

~Other Speakers M-R: A.W. Pink:

"For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"(2 CORINTHIANS 4:17).

These words supply us with a reason why we should not faint under trials nor be overwhelmed by misfortunes. They teach us to look at the trials of time in the light of eternity. They affirm that the present buffetings of the Christian exercise a beneficent effect on the inner man. If these truths were firmly grasped by faith they would mitigate much of the bitterness of our sorrows.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This verse sets forth a striking and glorious antithesis, as it contrasts our future state with our present. Here there is "affliction," there "glory." Here there is a "light affliction," there a "might of glory." In our affliction there is both levity and brevity; it is a light affliction, and it is but for a moment; in our future glory there is solidity and eternity! To discover the preciousness of this contrast let us consider, separately, each member, but in the inverse order of mention.

1. "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It is a significant thing that the Hebrew word for "glory"-kabod-also means "weight." When weight is added to the value of gold or precious stones this increases their worth. Heaven's happiness cannot be told out in the words of earth; figurative expressions are best calculated to convey some imperfect views to us. Here in our text one term is piled up on top of another. That which awaits the believer is "glory," and when we say that a thing is glorious we have reached the limits of human language to express that which is excellent and perfect. But the "glory" awaiting us is weighted, yea it is "far more exceeding" weighty than anything terrestrial and temporal; its value defies computation; its transcendent excellency is beyond verbal description. Moreover, this wondrous glory awaiting us is not evanescent and temporal, but Divine and eternal; for "eternal" it could not be unless it were Divine. The great and blessed God is going to give us that which is worthy of Himself, yea that which is like Himself-infinite and everlasting.

2. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment." (1) "Affliction" is the common lot of human existence; "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). This is part of the entail of sin. It is not meet that a fallen creature should be perfectly happy in his sins. Nor are the children of God exempted; "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). By a hard and rugged road does God lead us to glory and immortality. (2) Our affliction is "light." Afflictions are not light in themselves for oftentimes 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 real lightness is best seen by comparing them with the weight of glory which is awaiting us. As said the same apostle 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" (Rom. 8:18). (3) "Which is but for a moment. Should our afflictions continue throughout a whole lifetime, and that life be equal in duration to Methuselah's, yet is it momentary if compared with the eternity which is before us. At most our affliction is but for this present life, which is as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Oh that God would enable us to examine our trials in their true perspective.

3. Note now the connection between the two. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 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. Oftentimes afflictions appear only to sour us and make us more rebellious and discontented. But let it be remembered 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 to prepare us for the glory hereafter. Affliction draws away our heart 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 which God had 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, yea, of a martyr's death, when weighed over against the pleasures at God's right hand, which 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 counterbalance the years we have spent in this dreary wilderness. May God grant unto us that faith which will

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enable us to anticipatively lay hold of the future and live in the present enjoyment of it.