

# 2 Corinthians 4:17 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT  
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## Overview of Second Corinthians

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| 2Co 1:1-7:16   | 2Co 8:1-9:15                                | 2Co 10:1-12:21                                   |
| Character of Paul                                      | Collection for the Saints                   | Credentials of Paul                              |
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[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

**2 Corinthians 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek** : to gar parautika elaphron tes thlipseos hemon kath' hyperbolen eis hyperbolen aionion baros doxes katergazetai (3SPMI) hemin,

**Amplified**: For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!], ([Lockman](#))

**ASV**: For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory;

**Barclay**: for the light affliction which at the moment we must endure produces for us in a way that cannot be exaggerated an eternal weight of glory, ([Westminster Press](#))

**BBE**: For our present trouble, which is only for a short time, is working out for us a much greater weight of glory;

**Darby**: For our momentary and light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory;

**God's Word**: Our suffering is light and temporary and is producing for us an eternal glory that is greater than anything we can imagine. ([GWT](#))

**ESV**: For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ([ESV](#))

**GNT:** And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble.

**HCSB:** For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.

**ICB:** We have small troubles for a while now, but they are helping us gain an eternal glory. That glory is much greater than the troubles. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**ISV:** This light, temporary nature of our suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory, far beyond any comparison,

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

**Mace:** for the light affliction, which I at present suffer, will be infinitely over-balanced by an eternal weight of glory;

**MLB (Berkley):** For this slight momentary trouble is producing for us an everlasting weight of glory that exceeds all measures,

**Moffatt:** The slight trouble of the passing hour results in a solid glory past all comparison,

**NAB:** For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

**NEB:** Our troubles are slight and shortlived; and their outcome an eternal glory which outweighs them far.

**NET:** For our momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV:** For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NJB:** The temporary, light burden of our hardships is earning us for ever an utterly incomparable, eternal weight of glory,

**NKJV:** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

**NLT:** For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** These little troubles (which are really so transitory) are winning for us a permanent, glorious and solid reward out of all proportion to our pain. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**RSV:** For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

**TEV:** And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble.

**TLB:** These troubles and sufferings of ours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. Yet this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessing upon us forever and ever!

**Weymouth:** For this our light and transitory burden of suffering is achieving for us a preponderating, yes, a vastly preponderating, and eternal weight of glory;

**Wuest:** For our momentary light burden of affliction is working out for us more and more surpassingly an eternal, heavy weight of glory

**Young's Literal:** for the momentary light matter of our tribulation, more and more exceedingly (according to excess unto excess) an age-during weight of glory doth work out for us--

- **affliction:** 2Co 11:23-28 Ps 30:5 Isa 54:8 Ac 20:23 Ro 8:18,34,37 1Pe 1:6 4:7 1Pe 5:10
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Romans 8:17-23+ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. 18For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not

worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

**For (1063) (gar)** explains the second reason why Paul does not lose heart. The first was the fact that even through his body was deteriorating from age and adversity, his inner man was being daily transformed (2Co 4:16+), being conformed to the image of God's Son (Ro 8:29+).

**Momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison** -More literally this verse reads "For our temporary lightness of affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory that is out of all proportion (to the affliction)." Remember the context. Paul is defending his ministry and has explained the multiple and variegated afflictions he has endured, and yet here he is able (by the Spirit) to refer to them as **momentary** and **light**. In fact to read Paul's letters they seem to be relatively constant and heavy! His eternal mindset enabled him to see them as **momentary** and **light**.

**THOUGHT** - May God grant all of us reading this to have a supernaturally enabled eternal mindset like Paul. In Jesus' Name. Amen

John Piper writes of Paul, "When he is hurting, he fixes his eyes not on how heavy the hurt is, but on how heavy the glory will be because of the hurt."i

The puritan, **Thomas Watson**, reminds us, 'Affliction may be **lasting**, but it is not **everlasting**'. The reality is, however, when we are suffering it seems like forever. I do not wish to minimize the challenges one faces with an unrelenting illness or a broken relationship. My goal today is not to minimize suffering; my goal today is to magnify future glory. I do not want you to pretend that suffering is pleasant, rather, I want you to be able to say with Paul "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Paul's words in this verse are in a way an "answer" to Moses' prayer of Psalm 90:14, 15 in which Moses asks for joys to balance sorrows (afflictions)...

O satisfy us in the morning with Thy lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days ("eternal weight of glory"). Make us glad according to the days Thou hast afflicted us, and the years we have seen evil ("momentary, light affliction").

**Momentary** (3910) (**parautika**) (adverb) is used only here in the NT and means for the moment, for a little while, temporary, transient (lasting or staying only a short time), ephemeral (implies striking brevity of life or duration). In some secular uses it means "immediately". Parautika pertains to a relatively short period of time, with emphasis upon the temporary nature of the event or state. **Momentary** means having a brief life, a great picture of afflictions, which are "short-lived" in comparison to eternal life! Oh, how we all need to "accentuate the positive!" I love Webster's thought on **momentary** as that which is "*coming and going quickly and therefore being merely a brief interruption of a more enduring state.*"

Amplified Version has "this slight distress of the passing hour." Indeed as James says our present life is "just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." (Jas 4:14+)

**Try this little exercise** -- Use each of the following synonyms of **momentary** to modify "**light affliction**" and read the entire verse. You will memorize this verse which will be good for your heart. Your mind will be renewed by the Word of Truth (Jn 8:31, 32, Deut 32:47, Lk 1:37ASV). **Synonyms** - brief, ephemeral, evanescent, fleeting, flying, fugacious, impermanent, passing, quick, short, short-lived, temporary, transitory. Affliction never "feels" momentary and light but enduring and heavy and yet this is God's "verdict" on this subject. While I cannot explain it and it is not "mind over matter" nor "magical", I believe that allowing God's Word of Truth and Life to percolate through your being and to saturate your mind, will set you free to experience the truth of passages like James 1, so that you can indeed obey the command to...

**Consider** (**orist imperative** see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4+)

As you are transformed by this truth (2Co 3:18, Ro 12:2, Ep 4:23), the Holy Spirit supernaturally renews your mind so that begin to genuinely believe that God will not allow you to experience more that you can bear (1Co 10:13) and you come to understand that He

is there with you to help bear the burden.

(Jesus commands us to) **Come** to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. **Take** My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28, 29, 30+)

Blessed be **Jehovah**, Who daily ("day after day"; Lxx = "*hemeran kath hemeran*") bears our burden (or "bears us up" ESV), the God Who is our salvation (Heb = Yeshua ~ the essence of the Name = Jesus, the One Who saves = He moves us from distress to safety which necessitates deliverance). Selah. (Psalm 68:19)

**Spurgeon's comment:** Our version contains a great and precious truth, though probably not the doctrine intended here. God's benefits are not few nor light, they are loads; neither are they intermittent, but they come "daily;" nor are they confined to one or two favorites, for all Israel can say, he loads us with benefits. Delitzsch reads it, "He daily bears our burden;" and Alexander, "Whoever lays a load upon us, the Mighty God is our salvation."

**If He Himself burdens us with sorrow, He gives strength sufficient to sustain it; and if others endeavour to oppress us, there is no cause for fear, for the Lord will come to the rescue of his people.**

Happy nation, to be subdued by a King whose yoke is easy, and who secures his people from all fear of foreign burdens which their foes might try to force upon them.

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (1Corinthians 10:13-+)

**Ezekiel Hopkins:** Who daily bears our burden. Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his burden, as much as he can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with the like sail, and therefore God, to keep us from overturning (spiritually), puts on us only as much as will safely bring us to heaven, our desired port.

**Alexander Maclaren:** Not only does He march at the head of the congregation through the wilderness, but He comes, if I might so say, behind the caravan, amongst the carriers and the porters, and will bear anything that any of the weary pilgrims entrusts to His care. Oh, dear brethren! if familiarity did not dull the glory of it, what a thought that is—a God that carries men's loads! People talk much rubbish about the 'stern Old Testament Deity'; is there anything sweeter, greater, more heart-compelling and heart-softening, than such a thought as this? How all the Majesty bows itself, and declares itself to be enlisted on our side, when we think that 'He that sits on the circle of the heavens, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers' is the God that 'daily bears our burdens'!... the responsibilities of the Creator are in proportion to His greatness, and He that has made man has thereby made it necessary that He should, if they will let Him, be their Burden-bearer and their Servant.

'**He daily beareth our burdens.**' If there is any meaning in this word at all, it means that He so knits Himself with us as that all which touches us touches Him, that He takes a share in all our pressing duties, and feels the reflection from all our sorrows and pains. We have no impassive God in the heavens, careless of mankind, nor is His settled and changeless and unshaded blessedness of such a sort as that there cannot pass across it—if I may not say a shadow, I may at least say—a ripple from men's pangs and troubles and cares. Love is the identification of oneself with the beloved object. We call it sympathy, when we are speaking about the fellow feeling between man and man that is kindled of love. But there is something deeper than sympathy in that great Heart, which gathers into itself all hearts, and in that great Being, whose being underlies all our beings, and is the root from which we all live and grow. God, in all our afflictions, is afflicted; and in simple though profound verity, has that which is most truly represented to men, by calling it a fellow feeling with our infirmities and our sorrows.

'Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,  
And thy Maker is not nigh;  
Think not thou canst weep a tear,  
And thy Maker is not near.'

For want of a better word, we speak of the sympathy of God: but we need something far more intimate and unwearied than we understand by that word, to express the community of feeling between all who trust Him and His own infinite heart. If this bearing of our burden means anything, it gives us a deep

insight, too, into His workings, as well as into His heart. For it covers over this great truth that He Himself comes to us, and by the communication of His own power to us, makes us able to bear the burdens which we roll upon Him. The meaning of His 'lifting our load,' in so far as that expression refers to the divine act rather than the divine heart, is that He breathes into us the strength by which we can carry the heavy task of duties, and can endure the crushing pressure of our sorrows. All the endurance of the saints is God in them bearing their burdens.

Notice, too, 'daily beareth,' or, as the Hebrew has it yet more emphatically because more simply, 'day by day beareth.' He travels with us, in the greatness of His might and the long-suffering of His unwearied patience, through all our tribulation, and as He has 'borne and carried' His people 'all the days of old,' so, at each new recurrence of new weights, He is with us still. Like some river that runs by the wayside and ever cheers the traveller on the dusty path with its music, and offers its waters to cool his thirsty lips, so, day by day, in the slow iteration of our lingering sorrows, and in the monotonous recurrence of our habitual duties, there is with us the ever-present help of the Ancient of Days, who measures out daily strength for the daily load, and never sends the one without proffering the other. (Take a moment and read the entire sermon - [The Burden Bearing God](#))

**Warren Wiersbe comments on Psalm 68:19:** God is the One who gives us the burdens of life. Sometimes we bring burdens upon ourselves by our disobedience, rebellion, sin, unbelief, lack of love and unkindness. But if we are walking in the will of God on the path of His choosing, and if we have burdens to bear, He is the One who has given them to us. Let's view the burdens of life as benefits. Perhaps the greatest example of this is the Apostle Paul. How he was burdened with his thorn in the flesh! He prayed three times that God would take it away. Instead, God turned that burden into a benefit. He told Paul, "I'm going to give you the grace that you need" (see 2Co 12:7, 8, 9-+). Sometimes God answers prayer by taking things away. Sometimes He answers prayer by adding things to us. That's what he did for Paul, and the burden became a benefit. "But," you say, "I have some heavy burdens. I don't see much benefit to them." Notice the word daily in verse 19: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits." We live a day at a time. To think of all of life's burdens coming at once can be crushing. Remember what you have been through in your life. You've been through circumstances you never thought you would get through. But God brought you through. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11-+). "And, Lord, give us this day our daily burdens and benefits." God knows how much we can bear, and His grace is sufficient for each day. But there is another dimension to our burdens. God can turn them into benefits. Has He given you a heavy burden? Perhaps He wants to turn it into a benefit and do something special for you. ([Warren Wiersbe. Prayer, Praise and Promises](#))

Or instead of allowing God's Word and Spirit to supernaturally change your perspective and make you "better" (not necessarily relieving the trial but giving you supernatural joy in the midst of the trial), you can choose your own way of coping (Pr 14:12) and potentially allow the trials to make you bitter instead of better!

Although **Shakespeare** was not commenting on **affliction** in 2Co 4:17, he just as well could have been when he said

Swift as a shadow,  
short as any dream.

**A W Pink** - Should our afflictions continue throughout a whole lifetime, and that life be equal in duration to Methuselah's, yet it is **momentary** compared with the eternity before us. At most our affliction is for this present life, a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away (Jas 4:14). O that God would enable us to examine our trials in their true perspective. ([Affliction and Glory](#) in his treatise [Comfort for Christians](#))

**Peter** uses the phrase "**for a little while**" to describe the transitory nature of present trials...

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary (indicating that they ARE necessary to purify us), you have been have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1Pe 1:6-note [some good illustrations on trials near bottom of page], 1Pe 1:7-+)

But **resist** (**anthistemi** [literally "stand against" ~ arrange in battle against] in aorist imperative = Do this now! Don't delay! It is urgent!) him (diabolos), firm (stable, immovable - this reflects the Spirit's enabling power!) in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being (passive = effect is from outside force, God's Spirit) accomplished (worked out to their intended goal of making us more like Christ) by your brethren

who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1Pe 5:9+, 1Pe 5:10+, 1Pe 5:11+)

**Comment:** Note the pattern in both these sections - first temporary trials and suffering and then glory forever.

In Romans **Paul** says...

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18+)

**Comment:** Note that the eternal **praise** from our sufferings will far exceed the temporary **pain** of our sufferings. Our sufferings now may be great, but they will not last for they will give way to a reward of glory that will never end! Can you hold on a little while longer beloved? Cry out for His enabling grace and Spirit and you will be able to hold fast until the end, which will really be just the beginning... of everlasting, unimaginably ([I Can Only Imagine](#)) magnificent glory as [We Fall Down](#) in the presence of the [Indescribable Glorious One](#), the [Beautiful One](#), the [Everlasting God](#), the [God of Wonders](#), our [All in All](#)!

In the present passage the idea of "**light**" is that which is not oppressive and thus is easy to be suffered or endured. Other synonyms: lightweight, slight, easy, trifling, trivial (albeit when we are experiencing them, they are not "trivial" to us!), manageable, small, featherweight, "light as a feather"

This is an interesting term, for a thing is **light** only comparatively. That which is **light** to a man, may be heavy to a child. **Alight** burden for a camel, may be insupportable to a horse.

Now read 2Co 11:23, 24, 25, 26, 27 to see what Paul calls "light affliction"! Paul's point is that they are light compared to what is coming (See [Our Light Affliction](#) where **C H Spurgeon** elaborates on this thought ). Compared to the weight of glory, his afflictions are like a feather on the scale (see Ro 8:18). This weighty glory is beyond all comprehension. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul had written...

that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him. (1Co 2:9)

And remember it is not just that the momentary, light afflictions precede glory, but they also help produce glory as discussed more below.

**Hodge** rightly says that "It is only by comparison with the **eternal glory** that it (affliction) seems insignificant." ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

### **Vance Havner on Suffering**

- It won't last forever but we will!
- Now for a season... ye are in heaviness... (1Peter 1:6).
- After that ye have suffered a while... (1Peter 5:10).
- For our light affliction, which is but for a moment... (2Cor. 4:17).

### **Thomas Watson...**

Consider that our sufferings are **light**. It is heavy to flesh and blood—but it is light to faith. Affliction is light in a threefold respect:

**1. It is light—in comparison to SIN.** He who feels sin heavy, feels suffering light. Sin made Paul cry out, 'O wretched man that I am!' (Ro 7:24). He does not cry out of his iron chain—but of his sin. The greater noise drowns the lesser. When the sea roars, the rivers are silent. He who is taken up with his sins, and sees how he has provoked God—thinks the yoke of affliction to be light (Micah 7:9).

**2. Affliction is light—in comparison of HELL.** What is persecution, compared to damnation? What is the fire of martyrdom, compared to the fire of the damned? It is no more than the pricking of a pin, compared to a death's wound. 'Who knows the power of your anger!' (Psalm 90:11) Christ himself could not have borne that anger, had he not been more than a man.

**3. Affliction is light—in comparison of GLORY.** The weight of glory makes persecution light. 'If,' says Chrysostom, 'the torments of all the men in the world could be laid upon one man, it were not worth one hour's

being in heaven!' And if persecution is light, we should not be overly downcast by it. Let us neither faint through unbelief, nor fret through impatience.

**Consider that our sufferings are short** 'After you have suffered a little while' (1 Peter 5:10). Our sufferings may be lasting, not everlasting. Affliction is compared to a 'cup' (Lamentations 4:21). The wicked drink of a 'sea' of wrath which has no bottom. It will never be emptied. But it is only a 'cup' of martyrdom, and God will say, 'Let this cup pass away'. 'The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous' (Psalm 125:3). The rod may be there, it shall not rest. Christ calls his sufferings 'an hour' (Luke 22:53). Can we not suffer one hour? Persecution is sharp—but short. Though it has a sting to torment—yet it has a wing to fly! 'Sorrow shall fly away' (Isaiah 35:10). It is but a little while when the saints shall have a writ of ease granted them. They shall weep no more—and suffer no more. They shall be taken off the torturing wrack—and laid in Christ's bosom. The people of God shall not always be in the iron furnace; a year of Jubilee will come. The water of persecution like a land-flood, will soon be dried up. ([Beatitudes](#))

| TWO MAJOR STAGES OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| STAGE 1<br>THE PRESENT                   | STAGE 2<br>THE FUTURE |
| In the World                             | In Christ's Presence  |
| Temporary                                | Eternal               |
| Humility                                 | Exaltation            |
| Cross-bearing                            | Cross-wearing         |
| Suffering                                | Glory                 |
| Describable                              | Incomparable          |
| Trials                                   | Triumph               |

[Understanding Christian Theology - C R Swindoll & Roy Zuck](#)

**Light** (1645) (**elaphros**) means not heavy, easy to bear (as in Mt 11:30+, the only other NT use), not burdensome, not difficult to bear, having little weight, easy to be lifted, borne or carried by physical strength.

