implied, that aggressive young man who, wishing, challenged
the world to battle, would perhaps lose courage; instead of
falling in the struggle, he perhaps would sink under suffering.
Alas, to want to suffer and to choose sufferings—that is a wish
that never arose in any human heart. The person who thinks
that is deceiving only himself. In order to grasp the thought of
suffering and the joyous gospel of suffering, in order to endure
the suffering and actually have benefit from it, in order to be
able to choose suffering and in order to believe that this actually
is wisdom leading to eternal happiness, a human being needs
divine guidance. It can never occur to the natural man to wish
for suffering. The most profound change must first take place
before a person can believe this secret of sufferings. He must
first be gripped by and then be willing to learn from the only
one who went out into the world with the purpose of willing to
suffer, with the choice of willing to suffer and with insistence
upon it. He went out into the world, but he did not go out the
way a youth goes out from his paternal home. He went out
from the Father in Heaven; he relinquished the glory he had
before the foundation of the world was laid—yes, his choice
was eternally free, and he came into the world—in order to
suffer.

It is said of him, the Lord Jesus Christ: Although he was a
son, he learned obedience from what he suffered (Hebrews
5:8). This is the text we shall examine as we consider that even if
no human being, as he is by nature, can wish sufferings, this is
the joy of it:

that the school of sufferings educates for eternity.

When we say of someone that he has learned from what he
suffered, this statement simultaneously contains something in-
viting and something deterring. The inviting thing is: he
learned. People are not unwilling to learn; on the contrary,
they are eager to learn and especially eager to have learned
something. They prefer to learn everything very quickly, but if
some effort must be made, they are also willing to make some
effort. But if it is a matter of learning a little, slowly, but of
course thoroughly, they are already impatient, and if a long
time is required they become, as the language sarcastically puts
it, thoroughly [tilgavns, of benefit] impatient. But if suffering
is to be the teacher, be the schooling, then they completely lose
their zeal for learning and think that they are already wise
eat too high a price, because they cannot promptly,
and wise enough to perceive that one can indeed buy
with a commonsense estimate, think through the suffering and
understand its beneficialness. If, namely, the suffering is not
greater, not more serious, not heavier, not more difficult than
can be grasped in its benefits by common sense, then suffering
is not the schooling, then it is the schooling that has its ardu­
ousness, its suffering, which, of course, is an entirely different
matter.

People are eager to learn, and if they hear about a great
teacher they hurry to him. Then they are quickly prompted to
reachability, then they are eager to buy schooling for money
and for admiration. Indeed, they compete to come to him,
because it flatters the vanity to have learned from the admired
teacher, the one they pay by means of money and admiration,
while they also cash in on him and are themselves paid for
having learned—from the admired teacher. But if the teacher is
unwilling to deceive them, is unwilling to take either their
money or their admiration, if he knows only one truth and
wants to know only one, the truth that he has by no means
invented himself and in which he himself is only a learner—
that through sufferings, by himself in sufferings, a person will
with the help of God learn the highest truth—then they be­
come impatient and almost indignant with the teacher. The
same young man who wanted only one thing, to admire the
teacher, who wished for only one thing, in the capacity of
the first loyal adherent to proclaim the admired one’s praise in
the world, becomes indignant when he hears that sufferings are
to be the teacher to whom everyone is to be directed. How
strange that the young man would so eagerly and admiringly
need the teacher and be deceived; on the other hand, he is angry
at having to do without the teacher and through sufferings to
be in the truth. How strange that the most coveted good in the world is independence and that there nevertheless is almost no one who covets the only way that truly leads to it: sufferings.

People are eager to learn something, to learn something by which they could amount to something, to learn something that could be of benefit to them, or to learn something of which the knower dares to say that by knowing it he knows a great deal. But when it comes to learning to know oneself through sufferings, then they lose the courage or the ability to comprehend, then they easily see, so they think, and believe that the outcome bears no relation to the arduousness. —Alas, it must indeed be said that, instead of learning something, every human being must learn first what is most important to learn. And this first, this most fundamental schooling underlying all other, which is the schooling of sufferings—this is the last to be sought.

"He learned obedience from what he suffered." Imagine if you will, my listener, a very lowly person. He lives in a remote place; his capacities are very limited. Is it not true that the world will say of him: What would he be able to learn? And yet, yet there is one thing he is able to learn—he is able to learn obedience. Indeed, if he were even more limited than he is, yet, yet there is one thing he is able to learn—he is able to learn obedience. But why is it so difficult to learn obedience: is it not because one must learn first of all that obedience is truly worth learning, that far from being what is busily called a waste of time obedience means to gain the eternal? Why is this so difficult to believe? "Because it is so difficult to obey." And why is it so difficult to learn to obey? Because we must learn first that obedience is eternally worth learning.

All the knowledge allied with inquisitiveness, thirst for knowledge, natural talent, the self-seeking passion, all the knowledge the natural man promptly understands to be worth learning is also basically and essentially easy [nem] to learn, and aptitude [Nemme] is involved here from first to last. Therefore people are willing enough when it is a matter of learning more, but when it is a matter of learning anew through sufferings, then learning becomes hard and heavy, then aptitude does not help,
but on the other hand no one is excluded even though he is ever so lacking in aptitude. The lowliest, the simplest, the most forsaken human being, someone whom all teachers give up but heaven has by no means given up—he can learn obedience fully as well as anyone else.

This was the first part, that you, my listener, imagined the lowliest human being. But now imagine that the one who Holy Scripture says learned obedience from what he suffered—that it was he who was with the Father from eternity, that it was he who came in the fullness of time,\(^52\) that it was he who finished what the Father had begun, who completed creation and transformed the shape of the world.\(^53\) Holy Scripture speaks of him as of the lowliest of men, says nothing about who he was, about what he was, about what he was able to do, about what he accomplished, nothing about his work, which is beyond all human thought—it only says: he learned obedience from what he suffered! Alas, he who knew everything, he whose thought encompasses everything, he who therefore needed to learn nothing because what he does not know simply does not exist—of him it says: He learned obedience from what he suffered.

Christ *learned* obedience. Surely his will from eternity was in harmony with the Father’s; his free decision was the Father’s will. But when he came in the fullness of time he learned obedience from what he suffered—that he suffered when he came to his own and they knew him not,\(^54\) when he went around in the lowly form of a servant\(^55\) and carried God’s eternal plan although his words seemed futile, when he, the only one in whom there is salvation, seemed superfluous in the world, when he achieved nothing, nothing, when no one paid attention to him or, what surely was even harder, when he was an object of the vile pandering of inquisitiveness. Ah, even when wickedness rose up against him in ferocious rebellion and carried him, the Holy One, to death—this is not as horrifying as the time when he was an object of inquisitiveness, when the Savior of the world was capable of nothing in the lost world but only of gathering the inquisitive, the idlers around him, so that the workman left his task to stare at him, the merchant ran