

fruit. They are very unripe Christians; they are sharp, acrid men. They are severe, selfish, harsh, bitter, censorious. There is no sweetness, gentleness, kindness in them. They may be at the heart good men or women, but they are not beautiful. People cannot love them. And yet they are God's dear children. Then the frosts come—sharp, biting frosts. Sickness prostrates them, sorrow breaks in upon them. Bereavements turn the green leaves to sere and yellow. Humiliations come; trials come; disappointments come. They are defeated and crushed. God allows them to suffer great temptations. And out of these sad and painful experiences, these troubles and trials, these humiliations and failures, they come, like the autumn fruits after the frosts, mellow, luscious, rich and ripe.

Nothing like trials, afflictions, humiliations, defeats, to rid us of self-confidence, self-dependence and self of every form, and to make us humble, and meek, and kind, and gentle, and loving, and Christ-like.

Such is the design of affliction. Without these painful processes, many a man would never reach glory. It was the humiliations, defeats and trials of his early discipleship that made the Peter of the Gospels, the Peter of the Acts and Epistles. It was scourging, imprisonment and persecutions that made Paul the brightest jewel of the world.

“David's Psalms had ne'er been sung
If grief his heart had never wrung.”

Bereavements, loss and sore sickness fitted Job to write that wondrous book that bears his name. Rutherford's charming letters, headed “Christ's Palace, Aberdeen,” were written while he was imprisoned for conscience's sake. Bunyan got the “Pilgrim's Progress” out of prison walls and from the clanking of prison chains. And the hosts of the redeemed around the throne are described as “they who have come through great tribu-