**Affliction** (2347) (**thlipsis** from **thlibo** = to crush, press together, squash, hem in, compress, squeeze in turn derived from **thláo** = to break) originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on a man. Thlipsis is a strong term which does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships. As discussed elsewhere but worth repeating, afflictions of life are intended by God to make us **better** not **bitter**! They are for our good and His glory (and our glory!).

Medically **thlipsis** was used of the pulse (pressure). It is a pressing together as of grapes. It conveys the idea of being squeezed or placed under pressure or crushed beneath a weight. When, according to the ancient law of England, those who willfully refused to plead guilty, had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were pressed and crushed to death, this was literally **thlipsis**. The iron cage was **stenochoxia**. **Thlipsis** thus refers not to mild discomfort but to great difficulty.

The picture of **thlipsis** is of one being squeezed. When you squeeze something, what comes out is what is on the inside. What comes out of you when you are experiencing "thlipsis"? Remember believers have Christ in them the hope of glory and therefore have the potential to exude the fragrance of His life when crushed.

Remember that because of his faith every genuine child of God will experience tribulation during his or her life on earth (Jn 16:33; 2Ti 3:12, Php 1:29). Paul understood the truth that "if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with" Christ (Ro 8:17).

**Afflictions for Christ's sake produce spiritual strengthening in this present life and eternal reward in the future life.**

**Butler** - This verse has encouraged many suffering saints over the ages. Paul noted the perspective of his trials in a threefold way here. First, the difficulties of the afflictions. "Our light affliction." Paul says his trials were "light" in spite of the fact that they involved stoning, prison, shipwreck and other great problems. But in view of eternity, the heavy seems light. Second, the duration of his afflictions "For a moment." In spite of the fact that his life was filled with trials, Paul says they are only a moment. When one has eternity in view, he can say that. Third, the dividends of his affliction. "Worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Afflictions bring great blessings. During the time of the affliction it is difficult to realize that truth, however. Note how Paul

contrasted the dividends with the difficulties. The difficulties were "light" but the dividends heavy ("exceeding... weight"). The difficulties were short ("moment"), the dividends long ("eternal"). The difficulties were grievous ("affliction"), but the dividends were glorious ("glory"). ([Analytical Bible Expositor - 1 & 2 Corinthians](#))

**Guzik** notes that affliction is the Christian's lot in this life much as "A runner must be stressed to gain endurance. Sailors must go to sea. Soldiers go to battle. For the Christian, tribulation is just part of our Christian life (Acts 14:22+)." ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Spurgeon** adds that "A Christian man should be willing to be tried; he should be pleased to let his religion be put to the test. 'There,' says he, 'hammer away if you like.' Do you want to be carried to heaven on a feather bed?"

**Henry Morris** rightly notes that "No one likes troubles of this kind, but they may be seen as difficulties to be overcome, as ways of opening up new possibilities. One who sees them in this light glories in them ([light affliction but for a moment](#))

**Martin Luther** wrote that "Whatever virtues tribulation finds us in, it develops more fully. If anyone is carnal, weak, blind, wicked, irascible, haughty, and so forth, tribulation will make him more carnal, weak, blind, wicked and irritable. On the other hand, if one is spiritual, strong, wise, pious, gentle and humble, he will become more spiritual, powerful, wise, pious, gentle and humble.

**John MacArthur** writes that "**Thlipsis** (tribulations) has the underlying meaning of being under pressure and was used of squeezing olives in a press in order to extract the oil and of squeezing grapes to extract the juice... In Scripture the word **thlipsis** is perhaps most often used of outward difficulties, but it is also used of emotional stress." ([Romans 1-8](#))

Figuratively **thlipsis** pictures one being "crushed" by intense pressure, difficult circumstances, suffering or trouble pressing upon them from without. Thus persecution, affliction, distress, opposition or tribulation, all press hard on one's soul. **Thlipsis** does not refer to mild discomfort but to great difficulty. In Scripture the **thlipsis** is most often used of outward difficulties, but it is also used of emotional stress and sorrows which "weighs down" a man's spirit like the sorrows and burden his heart. **Thlipsis** then includes the disappointments which can "crush the life" out of the one who is afflicted.

The English word "**tribulation**" is derived from the Latin word **tribulum** (literally a thing with teeth that tears), which was a heavy piece of timber with spikes in it, used for threshing the corn or grain. The **tribulum** was drawn over the grain and it separated the wheat from the chaff. As believers experience the "tribulum" of tribulations, and depend on God's grace, the trials purify us and rid us of the chaff.

For every hill I've had to climb,  
For every stone that bruised my feet,  
For all the blood and tears and grime,  
For blinding storms and burning heat,  
My heart sings but a grateful song  
These were the things that made me strong!—Anon.

**Lawrence Richards** writes that "**thlipsis** is used as a technical theological term for the **Great Tribulation** (see note below) of the end times. **Thlipsis** is also used in a non-theological, figurative way to convey the idea of the great emotional and spiritual stress that can be caused by external or internal pressures. Of the fifty-five uses of this root (thlipsis and thlibo) in the NT, fifty-three are **figurative** and correspond closely to the Hebrew words [tsarar](#) and [tsar](#)." ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**Marvin Vincent** has the following note explaining that the root **thlibo** means "to press or squeeze. Tribulation is perhaps as accurate a rendering as is possible, being derived from tribulum, the threshing-roller of the Romans. In both the idea of pressure is dominant, though thlipsis does not convey the idea of separation (as of corn from husk) which is implied in tribulatio." (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament Vol. 1, Page 3-80)

**Vine** writes that **thlipsis** "primarily means a pressure, that which weighs down the spirit. For the believer who is enabled to endure it, the affliction becomes a means of triumph... "afflictions" are the various forms of injury to body and mind suffered by those who are persecuted... Thlipsis is the suffering which results from what presses hard on the soul." ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#) )

**John MacArthur** makes an important distinction commenting that...the only suffering that produces the eternal weight of glory is suffering for the sake of Christ, or that honors Him. Whether suffering comes from believers' faithful, loyal, committed testimony about Jesus Christ, or the patient enduring of life's normal trials, such as disease, divorce, poverty, and loneliness, if endured with a humble, grateful, God-honoring attitude, it will add to the eternal weight of glory. On the other hand, suffering the consequences of sin does not contribute to our heavenly blessing and could remove some of the reward already gained (2John 1:8). ([2Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))



**Peter** wrote, "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God" (1Pe 2:20+), and If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. (1Pe 4:14, 15, 16+)

**Unger** writes "Respecting the well-known and often quoted passage which begins "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us" (2Cor. 4:17), we quote from Meyer, Com., Notes by American Editor: "The Revision of 1881 gives this weighty and impressive verse in a rendering which is exact, and yet faithful to our English idiom. The verse contains the whole philosophy of the Christian view of affliction. It does not deny the reality of earthly sorrows or underrate their power, as did the Stoics; but after allowing them all their force, calmly says that they dwindle into insignificance when compared with the exceeding and eternal glory to which they lead. But this applies only to believers, as appears by the next verse, 'while we look,' etc. **Afflictions have a salutary operation, provided that we look at the things which are eternal.**" ([The New Unger's Bible Dictionary](#))

**A W Pink** reminds us that the "**Afflictions** are not **light** in themselves, often they are heavy and grievous; but they are **light** comparatively! They are **light** when compared with what we really deserve. They are **light** when compared with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. But perhaps their lightness is best seen by comparing them to the glory awaiting us. As the same apostle said in another place, "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" (Ro 8:18). ([Affliction and Glory](#) in his treatise Comfort for Christians)

**Thomas Watson...**

**Affliction** is a means to make us happy. It seems strange to flesh and blood—that affliction should make us happy. When Moses saw the bush burning and not consumed, he said, "I will turn aside and see this strange sight!" Exod 3:3. Likewise, here is a strange sight—a man afflicted, and yet happy. The world counts them happy—who can escape affliction; but truly happy is the man whom God corrects.

**How do afflictions contribute to our happiness?** Afflictions make us happy—as they are a means of bringing us nearer to God. The loadstone of prosperity does not draw us so near to God, as the cords of affliction. When the prodigal was pinched with need, he said, "I will arise—and go to my father!" Luke 15:18. As the deluge brought the dove to the ark—the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ, our ark!

**Afflictions** make us happy—as they are safe guides to glory. The storm drives the ship into the harbor. Blessed storm—which drives the soul into the heavenly harbor! Is it not better—to go through momentary affliction to eternal glory—than to go through momentary pleasure to eternal misery? The wicked must drink a sea of wrath; but the godly have only a cup of affliction.

Think, O Christian—what affliction leads to! It leads to paradise, where rivers of pleasure are always running!

**Joseph Alleine** - Times of affliction are usually gaining times to God's people.

**William Dyer** - Oh Christians! under your greatest troubles—lie your greatest treasures! By the greatest affliction—God teaches us the greatest instruction. When a believer lies under God's hand which afflicts him—he lies in God's heart which loves him! Afflictions are good—but not pleasant. Sin is pleasant—but not good. There is more evil in a drop of sin—than there is in a sea of afflictions! God by affliction, separates the sin He hates so deadly—from the soul He loves so dearly! The believer studies more how to adorn the cross—than how to avoid the cross! Tell me, oh believer, is not Christ with His cross—better than the world with its crown? Suppose, Christian, that the furnace is hot, seven times hotter—it is but to make you seven times more holy! Fiery trials—make golden Christians! Sin has brought many a believer unto suffering—and suffering has kept many a believer from sinning! It is better to be preserved in brine—than to rot in honey! **Amen!**

[Fiery trials make golden Christians \(William Dyer, "Christ's Famous Titles"\)](#)

"For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory." 2 Corinthians 4:17

Oh Christians! under your greatest troubles, lie your greatest treasures.

"It is good for me to be afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes." Psalm 119:71

By the greatest affliction, God teaches us the greatest instruction.

When a believer lies under God's hand which afflicts him, he lies in God's heart which loves him.

Afflictions are good, but not pleasant.

Sin is pleasant, but not good.

There is more evil in a drop of sin, than there is in a sea of afflictions.

God by affliction separates the sin He hates so deadly, from the soul He loves so dearly.

The believer studies more how to adorn the cross, than how to avoid the cross.

Tell me, oh believer--is not Christ with His cross, better than the world with its crown?

"God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Hebrews 12:10

Suppose, Christian, that the furnace is hot, seven times hotter, it is but to make you seven times more holy. Fiery trials make golden Christians. Sin has brought many a believer unto suffering, and suffering has kept many a believer from sinning. It is better to be preserved in brine, than to rot in honey.

"I know, O Lord, that Your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me." Psalm 119:75

**Thomas Watson** - Affliction is like throwing a bag of money at another person; it may bruise him—but it enriches him. So affliction may bruise us but it enriches us, and this works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. In short, the black rod prepares for the white rod. O Christian! You who are now humbled by some sharp affliction—shall shortly wear a garland made of the flowers of paradise. You shall have your soul set thicker with the jewels of heaven—than the sky is with the stars. ([The Comforting Rod](#))

Afflictions are often God's best blessings sent in disguise because affliction, like the iron-smith, shapes as it smites. Affliction is also God's shepherd dog to drive us back to the fold (Ps 119:67, 71). As someone has well said "The darker the night, the brighter the stars; the hotter the fire, the purer the gold." And so it is with afflictions.

**David Guzik** reminds us that a coming glory that outweighs any of today's difficulties.

When Paul writes "our light affliction," we might wonder if he had ever known any "real" trials. Some might think, "Well Paul, your affliction might be light, but mine isn't. If you only knew how I am suffering! Why, it's unbearable!" But Paul isn't writing as a kindergartner in the school of suffering. Paul has an advanced graduate degree! He describes some of these sufferings in 2Corinthians 11:23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28... "This rich theology of suffering was forged on the anvil of his own experiences of 'the sufferings of Christ.'" (Harris) So, when Paul writes our **light affliction**, we can know God means our **light affliction**. If Paul could say his affliction was light, then what is ours?

**Why is our affliction light, and not heavy?** Because even the worst of it, by the measure of eternity, is but for a moment. This is partially true in the sense that most of our troubles come and go, and "this too shall pass." But it is also true in the sense that even a long life by this world's standard is nothing on the scale of eternity. Even if one were to live for a hundred years and suffer every day of their lives, by the measure of eternity, it is but for a moment.

**Why is our affliction light, and not heavy?** Because of what God is accomplishing in us through our affliction: a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The Scriptures are clear: if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together (Ro 8:17). Glory is tied to suffering, and God will accomplish in us a glory far heavier than any affliction we have suffered here.

Affliction is not something to be endured in order to reach glory. It is the very process which creates the glory. Through travail comes birth. (Morgan)

It is as if Paul says

Go ahead and get out the scale. Put all your afflictions on one side of the scale, and even put your thumb down on that side. Then let me place the weight of glory on the other side of the scale, and you will see what a light affliction you really have.

Yes, our affliction is **light**!

Our affliction is **light** compared to what others are suffering.

Our affliction is **light** compared to what we deserve.

Our affliction is **light** compared to what Jesus suffered for us.

Our affliction is **light** compared to the blessings we enjoy.

Our affliction is **light** as we experience the sustaining power of God's grace.

Our affliction is **light** when we see the glory that it is leading to.

We really can say with Paul, "our light affliction." ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Ray Stedman** has an interesting thought on the phrase "**eternal weight of glory**" noting that "The trials were creating the glory! Perhaps this throws some light upon a strange statement which Jesus made to his disciples in the upper room. In saying that he was going away, he added, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2KJV). This cryptic statement seems to suggest that heaven was not yet ready and needed some additional work before any guests arrived! But if we link it with the further explanation which Jesus gave them ("but if I go, I will send him [the Holy Spirit] to you," John 16:7), we have the strong suggestion that his way of preparing a place for them was to send the Holy Spirit to them. The Spirit, when he came, would give them the power to handle the pressures and pains of life ("hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; ... struck down, but not destroyed") and in the mystery of redemption, transmute each trial into a corresponding glory. Thus, the trials were preparing the glory; the hardships were preparing "the place" for them. Jesus was doing it by means of the Spirit ([Authentic Christianity](#))

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon** on **trials and afflictions (multiple quotes)** -

- A true Christian's losses are gains in another shape...
- I am afraid that all the grace that I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the crucible and the furnace, the bellows that have blown up the coals, and the hand which has thrust me into the heat?...
- I am sure I have derived more real benefit and permanent strength and growth in grace, and every precious thing, from the furnace of affliction, than I have ever derived from prosperity...
- I bear my witness that the worst days I have ever had have turned out to be my best days...
- I can bear my personal testimony that the best piece of furniture that I ever had in the house was a cross. I do not mean a material cross; I mean the cross of affliction and trouble...
- I owe more than I can tell to the graver's tool, and I feel the lines of its cutting even now...
- In shunning a trial we are seeking to avoid a blessing...
- None of us can come to the highest maturity without enduring the summer heat of trials...
- On some few occasions I have had troubles which I could not tell to any but my God, and I thank God I have, for I learned more of my Lord then that at any other time...
- Our troubles have always brought us blessings, and they always will. They are the dark chariots of bright grace...
- Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well, when they cannot be discerned from the top of a mountain. So are many things learned in adversity which the prosperous man dreams not of...
- The anvil, the fire and the hammer are the making of us...
- The Christian gains by his losses. He acquires health by his sickness. He wins friends through his bereavements, and he becomes a conqueror through his defeats...
- There are some of your graces which would never be discovered if it were not for your trials...
- There is nothing that makes a man have a big heart like a great trial...
- We find no sword-blades so true in metal as those which have been forged in the furnace of soul-trouble. ([The Complete Gathered Gold A Treasury of Quotations for Christians by John Blanchard](#))

**Jeremy Taylor** - We are safer in the storm God sends us than in a calm when we are befriended by the world.

**Abraham Wright** was right when he said - What fools we are, then, to frown upon our afflictions! These, how crabbed so ever, are our best friends. They are not intended for our pleasure, they are for our profit.

**Thomas Watson** - The wisdom of God is seen in making the most desperate evils, work to the good of His children. As several poisonous ingredients, wisely tempered by the skill of the apothecary, make a sovereign medicine—so God makes the most deadly afflictions work together for the good of His children. He uses severe afflictions to purify them, and prepare them for heaven. These hard frosts hasten the spring flowers of glory! The wise God, by a divine chemistry, turns our afflictions into cordials. He makes His people gainers by losses; and turns their crosses into blessings! ([Body of Divinity](#))

**More of Watson on Affliction** - Affliction is God's flail to thresh off our husks... Christians are commonly best in affliction... Is it any injustice in God to put his gold into the furnace to purify it?... The whale that swallowed Jonah was the means of bringing him safe to land... Jonah was sent into the whale's belly to make his sermon for Nineveh... The eyes that sin shuts affliction opens... There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction... When God lays men on their backs, then they look up to heaven.

In this letter Paul speaks much of his sufferings, especially in chapters 4, 6, and 11. At his conversion the Lord had said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name" (Acts 9:16). The sufferings began immediately and continued in unbroken succession for over 30 years:

- They plotted to kill him in Damascus (Acts 9:24) and again in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29).
  - They drove him out of Antioch (Acts 13:50).
  - They attempted to stone him in Iconium (Acts 14:5).
  - They did stone him and left him for dead in Lystra (Acts 14:19).
  - In Philippi they beat him with rods and put him in stocks (Acts 16:23, 24)
  - In Thessalonica the Jews and the rabble tried to mob him (Acts 17:5).
  - They drove him out of Berea (Acts 17:13, 14).
  - They plotted against him in Corinth (Acts 18:12).
  - In Ephesus they almost killed him (Acts 19:29; 2Co 1:8, 9).
  - In Corinth, shortly after he had written this epistle, they again plotted his death (Acts 20:3).
  - In Jerusalem they again would have made a quick end of him if he had not been rescued by the Roman soldiers (Acts 22).
  - He was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years, and for two more years in Rome.
- Besides all this, there were unrecorded beatings, imprisonments, shipwrecks, and endless deprivations of every kind (2 Corinthians 11:23, 25, 26, 27).
- Finally, he was taken to Rome to be executed as a criminal (2Ti 2:9).

