christ! While talking with them, endeavoring to comfort them, and I hope not unsuccessfully, I was led to feel in my own mind what an awful crime it is to doubt God, to doubt Him that speaks from above, to doubt Him when He hangs bleeding on the tree. While it seemed to me to be such a hard thing to bring a sinner to trust Christ, yet it did seem, on the other hand, such a sin of sins, such a masterpiece of iniquity that we do not trust Christ at once.

Here is the plan of salvation—trust Christ and He will save you. But they say, "I do not feel enough," or else "I have been such a sinner," Or else "I cannot feel the joy I want," or else "I cannot pray as I would." Then I put it to them. Do you trust Christ? "Yes," they will say, "I do trust Christ, and yet I am not saved." Now, this makes God a liar, for He says, "He that believes in him is not condemned, and he that believes on Him has everlasting life." When a soul professes to trust Christ, and yet says, "I am afraid He will not save me," what is this but telling the Eternal God to His face that He is false? Can you suppose a grosser infamy than this? Oh! that men were wise, that they would take God at His word, and believe that Christ is a perfect Savior, not asking them to help Him at the first, but able to begin with them just where they are, and to lift them up from all the hardness of their hearts and the blackness of their souls to the very gates of heaven. He is a perfect Savior, soul, and a perfect Savior for you.

You know the old story of the brazen serpent. There may have been some very wise persons who, when the brazen serpent was lifted up, would say, "I cannot look there and be healed, for, you see, I do not feel the venom in my veins as my next door neighbor does." The man is bitten, and his veins are swelling, but he says he does not feel the pain so acutely as his neighbor, and he does not feel the joy of those who are healed, or else he would look. "If some angel would come," he says, "and tell me that the brazen serpent was set up on purpose for me, and that I am ordained to be healed by it, then I would look."

There is a poor ignorant man over there who asks no questions but does just as he is told. Moses cries, "Look, look, you dying, look and live!" and, asking no questions about what he has felt, or what he was, or what he should feel, yonder poor soul just looks and the deed is done, the flush of health runs through him, and he is restored, while the questioner, the wise man in his own conceit, too wise indeed, to do as he is told, perishes through his own folly, a victim to the serpents, but yet more a victim to his own conceit.

Christ is a perfect Savior to begin with you, and He will also be a perfect Savior to carry on the work. He will never want your help, He is a perfect Savior to finish the work. He will bring you at last to His right hand, and throned with Him in light you shall bless and praise the name of God that He provided a perfect Savior for men.

3. Once more, let me remind you *that Christ is a perfectly successful Savior*. I mean by this that, in one sense, *He has already finished the work of salvation*. All that has to be done to save a soul Christ has done already. There is no more ransom to be paid, to the last drachma He has counted down the price. There is no more righteousness to be wrought out, to the last stitch He has finished the garment. There is nothing to be done to reconcile God to sinners, He has reconciled us unto God by His blood. There is nothing wanted to clear the way to the mercy seat, we have a new and living way through the veil that was rent, even the body of Christ. There is no need of any preparation for our reception on the part of God. “It is finished,” was the voice from Calvary, it meant what it said, “*It is finished.*” Christ has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

And, as He has been successful in doing all the work for us, so, *in every case where that work has been applied, perfect success has followed*. Produce a single case where an application has been made to Christ without success. Find a single soul in whom Christ has commenced His work, and then left it. You do hear of some who fall from grace, produce them. We are told of some who are children of God today, and children of the devil tomorrow, produce them. We are told that whom once He loves He may leave, produce those whom He has ever left. Let them be seen. Hold them up to the gaze of men and devils—the patients in whom Christ’s medicine did work awhile, but failed to produce a lasting cure. Heaven were clothed in sackcloth if such a discovery were made, for if He has failed to keep on earth, why not in heaven? Hell were echoing with infernal laughter if one such instance were found, for where were the honor of God’s word and promise?

