

## CHAPTER VII.

### *Consolation for Mourners.*

“ Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God,”  
Isaiah xl. 1.

CHRIST says, “ Blessed are they that mourn.” Not they shall be blessed, but, they are blessed ; and this blessedness cannot be reversed : for Balaam tried all he could to alter God’s mind, and so does the devil, the world, and the flesh, to this day. But all Zion’s foes shall be confounded, while, with hellish grief, they each one day must own, “ he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.” There are, however, mourners who have nothing to do with the blessedness Christ speaks of ; therefore Christ, speaking by his servant Isaiah, long before his incarnation, says, that he was anointed to comfort those that “ mourn in Zion.” “ Man is born unto trouble,” so that all Adam’s children mourn more or less ; “ but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” Therefore the question becomes important, What is it to be a mourner ? It is to know the evil of sin, the plague of the heart, and the workings of an evil nature. It is to walk in darkness and have no light, to be persecuted for righteousness sake, and to be in prison and not able to come forth. A mourner feels sin is an evil, because it hinders his approach to God, interrupts his communion with God, and drives him from God ; it oppresses his mind, contracts guilt upon his

conscience, makes him resemble the devil, and act like the world. He therefore "groans, being burdened" with sin; at the same time he breathes after God, desiring to have nearness of access to him, to receive a smile from him, and to live above the flesh. He knows the "plague of his own heart," because he finds everything the devil suggests it is ready to receive, and every affliction God sends it is inclined to murmur at. While his affairs are easy his heart can cry "thy will be done;" but when troubles arise, this cry ceases, and the heart is ready to say, "God deals harder with me than he does with others." If he attends God's house, the devil and the world often carry on traffic together in his heart. And unless Jesus comes and drives these buyers and sellers out of his temple, the poor soul who is afflicted by them, will not be able to get one crumb from his master's table. He often sighs on account of the workings of an evil nature. If he approaches the throne of grace dead formality frequently takes the place of true prayer; if he communes with God's saints, he is more ready to talk about the affairs of this world than of eternal realities; if he prays in public, his pride is either mortified by his being in bondage, or inflamed by his tongue being loosened; he would say, when God crosses him, "thy will be done," but he feels peevish and fretful before God, and is more ready to exclaim, like Joseph to his father Jacob, "not so, my Father;" he would view himself as the least of all saints, but sometimes thinks himself better than others; he would receive a brotherly reproof in love, saying, "let the righteous smite

me, and it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head," but when the reproof is given, malice works him into a rage; he would feel for others, "weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice," but often he envies his brother his happiness or prosperity, though were his brother not happy or prosperous it would be of no advantage to him, and instead of sympathizing, is ready to increase his brother's sorrows; he would not wish to be thought more than he is in himself, and yet feels the risings of anger the moment he is told what he is. He knows he is a sinner, but if told so, old nature murmurs at it. He knows he is proud, but if told so, old nature frets and fumes at it. He knows he is ignorant, but if informed of it, old nature thinks it an insult. He would always act from the best motives, but very often is warm for God and his truth, because some one has offended him, or it answers some worldly purpose. Thus when he "would do good evil is present with him, and the good that he would do that he does not, and the evil that he would not that he does." When alone he would be spiritually minded, but often feels more carnal than at any other time; he would never act the hypocrite, and yet feels all sorts of deceit working within him, and at times showing itself without him; he would always be sober-minded, but frequently feels full of lightness; he would have much of the communion of saints, but feels so carnal at times, that he would rather do anything than meet with one. Thus when he lays down and when he rises up; when he is speak-

ing to God, and when he is speaking of God; when he is in public, and when he is in private; when with the world, and when among God's saints; sin works within him, which makes him often sigh, "O wretched man that I am!"

But he hates sin and himself, which shows that he is a "partaker of the divine nature;" he thirsts after God, which shows that "the Lord is his portion;" he resists and struggles with the devil and the world, which shows he is an "heir of heaven;" he often fears internal corruptions will break out into open actions, and that he will thus disgrace his profession, which shows he possesses a "purified heart;" he wrestles with the suggestions of the wicked one, which shows he fears God;" he frequently feels neither "fit for the land," the Lord's people, "nor yet for the dunghill," the world, which shows he "serves the Lord with all humility of mind," and that he is "born from above;" he loves to live out of himself; and as a "good man," is satisfied not in himself, nor with himself, nor by himself, but "from himself," Prov. xiv. 14. So this shows he is "a good man:" he cannot take it for granted that he is the Lord's, and is never satisfied without the "earnest of the Spirit in his heart," which proves he is "taught of God;" he feels he cannot keep himself, and therefore cries, "hold thou up my goings in thy path," which proves he is "kept by the power of God;" he abhors himself when he indulges vain and earthly thoughts, which shows "his affections are set on things above." This mourner is blessed with a knowledge of sin, self, and the

devil, so as to hate and fight against each : he is blessed with salvation, holiness, and heaven : he is blessed with the Father's love, the Son's grace, and the Spirit's power, which blessings are known by none but "the family redeemed from among men."