Paul must have had amazing endurance, for he sang as he suffered (Acts 16:25). Nothing but an iron constitution could have lived through it all—and even that would not have been sufficient apart from the marvelous grace of God. By the Lord's help, Paul must have felt himself immortal until his work was done. ([Halley's Bible Handbook](#))

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**Charles Haddon Spurgeon** - We cannot be established except by suffering. It is of no use our hoping that we shall be well-rooted if no March winds have passed over us. The young oak cannot be expected to strike its roots so deep as the old one. Those old gnarlings on the roots, and those strange twistings of the branches, all tell of many storms that have swept over the aged tree. But they are also indicators of the depths into which the roots have dived.

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**Thomas Brooks - A PERSPECTIVE ON A BELIEVER'S PRESENT AFFLICTIONS** - Christian! Your present afflictions are not great—if compared with the afflictions and torments of many of the damned, who when they were in this world, never sinned at so high a rate as you have done! There are many now in hell, who never sinned against such clear light as you have done, nor against such special love as you have done, nor against such precious mercies as you have done! Certainly there are many now a-roaring in everlasting burnings—who never sinned as you have done!

What are your present afflictions and troubles—compared to the torments of the damned, whose torments are ... without intermission, without mitigation, numberless, bottomless, remediless, and endless! Who have ... weeping served for the first course, and gnashing of teeth for the second course, and the gnawing worm for the third course, and intolerable pain for the fourth course! Yet the pain of the body is least part of pain. The very soul of sorrow and pain—is the soul's sorrow and pain! The everlasting alienation and separation from God is served for the fifth course!

Ah, Christian! how can you seriously think on these things and not lay your hand upon your mouth—even when you are under the greatest temporal sufferings? Your sins have been far greater than many of those who are now in hell, and your great afflictions are but a flea-bite compared to theirs! Therefore hush your murmuring, and be silent before the Lord!

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**William Dyer** - Oh! beloved, there is more evil in the least sin against Christ—than in the greatest suffering for Christ! 2 Corinthians 4:17 1. Our sufferings for Christ are but light. 2. Our sufferings for Christ are short—but for a moment. 3. Christ stands by us in our sufferings. 4. Our sufferings are ordered by the Father. 5. Our sufferings shall not hurt our souls. ([The Strait Way to Heaven](#))

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**THE FRUIT OF AFFLICTION:** We sometimes say that certain people have "two strikes" against them. By this we mean they start out their lives under the cloud of some difficulty. It may be the character of their parents, their environment, their appearance, or a disability that came upon them while they were still young. One such person was Mercy Goodfaith. She was an orphan, and at the age of ten was unhappy, sickly, ill-tempered, ugly, and hunch-backed. No one seemed to love her, and no one wanted her until one day a woman came to the orphanage looking for a child no one else would take.

Thirty-five years later reports were circulated that one county-appointed home for orphans stood out above all others. A case-worker reported that the children were clean and happy. The matron of this home frequently sang with the children while one of the older girls assisted by playing on a small pump organ. They all seemed to have a deep affection for the housemother and constantly flocked about her. She in turn gave each one the utmost in love and gracious attention. This great and helpful woman was none other than the outwardly ugly hunchback named Mercy Goodfaith. Her affliction had not made her bitter, but had led her into a life of service and devotion to others.

The patriarch Joseph also experienced a great deal of misfortune in his lifetime, first at the hand of his brothers and then in his early days in Egypt. He did not deserve the things he suffered. Yet he never became spiteful, never lost his faith, but was able to give a glowing testimony of his submission to the ways of God. The trials were necessary in order that the Lord's loving purpose for the sons of Jacob might be fulfilled.

Your misfortunes need not be tragedies. They can be stepping-stones to a life of sweet fellowship with God and service to others. It is your response to affliction that makes the difference! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**GREAT PREACHERS:** The greatest sermons I have ever heard were not preached from pulpits but from sickbeds. The deepest truths of God's Word have often been taught by those humble souls who have gone through the seminary of affliction.

The most cheerful people I have met, with few exceptions, have been those who've had the least sunshine and the most pain and suffering in their lives. The most grateful people I have ever known were not those who had traveled a pathway of roses all their lives, but those who were confined to their homes, some to their beds, and had learned to depend on God.

The grippers, on the other hand, are usually those who have the least to complain about. The men and women who are the most cheerful and the most grateful for the blessings of Almighty God are often those who have gone through the greatest trials.

The Bible tells us that if we respond properly to the trials of life, we will develop patience and godly maturity (Ro 5:3-+, Ro 5:4, 5-+; Jas 1:3, 4-+). We must keep in mind that our present sufferings are "but for a moment" and that they are being used by God for our eternal good (2Corinthians 4:17, 18).

So take heart, suffering one. Someday you too will realize that it was worth it all (1Peter 1:7-+). —M R DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Some of life's greatest lessons are learned  
in the school of affliction.**

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**Surprised By Trials** - A young man looked forward to joining the US Marine Corps after high school. But after just 3 weeks in boot camp, he wanted out. After he got an administrative discharge, he said, "I didn't know it would be that hard."

Like that recruit, many Christians are surprised by life's trials. But just as this young man should have known what he was getting into, we too have been warned that the life of a follower of Christ is not all fun and games.

In 1Pe 4:12-+ we read, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you." The clear message: "Don't be surprised by trials."

That doesn't sound like good news, but it's not the whole story. Consider the reassuring words of Ro 8:18-+, where Paul declared that our present sufferings cannot compare with the glory that will be ours in heaven. Our trials will be over, and everlasting joy will follow.

Trials are an inescapable part of this life. But God's Word assures us that they will turn to joy in the morning of His heavenly

presence.

Facing tough times? Lean on God, and be encouraged by the glory that will someday replace those trials.— by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's love for His Son was never a shield  
To keep Him from Calvary's cross;  
God's love for His children demands that we yield  
To trials that burn out the dross. —Gustafson

**Man's highest good  
may come from his deepest suffering.**

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### 'It Came To Pass'

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. —2 Corinthians 4:17

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

Some members of a church were sharing their favorite Scripture passages with each other. A number of verses were quoted, most of them on salvation, assurance, or God's provision. One elderly man, though, stood up and said that his favorite words in the Bible were "It came to pass." He continued, "When sickness strikes, it encourages me to know that it will pass. When I find myself in trouble, I know it won't last forever. I'll soon be able to say, 'It came to pass.'"

Although this man had placed a different meaning on those words than the writers of Scripture intended, he saw in them an important truth that is found in the Bible. No matter how unending a trial may seem, the day will come when it will no longer be a burden or a source of distress. In fact, it will seem like nothing in the light of eternity.

Second Corinthians 4:17 tells us that our "light affliction . . . is but for a moment." Knowing that our burdens are temporary enables us to bear them with a triumphant outlook.

Whether your trials last for days, months, years, or a lifetime, they are still "but for a moment." Like that wise old Christian, you can say, "This too shall pass!" By: Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Be still, my soul—the hour is hastening on  
When we shall be forever with the Lord,  
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored. —von Schlegel

We can endure anything if we depend on Christ for everything.

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**Groans Now, Glory Later** - I once heard of a Christian seminar titled, "How To Live A Stress-Free Life." Such an unrealistic hope promptly made me stressful! Yet we all long for relief from life's many pressures.

A Christian friend of mine whose family is experiencing tough times admits feeling let down by God. She said, "I've prayed, agonized, and claimed promises, but nothing changes. The frustrating thing is that I know He has the power to get us out of this. I've seen Him do it before, but this time He's silent."

Larry Crabb, in his book *Inside Out*, emphasizes that our only hope for complete relief from hardship is to be with Jesus in heaven. "Until then," he says, "we either groan or pretend we don't." He adds, "The experience of groaning, however, is precisely what modern Christianity so often tries to help us escape."

My friend is groaning and she's not pretending she isn't. Like all of us, she simply wants things to change. But the fact is, something is changing—she is!

Paul assured us in 2Corinthians 4:17 that our present sufferings are lightweight and brief compared with the weighty and eternal changes they are producing in us. We groan now, but there's glory ahead (Ro 8:18-+).— by Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The obstacles that we must face  
Along life's rocky way  
Are used by God so we might hear  
"Well done" from Him someday. —Sper

**God often uses a setback to move us forward.**

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### J C Philpot Devotional (June 8)

O suffering saints of God! tried and afflicted children of the most High! raise up your thoughts as God may enable you--lift up your eyes, and see what awaits you. Are you tried, tempted, exercised, afflicted? It is your mercy. God does not deal so with every one. It is because you are his children, that he lays on you his chastening hand. He means to conform you to the image of his Son in glory, and therefore he now conforms you to the image of his Son in suffering. 'O but,' you say, 'I cannot believe it is so!' No; if you could, it would not be much of a trial.

This is the trial of faith--to go groaning on, struggling on, sorrowing on, sighing on; believing against unbelief, hoping against hope; and still looking to the Lord, though there is everything in nature to damp the hopes and expectations of your waiting souls. Yet all will end well with the people of God. Their life here is a life of temptation, of suffering and trial; but heaven will make amends for all. And if our faith is now tried as "with fire," it will one day "be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In that day when the secrets of all hearts will be brought to light, the faith of thousands will be found to be little else than presumption; but the faith of God's dear family will then be crowned with "praise and honor and glory;" and they shall see the Lamb as he is face to face, when all tears are wiped away from all faces. ([Devotionals](#))

**PRODUCING FOR US AN ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY FAR BEYOND ALL COMPARISON: hemon kath' huperbolen eis huperbolen aionion baros doxes katergazetai (3SPMI) hemin:**

- **producing:** Ps 119:67,71 Mt 5:12 Ro 5:3, 4, 5 Php 1:19 2Th 1:4,6 Heb 12:10,11 Jas 1:3,4,12
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**They who *wait* on the Lord  
Can bear the *weight* of adversity.  
For they await the *weight* of glory!**

It is ironic that earlier Paul had used the noun form of "**weight**" to declare...

For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened (weighed down = **bareo** from **baros** = weight) excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; (2 Co 1:8)

**Spurgeon** said that "The tears of affliction are often needed to keep the eye of faith bright". In turn it is the eye of faith that sees eternal glory in the midst of one's temporal afflictions.

**NO CROSS  
NO CROWN**

Romans 8:18-25 is an excellent commentary on this passage...

Romans 8:18-25 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are **not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.** 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

We see the principle of a cross before a crown in Acts 14 where Paul and Barnabas traveled through the cities...

strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many **tribulations** we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)

God never wastes our suffering. Trials work for us, not against us. Suffering today means glory tomorrow. (1Pe 1:6, 7, 8; 1Pe 5:10; Ro 8:18).

Remember that The Lord tests the righteous to bring out the best in them, but Satan tempts them to bring out the worst. When we trust the Lord in the difficulties of life, our trials work for us and not against us and lead to glory.

In Hebrew the root for **glory** means 'to be heavy' and thus 'to be glorious'. Hence we note the the striking image of glory "outweighing' troubles" -- usually we think of troubles, not glory, as heavy!

**David Guzik** asks "Do we appreciate the weight of glory? It is an **eternal** weight. Often, the problem isn't so much about what we think about our light affliction, but that we think so little of our coming weight of glory. It is everywhere visible what influence St. Paul's Hebrew had on his Greek: **chabad**, signifies *to be heavy*, and to be *glorious*; the apostle in his Greek unites these two significations, and says, **weight of glory**. (Dodd, cited in Clarke) ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

I thank You, Lord, for trials sore,  
That taught me how to trust You more,  
For when I found no other stay,  
I learned to lean on You each day.- Sorrell

**Warren Wiersbe** cautions that "We must not misunderstand this principle and think that a Christian can live any way he pleases and expect everything to turn into glory in the end. Paul was writing about trials experienced in the will of God as he was doing the work of God. God can and does turn suffering into glory, but He cannot turn sin into glory. Sin must be judged, because there is no glory in sin. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

## FUTURE GLORY

**is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison- Is producing** is in the **present tense** signifying that this is an ongoing process. In short, our earthly afflictions (albeit not afflictions as a consequence of our sin!) are always working out our heavenly glory. In other words, it is not that the glory is a compensation (in fact it could never be earned or merited), but that the future glory actually grows out of our present suffering for His Name's sake. There is an "organic" relation between present affliction ("the seed") and future glory ("the fruit") for everyone who endures to the end. Hallelujah!

**Producing** ([2716](#))(**katergazomai** from **katá** = intensifies meaning of verb + **ergazomai** = labor, work or engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort) means to work out fully and thoroughly, to accomplish or achieve an end (implying thoroughness), to finish or carry something to its conclusion. To work so as to bring something to fulfillment or successful completion and implies doing something with thoroughness. It means to do that from which something results. **Katergazomai** always means to complete the effort and the work begun -- Paul is saying God is not going to stop halfway in producing this glory but in fact is going to go beyond our human expectations, for "*He who began a good work in you **will perfect** it until the day of Christ Jesus.*" (Php 1:6-+)

**Katergazomai** - 22x in 22v in the **NAS** - accomplished(1), brings about(2), carried(1), committed(1), committing(1), does(1), doing(4), done(1), effecting(1), performed(1), prepared(1), produced(2), produces(2), producing(2), work(1). Rom 1:27; 2:9; 4:15; 5:3; 7:8, 13, 15, 17f, 20; 15:18; 1Co 5:3; 2 Cor 4:17; 5:5; 7:10f; 9:11; 12:12; Ep 6:13; Phil 2:12; Jas 1:3; 1Pe 4:3.

Note that affliction per does not earn future, but God allows affliction to enter our lives and through these afflictions He produces eternal glory. The more a believer suffers in this life, the greater will be his or her capacity for glory in heaven. Stated another way, the spiritual quality of the believer's earthly life will in some divinely determined way affect the quality of their heavenly life.

**James Meikle** (1730-1799)

Two things render affliction either easy or intolerable, namely, its kind, and its continuance. If it is ponderous and crushing, and continual—this makes affliction break all the bones, and wound the very spirits. But when it is light, and over in a moment, which is the case with all the afflictions that befall the children of God, I wonder why or how I can complain. But how astonishing beyond expression must it be, that this light and transitory load of affliction should work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!



Truly I have no reason to complain because of my troubles and trials, since they work more good for me than now I can conceive. And little do I think, while grappling with my afflictions and fears, that they are procuring for me in the highest heavens.

**God has so connected the seed-time of tears with the harvest of glory, that those who sow weeping, shall reap with everlasting joy. Would I grudge to carry a stone for a day or two, if assured that when I laid it down, I should receive a crown of gold? Why, then, repine under my afflictions?**

But, again, what proportion is there between—the cross and the crown; the trial and the triumph; the affliction and the comfort; the burden of grief and the exceeding weight of glory?

Here our afflictions own the creature as the instrument, and sometimes have their origin in imagination; here they are light, and they are transitory; but the glory above is massive and weighty, is permanent and eternal, and is the immediate gift of God, neither by nor from the creature. Moreover, affliction works for our good, even here—For,

## **THE GOOD OF OUR AFFLICTIONS**

**(1.) To the saints, it bears, as it were, its own reward in its bosom, yielding to all that are rightly exercised therewith the peaceable fruits of righteousness.** It deadens the pleasures of sense, and gives the soul a relish for spiritual things; yes, it divorces the soul from the creature, and draws it near to God.

**(2.) There is no proportion between all that can befall the saints in this state, and that joy wherewith they shall be comforted in eternal glory.** In no person, do all afflictions meet at one and the same time. Job's case came nearest it—but at all times he had the exercise of his reason, and the testimony of a good conscience, with an invincible faith in God, which made him conquer, even while he seemed to fall. The afflictions, then, of saints, are verily light; but their future glory is a weight filling every power, replenishing every faculty, overflowing the whole soul, and satisfying every desire. Now, in all the sons of God, the heirs of glory, every heavenly gift, every blessing of love, every degree of felicity, every beam of glory—centers, meets, and rests forever. Therefore, there is no proportion between their sufferings and their consolation.

**(3.) Affliction is of no continuance; the apostle elegantly expresses it by a moment, which of all times is the shortest.** And indeed though the affliction were severe and very ponderous, yet this lightens it much—that it is over and gone in a moment, no sooner felt than fled, to return no more. But the exceeding weight of glory, to pitch up their felicity to the highest degree, is also eternal.

But some may think, How can affliction be thought either light, or but for a moment, since, for their part, it is all they can do to survive under the pressure and weight of their many adversities? And as to their being over in a moment, they rather think with Heman, "that they are afflicted, and ready to die from their youth up;" or, with Asaph, that they are "plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning."

Yes, though the outward man be crushed, and seems to perish, yet it is to our advantage, for thereby the inward man is renewed day by day, and grows up in strength unto eternal glory. And this mitigation arises from the divine sympathy of him, who in all their afflictions is afflicted. Moreover, how often does the joy which God pours into the soul, in the time of affliction, overbalance and outweigh all the sorrow that arises from them.

And, as to the second complaint—of continuance. As a moment bears no proportion to one's life; so our whole life bears no proportion to the eternity of glory which shall take place, when the hour-glass of time has not a sand left. A moment stays not, and when gone cannot be remembered; for even millions of moments put together make but a duration, which, when past—is only like a tale that is told. Now, life consists of so many moments, therefore a moment bears some proportion to our life, though very small; but eternity is not composed of moments, life-times or ages—therefore the whole life bears no proportion to eternity. That which endures but for a while may be divided into the smallest parts—but what continues forever cannot be broken down into numbers.

**Now, is it much to pass through the shallow stream of affliction, that can rise but to the ankles, in order to plunge into the pleasures of God's right hand, which are a great river, even waters to swim in?**

Can any child of heaven quarrel with the kindness of God, who makes light and momentary affliction work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

Take courage, then, my soul, and be strong! Look into God's dealing with you, for his ways can stand the

strictest search, as through them all, even in the afflicting hand, Fatherly-kindness and eternal love shine forth. Now I see what I never saw before, that afflictions sanctified are indulgences; and trials the special gifts of Heaven (cp Acts 5:41). And I do not wonder that all the saints are, I say not punished—but privileged with them, of one kind or another; since they here keep sin low, and for them accumulate eternal weights of glory in the eternal world.

My not looking into the ways of divine wisdom, and to the extent of the promises, has made me have very odd thoughts of afflictions; and, concluding them to be the signs of divine displeasure, I have been ready to question my saving interest in God, and was bewildered how to understand the word of truth. But now I see, that though sometimes he sends afflictions to chastise his saints for sin, and curb their carnal affections, (and how kind is it thereby to punish sin, and prepare them for glory, and glory for them!) yet, that at other times he sends them to improve the soul, and exercise every grace in his saints.