We challenge you, you princes of darkness, and you who make the vast assembly of the damned in hell, we challenge you to produce in all your ranks a single case of one who trusted in Christ that He would deliver him and yet Christ cast him away, or one in whom the new spirit was infused and regeneration wrought, and who yet, after all fell and perished like the rest. Lift up your eyes to heaven, innumerable as the stars are the spirits redeemed by blood, so many as they are, they are all witnesses to the fact that Christ is a perfect Savior, that He is no professor who does not perform, for He has carried them all there, and as we gaze upon them we can say, “*You have redeemed them unto God by Your blood,*” You can save, and perfectly save, O Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I have thus dwelt upon the perfect adaptation, the perfect ability, and the perfect success of Christ. Our text tells us that *it became Him, for whom are all things, that He should give us such a Savior*. “For whom are all things,” says the apostle, that is, all things are made for His glory. Now, it could not have been for God’s glory to give us an imperfect Savior, to send us one who would mock us with hopes which could not be fulfilled. It would have been a tantalizing of human hope, which I do not hesitate to pronounce an awful cruelty, if any but a complete and perfect Savior had been presented to us. If it had been partly works and partly grace, there had been no grace in it. If it had been needful for us to do something to make Christ’s atonement efficacious, it would have been no atonement for us, we must have gone down to the pit of hell with this as an aggravation, that a God who professed to be a God of mercy had offered us a religion of which we could not avail ourselves, a hope which did but delude us, and make our darkness the blacker.

I want to know what some of my brethren in the ministry, who preach such very high doctrine, do with their God’s character. They are told to preach the Gospel to every creature, but they very wisely do not do it, because they feel that the Gospel they preach is not a Gospel suitable to every creature, so they neglect their Master’s mandate, and single out a few. I bless my Master that I have an available Gospel, one that is available to you this morning, for “*Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life,*” and I hold that it were inconsistent with the character of Him, “*For whom are all things,*” and that it were derogatory to His honor if He should have sent to you a salvation that would not meet your case, if He should have sent me to preach a Gospel to you which could not completely save. But, glory be to God, the salvation which is here preached, the salvation taught in this Book, brings all to you, and asks nothing from you.

Moreover, Paul calls our God—“*Him by whom are all things.*” It would be inconsistent with the character of Him by whom are all things if He had sent a part-Savior, for us to do part ourselves and for Christ to do the rest. Look at the sun. God wills for the sun to light the earth, does He ask the earth’s darkness to contribute to the light? Does He question night, and ask it whether it has not in its somber shades something which it may contribute to the brightness of noon? No, my brethren, up rises the sun in the morning, like a giant to run his race, and the earth is made bright.

And shall God turn to the dark sinner, and ask him whether there is anything in him that may contribute to eternal light? No, up rises the face of Jesus, like the Sun of Righteousness, with healing beneath His wings, and darkness is, at His coming, light. See you, too, the showers. When the earth is thirsty and cracking, does the Lord say unto the clouds, “Wait you until the earth can help you, and can minister unto its own fertility”? Nay, verily, but the wind blows and the clouds cover the sky, and upon the thirsty earth the refreshing showers come down. So is it with Christ, waiting not for man, and tarrying not for the Son of Man, asking nothing from us, He gives us of His own rich grace, and is a complete and perfect Savior.

Thus much, then, upon our first head, I would we had more time for our second, but we will pass to it at once.

## II. CHRIST WAS MADE A PERFECT SAVIOR THROUGH SUFFERING.

He was not made perfect in character by His suffering, for He always was perfect—perfect God, perfect man, but He was made officially perfect, perfect as the captain of our salvation through His sufferings, and that in four ways.

