

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

GOD'S TIME FOR COMFORTING.

A Sermon

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“Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?”—Psalm cxix 82.

DAVID, in his troubles, knew where to turn for consolation, and that is no small piece of wisdom. When a man is ill, he may not know to which physician he had better send; but if he knows of one who has had much experience with the disease from which he is suffering, he sends for him at once if he is a wise patient. David knew that the best place for a true believer to find consolation was in God's Word, so he did not look in a thousand places, but his eyes were turned to God's Word; and though he did not immediately find the comfort that he sought, yet he continued still to look even till his eyes seemed to fail him, till they ached with looking, till they wearied with watching, till his disappointed expectation made his heart sick. Yet the idea never entered into his mind that he had better knock at another door, or seek another friend, or try another fountain; but he continued still in the attitude of expectancy and desire, his eyes still searching the Word of God to find the comfort that he so greatly needed.

Christian, learn this piece of heavenly wisdom from the psalmist's experience,—there is no other comfort for thee beneath the skies like that with which the Word of the Lord will furnish thee. If God's promises cannot comfort thee, rest assured that no speech from the lips of man can do it. If thy God shall not yield thee the consolation that thou needest, thou wilt go in vain to the giddy world and its pleasures and follies in the hope of finding it. If that overflowing well could ever dry up, thou wouldst indeed be the subject of despair. Resolve in thy mind never to expect any good thing apart from God. Say with Toplady,—

“I will not be comforted
Till Jesus comforts me.”

Refuse all consolation but that which comes from the Most High, for it will be fictitious, delusive, dangerous, perhaps fatal, but
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cling thou to thy God whatever happens. Though he smite thee, still cling to him. Though he slay thee, still trust thou in him. If his Word should seem to be like thunder and lightning to thee, though every page of it should seem to bristle as with bayonets, and not a single thought of consolation should be found in a thousand verses, yet still cling thou to thy father's Bible, hold fast to the good old Book which made glad thy mother's heart; for, ere long, comfort shall shine forth from it upon thee, like the sun in the fulness of its strength, and the day shall break, and the shadows flee away. Go not elsewhere to look for consolation; seek out no strange doctrines. Weary not thyself in searching for other comfort; but let thine eyes, even if they fail, still look to the Word of God for the consolation that thy soul needs.

David, however, besides looking to the Book of the Lord, looked to the Lord of the Book, saying, "When wilt *thou* comfort me?" He did not expect the Word in itself to be a sufficient consolation to him; but he looked to the Word as applied by God the Holy Spirit, the Word as spoken over again by the mouth of God into the silent soul of the waiting believer. Paul tells us that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;" and the psalmist so far anticipates that truth as to cry to the Lord, "When wilt *thou* comfort me?"

Christian, I again exhort thee to imitate the psalmist's example by going to thy God for comfort. Thou art still far too apt to lean upon an arm of flesh; but hast thou not yet learned what disappointments are always to be met with there? Wilt thou still go to the broken cisterns that can hold no water when they have already only mocked thy thirst? When wilt thou give up running to thy neighbours, and going to thy brother's house in the day of thine adversity? Thou wilt do far better if thou wilt go to thy Father's house, and to thine Elder Brother. Even our common proverb says, "Straightforward makes the best runner;" so, run thou straight to thy God. Go not roundabout, and beat the bush in the hope of getting at God through second causes, but go to the great fountain-head of all consolation at once. Depend upon it, that the more absolutely thou dost hang upon the bare arm of God, the better will it be for thee, and the more wilt thou learn to live independently of those poor creatures of earth whose breath is in their nostrils. The more thou dependest upon the great, invisible, omnipotent, eternal Jehovah, the stronger and happier wilt thou become. Then shall thy head be lifted high above thine enemies round about thee, and thou shalt sing praises unto God for very gladness of heart.