We also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. (Romans 5:3, 4)

Why, then, do not I, like the great apostle of old, rejoice in afflictions, which, where grace is in exercise, sets all the wheels of the soul in motion—affliction producing endurance, endurance producing proven character, and proven character producing hope; and hope, being no way ashamed to confess her confidence in him who has shed his love abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, gives a heavenly boldness. Should I then be disconsolate, because some fogs dwell on the eyelids of everlasting morn, which, when the sun arises, shall never more be seen? Should any shades in this early twilight give sorrow, which are to be swallowed up in the brightness of eternal glory? A little patience—and I am past every one of my troubles—and, possessed of all the transports of perpetual glory!

Even from the vastness of my affliction and sorrow here, solid joy may rise; for if affliction sometimes almost crushes me, and I am sometimes likely to fall under it—ought I not to consider, that this eternal weight of glory shall far, very far, exceed the present burden? Now, if my afflictions are so much—how much more, infinitely much more, will my glory be! Yes, it shall be such, that were I not replenished with immortality, and upheld by the Most High, I would fall under the insupportable emanations of divine glory! But I shall be all power in that happy state, where, to my sweet experience, I shall learn—that my light afflictions, which were but for a moment, wrought for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! ([Solitude Sweetened - The glorious fruits of sanctified affliction](#))

**Eternal** (166) (**aionios** from **aion**) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26+ - God's attribute). **Aionios** (eternal) is the exact antithesis of **proskairos** (temporal). See additional discussion of aionios in study of eternal punishment, specifically the importance of an [accurate understanding of aionios as a refutation of the false teaching of universalism](#) (everyone will be saved).

**Thayer** modified and summarized... (1) without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be: Ro 16:26, He 9:14.

In the **Septuagint (LXX)** **aionios** is used for **everlasting** (Hebrew = *olam*) referring to **God** (Study His wonderful Name [El Olam: Everlasting God](#)) - Ge 21:33, Is 26:4, Is 40:28, to His **Covenant** - Ge 9:16, Ge 17:7, 13, 19, Lv 24:8, Nu 18:19 2Sa 23:5, 1Ch 16:17, Ps 105:10, Is 24:5, Is 55:3, Is 61:8, Jer 32:40, Jer 50:5, Ezek 16:60, Ezek 37:26 (See related study - New Covenant in the Old Testament)

(2) Without beginning: Ro 16:25, 2Ti 1:9, Titus 1:2, Rev 14:6 = a gospel whose subject-matter is eternal, i. e., the saving purpose of God adopted from eternity)

(3) Without end, never to cease, everlasting: **Eternal describes a number of entities in the NT -- kingdom** = 2Pe 1:11, **glory** = 2Co 4:17 2Ti 2:10, 1Pe 5:10; **inheritance** = He 9:15; **redemption** = He 9:12; **comfort** = 2Th 2:16; **dwelling places** = Lk 16:9, 2Co 5:1; **salvation** = He 5:9; **punishment** = Mt 25:46; **destruction** = 2Th 1:9; **judgment** = He 6:2; sin = Mk 3:29; . For **eternal life** see 41 uses below).

**Mounce** on **aionios** - This adjective typically functions in three settings: the eternity of God and the divine realm; the blessings of salvation; and everlasting conditions that have neither beginning nor end.

**Gilbrant** has a lengthy discussion of **aionos** -

Put very plainly *aīōnios* is an adjective meaning “eternal, perpetual.” Among classical writers this especially refers to “endless time,” a period of time lasting “for an age” (Liddell-Scott). Together with *aīōn*

(163) the term acquired philosophical overtones, especially beginning in the writings of Plato who developed the term along lines of “super-time, an idea of time in itself” (Guhrt, “Time,” Colin Brown, 3:827). Later, individuals and groups adopted this concept; this opened the door for even further speculations about time (ibid.). (See article on *aion*.)

Despite the rather singular meaning of *aionios* in both Biblical and nonbiblical sources, a fundamental difference exists between the classical/philosophical Greek concept of “eternity” and the Hebraic/Biblical attitude. Whereas the Biblical concept of eternity is an eternity filled with time, “endless time,” the philosophical, Greek notion knows only a “timeless eternity.” In eternity there is no such thing as time—no such thing as past, present, or future, only an eternal now. According to such thinkers as Plato everything in the created order belonged to the realm of time, while eternity was the exclusive territory of deity.

**Septuagint Usage** - Like its relative *aion*, *aionios* is common in the Septuagint (ca. 160 times), and like *aion*, it is regularly the replacement for the Hebrew *’olam* (See the wonderful Name = [El Olam: Everlasting God](#)), “long time, duration, for all time” (in various forms). Often it describes a “lasting ordinance” (nomimon *ainōion*) given for all generations (e.g., Exodus 30:21; Leviticus 7:36; 10:9; cf. 16:29,31,34; Numbers 10:8; 15:15).

*Aionios* frequently describes the “eternal, lasting” covenant God makes with individuals (e.g., Noah, Genesis 9:16; Abraham, Genesis 17:7,8,13,19; David, 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Chronicles 16:17). This is the eternal covenant in which the faithful place their hope and which God promised to fulfill (Ezekiel 16:60; Jeremiah 50:5; Isaiah 55:3; 61:8). The fulfillment of the covenant is the eternal salvation of God (Isaiah 45:17).

From a theological point of view, God himself is “eternal” (Genesis 21:33; cf. Job 34:17, a Septuagint text which varies from the Hebrew and describes God as “the eternal righteous one”). Isaiah records a song to be sung in the land of Judah: “Trust ye in the LORD for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength” (26:4). The Septuagint reads “the great eternal God” (cf. Isaiah 40:28; Susanna 42). His rule and dominion are also eternal (Daniel 7:14,27). In an inspiring praise to God the prayer of Nehemiah is recalled in 2 Maccabees: “O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things . . . who alone is righteous, almighty and eternal . . .” (1:24f.). Thus being “eternal” is the character of God; it is demonstrated in His faithfulness over the ages to keep His promises and covenants. Eternal life—union with the Eternal God—awaits the faithful (4 Maccabees 15:3; cf. 3 Maccabees 7:16). It appears from the evidence of the Septuagint that the translators avoided using *aionios* in the philosophical sense, even in the more Hellenistic writings.

**New Testament Usage** - Much the same can be said for the writers of the New Testament; they knew of no “timeless eternity,” only of time without end. A fundamental tenet of the Biblical faith is that God—deity—does indeed enter human history. God, therefore, is not in some “timeless” otherworld; rather, He is present and is making himself known in the daily life of His creation. Divine revelation and salvation history take place in time, and almost every basic doctrine of the Bible is decided from this: revelation, salvation, redemption, Law, gospel. According to the Bible, history moves toward a goal: the realization of the kingdom of God in time and space. God is the God of time and space; but He is not bound by it. Therefore it is especially important to avoid imposing a Platonic view of eternity and time upon the Biblical writers. To repeat: Eternity is “endless time” not “timelessness.”

The New Testament uses the term *aionios* about 70 times. In 64 of these instances the word describes God or divine facts concerning His work of salvation and everlasting life (Romans 16:26; 2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:1, cf. 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 9:12,14,15; 13:8,20; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 14:6). There is little doubt that the word “eternal” in each of these instances is used in its absolute sense and connotes “endlessness.” Furthermore, in 2 Corinthians 4:18 the term *aionios* is used over against *proskairos* (4199) (“temporal,” “that which lasts for only a period”; cf. Philemon 15).

**Especially noteworthy is that *aionios* refers to the eternal condition of both the just and the unjust.** It speaks of the believers who will not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). But, on not less than seven occasions it denotes the eternal fate and condition of the unjust: eternal damnation and torment (Matthew 18:8; 25:41,46; Mark 3:29; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 6:2; Jude 7). In one of these instances *aionios* speaks of the everlasting punishment of the unjust and the eternal life of the just (Matthew 25:46). It is impossible to interpret *aionios* as the external existence and glory of the believers, while interpreting the punishment of the ungodly in temporal terms. The thought that *aionios* should have such an essential difference within the same verse is so unreasonable that it should not have to be disproved. Evidently the word “eternal” in these 7 places carries the same absolute meaning of

“endlessness” as in the other 64 places. To separate these meanings from each other in order to eliminate or weaken the teachings of Scripture concerning the eternal punishments of hell violates the truth.

As demonstrated above *aīōnios* frequently occurs in conjunction with central words and ideas of the gospel. Of particular importance is the construction “eternal life.” One can say the *zōē aīōnios*, “eternal life,” also acquires a qualitative sense in addition to its quantitative implications. This not only concerns the extended life (its duration) but also its quality and make-up.

Eternal life transcends the old existence, which the Bible depicts as “spiritual death” (Ephesians 2:1,5). Eternal life is communion with God, the fountain of life: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Only when one obtains a share in the life of God himself can an eternal existence be of any joy. There is not life outside of God. What the Scripture terms “the second death” (Revelation 20:14) is precisely an eternal existence without eternal life. The pain which will be combined with such an existence is characterized in the most drastic terms. One of the strongest presentations is the picture of the rich man’s cry for a drop of water to satisfy the burning thirst of his tongue (Luke 16:24). As a contrast to this one finds the promise: “To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life” (Revelation 21:6, cf. 22:17). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

**Aionios** is used most often with **life** - See **eternal life** in Mt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mk 10:17, 30; Lk 10:25; 18:18, 30; John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2, ; Acts 13:46, 48; Ro 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal 6:8; 1Ti 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1Jn 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:21

**Aionios** - 71x in 69v - Mt 18:8; 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:29; 10:17, 30; 16:8; Lk 10:25; 16:9; 18:18, 30; Jn 3:15f, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2f; Acts 13:46, 48; Ro 2:7; 5:21; 6:22f; 16:25f; 2 Cor 4:17f; 5:1; Gal 6:8; 2 Thess 1:9; 2:16; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12, 16; 2Ti 1:9; 2:10; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Philemon 1:15; He 5:9; 6:2; 9:12, 14f; 13:20; 1 Pet 5:10; 2Pe 1:11; 1Jn 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:7, 21; Rev 14:6

One definition of **eternal** is without beginning or end of existence, but in the present passage this glory has a beginning. Once worked out, this glory will be everlasting and endless.

**All that which pleases is but for a moment**

**All that which troubles us is but for a moment**

**That only is important which is eternal**

Unlike the sign, the limits to the weight of glory to be ours throughout eternity is so great that it is immeasurable! This great truth should strengthen you for the good fight of faith so that "When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives (you)... don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends!" (Phillips Translation - Jas 1:2)!

**Thomas Watson** - The weight adds to the worth. The weightier a crown of gold is, the more it is worth.

**Weight** (922) (**baros** English - barometer from **baros** + **metron**) literally refers to a weight (a heavy weight), burden, trouble, load. In Classic Greek **baros** refers to a weight or heaviness and then a burden. In the NT **baros** is used only figuratively meaning something pressing on one physically or emotionally either in a bad or good sense. The burden of a thing (hardship, daily toil - Mt 20:12) or that which a person bears (Gal 6:2 - oppressive suffering), imposition of religious requirement (Acts 15:28+, difficult duty in Rev 2:24+), weight as equivalent to authority (wield authority, insist on one's own importance - 1Th 2:7 and secular Greek writings). **Baros** was used in some Greek secular writings in a metaphorical sense to describe grief or misery. Paul's use in 2Co 4:17 is metaphorical where it pictures a believer's future glory, which is a "weight" every believer should desire and by grace seek after.

**Gilbrant** - Classical Greek - **Baros** functions in various capacities, but as a general rule it depicts something that is “heavy,” something with “weight,” such as a “burden.” It may be used either literally, as in the case of a “heavy burden” that is carried, or it may function figuratively, such as a psychological “burden” or “pressure.” Thus figuratively it may suggest affliction, struggle, oppression, or the like. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**TDNT...**

Originally “weight,” then figuratively “suffering,” “power.”

A. In the Greek and Hellenistic World.

1. From physical weight the meaning is first extended to “tone” or “stress” in speech.

2. The next development is to “thrust,” with a nuance of force or violence.
3. A rather different use is for “fullness,” “plenitude,” “maturity.”
4. The next meaning is “oppressive suffering,” e.g., illness, depression, and burdensome taxation.
5. Finally we have a common use for “weight” in the sense of “dignity or power,” e.g., personal appearance or influence, the power of a state, or the power of arms.

**Baros** - 6x in 6v in **NAS** - asserted... authority(1), burden(3), burdens(1), weight(1).

Matthew 20:12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the **burden** and the scorching heat of the day.'

Acts 15:28+ "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater **burden** than these essentials:

2 Corinthians 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal **weight** of glory far beyond all comparison,

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's **burdens**, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have **asserted** our **authority**.

The phrase *en barei einai* found here in 1Th 2:6 literally reads "**be in weight**" and figuratively may mean something like make one's weight felt, insist on one's importance, claim high status, influence that someone enjoys or claims, claim of importance or making demands (all are in the context of apostle). The Greek metaphor of **weight** is well brought out in Spanish Common Language Translation "We could have made you feel **the weight of our authority**."

Revelation 2:24 'But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them-- I place no other **burden** on you.

Jesus alludes to the reward awaiting the suffer saint calling on him to...

**Rejoice**, and **be glad**, (literally means to "jump for joy!") for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mt 5:12-+)

**Comment:** Both **rejoice** and **be glad** (**agalliao**) are **commands** to carry out these attitudes and actions at all times (**present imperative**), especially when you are being persecuted for the sake of God's righteousness (not self-righteousness) and the Name of your Lord and King Jesus Christ. The joy commanded here, as elsewhere in Scripture (esp. Jas 1:2-+) is not an emotion but a supernaturally enabled attitude, one component of the fruit of the Spirit ( Gal 5:22-+, Gal 5:23-+). The practical point is that if we don't rejoice when we suffer for our King's sake, it amounts to disobedience and is a reflection of our failure to really believe His promises, including the promise of 2Cor 4:17 of surpassing eternal glory. The world can take away every possession we own but it cannot disown us from Jesus and the joy He gives. And the worst the world can do to us is only temporary, while the glory we enjoy is eternal.

**Illustration** - Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "**All that which pleases is but for a moment**" Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "**All that which troubles us is but for a moment**." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "**That only is important which is eternal**." If we realize these three truths, we will not let trifles trouble us, nor be interested so much in the passing pageants of the hour. We would live, as we do not now, for the permanent and eternal (2Corinthians 4:17-18).

**The Greatest Blessing** - If we could ask the apostle Paul what he saw as life's greatest blessing, I suspect he would answer something like this: "Personal salvation with its provision of the present and the future." For him, nothing else really mattered. He constantly looked beyond his trials and adversities, sensing the presence of Jesus Christ and rejoicing in the prospect of happiness in heaven with Him.

Romanian pastor Richard Wurmbbrand spent 14 years in prison for preaching the gospel. Although his captors smashed four of his vertebrae and either cut or burned 18 holes in his body, they could not defeat him. He testified, "Alone in my cell, cold, hungry, and in rags, I danced for joy every night." During this time he turned to a fellow prisoner, a man he had led to the Lord before they were

arrested, and asked, "Have you any resentment against me that I brought you to Christ?" His response: "I have no words to express my thankfulness that you brought me to the wonderful Savior. I would never have it another way." These two men exemplify the supernatural joy that can be experienced by believers who live on the edge of death as the result of being severely persecuted.

Salvation, which brings strength for today and hope for tomorrow, lasts forever. Therefore, we don't have to be defeated by troublesome circumstances. When we know we are saved, we have the assurance that God is at work in our lives, preparing us for the eternal realities of the better world. Yes, salvation is life's greatest blessing. - H. V. Lugt

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**Interest in Advance** - The Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer, gives us a foretaste of the coming glory of heaven. He is therefore called the "earnest" or pledge of the inheritance we shall receive by God's grace in eternity (Eph. 1:13, 14). In biblical times, the word "earnest" was a trade term for the initial payment on a debt. It was made as a promise that full payment would be forthcoming. In principle, then, when an earnest was given, the final installment was guaranteed. Likewise, the joy we experience now through God's Spirit is just a kind of first installment of the rich blessings that His children will receive in eternity.

A wealthy man called his faithful assistant into his office one day and said, "I've put your name in my will, and someday you'll receive \$10,000. Since it may be a while before you get that legacy, I want to make you happy now by paying you the interest on that amount each year. Here is a check for \$600 as a starter." The surprised clerk was doubly grateful. The prospect of the inheritance was certainly good news, but the money he received in advance gave him complete assurance that someday the entire \$10,000 would be his.

As God's children, let's rejoice in the riches we now have in Christ through the Holy Spirit. He is our guarantee of the **exceeding and eternal weight of glory** that our Heavenly Father will one day give to the heirs of salvation (2Cor 4:17). Our present blessings are but a token of the greater inheritance we will eventually receive.

### Afflictions

### Glory

If we place our present "afflictions" on the scale and our promised future "glory" on the other side of the scale, the scales will be tipped heavily in favor of our eternal glory. Try to remember this picture the next time you experience afflictions. It is also worth noting that in Hebrew the word for "glory" is [kabod](#) from root **kabad** = to be heavy or weighty and thus conveying the central meaning of weight in most OT occurrences. It is very possible Paul had this Hebrew thought in mind as he wrote of afflictions as light and glory as heavy.

**Adam Clarke** - Here we see the influence of Paul's Hebrew on his Greek -- The Hebrew word **כבוד** = **cabad** (or [kabod](#)), means literally to be heavy (as in Job 6:3) and so to be glorious (a "weighty person" in society = one who is honorable, impressive, worthy of respect; of God **kabowd** refers to God's essence, the profound, glowing, confluent expression of the attributes of Deity which bears witness to a still more profound and incomprehensible reality of essence. Although invisible [Jn 4:24], He has made Himself known to man through revelation of His Names, His attributes, His written Word, and finally His Living Word, Jn 1:14, He 1:1, 2, 3); the apostle in his Greek unites both these ideas, and says, "**weight of glory**." ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Thomas Watson** - They shall not only have weight for weight, measure for measure, their load of glory for their load of sufferings—but they shall have over-weight, over-measure; good measure, pressed down, heaped together, and running over shall then be given unto them (Lk 6:38+). According to their deep poverty, shall be the height of their riches; according as their blackness has been in their houses of bondage shall, be their brightness in the land of promise.

