

inflicted, or that the ingenuity of cruel men has devised, fail in conveying to us anything like a full perception of what the Redeemer underwent, when He agonized in the garden, and bled on the cross. When it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and put Him to grief—when His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground—when He exclaimed in the bitterness of His heart, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”—he was then bearing the iniquities of His people. He was enduring the sufferings which ought to have fallen upon them. The fire of God’s wrath was burning in His pure and spotless soul—and a burden was laid upon Him which, had He not been possessed of omnipotence to bear it, would have entirely crushed and overwhelmed Him by its weight.

When you consider this, you learn how expressive and significant, as applied to the Redeemer’s sufferings, is the language of our text—“*the travail of His soul.*” In the inward man was the agony felt—*here* He endured all the hidings of His Father’s countenance—the Divine love and presence were for a time withdrawn. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”

We may speak of our trials and afflictions and tribulations—our agonies of mind and pains of body, our varied calamities, and distresses in life. We may at times, when the strokes of Divine chastisement are repeated and severe, be apt to think that there never was sorrow like unto our sorrow. But how doth it become us to be still, and not to open our mouth, when we remember that all the sufferings which it is possible for the whole human race to endure on this earth were but as a drop in the waters of the ocean, when contrasted with the fearful and tremendous griefs which pierced the heart of our Blessed Lord, as there were laid upon Him the iniquities of us all. Surely the redemption of the soul is precious. Surely there was a fixed determination in the councils of heaven that sinners shall be saved. Surely it is the purpose of the Godhead that Jesus Christ shall see His seed as the travail of His soul, that He shall have a seed to serve Him, while sun and moon endure. And this leads us to remark

II. That these sufferings were merely preparatory to a glory that should follow. It would not have been consistent with the righteousness of the Divine character to have inflicted them without a necessary cause—it would not have been accordant with the dictates of infinite wisdom to have voluntarily submitted to them without a corresponding design in so doing. What that design was, the Scripture hath plainly told us. His sufferings were necessary as an atonement for sin. Christ must needs suffer, that the honour of God’s law might be maintained, that the righteousness of His government might be vindicated, whilst mercy is extended to the guilty and condemned. He willingly poured out His soul unto death, that having brought in an everlasting righteousness He might secure the salvation of sinners of mankind in compliance with the terms of the everlasting covenant. Having made His soul an offering for sin—having fulfilled the engagements under which He came, having paid the price of His people’s redemption, and done everything for their complete salvation, there is ample security provided for that end; the Father is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake—the Spirit is sent forth to apply the Saviour’s finished work—He is commissioned in God’s own way and time to gather them into the Church on earth, and finally to collect them around the throne on high, as the trophies of His matchless redeeming love.

Hence it is affirmed in the words of our text, “*He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.*” And, blessed be the name of God, this promise has in no age, and at no time, remained unaccomplished. No sooner did the Apostles go forth, preaching a crucified Jesus and the resurrection from the dead, then we find the prediction beginning to be fulfilled. They who with impious hands had nailed the Saviour to the cross, and taken part in shedding His innocent blood, were amongst the first to bend beneath the sceptre of His grace, and to experience the blessed fruits of the death which they helped to inflict.