

COMFORT FOR SUFFERING SAINTS

Jerome Zanchius (1516-1590)

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.”—Romans 8:28-29

WITHOUT a due sense of predestination, we shall [lack] the surest and the most powerful inducement to patience, resignation, and dependence on God under every spiritual and temporal affliction.

How sweet must the following considerations be to a distressed believer!

1. There most certainly exists an almighty, all wise, and infinitely gracious God (Heb 11:6).
2. He has given me in times past and is giving me at present (if I had but eyes to see it) many signal intimations of His love to me, both in a way of providence and grace (Eph 1).
3. This love of His is immutable.¹ He never repents of it nor withdraws it (Phi 1:6).
4. Whatever comes to pass in time is the result of His will from everlasting (1Co 8:6), consequently—
5. My afflictions were a part of His original plan and are all ordered in number, weight, and measure (Psa 22:24).
6. The very hairs of my head (every one) are counted by Him; nor can a single hair fall to the ground but in consequence of His determination (Luk 12:7). Hence—
7. My distresses are not the result of chance, accident, or a fortuitous² combination of circumstances (Psa 56:8), but—
8. My distresses are the providential accomplishment of God’s purpose (Rom 8:28), and—
9. My distresses are designed to answer some wise and gracious ends (Jam 5:10-11), and—
10. My affliction shall not continue a moment longer than God sees [fit] (2Co 7:6-7).
11. He Who brought me to it has promised to support me under it and to carry me through it (Psa 34:15-17).
12. All shall most assuredly work together for His glory and my good, therefore—
13. “The cup which my heavenly Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?” (Joh 18:11).

Yes, I will, in the strength He imparts, even rejoice in tribulation. Using the means of possible redress,³ which He hath or may hereafter put into my hands, I will commit myself and the event to Him, Whose purpose cannot be overthrown, Whose plan cannot be disconcerted, and Who, whether I am resigned or not, will still go on to work all things after the counsel of His own will (Rom 5:3-6; Psa 33:11-12; Eph 1:11).

Above all, when the suffering Christian takes his election into the account and knows that he was by an eternal and immutable act of God appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; that, of course, he hath a city prepared for him above, a building of God, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens; and that the heaviest sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in the saints—what adversity can possibly befall us, which the assured hope of blessings like these will not infinitely overbalance (Pro 8:35; 2Co 5:1; Rom 8:18; Rom 8:33-37)?...However keenly afflictions might wound us on their first access, yet under the impression of such animating views we should quickly come to ourselves again; and the arrows of tribulation would in great measure lose their sharpness. Christians [lack] nothing but *absolute* resignation to render them perfectly happy in every possible circumstance; and *absolute* resignation can only flow from an *absolute* belief of, and an *absolute* acquiescence⁴ in, God’s *absolute* providence, founded on *absolute* predestination (1Th 1:2-4).

From *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination*, available as a tract from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

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¹ **immutable** – unchangeable.

² **fortuitous** – happening by chance.

³ **redress** – compensation for wrongdoing.

⁴ **acquiescence** – acceptance and submission without protest.