**Glory** ([1391](#))(**doxa** from [dokeo](#) = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something and thus the **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory.

Cassirer has a "load of glory". Moffatt renders it "solid glory".

**A T Robertson** points out Paul's "Careful balancing of words in contrast (affliction vs. glory, lightness vs. weight, for the moment vs. eternal).

In light of the truth that **"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** (Ro 3:23+), the truth that believers will be rewarded with immeasurable glory in heaven is another manifestation of God's amazing grace.

**Charles Ryrie** says that the **glory of God** "is the manifestation of any or all of His attributes. In other words, it is the displaying of God to the world. Thus, things which glorify God are things which show the characteristics of His being to the world."

**Horatio Bonar** on "**Glory Awaiting Us**"

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 Cor. 4:17.

All that awaits us is glorious. There is "a rest," a Sabbath-keeping in store for us (Heb. 4:6); and this "rest shall be glorious." (Is 11:10.) The kingdom that we claim is a glorious kingdom, the crown which we are to wear is a glorious crown. The city of our habitation is a glorious city. The garments which shall clothe us are garments "for glory and beauty." Our bodies shall be glorious bodies, fashioned after the likeness of Christ's "glorious body." (Php 3:21.) Our society shall be that of the glorified. Our songs shall be songs of glory. And of the region which we are to inhabit it is said, the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Rev. 21:23.)

"That they may behold my glory," the Lord pleaded for his own. This is the sum of all. Other glories there will be, as we shall see; but this is the sum of all. It is the very utmost that even "the Lord of glory" could ask for them. Having sought this, he could seek no more; he could go no further. And our response to this is, "Let me see thy glory;" yes, and the glad confidence which we rest in is this: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake with thy likeness." This is our ambition. Divine and blessed ambition, in which there is no pride, no presumption, and no excess! Nothing less can satisfy than the directest, fullest vision of incarnate glory. Self-emptied, before the infinite Majesty, and conscious of being wholly unworthy even of a servant's place, we yet feel as if drawn irresistibly into the innermost circle and center, satisfied with nothing less than the "fullness of Him that fills all in all."

**J R Miller** helps us understand the idea of **an eternal weight of glory** in his discussion of the one true aim of living...

**What is success? What is the true aim in life? What should one, setting out to make his way through this world—take as the goal of all his living and striving?**

'Views of life' differ widely. Many think they are in this world to make a career for themselves. They set out with some splendid vision of success in their mind—and they devote their life to the realizing of this vision. If they fail in this, they suppose they have failed in life. If they achieve their dream—they consider themselves, and are considered by others, as successful.

The world has no other standard of success: it may be the amassing of wealth; it may be the winning of power among men; it may be the triumph of a certain skill; or genius in art, in literature, in music, etc. But whatever the definite object may be, it is purely an earthly ambition. Applying this standard to life—but few men are really successful. Great men are as rare as lofty mountain peaks. Only a few win the high places; the mass remain in the low valleys. Only a few win honor, rise into fame, and achieve 'distinction'; while the great multitude remain in obscurity—or go down in the dust of earthly defeat.

Is this the only standard of success in life? Do all men, except for the few who win earth's prizes, really fail? Is there no other kind of success? The world's answer gives no comfort to those who find themselves among 'the unhonored'.

**But there is another sphere—there is a life in which success is not material—but spiritual. One may utterly fail, so far as earthly results are concerned; and yet, in the invisible spiritual realm—be a splendid winner in the race!**

### **THE TRUE TEST OF A LIFE WELL LIVED: CHARACTER**

**The true test of life—is character.** Everything else is extraneous, belonging only to the husk, which shall fall off in the day of ripening! Character is the kernel, the wheat—that which is true and enduring. Nothing else is worth while—except that which we can carry with us through death, and into eternity!

**"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 4:18

It is altogether possible that a man may fail of winning any earthly greatness, any distinction among men, anything that will immortalize him in this world's calendars—and yet be richly and nobly successful in spiritual things, in character, in a ministry of usefulness, in things which shall abide—when mountains have crumbled into dust! It is possible for one to fall behind in the race for wealth and honor—and yet all the while to be building up in himself—an eternal fabric of beauty and strength!

**What is the standard of success in the sphere of the unseen and the eternal?** It is the doing of the will of

God. He who does the will of God—makes his life radiant and beautiful, though in the world's scale he is rated as having altogether failed in the battle. He who is true, just, humble, pure, pleasing God and living unselfishly—is the only man who really succeeds—while all others fail. Really, there is no other final and infallible standard of living. One who writes his name highest in earth's lists, and yet has *not* done God's will—has *failed*, as God Himself looks at his career.

God had a purpose in our creation—and we only succeed, when our life carries out this purpose. The most radiant career, as it appears to men, means nothing—if it is not that for which God made us. We *fail* in life—if we do not realize God's will for us. We live worthily—only when we do what God sent us here to do. A splendid career in the sight of men—has no splendor in God's sight!

Not the making of a fine worldly career, therefore—but the simple doing of God's will—is the one true aim in living. Only thus can we achieve real success. If we do this, though we *fail* in the earthly race—we *shall not fail* in God's sight. We may make no name among men, may raise for ourselves no monument of earthly glory—but if we please God by a life of obedience and humble service, and build up within us a character in which divine virtues shine, we shall have attained abiding success! (**Ed: In other words we attain an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison!**)

**A W Pink** comments on 2Cor 4:17...

Afflictions are not light in themselves, often they are heavy and grievous; but they are light comparatively! They are light when compared with what we really deserve. They are light when compared with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. But perhaps their lightness is best seen by comparing them to the glory awaiting us. As the same apostle said in another place, "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" (Ro 8:18)...

The present is influencing the future. It is not for us to reason and philosophize about this, but to take God at His Word and believe it. Experience, feelings, observation of others, may seem to deny this fact. Often afflictions appear only to sour us and make us more rebellious and discontented. But let us remember that afflictions are not sent by God for the purpose of purifying the flesh: they are designed for the benefit of the "new man." Moreover, afflictions help prepare us for the glory hereafter. Affliction draws away our hearts from the love of the world; it makes us long more for the time when we shall be translated from this scene of sin and sorrow; it will enable us to appreciate by way of contrast the things God has prepared for them that love Him.

Here then is what faith is invited to do: to place in one scale the present affliction, in the other, the eternal glory. Are they worthy to be compared? No, indeed. One second of glory will more than counterbalance a whole lifetime of suffering. What are years of toil, of sickness, of battling against poverty, of persecution, even a martyr's death, when weighed over against the pleasures at God's right hand, that are for evermore! One breath of Paradise will extinguish all the adverse winds of earth. One day in the Father's House will more than balance the years we have spent in this dreary wilderness. May God grant us faith that will enable us to anticipatively lay hold of the future and live in the present enjoyment of it. ([Comfort for Christians](#))

**Robert Morgan** comments on **producing an eternal weight of glory**...

This is a profound sentence. He is using the analogy of a pair of scales. Inside of you and me, we have an emotional pair of scales. On one side is joy and on the other side is depression. On one side are our temporary problems and on the other side is our eternal glory. When we fail to renew ourselves each day (**Ed:** Remembering that the renewal is from God, we can refuse to allow ourselves to be renewed [unconfessed sin is one common way to "refuse"] but of course we have to do our part by eating God's provision of daily bread, Mt 4:4, drinking God's pure milk 1Pe 2:2+), we tend to forget about the glory side of the scales and we focus on our afflictions, and they seem very heavy. We talk about being heavy-hearted, about carrying a heavy load. When we don't daily renew ourselves, when we do not daily tend to the interior life, our hearts grow heavy and our burdens weigh us down. We lose our joy. We lose the light-heartedness in life.

But Paul is saying here in 2Co 4:17 that when we are being daily renewed in the inner man and when we are refreshing ourselves daily with the perspective of Scripture, we begin to see things more as God does. And when we see things more nearly as God does, our afflictions in this world seem to "weigh" a lot less. In fact, they are **light**. They aren't heavy at all, they are **light**.

What kind of afflictions is Paul talking about? Well, he gives us a list of them in chapter 11: In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes save one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was ship-



wrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep, in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes up me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. You and I have not experienced most of those afflictions, but we have our own list. But combine them all tighter, group them in one huge bundle, and throw them on the apostle Paul's back—and how does he describe them? They're **light**. Because they are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The heavy, solid side of the scales is our eternal glory. Eternal life. Our eternal home. Our eternal rewards. Paul's going to go on and talk about that in chapter 5, but for now, he just wants us to look at our temporal heartaches in the light of our eternal hope, and the ability to do that is a product of the constant renewal of our minds and hearts.

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A famous Danish sculptor went to Rome to produce his works of art because choice marble was available there. When he finished, he put his masterpiece in crates, using hay and straw to protect them for shipping. Then he hurried back to Denmark. The day his treasures arrived, he was away on business. After uncrating the statues, his resentful servants deliberately scattered the packing material over his well-tilled garden, hoping the weeds which were lodged in the chaff would take root in the fertile soil. Exotic plants native to Rome sprang up instead, and today they are some of Copenhagen's most beautiful flowers.

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**Thomas Watson** - Hence, for the persevering saint, there is laid up a crown of righteousness in heaven. A crown is the highest picture of worldly happiness. It is only for kings and people of renown to wear. There is a crown of righteousness laid up for the elect. It is a weighty crown. The Hebrew word for glory signifies a weight—things that are precious and weighty. The more weighty they are, the more they are worth. The weightier a gold chain is—the more it is worth. The heavenly crown is expressed by a weight of glory in 2 Corinthians 4:17. This crown of righteousness exceeds all earthly crowns. ([The Fight of Faith Crowned](#))

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We have read that during World War I, when it was no longer possible to import those beautiful singing canaries from the Harz Mountains, Germany, a dealer in New York decided to start a system of training canaries to sing. He had bird songs put on records, and these proved of value. But one day he made a real discovery which meant success. He found that if he covered the cages with thick cloths, completely shutting out the light, the birds learned their song. **God sometimes teaches His children to sing in darkness.** Verily, "He giveth songs in the night."—Moody Monthly

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**Joni Eareckson Tada**- While lunching at a friend's house, I had to borrow a spoon and have her bend it so it could be inserted in my hand splint and I could feed myself. Throughout lunch, she glanced at the spoon. Embarrassed, I offered to have my husband straighten it out. Later I thought, Isn't that the way God works in our lives? He knows he can accomplish his unique plan when he bends us to suit his will. The metal of our souls may be difficult to bend, but when we allow God the privilege of shaping our lives, we discover new depths of purpose and meaning. We become perfectly suited for his use. -- Don't be afraid of difficult times. God may be using them to bend you, shape you, make you more useable.

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For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."  
2 CORINTHIANS 4:17

It is far easier to endure trials when we value the future over the present.

A few years ago the popular Back to the Future movies dealt rather whimsically with the possibility of time travel, which always involved entering the future. The recurring theme was that with all the complications of tampering with the future, it was better to live in the present. Viewers could infer that, ultimately, it is not worth it to dwell a lot on the future.

That is just the opposite of the apostle Paul's attitude about the future. He dealt with the profound certainties of what awaits all believers in the life to come. For Paul, the value of the future was another important reason he could endure life's sufferings and trials. The temporal pain for him and us is inconsequential compared to what awaits us in Heaven (Rom. 8:18).

Trials are inevitable, and the pain associated with them can be very intense, but when compared to what we will enjoy in the future, they hardly matter. Paul saw them as light afflictions, or literally "weightless trifles." He knew that their real significance is only in how they contribute to our eternal glory.

That contribution is anything but trivial. Rather, it produces "an eternal weight of glory." Concerning this expression, it's as if Paul envisioned an old-fashioned two-sided scale that was being tipped in favor of the future by the cumulative mass ("eternal weight of glory") of his individual sufferings. Paul could endure the pain of present trials when he was certain that they contributed positively to his life in Heaven.

The amount of trials and suffering you and I endure now is also directly linked to our eternal rewards. Those rewards are not external bonuses such as fancier crowns, better robes, or bigger heavenly mansions. Instead they refer to our increased capacity to praise, serve, and glorify God. That fulfilled Paul's greatest desire and enabled him to joyfully persevere in trials, and it should do the same for us. (Strength for Today - John MacArthur)

Suffering not only makes us stronger now—it makes us able to endure with patience, increases our faith, teaches us to trust God, and leads us to depend on Christ and His Word—but also affects how we will function later. That's why Paul went on to say our focus isn't on today but the future: "We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (v. 18).

The greater our endurance through suffering, the greater our eternal reward.

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## **Our Light Affliction 2 Corinthians 4:17 - Charles Wood**

Introduction: Are you kidding, Paul? What do you mean, "our light affliction?" Some of us are going through heavy affliction; where do you come off calling it light? Paul is writing under inspiration and knows whereof he speaks. Whatever your affliction, it is really light. Here are seven reasons why that is true:

- I. Your affliction is light when compared with that of many others.
  - A. No matter how heavy, there are others with worse.
  - B. Paul endured incredible afflictions—he speaks from experience.
- II. Your affliction is light compared with your deserts.
  - A. It is unworthy to be compared to the woes of the lost (slightly revealed in story of rich man and Lazarus).
  - B. You actually deserve the woes of hell (and would have them were it not for the grace of God in Christ).
- III. Your affliction is light compared to that of your Lord.
  - A. He drained an ultimate cup of woe.
  - B. Thus the One who regulates our afflictions knows exactly what afflictions really are.
- IV. Your affliction is light compared with the blessings you enjoy.
  - A. We possess:
    1. Salvation.
    2. Righteousness.
    3. Adoption.
    4. The privileges of the children of God.
    5. The assurance of future glories.
  - B. No amount of affliction can take these blessings away (or outweigh them either).
- V. Your affliction is light in comparison to its benefits to you.
  - A. It proves the power of sustaining grace.
  - B. It is designed of God to make changes in you.
    1. It can drive out sin.
    2. It can develop character.
    3. It can deepen your walk with God.
- VI. Your affliction is light because of its relative brevity.
  - A. "Which is but for a moment"—it is not lasting.
  - B. It must be viewed as relative.
    1. Compare it to the overall span of life.
    2. Compare it to the reach of eternity.
- VII. Your affliction is light in comparison to the glory to be revealed.
  - A. Paul refers to "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."
  - B. Handling the affliction right can increase the weight of glory.
    1. It can make us more what God wants us to be.
    2. It can increase the weight of the reward awaiting us.

**Conclusion: Our afflictions are much a matter of focus. Focus on the afflictions, and they become heavy. Focus on what God is doing through them, and they lose weight. Whatever it is that you are going through, will you see it through God's**

eyes? Or will you see it as some heavy weight? Paul says, “For our light affliction which is but for a moment,” and we had better agree with him.

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### Streams in the Desert -

“For this our light and transitory burden of suffering is achieving for us a weight of glory.” (2 Cor. 4:17.) (Weymouth.)

IS achieving for us,” mark. The question is repeatedly asked—Why is the life of man drenched with so much blood, and blistered with so many tears? The answer is to be found in the word “achieving”; these things are achieving for us something precious. They are teaching us not only the way to victory, but better still the laws of victory. There is a compensation in every sorrow, and the sorrow is working out the compensation. It is the cry of the dear old hymn:

“Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee,  
E’en tho’ it be a cross that raiseth me.”

Joy sometimes needs pain to give it birth. Fanny Crosby could never have written her beautiful hymn, “I shall see Him face to face,” were it not for the fact that she had never looked upon the green fields nor the evening sunset nor the kindly twinkle in her mother’s eye. It was the loss of her own vision that helped her to gain her remarkable spiritual discernment.

It is the tree that suffers that is capable of polish. When the woodman wants some curved lines of beauty in the grain he cuts down some maple that has been gashed by the axe and twisted by the storm. In this way he secures the knots and the hardness that take the gloss.

It is comforting to know that sorrow tarries only for the night; it takes its leave in the morning. A thunderstorm is very brief when put alongside the long summer day. “Weeping may endure for the night but joy cometh in the morning.”

—Songs in the Night.

“There is a peace that cometh after sorrow,  
Of hope surrendered, not of hope fulfilled;  
A peace that looketh not upon tomorrow,  
But calmly on a tempest that it stilled.

“A peace that lives not now in joy’s excesses,  
Nor in the happy life of love secure;  
But in the unerring strength the heart possesses,  
Of conflicts won while learning to endure.

“A peace there is, in sacrifice secluded,  
A life subdued, from will and passion free;  
’Tis not the peace that over Eden brooded,  
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane.”

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### When Trouble Works For Us

Our light affliction . . . is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. —2 Corinthians 4:17

Today’s Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Is there something that seems to be working against you today—time, health, money, opportunity, people? Sometimes it’s easy to feel that everything and everyone is against us. We know we’re supposed to trust God, but it’s hard to understand why He would allow our circumstances to become so difficult and confusing.

A friend of mine who has experienced many setbacks offered a fresh look at the role of our difficulties. He emphasized a single word in a familiar passage: “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

“We think our afflictions are working against us,” my friend said, “but God says they are working for us. They’re producing a glory that will last forever. Compared to our trials, the glory is always greater. That’s why we don’t lose heart.”

From God’s perspective, our deepest disappointments and sorrows are “but for a moment.” It’s difficult for us to accept this while we are in the midst of our trials, but we can trust the word of our kind and loving Father.

It’s amazing to know that God can take the things that seem to be against us and cause them to work for us. By faith, we can embrace His perspective today. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. —](#)

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One little hour to suffer scorn and losses,  
Eternal years beyond earth's cruel frowns;  
One little hour to carry heavy crosses,  
Eternal years to wear unfading crowns. —Anon.

God can weave the thorns of life into a crown of glory.

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### **It's Working for You - Bob Gass - A Fresh Word for Today**

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us. (2 Corinthians 4:17)

There are times when everything you attempt to do will seem to go wrong. Regardless of your faith and your consecration, adversity will come. You can't pray away God's seasons. The Lord has a purpose for not allowing you to be fruitful all the time. You need seasons of struggle as well as seasons of success. These times destroy pride in our own ability and increase our dependency upon God.