The true mourner knows what it is to "walk in darkness, and have no light." He often reads the word, but cannot enter into the spirit of it; sits under the ministry of the gospel, can approve of what is said as truth, but can neither taste, handle, nor feel the "word of life." He can look at promises and portions, which, in times and seasons past, proved very precious, but are now quite dry and barren; he therefore thinks past joys nothing but fancies, and the past visits of God's face nothing but delusions; he doubts the reality of religion in others, and still more in himself; or, if there is any religion, he thinks every man has got the right but himself; he is ready to doubt the truth of Scripture, and to dispute the thing of a God; he secretly wishes himself anything but a man, that he could creep into some cave and never be seen; he imagines every one must know the misery of his mind, and that, consequently, every one thinks he is what he fears himself to be—a deceiver. He dreads hypocrisy more than any other evil, and yet fears he is an hypocrite; he hopes—he fears—he cries—he endeavours to forget his woe—he is cast down—he hopes again, and mourning sinks into himself. Like Elijah, he gets into a cave at Horeb; a dry, lonely, and desert spot; but God in his own time comes and says, "What doest thou here Elijah? go forth," and imme-

diately he leaves his miserable state. And though God appears in all the glory of Deity, yet nothing but his "still small voice" in the soul, relieves his desponding and agitated feelings; so that the tempest is turned into a calm, the hurricane into tranquillity, the darkness into light, the war into peace, and God is known as "a very present help in time of trouble."

Very blessed are the Lord's words to his church while passing through the wilderness—"O, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, I will lay thy stones with fair colours," or "divers colours," 1 Chron. xxix. 2. Every regenerated member of Christ's church possesses divers colours, namely, "sighing" under darkness; "crying" from the loss of God's presence; "asking" for fresh love-tokens; "grasping" the promise; "clinging" to the truth; "pursuing" the Redeemer; "reaching" after God; "taking hold" of the covenant; "waiting" for God; "standing still" to see his salvation; "seeking" his smiles, while the enquiry is, "O, when wilt thou comfort me?" "Watching" his hand, saying, "I will look for him;" "resisting the devil," exclaiming, "Lord help me."

A pharisee, or false professor, has only one colour, and that is the devil's colour, namely, carnal security: so that not knowing what it is to groan, he knows not what it is to sing—not knowing what it is to be naked, he knows not what it is to be clothed—not knowing what it is to be lost, he knows not what it is to be found—not knowing what it is to mourn the absence of God's face, he knows not what it is to have the light of his countenance upon the soul—not

knowing what it is to struggle with the powers of darkness, he knows not what is meant by the church's "candle not going out by night," Prov. xxxi. Whereas, dear child of God, your divers colours prove you are a favourite with your heavenly Father; but you will perhaps say, the words are "fair colours"—very true, these divers colours arise from your life being hid with Christ in God, which must be a fair life, because a perfect life: and thus he says, "thou art all fair, my love; thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee."

The true mourner is persecuted for righteousness sake: he is called "too particular," "narrow minded," "bigoted," "uncharitable," "Antinomian," "dangerous." He is slandered and spoken against in all shapes and forms, his company is shunned, and his name cast out as evil.

If he is poor in this world, and requires the common necessaries of life, the rich are very shy of helping him, because he does not go to their church or chapel. If he is a tradesman, the fashionable professors do not like to deal with him, and advise others to follow their example. He is considered a "troubler," "a setter forth of new doctrines," "a fool," "an enthusiast," "a pest to society." He is altogether "unknown" in this world: but "well known" by the Father, as one of his jewels; "well known" by Jesus, as one of his sheep; "well known" by the Spirit, as one of his temples. If he makes a blunder, or falls through infirmity of the flesh, it is never forgotten; but the cry is, "ah, ah! so would we have it." God has said, "dust shall be the serpent's meat;" and the weaknesses and falls of

God's people become this dust, upon which the serpent feeds himself and all his seed. David knew what his enemies wanted when they encompassed him, for, said he, "mine enemies and my foes come upon me to eat up my flesh," that is, the sins of his flesh.