Troubled ones, I urge you to resolve that, if you cannot have comfort from God, at any rate you will not have it from the devil;—determine that, if you cannot do business with heaven, you will not trade with hell; and say that you would rather live in a dungeon with God than dwell in tents of ease with Satan. If your life must always be one of sorrow, be content that it shall be so if the Lord so wills it; but be resolved that you never will dally with sin or Satan for the sake of any present consolation. You cannot afford

to buy your gold so dearly as that, nor to part with heaven for the sake of the richest comforts of earth.

It is worthy of note that the psalmist, even in his worst condition, always expected to be comforted. Our text was probably uttered by the same man who more than once asked himself, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" Some men readily fall into a state of despair; but the psalmist was not a man of that sort. When all God's waves and billows had gone over him, he still said, "Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me;" and when deep called unto deep at the noise of Jehovah's waterspouts, he could still hear the still small voice of hope, so that he said to his soul, "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Beloved, let none of us give way to despair. No doubt Satan will tell us that it is humble to despair, but it is not so. The pride of despair is truly terrible. I believe that, when a man altogether doubts the power of God to save him, and gives himself up to sin because he thinks he cannot be saved, so far from there being any humility in it, it is the proudest action that depraved flesh and blood can perform. Man, how darest thou say that there is no hope for thee? If the iron gates of hell were shut upon thee, and God had hurled the key of the pit into the infinite abyss, then thou mightest say that there was no hope for thee; but as long as there trembles in the air that blessed invitation of Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," it is only a lying voice that tells thee that there is no hope for thee. No hope, man! Why, if thou wert in the very jaws of death, and the grim monster's teeth were about to close upon thee, there would still be hope for thee. The dying thief on the cross did but trust to the expiring Saviour by his side, and that very day he was with his Lord in paradise. Never despair, sinner, but trust in Jesus when at thy worst.

And as for thee, Christian, what hast thou to do with despairing? Be thou of good cheer, for thy sins are forgiven thee.* Even though thine eyes fail, God's eye does not fail, nor his arm either; and though thou growest weary with thy long waiting, yet, when he comes to thee, he will make amends for that, and thy weary waiting shall be well repaid. Wait thou still at the posts of his doors, for—

"He never is before his time;
He never is too late."

If thou wilt but play the man, and let patience have her perfect work, thou shalt be well rewarded ere long. Wherefore, wipe away thy tears; and "wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

Now, although the psalmist expected to receive comfort from the Lord, whatever his trouble might be, yet he was careful to do what he could in order to obtain it. He looked into God's Word for

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 3,016, "Good Cheer from Forgiven Sin."

comfort, and he asked the Lord, "When wilt thou comfort me?"—as if he meant to say, "If there is anything, on my part, which prevents my receiving the comfort, let me know it; and, Lord, I will put it away from me. Shouldst thou be withholding thy consolation from me because of any sin which I am harbouring, only say the word, Lord, and my sin shall be taken out to execution; quick shall be my hand, and sudden shall be the stroke, for I must have thy comfort to sustain my soul; I cannot longer live in this state of sadness."

I trust that this will be the language of anyone here who is seeking the forgiveness of his sins. Peradventure I may be addressing someone who has been seeking mercy for months, and he has not yet found it. I hope he is not satisfied to go without it. I trust that he will hunger and thirst until he gets it, and that he will, at this moment, put up these requests to God, "Show me, Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me. When wilt thou comfort me? What is there which parts me from thee, and hides the light of thy face from my poor, guilty, dying spirit?"

Perhaps the words which I am about to utter, in answer to the question in my text, may be the means of bringing comfort to some who are groping for it in the dark like blind men trying to feel the waymarks which they cannot see. I shall first address myself to Christians, and then to seekers after salvation.

I. First of all, I SPEAK TO YOU, BELOVED BELIEVERS,—to you who are saying, with the psalmist, that your eyes are failing for the Word of God,—to you whose hearts are saying to him, "When wilt thou comfort us?"

God will answer your question in his own good time and way, but it is certain that *God will comfort you one day*. He cannot leave his people without comfort. You know that he said, in the olden time, by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." The mother ought not to be able to forget her child when it is in that specially dependent stage of its existence; when it is a sucking child, not only her love, but the very force of nature ought to compel her to remember it. Yet, though she may forget her child, God cannot and will not forget you who are his children. That is impossible; the whole force of his divine nature constrains him in lovingkindness to remember you, and to say to you, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." His message to his servants still is, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." Now, how can comfort be withheld from those whose sins are pardoned? Christian, you must have comfort from your God sooner or later.