Paul says these light afflictions are only for a moment. Because you can't change it, doesn't mean you can't survive it. If you can't alter it—outlive it! Be like a tree. In winter it silently refurbishes its strength, preparing for the next season of fruitfulness.

If you look back on your accomplishments, you'll notice that they are seasonal. There are seasons of sunshine as well as rain. Each season has its own purpose. Never make permanent decisions based on temporary circumstances. Again Paul says, "The things which are seen are temporary; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). The word "temporary" means "subject to change." Rejoice; it's not always going to be this way. Just hold steady.

Temporary circumstances don't always require action. I've found that prayer brings patience, and patience results in trust. You can't trust a God you don't talk to! Paul says, "Light affliction works for us."

IN WAYS THAT YOU CANNOT SEE OR UNDERSTAND, GOD IS MAKING THE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU'RE IN TODAY WORK FOR YOU.

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We write our blessings on the water, but our afflictions on the rock. GUTHRIE.

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If at any time you feel disposed to say, "It is enough," and that you can bear the burden of life no longer, do as Elijah did, flee into the silence of solitude, and sit under—not the juniper-tree—but under that tree whereon the incarnate Son of God was made a curse for you. Here your soul will assuredly find sweet refreshment, from Christ's acceptable offering to God.... At the sight of the cross you will no longer think of complaining of the greatness of your sufferings; for here you behold sufferings, in comparison with which yours must be accounted a light affliction which is but for a moment; here the righteous One suffers for you,—the just for the unjust.... Under the cross you are prevented from supposing that some strange thing is happening unto you; "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord...." At the foot of the cross your grief will soon be lost in that peace and joy of God which drops from this tree of life into the ground of your heart, and the foretaste you will here obtain of heaven, will sweeten the troubles of this life as with the breath of morning.... Yea, the cross itself will be transformed into such a medium between heaven and earth, that the most comforting thoughts shall descend into your soul, and the most grateful thoughts shall ascend from your soul to heaven like those angels of God seen in a vision on the plains of Bethel by the solitary and benighted patriarch, Jacob. KRUMMACHER.

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**A W Pink** - The sufferings of God's people in this world are, considered in themselves, often very heavy and grievous, and in many cases long protracted. If, therefore, they be "light" when set over against their future bliss, how great that bliss must be! The paucity of human language to express it is seen in the piling up of one term upon another: it is a "weight," it is an "exceeding weight," even a "far more exceeding weight," yea, it is an "eternal weight of glory."

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**Henry Scudder** - And as for the time to come, when you think upon all your crosses and sufferings of this present time, yet reckon, that "they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you." For they are but short for time, and light for weight, being compared with the everlasting weight of glory which they will work for you, if you endure them patiently. I will say nothing of the shortness and lightness of your afflictions, in comparison of the far more intolerable and eternal weight of torments in hell, which you escape: and in comparing afflictions with glory, I will point out to you only the apostle's gradation; you shall have, for affliction, glory, for light affliction, weight of glory; for short affliction, an eternal glory; for common and ordinary affliction, excellent glory. And although it might be thought that he had said enough, yet he addeth degrees of comparison; yea, goeth beyond all

degrees, calling it more excellent, far more excellent: for thus he saith, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory." Indeed, you must not look at the things which are seen with the eye of sense, but at things which are not seen, which are spiritual and eternal, seen only by the eye of faith. (Scudder, Henry. *The Christian's Daily Walk*)

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Caribbean pine trees routinely withstand fierce hurricanes, long periods of drought, and even fire. But one thing they cannot tolerate is cultivation. In a well-kept yard with plenty of water and fertilizer, they often die. We tend to be like those pine trees. During good times we may grow complacent and lose our effectiveness for Christ. But blasts of trial remind us of our need to depend on Him. When we feel our weakest, we can actually be the strongest (2Cor 12:10+).

A tourist in Maine was watching a farmer build a stone wall. After a few moments, he inquired about the wall's strange dimensions. It was 4 feet high and 5 feet wide. The farmer explained, "I'm building it like this so that if it ever blows over, it will be taller than it was before."

No doubt the industrious fence maker said this with tongue in cheek, yet there is a good lesson to be drawn from this story. Even though the storms of trial may seem to blow us over, the Lord uses such experiences to make us "taller" than we were before.

Sometimes in the midst of great trials, it may seem as if the Lord has abandoned us. But we can "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance" (Ro 5:3+). Yes, we can grow taller through trial.- Herbert G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**A Little Perspective** - A college student wrote a startling letter to her parents:

Dear Mom and Dad:

I have so much to tell you. Because of the fire in my room set by rioting students, I suffered lung damage and had to go to the hospital. While there, I fell in love with an orderly. Then I got arrested for my part in the riots. Anyway, I'm dropping out of school, getting married, and moving to Alaska. Your loving daughter

PS: None of this really happened, but I did flunk a chemistry class, and I wanted you to keep it in perspective.

We might question this student's method of breaking bad news to her parents, but her approach highlights a truth: Proper perspective is essential.

When Paul encouraged the church in Corinth, he wrote a litany of his own very real trials and tribulations. To gain perspective, he shifted his focus to the eternal. "Our light affliction," he said, "is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2Corinthians 4:17).

In some ways, our perspective is more important than our experiences. Paul continued, "The things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Cor 4:18). Our sufferings will diminish in importance when compared to the glory that awaits us. — by Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

He promised no immunity from "chance";  
Instead, a cross with adverse circumstance;  
Yet we may toil with joy in all we do,  
For life is brief—eternity's in view. —Gustafson

**The supreme need in every hour of difficulty  
is a vision of God. —G. C. Morgan**

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**Cure For Complainers:** For years, the nearest I came to glorying in tribulations was to mutter, "Well, praise the Lord anyway!" I felt that my complaining was usually justified. After all, who needs pain and frustration? I certainly didn't, I thought. But God thought differently.

The Lord knew that I needed to change and grow spiritually. In Ro 5:3+, Ro 5:4+, Paul taught that life's predicaments can produce godly character in us. Our complaining hinders God's work.

Here are some suggestions for overcoming a complaining attitude:

Remember that your troubles did not take God by surprise. He is still in control.

Believe that God has a solution, a provision, or a gift of wisdom to match your difficulty.

Pray, affirming your faith in God and expressing your confidence in His loving purpose for you.

Wait with expectancy and availability, trusting God to work out His perfect will.

Praise Him--even before He acts.

This alternative to complaining gives God an opportunity to work creatively, both in us and in our circumstances. Best of all, even if circumstances don't change, He uses them to change us. I recommend it! --J E Yoder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **Jesus Is Greater**

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. —2 Corinthians 4:17

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

All the Ethiopian teenager had to do was tell the men who were beating her that she no longer believed in God, and they would have stopped. Yezeshewall was being detained and beaten because of her faith in Christ. But she told her tormentors, "Jesus is greater than all, . . . greater than Marxism, greater than anything."

According to an article in World Vision magazine, the torture continued as she was kicked, hit with an iron ball, and dumped unconscious on the prison floor. When the guards who had beaten her were asked by their supervisor why she had not given in, they replied, "We are dealing with a Christian who says she will not leave Christ."

What a remarkable testimony! This young woman endured brutal treatment because of her faith in Jesus Christ. Later, she was released without explanation.

The apostle Paul described the incredible suffering he went through for the sake of the gospel as light and momentary when he considered the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that awaited him (2 Cor. 4:17).

The persecution you endure may be far different and less dramatic. But when difficulty arises because of your faith, remember: Jesus is greater than anything. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflecting on our heavenly home  
And all that we'll have there  
Makes persecution by the world  
Much easier to bear. —Sper

To be at peace with God is to clash with the world.

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**In Light Of Eternity** - After the 1991 military coup in Haiti, the international community imposed an embargo on the tiny Caribbean nation. Life for many Haitians became a daily struggle for survival.

A missionary told me about a Christian woman who stood up in a meeting and prayed, "We thank You, Lord, for the embargo. It has taught us to depend more fully on You. And it has given us a greater longing for heaven."

Those believers were able to live joyfully, though weak and undernourished, because they kept their eyes of faith focused on the riches and glory they would one day receive in heaven.

We who enjoy comfortable houses and have plenty of food could learn from our Haitian brothers and sisters who live in one of the poorest countries of the world. We need to look at life with an eternal perspective.

I anticipate the time when all sin and pain and sorrow will have ended. I am troubled by all the suffering and evil in the world. But I'm sure those Haitian believers who were sick and hungry, and who sometimes lived under the fear of being killed, had a greater sense of anticipation than I do.— by Herbert Vander Lugt

Lord, help us view life in light of eternity,

even when things are going well.

**Think About It** - How have difficulties caused you to think more about eternal issues? How can you remember those lessons in good times? Are you looking forward to heaven? ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**We must walk in the light  
to keep eternity's values in sight.**

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**A Glimpse Of Glory** - Age has its troubles-failing hearing and eyesight, forgetfulness, aching backs, arthritic hands. These are intimations that we are wasting away. Yet, Paul insisted, inwardly we are

being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2Co 4:16, 17).

How so? The way I see it, aging and weakness focus our thoughts on God. We learn to fix our eyes on Him and on unseen realities; we learn to distinguish between the permanent and what is passing away. We are drawn by God's love to set our affection on things above and not on things of earth (Col 3:1+, Col 3:2+, cp 1Pe 1:13+).

And so we keep our eyes on "**the things which are not seen**" (2Co 4:18). We must look beyond our present frailty to what we will someday be-glorious creatures, bursting with radiant beauty and boundless energy!

So "**we do not lose heart**" (2Co 4:16). We can partner with our pain and go on serving, praying, loving, caring to the end of our days. We can know strength of character despite our frail humanity; we can show patient endurance and love for others in the midst of our discomfort. Despite our momentary troubles, we can press on, **for we have glimpsed the glory that far outweighs them all.** — by David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The future is seen in the Bible-  
This knowledge with us God has shared;  
By faith we can see the invisible,  
The glory that He has prepared.  
-Hess

**With nothing between us and God,  
our faces can reflect His glory.**

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**Storm Clouds And Blue Sky** - I was feeling down about some circumstances the other day and wondering how I might lift my spirits. I pulled from my shelf the book *Life Is Like Licking Honey Off a Thorn* by Susan Lenzkes, and I read this: "We take the laughter and the tears however they come, and let our God of reality make sense of it all."

Lenzkes says some people are optimists who "camp in pleasures and good memories," denying the brokenness. Others are pessimists who "focus on life's losses, losing joy and victory in the process." But people of faith are realists who "receive it all—all the good and bad of life—and repeatedly choose to know that God really loves us and is constantly at work for our good and His glory."

As I read, I looked outside and noticed dark clouds and a steady rain. A little later, a friendly wind came up and blew the clouds away. Suddenly the skies were bright blue. The storms of life blow in and out like that.

By faith we cling to God's promise of Ro 8:28-+. And we recall that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2Co 4:17). God loves us, and He's getting us ready for the day when skies will be forever blue. — by Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The purposes of God are right,  
Although we may not see  
Just how He works all things for good  
And transforms tragedy. —Sper

**God promises a safe landing—  
but not necessarily a calm passage.**

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**Handcrafted by God** - THE Steinway piano has been preferred by keyboard masters such as Rachmaninoff, Horowitz, Cliburn, and Liszt— and for good reason. It is a skillfully crafted instrument that produces phenomenal sound.

Steinway pianos are built today the same way they were 140 years ago when Henry Steinway started his business. Two hundred craftsmen and 12,000 parts are required to produce one of these magnificent instruments. Most crucial is the rim-bending process in which eighteen layers of maple are bent around an iron press to create the shape of a Steinway grand. Five coats of lacquer are applied and hand rubbed to give the piano its outer glow. The instrument then goes to the Pounder Room, where each key is tested 10,000 times to ensure quality and durability.

Followers of Christ are also being "handcrafted." We are pressed and formed and shaped to make us more like Him. We are polished, sometimes in the rubbing of affliction, until we "glow." We are tested in the laboratory of everyday human experience. The process is not always pleasant, but we can persevere with hope, knowing that our lives will increasingly reflect the beauty of holiness to the eternal praise of God.— David C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Is God bending, shaping, or polishing me right now? What's my attitude: Am I thanking and praising God, or am I complaining about the process?

Trials are intended not to provoke us but to prove us.

Tribulation, grief, and sorrow  
Are but heaven's steppingstones  
To a bright and glad tomorrow  
Where no heartache can be known. —Glass

We can endure this life's trials because of the next life's joys.

---

**True Victory** - In 2005, the surprising Boys Town High School Cowboys carried a perfect record into a Nebraska state semifinal football game. But more important, the players had taken giant strides toward overcoming their family backgrounds of abuse, abandonment, and neglect that had brought them to the safe, caring environment of Boys Town.

Their coach, Kevin Kush, believes that football is a way to build character, and says: "Victories at Boys Town are not won on a present-day athletic field. They are won years from now in cities and towns across this country when our players become productive citizens." His team plays to win while pursuing higher goals of sportsmanship, discipline, and teamwork.

Paul held a similar long-range view of our experience as followers of Christ. In the midst of personal setbacks, he urged the Corinthians not to lose heart (2Co 4:17). In spite of loss, we are to pursue the higher goals of God's kingdom now, anticipating our eternal triumph in Christ.

When the Boys Town Cowboys lost their playoff game 10-0, they were disappointed but not devastated. Their coach had taught them to keep going because their true victory in life is still to come. And so is ours in Christ.— by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Come, Lord, and give me courage,  
Thy conquering Spirit give;  
Make me an overcomer,  
In power within me live.  
—Anon.

**Trials can be God's way to triumph.**

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**Waiting For Joy** - A large part of life centers around anticipation. How much we would lose if we were to wake up one day to the unexpected announcement: "Christmas in 10 minutes!" The enjoyment in many of life's events is built on the fact that we have time to anticipate them.



Christmas, vacations, mission trips, sporting events. All grow in value because of the hours we spend looking forward to them—eagerly running through our minds the fun, challenges, and excitement they'll bring.

I think about the value of anticipation and the thrill it can bring to the human heart when I read Psalm 30:5

**Weeping may endure for a night,  
but joy comes in the morning.**

The psalmist is declaring the comforting idea that our earthly sorrow lasts but a short time when compared with the anticipated joy that will begin in heaven and last forever. Paul pens a similar idea in 2 Corinthians 4:17, where we discover that our "light affliction" leads to a glory of eternal value.

For now, those of us who weep can dwell on hope instead of hopelessness and anticipation instead of sorrow. It may be nighttime in our hearts, but just ahead lies the dawn of eternity. And with it, God promises the endless joy of heavenly morning. — by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Tribulation, grief, and sorrow  
Are but heaven's steppingstones  
To a bright and glad tomorrow  
Where no heartache can be known. —Glass

**We can endure this life's trials  
because of the next life's joys.**

#### FAR BEYOND ALL COMPARISON: hyperbolen eis hyperbolen:

- **far beyond:** 2Co 3:18 Ge 15:1 Ps 31:19 Ps 73:24 Isa 64:4 Lk 6:23 Ro 2:7 1Co 2:9 1Pe 1:7,8 5:10 1Jn 3:2 Jude 1:24
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

Psalm 31:19 How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men!

Psalms 73:24 With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

Luke 6:23+ "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Romans 8:18+ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not **worthy** ([áxios](#)) to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

### "HYPERBOLE UPON HYPERBOLE" "PLUS ULTRA" = MORE BEYOND

**Wikipedia** says "[Hyperbole](#) (adjective form hyperbolic) is the use of exaggeration as a rhetorical device or figure of speech. In rhetoric, it is also sometimes known as auxesis (literally 'growth'). In poetry and oratory, it emphasizes, evokes strong feelings, and creates strong impressions. As a figure of speech, it is usually not meant to be taken literally." That last phrase catches my attention - "usually not meant to be taken literally." However Paul intends for this description to be taken literally, albeit admittedly clearly beyond the comprehension and imagination of our non-glorified cerebral cortex!

**Far beyond all comparison** - The **Amplified** attempts (and even their description falls short of the Greek text "**hyperbolen eis hyperbolen**") to depict the incomprehensible truth = "beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!". **Barclay** says it this = "produces for us in a way that cannot be exaggerated an eternal weight of glory." More literally it reads more and more exceedingly or according to excess unto excess. One might translate it as "*Hyperbole upon hyperbole*".

**Spurgeon** - He can scarcely find words big enough to express the contrast between what believers now have to endure and what they shall for ever enjoy.

Play **Keith Green's** old classic [Trials Turned to Gold](#)

He's brought me low —  
So I could know —  
The way to reach the heights. —  
To forsake my dreams —  
My self-esteem —  
And give up all my rights. —  
With each one that I lay down, —  
A jewel's placed in my crown. —  
Because His love —  
The things above - —  
Is all we'll ever need. —  
He's brought me here —  
Where things are clear, —  
And trials turn to gold.

**Hughes** has an interesting [Illustration](#)...

When Spain had extended her conquests to the ends of the then-known world and controlled both sides of the Mediterranean at the Straits of Gibraltar (the fabled Pillars of Hercules), her coins proudly pictured the Pillars framing a scroll inscribed with the Latin words **Ne Plus Ultra**—"No More Beyond." The Pillars gated the end of the earth. But "In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue" and discovered the New World. The proud nation then admitted her ignorance and struck the negative **Ne** from her coinage, leaving the words **Plus Ultra**—"More Beyond."

The change from the myopic "**No More Beyond**" to the expansive "**More Beyond**" effected a revolution in world culture, global economy, and geopolitics. The change also serves as a handy example of what is needed in the spiritual geography of modern men and women, because so many live in the stifling delusion that there is no **more beyond**. Most, including many Christians, live as if "**this is it**"—as in the Looney Tunes finis, "**That's all, folks!**"

At the same time, **Plus Ultra** perfectly describes the Apostle Paul and the ultimate focus of the whole of Scripture and the intensive focus of this section of 2 Corinthians. We will see that 2Co 5:1-10 is in driving continuity with 2Co 4:13-18, where we saw that Paul's confidence in future resurrection and transformation was what enabled him to minister with such resiliency and steadfastness (cf. 2Co 4:7-12). Again we must emphasize that our "futures" (what we focus on) determine the way we live. The ongoing challenge is to embrace the Plus Ultra of future resurrection life with everything that is in us. (2Corinthians Power in Weakness)

Looking back, it seems to me  
All the grief which had to be  
Left me, when the pain was o'er,  
Richer than I'd been before.  
--Anon.