Persecution has never ceased since Abel's day, and the reason is, Christ is the same now as he was then; for the chief reason why the devil and his followers persecute God's people is, because Christ is in them: therefore, the reason why most professors escape persecution is, because Christ is not in them. Free-willers, universal redemptionists, and formalists, have not Christ in them by the saving testimony of the Holy Ghost, so they are never opposed and never persecuted; on the contrary, always popular, and are always well treated in this world. But, dear child of God, the more the world persecutes you the more you resemble Christ, and the greater reason have you to rejoice, because Christ says, "if ye were of the world the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Then you are blessed with an interest in election. Christ says, "woe be unto you when all men speak well of you." This woe does not belong to you, dear mourner, then you are blessed with freedom from it. The apostle, speaking of God, says, "the world knoweth us not because it knew him not," 1 John iii. 1. Then a true mourner is blessed with vital and spiritual adoption into his family. And he says in another place, "as he is so are we in this world," 1 John iv. 17. How

then is God? His word is despised, his truth trampled upon, his name blasphemed, his works disregarded, and his ways hated. Is this how the world serves God? Yes, and precisely thus it serves all who love him. So then, dear mourner, thou art blessed with love to God, oneness with God, and union to God; for thou art despised, trampled upon, spoken against, disregarded, and hated by the world.

But you will say "religious people are my chief persecutors." Yes, and "religious people" were chief persecutors of Old Testament saints, of Christ, and his apostles. Who persecuted Abel? "Religious" Cain. Who tried to curse Israel? "Religious" Balaam. Who opposed Jeremiah? "Religious" Hananiah. Who said to Christ, "thou hast a devil and art mad?" The "religious" pharisees. Who stoned Stephen? The "religious" Jews. Who assaulted Paul in the Temple? The "religious" multitude. In fact, none know how to persecute but "religious people," and the more religion they get in their heads while destitute of the power of godliness, the better they can injure God's saints. Nevertheless, "no weapon that is formed against thee," mourning soul, "shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment God will condemn," Isaiah ver. 54. then thou art blessed with constant security. Christ has bought thee out of captivity by his own blood, therefore the devil could not hold thee in his kingdom a moment after thy call by grace; he could not hold thee in legal bondage a moment after the Lord spoke liberty in thy soul; and he may often worry thee but must let thee go at last. The

world may persecute, but thou art bought out of captivity to it, therefore overcome it thou must; sin may annoy, but thou art bought out of captivity to it, therefore it shall not destroy thee: death may alarm, but cannot hold thee fast; the grave must let thee go through, and heaven cannot be shut against thee. God the Father's language to Christ is, "Go through, go through the gates:" and Micah sweetly sings, "their king shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them." Therefore as Christ hath passed through the gates of temptation, desertion, sorrow, reproach, persecution, darkness, hell, death, and the grave, and become a glorious conqueror, so all his mourners must be more than conquerors through him that loved them.

Rejoice, then, mourning soul;  
 Thy God is thy sure portion;  
 He's thy friend, thy shield,  
 And everlasting all.  
 Thou canst not be deceived  
 Nor lost.  
 Earth, hell, and death,  
 Must all give way  
 To enhance thy glory:  
 Thy very troubles, sins, and cares,  
 Contribute in God's hand  
 To work together for thy good,  
 All must be well;  
 For Jesus thy deliverer reigns.

God may hide his face, but he will never forget thee; troubles may encompass thy soul, but thou shalt rise above them all; darkness may oppress the mind, but "light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." And that thou art "righteous" is certain, because thou art depending upon no other righteousness but Christ's; and that thou art upright is certain, because thou canst appeal to the Lord in these

words, "All my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee," "Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." As this is thy character, dear believer, and so many blessed things are said of thee, do not despair, for soon, very soon, this old tabernacle of thine will be taken down; then "seeing Christ as he is," thou wilt have no more sorrow, and "being like him," no more sighing. Even so, Amen.

## FRAGMENTS.

“Gather up the fragments that remain,” John vi. 2.

A CHRISTIAN is one who is born from above ; therefore his desires aspire to heaven, his affections are fixed on Christ, and his understanding is illuminated, to see that nothing short of the blood of God’s dear Son can cleanse him from sin ; and that no other righteousness can justify him before God, but that which Christ wrought out, God the Holy Ghost reveals, and God the Father imputes to sin-sick souls : he is one who hates all sin, contemns himself, loves holiness, prizes communion with a Triune God, while every truth of the Holy Scriptures is dear to his heart.

A Christian feels that the greatest enemy he has to encounter in this world, is himself ; and knows, that though self often deceives him, yet self he as often makes an idol, falls down and worships it.