To help you to answer your question as to why you do not have that comfort now, consider, in the first place, that God may, *of his own sovereign will and pleasure*, withhold from you the comforting light of his countenance. He has his reason for doing so, but he may not give you that reason; but, surely, if he does not tell you

the reason, you will submit to his will. Remember the good advice of the prophet Isaiah, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." If you do but get to heaven at last, if the Lord should take away his candle from you on earth for a little time, you may cheerfully submit to that privation. You may cry out to him, for "his own elect" do that; they "cry day and night unto him," yet you must not be impatient if he does not at once grant your request. With ardent desire, you may long for him to comfort you in the night seasons; but, amid the darkest shades, you may still say to him, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." It may be because of divine sovereignty that comfort is, for a while, being withheld from you. If so, then the same sovereignty which shuts you up in the dark room, will in due season open the door, and set you at liberty.

But more likely, dear friends, you will get comfort *when you have cast away your present unbelief*. Most of us owe a great part of our sadness to our want of faith in God. Is it any wonder that you are sad when you will not believe your Heavenly Father's promise? Child of God, is it a surprising thing that your mind should be ill at ease when you mistrust the veracity of your Father? Would you expect your own children to be happy if they were always doubting the truth of their father's promises to them? What a wretched household such dark suspicions would soon make! Away, then, with all suspicion of the truth of your Heavenly Father's promises. It is utterly groundless; it is unworthy of yourself, and it is dishonourable to God. Testify against him now if you can. When did he ever fail you? Has he been a wilderness to you? Has he ever forsaken you? He has chastened you, it is true; but has he ever deserted you? "Come now, testify, O my people; bear witness against me if ye can!" saith the Lord. "Have I wearied you with labour? Have I borne you down with burdens, and not given you help?" Oh, no! we all bear witness that he is a good and gracious God, and we pray for the Holy Spirit's power to rest upon us that we may have done with our cruel, wicked, disgraceful unbelief. Come, child of God, take down thy Bible, find out some precious promise, grasp it, believe it, and expect to see it fulfilled to thyself. Thou wilt not then have long to ask, "When wilt thou comfort me?" Thou wilt be comforted as soon as thou hast cast away thy sinful unbelief from thy soul. Ask the Holy Spirit to help thee to do so at once.

Possibly, the answer to thy question may take another form,—*The Lord will comfort thee as soon as thou hast done with complaining*. There are certain people, in the world, whom God will never comfort until he has taken their present murmuring spirit out of them. I know some such people, to my sorrow. If they prosper very much, if they get on a great deal in their business, they say, "Oh, yes; we have had a tolerably good year!" They never admit that they have had anything beyond "a tolerably good year." That is all that they will say even when their money is rolling in in

floods. Many a farmer, when his ground is bearing as much corn as it possibly can, says, "Yes, I shall do pretty middling this year." He calls the very best that he can possibly have "pretty middling"! And if he should happen to have a little loss, or a little trouble, or some little vexation, then straightway his mouth is filled with murmuring against God; and though he would not like to have it called by that name, yet it is a sort of minor blasphemy against the Most High,—envying others, speaking of them as though they had all the sweets of life, and talking of himself as though he had to drink all the bitters, and all the dregs of the cup. Some of you know people of that kind, who seem to be "cut on the cross;"—a queer sort of people, who can always see clouds on the finest day, and who will say that the grass is all dried up even when all can see that it is beautifully green.

Ah, my dear friends, you must get rid of all this if you want God to comfort you! There is something expressive in that word murmur;—I have often wondered at the wisdom of the man who gave it the meaning that it has, though I do not know who he was. "*Mur-mur*"—two ugly little syllables, such as any cross child could easily sound; but it is a childish, foolish, wicked habit for any of us to fall into, to be murmuring against God; for, after all, our mercies far outnumber our sorrows. As long as we are out of hell, we have no right to complain; for, if we had received our deserts, we should have been there now. Dear friends, may God help you to shake off this murmuring spirit as Paul shook the viper off his hand into the fire; and when you have done that, then you will probably find that the Lord will speedily appear to comfort your heart.