**Adam Clarke** says "the **hyperbole eis hyperbole**, which we render far more exceeding, is infinitely emphatical, and cannot be fully expressed by any translation. It signifies that all hyperboles fall short of describing that weight—eternal glory, so solid and lasting, that you may pass from hyperbole to hyperbole, and yet, when you have gained the last, are infinitely below it.

**Beyond** (1519) (**eis**) is a preposition meaning extension toward a special goal, toward, in the direction of, into.

**Far... all comparison** (5236) (**hyperbole** from **hyper** = beyond + **ballo** = to throw - **hyperballo** used in 2Co 3:10, 9:14, Ep 1:19+, Ep 2:7+, Ep 3:19+) is literally a throwing beyond, an overshooting and then the idea of that which surpasses or excels. Extraordinary, over-great, extreme, supreme, utterly beyond all measure or comparison, to a far greater degree.

**Hyperbole** is used by Paul most often in the Corinthian epistles - extraordinary quality of the power in 2Co

4:7, the extraordinary nature of the revelations in 2Cor 12:7. Note especially how Paul "balances" the reality of his being "burdened excessively" in 2Co 1:8 with the truth of even more excessive resultant glory in 2Co 4:17.

**TDNT** - This verb, having an original sense of "to throw beyond," means "to go beyond," "to stand out," "to excel," or, censoriously, "to transgress the proper measure." The noun means "excess" or "supreme stage or measure."

**Louw-Nida** says **hyperbole** is a "degree which exceeds extraordinarily a point on an implied or overt scale of extent."

**BADG** says **hyperbole** is a "state of exceeding to an extraordinary degree a point on a scale of extent (the context indicating whether in a good or a bad sense) excess, extraordinary quality/character with genitive of thing."

The Greek word obviously gives us the English word **hyperbole** which Webster says is extravagant exaggeration. In rhetoric, **hyperbole** is a figure of speech which expresses much more or less than the truth, or which represents things much greater or less, better or worse than they really are. An object uncommon in size, either great or small, strikes us with surprise, and this emotion produces a momentary conviction that the object is greater or less than it is in reality. The same effect attends figurative grandeur or littleness; and hence the use of the hyperbole, which expresses this momentary conviction. The following are instances of the use of this figure." ([Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) - highly recommended)

**Hyperbole** - 8x in 7v in the **NAS** (not found in non-apocryphal Lxx but 4Macc 3:18) - beyond... all comparison(1), excessively\*(1), far... all comparison(1), measure(1), more excellent(1), surpassing greatness(2), utterly(1).

Romans 7:13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become **utterly** sinful ("sin to the max" so to speak, sin in the extreme)

1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still **more excellent** way.

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened **excessively**, beyond our strength (**far beyond** one's ability to endure), so that we despaired even of life;

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the **surpassing** greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

2 Corinthians 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory **far beyond** all **comparison**,

2 Corinthians 12:7 Because of the **surpassing** greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me-- to keep me from exalting myself!

Galatians 1:13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God **beyond measure** and tried to destroy it;

### **James Smith (1862) No Comparison!...**

"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; and being the heirs of God—proves that our inheritance is sure!

We shall share with Christ. We shall share as 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; and 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, "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). Let us consider,

The Comparison. Paul compares present sufferings—with future glory. Believers are exposed to all kinds of

suffering, and 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 together 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; and 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 house-top." 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, are called to suffer long and seriously.

But whether from trouble of mind, sickness of body, trials in business, family disorder, or persecution for Christ's sake—all suffer, and most believers suffer much!

But compare their present sufferings—with their 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; 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 so Jesus will be glorified in his saints, and admired in 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, and after careful comparison he 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 any one 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, we are perplexed, we are persecuted, we are cast down, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus; we are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake."

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 Corinthians 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; but Paul 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!"

Again, "You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions."

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—and 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 any one 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' 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, either with shame or pain.

In glory we shall never blush, hang down the head, or avert the face; but 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, our 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 upon 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!" ([No Comparison](#))

#### **James Lias (Cambridge Bible Commentary)...**

**17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment]** Literally, For the momentary lightness of our affliction. The argument is advanced another step. Not only have we this inner fount of strength and consolation, but we know that it is eternal, while our afflictions endure but for a moment. Cf. Ro 8:18.

**worketh for us]** Literally, worketh out, bringeth to perfection. The precise opposite of the word translated 'brought to nought,' 'done away.' See 2Cor 3:7.

**a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory]** Over measure an everlasting birthun into higness of glorie, Wiclif. Literally, a weight of glory in excess and unto excess: the whole passage denoting that the glory to come exceeds the power of words to tell. The Vulgate renders '*supra modum in sublimitate*.'

Afford, 'in a surpassing and still more surpassing manner.' An expression very closely approaching to this is the usual one in Hebrew for anything immeasurably great (**Ed**: In the sense that in the Hebrew repetition signified intensification of meaning), as for instance, in the original of Ge 7:19. The word **glory** in Hebrew is derived from the original idea of **weight**. It is possible that this connection of ideas may have influenced St Paul in the choice of this expression. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#))

**Matthew Henry** - The best of men would faint, if they did not receive mercy from God. And that mercy which has helped us out, and helped us on, hitherto, we may rely upon to help us even to the end.

#### **Octavius Winslow** - SEPTEMBER 24.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Corinthians 4:17

IN what respects will it be a glory revealed in us? It will be the glory of perfect knowledge. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Oh, what an orb of intellectual light will be each glorified mind! What capacity of understanding will it develop—what range of thought will it compass—what perfection of knowledge will it attain! How will all mysteries then be unraveled, and all problems then be solved, and all discrepancies then be reconciled; and every truth of God's revelation, every event of God's providence, every decision of God's government, stand out more transparent and resplendent than ten thousand suns. Do you, in your present search for spiritual knowledge, deplore the darkness of your mind, the feebleness of your memory—the energy of your mental faculties impaired, dimmed, and exhausted? Oh, rejoice in hope of the glory that is to be revealed in you, when all your intellectual powers will be renewed as the eagle's strength; developed, sanctified, and perfected, to a degree outvying the mightiest angel in heaven. Then shall we know God and Christ, and truth, and providence, and ourselves, even as now we are known. It will also be a glory in us of perfect holiness. The kingdom within us will then be complete; the good work of grace will then be perfected. It will be the consummation of holiness, the perfection of purity. No more sin! The conscience no more sullied—the thoughts no more defiled—the affections no more ensnared—but a glory of holiness, dazzling and resplendent, beyond an angel's, revealed in us. "It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him."

The glory of perfect happiness will be the certain effect of perfect sanctity. The completeness of Christ is the completeness of moral purity. With reverence be it spoken, God Himself could not be a perfectly happy, were

He not a perfectly holy Being. The radiance of the glorified countenance of the saints will be the reflection of holy thoughts and holy feelings glowing within. Joy and peace and full satisfaction will beam in every feature, because every faculty and feeling and emotion of the soul will be in perfect unison with the will, and in perfect assimilation to the image, of God. Who can paint the happiness of that world from where everything is banished that could sully its purity, disturb its harmony, and ruffle its repose?—where everything is included that comports with its sanctity, harmonizes with its grandeur, and heightens its bliss. Oh, yes! it will be a glory revealed in us. The glory of the Father's adoption—the glory of Christ's atonement—the glory of the Spirit's regeneration, radiating from a poor fallen son of Adam—a sinner redeemed, renewed, and saved. And what is each present ray of heavenly light, each thrill of divine love, each victory of indwelling grace, and each glimpse of the upper world, but the foreshadowings of the glory yet to be revealed in us? Suffering and glory thus placed side by side, thus contrasted and weighed, to what conclusion does our apostle arrive? "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." No, not worthy of a comparison. Do we measure their relative duration? "Then, our light affliction is but for a moment," while our glory is a "far more exceeding and eternal weight." Before long all suffering and sorrow will forever have passed away—a thing of history and of memory only—while glory will deepen and expand as eternity rolls on its endless ages. Do we weight them? What comparison has the weight of the cross with the weight of the crown? Place in the scales the present "light affliction" and the future "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which is the lightest? Are they worthy to be compared? Oh, no! One second of glory will extinguish a life-time of suffering. What were long years of toil, of sickness, of battle with poverty, persecution, and sorrow in every form, and closing even with a martyr's death, weighted with one draught of the river of pleasure at Christ's right hand—with one breath of Paradise—with one wave of heaven's glory—with one embrace of Jesus—with one sight of God? Oh, what are the pangs of present separation, in comparison with the joy of future reunion? What the pinchings of poverty now, with the untold riches then? What the suffering, and gloom, and contempt of the present time, with the glory that is to be revealed in us? We can go no further. Tell us, you spirits of just men made perfect, if it be lawful, if it be possible, what the glory that awaits us is! Tell us what it is to be an unclothed spirit—to dwell in the bosom of Jesus—to see God—to be perfectly holy—to be supremely happy! Wait, my soul! before long it will be all revealed!

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## **R A Torrey - TIME AND ETERNITY CONTRASTED**

"For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 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 (for a season); but the things which are not seen are eternal" (for eternity).—2 CORINTHIANS 4:17–18.

THE Apostle Paul had to endure some things that to most men would seem very hard to bear, and some of these afflictions continued through many years. Indeed the thirty years of his Christian experience seem, at first sight, like thirty years of self-denial and suffering for Christ. But in speaking of these afflictions in our text, Paul speaks of them as "our light afflictions" and also as "our affliction which is for a moment." Is thirty years "but a moment"? Yes, when compared with eternity. Your life of eighty or ninety years or one hundred years, is but the twinkling of an eye when compared with eternity. And is the loss of friends, the loss of ease, the loss of the admiration and applause of men, the loss of home and native land, the loss of all that men ordinarily hold dear; and imprisonment, and shipwreck and scourging and wandering and hunger and stoning, is all this "light afflictions"? Yes, when compared with the joy and honour and glory which are to be revealed in us in a glad day that is soon coming. When the sufferings of this present time are put in comparison with the eternal glories that are thus secured, they are nothing at all. And when all the wealth and pleasure and honours that one can possibly get in this world are put in comparison with the eternal agony and ruin and despair and shame that it costs to live for this world, they, too, are nothing. Suppose one gets a million dollars or two million dollars or one hundred million dollars at the cost of being lost forever? Does it pay? Suppose one's whole life from boyhood or girlhood to old age is one constant round of parties, and feasts, and frolics, and merriments, at the cost of spending an eternity in hell. Does it pay? The truly wise man does not look at the things which are seen, which are "for a time," but at the things which are unseen, which are for eternity. This, then, is really our subject to-night, ETERNITY.

### **I. THERE IS AN ETERNITY AND WE MUST GO THERE**

The first thing our text teaches us, and which we know to be true even though it were not in our text, is, There is an Eternity, and we must go there. It is the height of folly to refuse to think of eternity. A lady said to me one day, speaking of a certain shiftless young man who has had great opportunities in life but thrown them all away, "He just lives for today; he never thinks of the future either in the life that now is or the life that is to come." Everybody sees that that young man is an ass. I do not think there is any difference of opinion on that point among any of those who know him. But is he really much more of a blockhead than the man or the woman who



lives only for the brief days that we spend on this earth, and never thinks of that vast eternity which stretches beyond, and to which we are all hurrying on at express speed? THERE IS AN ETERNITY. I may live ninety or a hundred years of the life that now is, but I shall certainly live millions and billions and trillions of years in the endless æons of years in the life that is to come. I shall live forever and forever.

Eternity is the important thing. The life that now is is important only because it determines our eternity. Many a man who is wise enough to look somewhat into the future, asks himself the question, "Where and how shall I spend my middle life, and where and how shall I spend my old age?" A man who is still wiser will ask himself the question, "Where and how shall I spend my eternity?" Have you settled that question? Let me put it to every one of my readers: "Have you settled where and how you will spend eternity?" If you have not, there is really but one sane thing for you to do, and that is to settle the question to-night as to where and how you will spend eternity.

## II. WHERE AND HOW WE SHALL SPEND ETERNITY IS SETTLED IN THE LIFE THAT NOW IS

The second thing that I wish to say to-night is, Where and how we shall spend eternity is settled in the life that now is. The life that now is, is the preparation time, and the only preparation time for the life that is to come. Time is the preparation time and the only preparation time for eternity. The boy who has wasted his school days, and failed to make preparation for business life, when he gets into the weary grind of a life that is the inevitable outcome of a wasted boyhood and young manhood, would gladly go back and live his wasted boyhood over again; but he cannot. Much less can any man or woman who wastes this present life on earth come back from a ruined eternity and live this present life over. It cannot be done. You are making your eternity to-day.

Men have tried to fancy that there is some other time of preparation in the future for those who waste this present opportunity for preparation in the life that now is. Such a hope is the "baseless fabric of a dream" which has not one atom of foundation either in common sense or the more sure Word of God. "If," says Jesus, "ye die in your sins, whither I go ye cannot come." This word of our Lord Himself makes it as clear as day that where and how we shall spend eternity is settled in the life that now is, settled this side the grave.

You are making your eternity NOW. Some young man or woman may be saying in their heart, "I will go out and have one more fling at sin." Do it, and it may land you in hell for all eternity. In the lost world of endless midnight and despair you will look up and say, "Dr. Torrey told me that if I went out to spend one more night in sin I would spend eternity in hell, and here I am." And you will wring your hands, and you will shriek, and you will agonize, and you will despair, but it will be too late, too late forever.

I was dealing one night with a man in Minneapolis who was under deep conviction of sin. I urged upon him immediate acceptance of Jesus Christ, but he hesitated, and he went out without deciding. He thought he would go into a saloon and have one more drink and he did, and that led to another, and so on. Two years later I received a letter from him from the State Prison at Stillwater, telling me how near he had come to accepting Christ that night, but how he had gone to have another drink and then another, and how he had become intoxicated, and while intoxicated he had stolen an overcoat, was arrested, tried and found guilty. He had no recollection of stealing the coat, but said he had no doubt that he did. He was sentenced to two years in Stillwater State Prison. He added, "I have accepted Christ here, but these two years have been wasted, because I did not do as you urged me to that night." But ah, that was not so bad as to wake up in hell and know that you are to spend all eternity there, because you did not take the step that you know you ought to take to-night.

## III. HOW TO SECURE A BLESSED AND GLORIOUS ETERNITY

We have seen that there is an eternity, we have seen that where and how we shall spend eternity is settled in the life that now is; so we come face to face with the question, What must I do in the life that now is that I may have a satisfactory and glorious eternity?

First of all, if you are to have a satisfactory and glorious eternity, you must believe on Jesus Christ in the life that now is. This God tells us in His Word over and over again. For example, He says in John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." And He says in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The first thing to do, then, if we are to have a satisfactory and glorious eternity, indeed the first thing we must do if we are to spend eternity outside of hell, is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Just what does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? God Himself answers that question in John 1:12: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here we are told that to believe on Jesus Christ, to "believe on his name," is to "receive him," that is to simply accept Him to be to us what God offers Him to be to every one, to receive Him as the Saviour who has borne our sins for us, borne them in His own body on the cross, and who is therefore ready and able to forgive all our sins as soon as we confess them, and forsake them and put our trust in Him, to receive Him also as our Lord and Master to whom we surrender the entire control of our lives, to receive Him as our divine teacher to whom we surrender our thoughts. Whatever else we may do or not do, it is absolutely sure we shall not have a blessed eternity if we do not thus receive Jesus Christ.

In the second place, if we are to have a satisfactory and glorious eternity, we must serve Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace; but

we are rewarded according to our works. Eternity begins with the coming of Christ, and at His coming, Jesus Christ “shall reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27). Our eternity will be rich and full just in proportion to the faithfulness of our service here on earth. There are many who fancy that all professed Christians will have an equally glorious eternity, but this is pure fancy. It contradicts the plain teachings of the Word of God, and the teachings of sanctified common sense as well. The Word of God tells us that some will be saved, “so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:15); but that others will have an “abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11). The one who barely accepts Christ, and who holds on to the world in a measure, and does scarcely anything for his Master, will have no such entrance into “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” he will have no such glorious eternity as the one who turns away from the world with his whole heart, and gives up all its follies and self-indulgences and “comes out” and “is separate” and lives wholly for Christ, a life of constant self-denial and constant service. Do you realize, you professed Christians, that you are preparing your eternity by the way you serve Christ in the life that now is? Do you realize that your eternity will be richer or poorer by the way in which you serve Jesus Christ on earth? Do you realize that every day spent in hard service will make Heaven that much richer and every day and hour frittered away will make Heaven that much poorer? Ah, ponder again those familiar words that God spake to Daniel, “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” How important then is every day of our Christian life. Let me put to you the question, Has to-day counted as much as it might have counted for eternity?

Again let me say, that the sufferings we endure, and the sacrifices we make for Christ will make eternity richer. The words of our Lord Jesus are very plain on this point; He says, “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:11, 12). There are some who bitterly regret it when they are called upon to be reproached or slandered or in any way to suffer persecution for Jesus Christ’s sake. So far from regretting it, we should rather rejoice in it instead, we should be “exceeding glad,” these things bring great reward in Heaven. Every sneer that one endures, every reproach that is heaped upon us, every loss that we sustain for the sake of the truth and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, brings glorious reward in eternity. Never forget what Paul said, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward” (Rom. 8:18), and how he says again, “If I suffer, I shall also reign with him.” The seemingly awful tortures endured by the Armenian Christians rather than give up their faith in Christ, and which to some people seem so inexplicable are no longer a mystery if we only bear in mind how they will bring reward a thousand-fold throughout all eternity. Do not whine, but thank God every time it is your privilege to suffer for Christ, and the more you suffer the more rejoice. The opportunity to suffer for Christ or for the truth is an opportunity for an investment that pays an eternal dividend.