By His sufferings He became perfect as a Savior *from having offered a complete expiation for sin*. Sin could not have been put away by holiness. The best performance of an unsuffering being could not have removed the guilt of man. Suffering was absolutely necessary, for suffering was the penalty of sin. “In the day you eat thereof,” said God to Adam, “you shall surely die.” Die then He must. Nothing short of death could meet the case. Christ must go to the cross, He must suffer there, ay, and He must bow His head and give up the ghost, or else no atonement for sin would have been possible. The curse came upon us as the result of sin. “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.”

Now had Christ been ever so perfect, yet had He never suffered He never could have taken our curse. “Cursed is everyone that hangs on the tree,” but without the tree, without the cross, Christ had not been our substitute, and all He did could have been of no use to us. Being crucified He became accursed; being crucified He died, and thus He could make perfect expiation for sin. Sin demanded punishment, punishment must consist of loss and of pain, Christ lost everything, even to the stripping of His garment, His glory was taken from Him, they made nothing of Him, they spat in His face, they bowed the knee, and mocked Him with bitter irony.

There must be pain too, and He endured it, in His body there were the wounds and the fever which the wounds produced, and in His soul there was an exceeding heaviness even unto death, and an agony which no tongue can tell, for we have no words in which to speak of it. We believe that this agony was commensurate with the agonies of the lost in hell, not the same agony, but an equivalent for it, and remember, not the equivalent for the agony of one, but an equivalent for the hells of all that innumerable host whose sins He bore, condensed into one black draught to be drained in a few hours, the miseries of an eternity without end, miseries caused by a God infinitely angry because of an awful rebellion, and these miseries multiplied by the millions for whom the man Christ Jesus stood as covenant head.

What a draught was that, men and brethren! Well might it stagger even Him! And yet He drained that cup, drained it to its utmost dregs till not a drop was left. For you, my soul, no flames of hell, for Christ the Paschal Lamb has been roasted in that fire. For you, my soul, no torments of the damned, for Christ has been condemned in your stead. For you, my spirit, no desertion of your God, for He was forsaken of God for you. ’Tis done, ’tis finished, and by Your sufferings, Jesus, You have become perfect as the expiation of Your people’s sins.

Do, my brethren, remember that your sins are perfectly expiated. Do not let them trouble you as to punishment, the punishment has gone. Sins cannot lie in two places at one time, they were put on Christ, and they cannot be on you. In fact, your sins are not to be found, the scapegoat has gone, and your sins will never be found again. Your sins, if they were searched for, could not be discovered, nor by the piercing eye of God can a single blemish be found in you. So far as the punishment of the law is concerned it is finished, and Christ is a perfect Savior.

Again, if Christ had not suffered He could not have been perfect as a Savior, *because He could not have brought in a perfect righteousness*. It is not enough to expiate sin. God requires of man perfect obedience. If man would be in heaven He must be perfectly obedient. Christ, as He took away our guilt, has supplied us with a matchless righteousness. His works are our works, His doings are, by imputation, our doings. But, a part of obedience is a patient endurance of God's will. Patience is no mean part of the full obedience of a sincere soul. Christ must therefore suffer hunger, and cold, and nakedness, throughout life, that He may be capable of the virtue of patience. An obedience even unto death is now the only perfect form of obedience. The man who would keep the law of God perfectly must not start back even at martyrdom. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength," would now require death to consummate it. It was not possible for the Master to have made the robe, woven from the top throughout without seam, unless the scarlet thread of crucifixion had run along its edge.

But now, my soul, Christ is your perfect Savior, for He presents you with a perfect righteousness. There is nothing more to do. Neither my living, nor my dying can make my righteousness more complete. No doing, no laboring, no denying, no suffering, are needed to finish that which Christ began. "It is finished." Put on your robe, O Christian, walk ever in it, let it be your wedding dress. Angels admire you, God Himself accepts you, coming into His wedding feast, He sees you with this garment on, and He asks you not how you come hither, but bids you sit down and feast forever, for you are such as even He can keep company with in His glory.