Again, in some persons, there is an absence of divine consolation *because there is some sin which is tolerated within them*. There might be very startling discoveries made here, this very hour, if every professing Christian were compelled, by his accusing conscience, to stand up, and tell out to the congregation what his secret, besetting sin is. I fear that at least some of you would never dare to show your faces in the Tabernacle again; you would be ashamed to be seen any more amongst those who knew such things about you. Yet the smoke of these burning sins rises in clouds, and shuts the face of God away from such inconsistent Christians. God loves his people, but he does not love their sins. Sin is hateful anywhere, but it is most hateful in the Lord's own people. You are none of you fond of loathsome diseases, such as fevers; but I am sure that you loathe the fever most of all when it attacks your own dear child. So, sin is a disease which God hates everywhere, but he hates it most of all when he sees it upon one of his own children; and, for this reason, he takes his rod into his hand, and causes his sinning child to smart, and to cry out, with Job, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me." When the Lord's people are really in earnest about this matter, he points to their idol-gods, or to some other evil thing which they have harboured in their hearts, and so aroused his anger. Then, if they arise, and cast out these abominations, the rod is put away, and God once more gives them

the comforts of his grace. Wherefore, my brethren and sisters in Christ, if you lack comfort, search and see where the fault lies; for it is my firm conviction that, in nine cases out of ten, it is owing to some sin that has been indulged. I quoted Job's question just now, and Eliphaz asked him, "Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee? Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at, that thou turnest thy spirit against God, and letttest such words go out of thy mouth?" I pass those searching questions on to anyone here to whom they may apply, and I trust that, as the result of doing so, such a soul will be able to present the poet's petition with the poet's confidence,—

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

"So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

Possibly, the lack of comfort is owing to some other cause. Dear Christian brother or sister, you may be at this moment without comfort *because you have neglected some duty*. I believe that many of God's people, who know their Lord's will, yet do it not, do get beaten with many stripes. They say that they do not understand why they are thus chastised, and they do not know what it is that causes them to be so frequently and so sorely afflicted. It is because there is some precept, which they know to be their Lord's precept, yet they wink their eye at it, and leave it neglected. Learn a lesson from Jonah's experience. If the Lord should bid any of us go to Nineveh, and cry against it; and, instead of doing so, we go down to Joppa, and find a ship going to Tarshish, and get in it, we must not reckon upon having a smooth passage. Before long, there will be "a mighty tempest in the sea." If we had not been God's servant, there might have been fair weather; but when a child of God runs away from his plain duty, God will send a tempest after him, and he may be very thankful if God also sends a whale; for, although the whale may swallow him, yet it may bring him safely to land; but he will be sure to rue the day on which he turned away from his clear duty, and sought out a more comfortable path.

Master John Bunyan, whom I cannot help quoting, tells us the result of Christian and Hopeful going over the stile into By-Path Meadow. They thought it would be much smoother walking just on the other side of the fence, and Christian tried to assure his companion that the path ran along by the way-side. No doubt they thought that they could keep so close to the King's highway that they would see, in a minute, when the path began to turn away from the right road, and then they would just jump over the fence, and get into the right way again. They felt sure it would be all right; at least, Christian did, for Hopeful was doubtful

all the while, though he gave way to his older companion. But when Giant Despair found them sleeping in his grounds, and drove them off into his dungeon, and came, the next morning, with a great crab-tree cudgel, and gave them, not a mouthful of bread, nor a drink of water, but plenty of crab-tree; and when, the day after, he counselled them to destroy themselves, and left them lying, day after day, pining in their filthy prison,—then they understood that smooth walking is not always safe walking, and that it is best to walk in the right road even though it may be a rough one. Let us be careful where we walk, for we may lose our comfort very speedily unless we keep strictly to the path of obedience. Let us, at all times, with a cheerful and willing spirit, wear our Master's yoke, for his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