Again, if we would have a thoroughly satisfactory and glorious eternity, we must use our money for Jesus Christ. The use we make of our money in the life that now is, enriches or impoverishes our eternity. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:17–19, “Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.” And the Lord Jesus says in Matthew 6:19, 20, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” How few people seem to realize that they are making their eternity by their use of their money here on earth, but it is so. I think some of us will look back with regret from the other world and say, “What a fool I was to invest my money in houses and lands and jewels and luxuries, in gewgaws and trinkets, when I might have invested it so it would be paying me interest to-day.”

Men and women, the greatest practical question that confronts you and me is where shall we spend eternity and how shall we spend eternity? Will you spend eternity in heaven or will you spend eternity in hell? Will you spend it in joy and glory unutterable, or will you spend it in misery and shame unutterable? Time is nothing comparable with eternity. Ten, twenty, eighty years is nothing compared with eternity—eternity—eternity! That is the all-important matter. Where you will spend eternity and how you will spend eternity will be determined by your action in this life; it may be determined, it will be in a measure determined by your action to-day. What you do to-day is of tremendous importance. If you have not already accepted Christ, accept Him now. And even if you have accepted Christ, but have been serving Him in a half-hearted way, give yourself up wholly to Him from this time henceforward. If you have been holding back from sacrificing for Christ, make the sacrifice at once. I desire with all my heart that my eternity be just as rich, just as full, just as glorious as possible, and by God’s grace I am going to make it so, whatever it costs.

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## Great Texts of the Bible - AN ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY

For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.—2 Cor. 4:17.

GEORGE HERBERT, in his *Country Parson*, describes this Epistle as “full of affections.” Beyond any other of the Apostle’s letters it lays bare the deepest feelings of that great heart, which has been keenly wounded by sufferings more acute than the trouble that came upon him in Asia and pressed him out of measure, beyond his strength, so that he had despaired even of life. Life is still his:

but he has been made to feel, as he had not felt before, the pain which can be inflicted by coldness, suspiciousness, and something like hostility on the part of those towards whom, as he says, with touching emphasis, his heart has been habitually “enlarged.” They have listened to malignant misconstructions, set afloat by those Judaizing teachers who made it their business to stamp out his work wherever Jewish Christians were to be found. It was bitter indeed for him who during a year and a half had been the guest of Justus, who had baptized Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, to have to defend himself against the imputation of double-mindedness, of shifty diplomacy, and of what in modern phrase might be called priestcraft. It might well make him write warmly, and also mournfully. Much, he felt, was against him; he was hard put to it, “perplexed, cast down”; it was as if a “process of dying” had begun in him; his bodily health, continually impaired by the “thorn in the flesh,” had been yet further affected by the mental distress of an intensely sensitive nature. But faith comes to his aid; “though the outward man be decaying, the inward man is daily renewing its strength”; the “momentary affliction seems light” after all, when he considers that it is producing, in a manner and to an extent surpassing all thought, “an eternal weight of glory”; and this comes home to him when he seriously contrasts “the things seen,” as “temporal,” with “the things not seen” as “eternal,” and, at that high standpoint of illuminated reason, looks resolutely away from the former to the latter.

¶ It is no mere poetical hyperbole which finds expression in such words as these:

We live in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs.

Or again,

Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal Silence.

Who is there, indeed, whose familiar experience has not taught him, in some ways at least, the power of thought to master time, of feeling to lend wings to the leaden hours, or, what is relatively to us the same, to render us unconscious of their flight? Absorbing employment, intense excitements, critical emergencies, things and events that deeply affect or move us, often, as we all know, make hours to vanish unnoted and unmeasured, whole days to contract almost into the brevity of hours. When the flow of composition urges the writer’s rapid pen, when the inspiration of a congenial subject kindles the artist’s mind and lends deftness to his touch, when the orator is borne onwards on the swift tide of successful speech, when the trial is proceeding on whose issue life or death is suspended, when the decisive engagement, big with the fate of nations, is being lost or won—these, and such as these, are occasions on which time is not reckoned by physical measures, on which intensity of thought and feeling quickens the rate at which life moves.

## I THE WEIGHT OF AFFLICTION

1. Afflictions never seem light to those who are called upon to bear them. By some remarkable condition of things, heavy afflictions may seem light and be accounted as nothing at all, but, naturally and by themselves, we always regard our own afflictions as heavy. It is very easy for spectators to say, when they hear another complaining of sufferings, “Oh! they are nothing at all, not worth a moment’s attention”; and to be astonished that so much should be made of a little. But spectators of suffering may not be the best judges of its weight. In the first place it may be that they are not suffering themselves, and so look at things very comfortably. Then again, men differ as to their sensibility to pain. Circumstances which may be nearly unheeded by one who has but dull sensations may be agony to another more finely constituted. Or again, if both are sensitive, yet one may have a special wound or sore which the other is happily without, and then even the touch of a fly drives to madness. Therefore, when we see another in pain, it is not for us straightway to declare that there is nothing to be pained about. We are all better aware of the stress of our own sorrows than we are of those of other people, and the heart knoweth its own bitterness. Naturally we all feel our afflictions to be heavy.

St. Paul had his afflictions. He did not find the Christian life easy. He was speaking for himself and his companions when he said “We are troubled on every side,” “perplexed,” “persecuted,” “cast down,” “always delivered unto death.” These are not rhetorical phrases which spring to the pen of an eloquent and ready writer. They are words which tell us of hard experiences, harsh treatment, real pain and suffering. In another part of this letter he tells us something more of what he had endured as a Christian. Five times he was beaten by the Jews, thrice by the Romans. (The strokes of the whip and the rods were not make-believe.) Once he was stoned, thrice he suffered shipwreck. Everywhere perils awaited him—perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils of the Jews, perils of the heathen, perils in the wilderness, perils in the city. He had endured weariness and painfulness, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness.

2. How can afflictions, naturally heavy, come to be regarded as light? We know quite well that it is possible for the attention to be so occupied with one thing that it does not notice another. A man engaged in deep thought does not see the friend who recognizes him in the street. A philosopher like Newton may be so deeply involved in his problems as to forget the body and its want of food. In the

excitement of battle men have not noticed the wound they have received, and not until they have begun to faint from loss of blood have they perceived what has happened to them. A mind intensely occupied with one thing has little to bestow upon others. We cannot be alive with the same intensity all over. Great concentration of vitality at one point lessens it at others. So that the constitution of our nature points out the direction in which the answer to our question is to be sought. If there be something else of more importance than the pain upon which the attention can be fixed, then, for every degree of such attention there is a degree less of pain; with almost complete attention upon something else, the pain will very nearly disappear; until, by absorbing devotion to some great thing, it is possible for afflictions which naturally are heavy to become graciously light.

The vision of the unseen has this power. It interprets and transforms life. In this way "our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." We are to get the clue to the mystery of life, we are to cease to be puzzled by the pain and suffering. The meaning and end of the seen are hidden in the unseen. To see with any clearness the end will help to interpret the ways by which it is reached. Light from the unseen will give an interpretative value to life and its trials, and with the vision will come the transformation. That which was a tangled puzzle will solve itself when viewed from a right standpoint. Now St. Paul was always a traveller through the seen to the unseen, where he found the Aladdin's lamp which revealed the meaning of his present affliction, which, though often sore, became "light," working not sores in him, but rather great glory. And so it is that here the mind of the Apostle is overwhelmed by the contrast between the seen and the unseen, and, as he rises in his flight of contemplation, the calamities of earth dwindle into insignificant smallness till there is nothing visible but glory.

Yet, strange to say, he describes the glory by an old earthly metaphor, by the very metaphor, indeed, which he used to apply to his afflictions; he calls it a weight. We speak of a weight of care, a weight of sorrow, a weight of anxiety; but a weight of glory!—surely that is a startling symbol. We do not think of a man as being crushed, overwhelmed, weighed down by glory. We should have thought that the old metaphor of care would be repulsive, that it would be cast off like a worn-out garment and remembered no more for ever. But the old garment is not worn out when the glory comes, it is only transfigured; that which made our weight of care is that which makes our weight of glory. We need not a new object but a new light—to see by day what we have seen only in darkness.

¶ What is the use of all our reading and writing and speaking and thinking about God, and His love, and His care over us, if we are to see in an affliction nothing more than the distress which it brings? There is something else in the affliction besides this distress, and that something is God's love and eternal life. And the only use of all our reading, etc., is to fix our attention on this which is enclosed within the affliction, instead of having it engrossed by the envelope—the outward form in which God sends it.

¶ If from the shores of eternity we cast back our gaze over the path we have travelled in this world, which regions will shine most brightly and beautifully in the view? Not, I think, those that have seemed to be joyous in the passing—not the years of youth and health and strength and earthly happiness—but much rather the spaces that here have seemed perhaps the darkest and dreariest; for these have drawn us nearer to God, these have been fullest of prayer, on these have fallen the purest, brightest rays from the Father of lights and from Him who is the brightness of that Father's glory and the Light of the World.

## II THE DURATION OF AFFLICTION

1. Affliction is often life-long, as the Apostle well knew. Why then does he call it momentary? He compares it with what is unseen and eternal. He looks away from seen vicissitudes to unseen possessions. These vicissitudes may be manifold. They may be constant. There is the change from health to sickness. There is the change from wealth to poverty. There is the change from companionship to solitude. But let a man look away from them all, from the seen mutations to the unseen certitudes, and what then? Why, then he thinks of a place prepared where the inhabitant says no more, "I am sick"; of a treasure laid up "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"; of a friendship that neither fails nor falters, but is always faithful, always sure, and always near. Who shall separate us from the love of God? Who shall exclude us from the grace of Christ? Who shall deprive us of the communion of the Holy Ghost? These form abiding realities, which the shocks of circumstance are as powerless to change as the rocking earthquake is to ruffle the pure blue sky, or disturb the solemn marching of its silent stars. So may we all, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, serve God acceptably and with godly fear.

2. Although St. Paul places the emphasis on the eternal, he does not despise the present. He was far too healthy-minded a man to rail at a summer day because it does not last, or to depreciate the beautiful home in which the great God has placed us here because this, some day, has to make way for another; he was far too human to depreciate friendship or love because there are partings and families are broken up. He was not so much absorbed in the thought of death as to forget the warmth, the majesty, and the mystery of being alive at all; and therefore those completely travesty St. Paul's philosophy of life who fix their eyes so exclusively on another world that they take no interest in this, or who are so absorbed in thinking of the God whom they have not seen that they have no eyes to see and care for the brother whom they have seen. No, he calls these things, not unimportant, but temporal. And what he means evidently is this: that underneath the seen and passing things, here and now and in our midst, is a world of unseen reality; that "heaven lies about us," not only, as the poet says, "in our infancy," but all our days; that these unseen realities make use

of the seen, but exist independently of them; that it is possible as we walk the earth day by day to have our head above the mists in heaven; that our calling is to be eternal beings in a world of time, and that the real test of the use of life is what life leaves us when it has passed away.

¶ This valley [the Yosemite] is flanked by towering mountains, cleft for the most part right up in every variety of extraordinary summit. The rock is granite of flashing whiteness, rising into triangles, squares and domes. The feature of the valley is two gigantic domes, the one split like the half of a helmet, the other running up in a mass of rock till an entire helmet crowns its mass. Yesterday I walked to the Mirror Lake on the one fork of the valley. The pines at first by their reflection almost absorbed the view; but when you look far enough down, in quite distinct perspective you see to almost infinite depths the outline of the rocks and of the sky. Thus the transient in the glass of time captivates many; we need to look deep enough to catch the eternal.

### III THE END OF AFFLICTION

1. Affliction is the precursor of glory. It cannot be said that trial and suffering in themselves have power to make men holier or more heavenly. Upon many they have the very opposite effect, making them gloomy, selfish, and envious. They harden the heart instead of making it tender and sympathetic. They may come and overwhelm a man in their dark waves, and yet when their tide recedes it may leave him impure and worldly as before. Let no one think, then, that he is necessarily the better for having been tried. It is not so; and yet it is true that trial is most generally the instrument which God employs for softening the hard-hearted, for subduing the proud, for teaching endurance and patience, for expanding the sympathies, for exercising the religious affections, for refining, strengthening, and elevating the entire disposition and character. You cast the ore into the furnace in order to obtain the pure gold unalloyed with any dross; so men must pass through those fires of affliction which try every man's work of what sort it is. "And no one," it has been observed, "who has borne suffering aright has ever complained that he had been called on to endure too much of it. On the contrary, all the noblest of our race have learned from experience to count suffering not an evil but a privilege, and to rejoice in it as working out in them, through its purifying and perfecting power, an eternal weight of glory." St. Paul had learned to "glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience"; in other words, that the result of trial is, or ought to be, the discipline and enlargement of the spirit.

¶ A friend of mine, Mr. Houston of Johnstone Castle, died last week at the age of eighty-two, who had for fifty years suffered uninterruptedly from neuralgia. Many years ago he told me that for twenty years he had never been so sound asleep as to lose the consciousness of suffering. He died praising God for His tender mercies, which had led him all his journey through.

2. Affliction "worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." More is said here than at first appears; more than the hasty reader would observe. It is not merely asserted that we shall be relieved of pain by-and-by; it is not merely stated that they who suffer here on earth shall cease to suffer in heaven; this were no new thing to tell. But what is said is this: that pain is the forerunner of joy, as its efficient cause. "Affliction" is not merely followed by "glory"; it "worketh" that glory, it maketh that glory to be. "Our light affliction worketh for us a weight of glory." This is a specific truth of Catholic Christianity, and one unknown to the wise and sagacious of this world.

There is nothing more characteristic of the scientific thought of to-day than the law of progress through struggle. Scientists show us that its working is found in every kingdom of the animate universe; that there is no progress apart from struggle and labour and suffering; and that in this conflict only the fittest survive, and by their survival raise their species to a higher plane. And this which philosophers of the nineteenth century claimed as the great discovery of their age is anticipated in these words of St. Paul. Our sufferings and struggles, if rightly used, lead to the development of our powers, and work for us a splendid result—the life of glory. He shows us that in this struggle alone is spiritual progress possible, and that the result of it is the survival of the fittest, of the saints, in the kingdom of glory.

¶ A bar of iron worth £1, when wrought into horse-shoes is worth £2. If made into needles it is worth £70. If into pen-knife blades it is worth £650. If into springs for watches it is worth £50,000. Thus the more it is hammered and pounded and polished, and brought through the fire, the more valuable it becomes. Does not this throw light upon many a perplexing providence and many a crushing sorrow? The afflictions of this present time are preparing us for service here and for glory hereafter.

Without, as I heard the wild winds roar,  
And saw the black clouds their floods outpour,  
As the lightnings flashed,  
And the thunders crashed,  
And the hurricane's force waxed more and more,  
I said, as I looked from my window warm,

“Heav’n never on me send such a storm!”

Then came a dark day, when fierce and fast,  
Down fell on my head the blinding blast!  
Yet tho’ sore assailed,  
I nor shrank nor quailed,  
For tho’ loud the gale raged, as ’twould rage its last,  
The struggle I waged, as I journeyed on,  
Awoke in me powers before unknown!

I felt my hot blood a-tingling flow;  
With thrill of the fight my soul did glow;  
And when, braced and pure,  
I emerged secure  
From the strife that had tried my courage so,  
I said, “Let Heav’n send me or sun or rain,  
I’ll never know flinching fear again!”

3. It is Christ who makes affliction work out such glorious results. He has transformed pain and sorrow into beneficent angels. We cannot tell how it happened, but grief, through her acquaintanceship and familiarity with the Son of Man, became like a new creature; in her were seen a certain softness and pensiveness which she never had before; her form became altered and her footsteps light, until she seemed to take the air of a Sister of Mercy, and to breathe forth a wondrous benediction while she walked with Him. Doubtless it was His influence that worked the change; it was He who turned into a cross that scourge of small cords which she had carried from time immemorial, and gave to her eyes that tender look which seems to say, “I do not willingly afflict nor grieve you, O children of men.” Thus they went through the world hand in hand, until He went out of it by the gate of the grave, tasting death for every man. And grief has been acting ever since as one of His ministers, and representing Him, and doing the works of mercy in His Kingdom. She has given to men in these latter days more than she ever took away; she is a dispenser and not a spoiler; her hands are full of goodly gifts, and though her discipline be painful, yet it is ever merciful, and as a gentle almoner she offers and bestows, wherever faith and love dispose the heart to receive them, sure and perfect pledges of eternal blessing and glory.

¶ I stand in one of our harbours, and see beyond its shelter the waves lift themselves mountains high; my ears are filled with the roar of the angry wind. Ignorant of vessels and of navigation, I observe a goodly ship putting forth to sea, and the conviction steals over me that she will be engulfed in the waters or cast by the wind upon the shore; but I do not know the power of the engines that propel the vessel or the skill of the captain who is in command of her. Did I realize these I should be assured that she would force her way through the waves, and in due time reach the desired port in safety. It is thus with the world. We see, we realize, the misery, the strife, the confusion that prevail; but we do not see, we cannot realize, the wisdom, the love, the power in the nature of Him who, in spite of all these, reigneth King for ever, or we should be assured that, though “the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed,” yet “there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early.”

¶ “Open the door and let in more of that music,” the dying man said to his weeping son. Behmen was already hearing the harpers harping with their harps, he was already taking his part in the song they sing in Heaven “to him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood.”

Some one will enter the pearly gate  
By-and-by, by-and-by;  
Taste of the glories that there await,  
Shall you? Shall I?

If we are to be there, we must, like the saintly Behmen, “wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Everlasting life begins on this side the grave, and our Heaven, like his, must begin on earth. The Life Eternal, the life in which time is as eternity and eternity as time, is the life hid with Christ in God. In the measure in which we experience it, we shall rise above earth’s changing scenes. Our sorrows will not crush us; our successes will not elate us; our difficulties will not daunt us; death itself will not appal us, because, taught by the great Apostle, we are beginning to appraise the events of life at their true value, we are learning, through many a painful experience, slowly but surely to look “not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen,” and we find that the things which are unseen are eternal, for “Eternity is the Diamond in the Ring.”

Of fret, of dark, of thorn, of chill,  
Complain no more; for these, O heart,  
Direct the random of the will  
As rhymes direct the rage of art.

The lute's fixt fret, that runs athwart  
The strain and purpose of the string,  
For governance and nice consort  
Doth bar his wilful wavering.

The dark hath many dear avails;  
The dark distils divinest dews;  
The dark is rich with nightingales,  
With dreams, and with the heavenly Muse.