A Christian is one who meets with much persecution, for his holy fervour and heavenly zeal in contending for pure truth. Many are the hard names with which he is often branded, by flimsy professors, who would be very glad to see him fall into sin. But though falsely designated “an Antinomian,” he knows the doctrines of

grace in their vital power and efficacy in the heart, so that the doctrines being holy, they have a correspondent effect upon his mind; being heavenly, he soars above this vain world; being spiritual, the lust and depravity of his nature causes him constant pain; yea, being majestic, he is not greatly moved amidst the world's frowns, the devil's rage, and his own changeable frames and feelings; but knows what it is to triumph over all by precious faith. As universal charity is not what is inculcated in the Bible, nor known by the teachings of the Holy Ghost, so he is one who is constrained to differ from the great bulk of professed Christians who are cotemporary with him, and who prefer external appearance to internal evidence, and are concerned more about the conversion of others than the salvation of their own souls.

Good works are much talked of by those who have "the form of Godliness," but are rightly understood and practised by none but such as are heaven born, heaven taught, and heaven kept.

Good works are like a shadow, which is produced by light shining upon a dark body. Where there is no light, there can be no shadow; but when God lights up the lamp of truth in a sinner's heart, nothing can extinguish it, nor prevent his manifesting it, more or less, in his walk and conversation.

One reason why free-willers are so fond of talking about what they are to "do," is, because they "do" anything but live upon Christ.

As God's quickened children are daily learning that they can *do nothing*, they are more desirous

to hear of what Christ has *done*, when men attempt to preach the gospel, than of what they are *to do*.

God's grace is too pure to die, too strong to need man's help, and too rich to need creature improving.

One spiritual desire after Christ is worth more than ten thousand times ten thousand worlds; because it proves the professor to be a vessel of mercy, a favourite of heaven, and an heir of God.

Christ has declared, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven," Matt. vii. 21. There are many ways by which men say, "Lord, Lord;" who, notwithstanding, will never enter heaven. He who has the name of a Christian, but never takes up his cross to follow Christ, says, "Lord, Lord;" he who says prayers but never prays, says, "Lord, Lord;" he who reads the Scriptures, but never enters into the spirit of them, says, "Lord, Lord;" he who will never loose anything for Christ, and yet professes to follow him, says, "Lord, Lord;" he who changes his religion according as he gains or loses by it, says, "Lord, Lord;" he who sits under the preaching of the gospel, but never tastes, handles, or feels the word of life, says, "Lord, Lord." But as it is the will of the Father, that Christ shall, in all things, have the pre-eminence; so they do his will who prefer Christ's righteousness to their own, and glory alone in his finished salvation. As it is the Father's will, that all whom he has given to Christ, shall come to him;

so they do his will who come to him, as ruined sinners, for deliverance : as worthless rebels, for perfection : as sin-burdened souls, for rest : as destitute criminals, for life : and as forlorn refugees, for shelter. As it is the will of God the Father, that all his children shall be justified by faith without the deeds of the law ; so they do his will who possessing an inwrought persuasion of the freeness, suitability, and sufficiency of Christ's righteousness to justify before God, "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," and embrace his righteousness for want of a covering.

Christ is God's word to his church, and the church's word to God. He is God's word of love to the church, because God could not express his love to her in any other way than by giving Christ. In him he treasured up all his love, as the safest storehouse that Infinite Wisdom could discover, and as the only suitable medium through which it can be communicated. He is God's word of mercy to his church, being the only way by which pardon arises, peace flows, and health springs. He is God's word of Grace to his church, being the only person through whom "grace reigns unto eternal life." And he is the church's word to God, for she has no other place before God on earth, but the name of Jesus ; and when in heaven, Christ's blood will be her only song, and his righteousness her only dress. Afflictions can never do a believer harm, because they are in the management of none but his heavenly Father, who sends them to profit and not to destroy ; and must

accomplish that for which he sends them, because every one of them is in his own hands to remove, to lessen, or increase, as he pleaseth.

A quickened sinner can never perish, because God dwells in him ; and as there is no variable-ness nor shadow of turning in God, he does not enter a sinner to-day, and go out to-morrow, but enters to dwell for ever ; the devil cannot drive him out, the world cannot force him out, and the man cannot sin him out.

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#### INVITATION.

O ev'ry hungry, thirsty soul,  
Panting to know the Lord :  
Jesus alone can make you whole,  
And food to you afford.

In his rich covenant of grace,  
All that you need is given,  
For you are of his chosen race,  
To whom is promised heav'n.

Here's precious blood to cleanse from filth,  
Here's love to melt your heart ;  
Here's righteousness to justify,  
Which can't from you depart.

In Christ is all the strength you need,  
In him all wisdom's stor'd ;  
Dear trembling souls, for you he bled,  
Then be his name ador'd.