I will speak very plainly to some of you who get downhearted and desponding, for I am rather glad that you do get into such a state of mind. There are some who think that the blame rests with the preacher if they become despondent; they say that he ought to comfort them more than he does. Ah, but lazy professors must remember what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." As for you busy preachers, Sunday-school teachers, tract-distributors, and other earnest workers for Christ, when you do get to hear a sermon, how sweet it is to you! You have been hard at work for the Lord, and it has sharpened your spiritual appetites; but lazy Christians, who never try to win souls for the Saviour, and who only want to be spiritually fed without doing a stroke of work in the Master's service, get to be very dainty. No matter how good the fare may be, nor however much others enjoy it, they are sure to say, "That is not the food that we like." They want it spiced up to a wonderful degree, and it must be carved so daintily or they will not touch it; whereas, if they had been hard at work, they would have gained a healthy appetite, which would have turned even the bitters into sweets.

I pray God that those professors, who do nothing for him, may be miserable. "That is a very unkind prayer," say some of you. No, it is not, for it is meant for your good. See, if you get to be happy in your idleness, you will keep in that sinful state; but if you are unhappy while you are doing nothing for the Master, I think you will be the more likely to say to him, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then I hope you will soon get to work, and I believe that comfort will be sure to come to you when, in an evangelical spirit, depending upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Ghost, you go out to do what you can for the Lord. Some of you, perhaps, have a great heap of money stored up, and you cannot make out why there is such a bad smell of canker all over the house; I could tell you! Some of you, who have not been doing anything for your Master for a long while, think that surely your blood must be congealed in your veins, for it does not seem to move; I think I could tell you why that is. If you would again exercise yourself in God's work, as you used to do, you would soon find that the blood would again course through

your veins, and that the dew of your spiritual youth would come back to you. Our sorrows are often manufactured by our sins,—our sins of omission, or of commission. May we all have grace, then, to search within ourselves to see if we can discover the answer to the question, “When wilt thou comfort me?”

II. Now I am going, for a few minutes, to deal with THE CASE OF ANXIOUS, SEEKING SINNERS.

Where are you, anxious one? Never mind where you may happen to be at this moment; let the Word of the Lord come straight to you as though nobody else were here. You are sorrowfully saying, “I have been praying for pardon for months; I am in the house of God whenever it is open; I search the Bible as diligently as I can, yet I cannot find comfort. Oh, that I could get my sins forgiven! I must get that blessing, or I shall die. Tell me, sir, when will God comfort me?”

My dear hearer, it may be that comfort is withheld from you *because you have not fully confessed your sin*. We have God's Word for it that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” Then, if we do not make a complete confession to our God, we must not expect to receive pardon. “Oh!” say you, “I have said, ‘Lord, I am a sinner.’” That is right, but you must do more than that. To-night, before you go to bed, think over your past life. Recapitulate your faults, and confess the whole of them to God, and do not keep anything back. I have heard of a professor, who was guilty of backsliding for a time; and therefore was suspended from church-membership. He prayed about the matter, but he used to pray thus, “Lord, thou knowest that I have indulged a little; have mercy upon me!” Of course, no comfort came to him. Then a Christian brother said to him, “Tell the Lord the whole truth; he knows just what it is.” The man was wise enough to follow this good advice, so he prayed, “Lord, thou knowest that I was drunk, wilt thou not forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake?” Then the comfort came to him; and you also must call your sin just what it is when you go before God, for you are not truly humbled and penitent as long as you try to put a gloss upon your sin. David could get no peace till he prayed, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God;” and, my dear hearer, you must confess the worst aspect of your case before God. “Make a clean breast of it,” as we commonly say; tell the Lord all about your sin. Perhaps it is the lack of this that keeps you from being comforted,—the want of an explicit, plain, full confession of your sins.