Yet, thirdly, it was necessary that Christ should suffer to make Him a perfect Savior *so far as His sympathy goes*. After sin is washed away, and righteousness imputed, we yet need a friend, for we are in a land of troubles and of sorrows. Now, if Christ had not suffered, He could not have been a faithful high priest, made like unto His brethren. We should never have had that sweet text—"He was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin," if He had not suffered. But now He knows all shapes of suffering. It is not possible that even out of the thousands now in this house there should be one heart whose case Christ cannot meet—

***"In every pang that rends the heart  
The man of sorrows had a part."***

Disease, sickness of body, poverty, need, friendlessness, hopelessness, desertion—He knows all these! You cannot cast human suffering into any shape that is new to Christ. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." If you feel a thorn in your foot, remember that it once pierced His head. If you have a trouble or a difficulty, you may see there the mark of His hands, for He has climbed that way before. The whole path of sorrow has His blood-stained footsteps all along, for the Man of Sorrows has been there, and He can now have sympathy with you.

"Yes," I hear one say, "but my sorrows are the result of sin." So were His, though not His own, yet the result of sin they were. "Yes," you say, "but I am slandered, and I cannot bear it." They called Him a drunken man, and a wine-bibber. Why, when you once think of the sufferings of Christ, yours are not worth a thought. Like the small dust of a balance that may be blown away with the breath of an infant, such are our agonies and our trials when compared with His. Drink your little cup, see what a cup He drained. The little vinegar and gall that fall to your share you may gladly receive, for these light

afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared to the sufferings through which He passed.

Finally, upon this point, He thus became perfect *as our exemplar*. This, too, was necessary in bringing many sons unto glory, for we come to heaven by following the example of Christ, as well as by being washed in His blood. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” that holiness is best of all promoted by an investigation of Christ’s character, and a studious imitation of all its points. Now had Christ not suffered He could not have been an example to us. We should have said, “Yes, yes, He may be an example to unsuffering angels, but not to men who have to tread the hot coals of the furnace.” He could have afforded no example of patience if He had never suffered, He could never have taught us to forgive if He had never felt injuries, He could not have trained us to holy courage if He had never fought a battle, He could never have shown us the way to make tribulation work experience, and experience hope, if through tribulation He had not Himself waded to His throne.

We want not an example taken from princes to be applied to peasants. We need a poor man to be an example for the poor, we want a man who lives in private to teach us how to live in retirement, we want one who fears not the face of crowds to show us how to walk in our public ways. We want, if we would meet the case of fallen humanity, a man just like the Savior, who passed through all the various phases of life, was in all companies, was shot at from all quarters, was tempted in all points like as we are, and this could not have been if He had been led in quiet ways along a path of joy. He must do business on the tempestuous deeps, His ship must rock, His anchor drag, the thick darkness and the lightnings must gather round Him, they did so, and thus the captain of our salvation was made perfect *through suffering*, as an example for our imitation. I would that we might each of us know Him in the efficacy of His blood, in the glory of His righteousness, in the sweetness of His sympathy, and in the perfection of His example, for then would we know Him to the joy of our hearts forever.

**III.** And now, lastly, our third point—CHRIST’S HAVING BEEN MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING WILL ENNOBLE THE WHOLE WORK OF GRACE.

“It became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory”—that is the great work—“to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” The whole thing will work for His glory. Oh, my brethren, how this will glorify God at the last, that Christ, the man, should have been perfect through suffering! How this will glorify Him in the eyes of *devils!* Looking upwards from their beds of fire where they bite their iron bands in vain, how will they see the wisdom and power of God as more than a match for the wisdom and might of their leader! It was in man that they defeated God, in man God destroys them. They trampled on man’s heel, man has broken their head. They took away from man the transient crown of his Eden-glory, man wears the unfading crown of immortality. Man, even man, sits upon the throne of Godhead, and that man crowned with light and glory everlasting was a man who did encounter Satan, who met him, too, on fair grounds, not a man shielded from pain, not a man who had an immunity from internal or external distress, but a man full of weakness, full of infirmity like other men, and yet, through God in alliance with His manhood, more than a conqueror, and now reigning forever and ever.

Milton, I think it is, supposes that this may have been the reason for Satan’s first rebellion, because he could not bear that an inferior race should be lifted up to be set above himself on God’s throne. Whether this be so or not, it must certainly be an aggravation to the misery of that proud arch-traitor that now the man, the man, the man in whose image God was defeated, is heir of all things, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

How greatly will God be exalted that day *in the eyes of lost spirits*. Ah! you who shall perish—God grant there may be none such here!—if you shall ever perish in hell, you will have to glorify God as you see Christ, who was made perfect through sufferings, reigning there. You will not be able to say, “My damnation lies at God’s door,” for you will see in Christ a suitable Savior. You will have to look up and say, “Yes, He who was preached to me on Sabbath days was God, He could save me. He whom I was bidden to trust in was man, and could sympathize with me, but I would not come unto Him that I might



have life.” In letters of fire you shall see it written, “You knew your duty, but you did it not,” and even your moans and groans as you suffer shall be but an utterance of this awful truth—“Great God, You are just, nay, You are doubly just, just first, in damning me for sin, just next, in trampling me under foot, because I trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God, and counted His covenant an unholy thing.” Your weepings and wailings shall be but the deep bass of the awful praise which the whole universe, willingly or unwillingly, must give to Him who has provided a perfect Savior, and made Him perfect through suffering.

Oh, my brethren, what delight and transport will seize *the minds of those who are redeemed!* How will God be glorified then! Why, every wound of Christ will cause an everlasting song. As we shall circle His throne, rejoicing, will not this be the very summit of all our harmony—“You were slain, and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood.” We must not say what God could do or could not do, but it does seem to me that by no process of creation could He have ever made such beings as we shall be when we are brought to heaven, for if He had made us perfect yet then we should have stood through our own holiness, or if He had forgiven us without an atonement, then we should never have seen His justice, nor His amazing love. But in heaven we shall be creatures who feel that we have everything but deserve nothing, creatures that have been the objects of the most wonderful love, and therefore so mightily attached to our Lord that it would be impossible for a thousand Satans ever to lead us astray.

Again. We shall be such servants as even the angels cannot be, for we shall feel under deeper obligation to God than even they. They are but created happy, we shall be redeemed by the blood of God’s dear Son, and I am sure, brethren, day without night we shall circle God’s throne rejoicing, having more happiness than the angels, for they do not know what evil is, but we shall have known it to the full, and yet shall be perfectly free from it. They do not know what pain is, but we shall have known pain, and grief, and death, and yet shall be immortal. They do not know what it is to fall, but we shall look down to the depths of hell and remember that these were our portion.

Oh! how we will sing, how we will chant His praise, and this, I say again, shall be the highest note, that we owe all to that bright one, that Lamb in the midst of the throne. We will tell it over, and over, and over again, and find it an inexhaustible theme for melodious joy and song that He became man, that He sweat great drops of blood, that He died, that He rose again. While the angels are singing, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!” we will bid them stop the song a moment, while we say, “He whom you thus adore was once covered with bloody sweat.” As we cast our crowns at His feet, we will say, “And He was once despised and rejected of men.”

Lifting up our eyes and saluting Him as God over all, blessed forever, we will remember the reed, the sponge, the vinegar, and the nails, and as we come to Him and have fellowship with Him, He shall lead us beside the living fountains of water, we will remember the black brook of Kedron of which He drank, and the awful depths of the grave into which He descended. Amid all the splendors of heaven, we shall never forget the agony, and misery, and dishonor of earth, and even when they sing the loudest sonnets of God’s love, and power, and grace, we will sing this after all, and before all, and above all, that Jesus the Son of God died for us, and this shall be our everlasting song—“He loved us and gave Himself for us, and we have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

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