Again, if you ask me why you do not have comfort, although you do try to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, I answer, *Perhaps there is some sin that you have not given up*; and, depend upon it, if that is the case, although salvation is all by the grace of God, and we are not saved by our own works, yet you, sinner, never can have peace with God till you have made a clean sweep of every known sin. There may be a man here, who has attended the Tabernacle for a long time, and who says that he cannot get peace. Now, where was he last night? His conscience knows, and I will ask him whether he expects to get peace with God while he can be found in such

society? There is another man here, who says that he cannot get comfort; but where is he to be found the greater part of the week? Does he not regularly go to the gin-palace, and can he expect that the Lord Jesus Christ will go there with him? Nay, that cannot be; there was no room for Christ in the inn when he was born, and there is certainly no room for him in the gin-palace of the present day. There are some men who can cheat in their business; they know very well that they do not deal fairly with their customers. Their goods are adulterated, and they give short weight; yet they expect to have peace with God while this is the case! How can it be? Do you suppose that God will patch up a truce with your sins, and give you his forgiveness while you are harbouring such evil things in your house? Nay, that cannot be. Though you cannot be perfect, yet you must want to be perfect, and there must not be any sin which you knowingly spare. Cut them in pieces, every one of them; as soon as you know that anything is wrong, I pray you to have such a tender conscience that you will seek to escape from it; for, as long as you harbour even one of them, comfort will never come to you.

“But this is such a little sin,” says one. Ay, and those little ones are like the little boys that the big thieves take with them, to put through the little windows, and then they open the door, and let the big thieves in. Those little sins will be your ruin unless you forsake them, and get them forgiven. One of our proverbs says, “Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.” Turn that proverb round, and it will teach you that, if you look sharply after your little sins, you will not fall into great ones. It is these so-called little sins—mixing with worldly society, going into bad company, and so on,—that keep so many of you from getting peace with God. Some of you, young women, get walking with ungodly young men; and some of you, young men, form acquaintances that are no good to you; and then you come here, and your consciences are somewhat touched, and you ask that you may be found “accepted in the Beloved.” How can that be when you will walk straight away from this service, and talk in such a way as would be impossible if the Holy Ghost were really in you? The Holy Dove would fly away from such talk as that, a defiled heart is no nest wherein he can take his rest.

Once again, is it not very likely that the reason why you do not get peace with God is this,—that *you have not trusted to the Lord Jesus Christ wholly and entirely?* There is the root of the mischief. You still hope to save yourself in some measure; and, as long as you cling to a rag of self-righteousness, you cannot get peace or comfort. If ever a sinner is to be saved, it must be entirely by the mercy of God shown to him solely because of the merit of Jesus Christ; and, as long as a man puts so much as a shadow of a trust in himself beside his trust in Christ, his comfort will be marred. You must be to yourself as though you were dead, so far as any confidence in yourself is concerned, and you must rest alone in Jesus. The finished work of the exalted Redeemer must be your only confidence.

"How was it, Sam," asked a Christian master of his servant, "that, when you and I were both under conviction of sin, you got comfort so much sooner than I did? As far as I know, Sam, my life seemed to be as good as yours before conviction came to me, yet I could not get comfort, though you did." "Ah!" said Sam, "you see, master, I was a great deal worse than you were; and when God the Holy Spirit showed me what I was, I looked at my rags, and I said, 'Ah! they are nothing but a lot of filthy rags, they will never patch up;' so I took them off at once, and I put on the robe of Jesus Christ's righteousness, for I knew my rags would never match that spotless garment of his; but, master, when you got a little light, you looked at yourself, and you had been so good, you had lived such a decent life, that you said, 'Ah! my coat wants mending; there is a hole in the elbow, and a rent here and there, but it can be patched up, and I shall do a little longer; and so, master, you did not get the robe of Christ's righteousness as quickly as I did." And some of you, moral people, will have hard work in fighting against your self-righteousness. When good Mr. Hervey questioned a godly ploughman as to what was the greatest hindrance to a sinner's coming to Christ, he thought the ploughman would say, "Sinful self", but he said, "Righteous self", and so it is. Righteous self-confidence in our prayers, self-confidence in our repentance, self-confidence in something we mean to do, or something we feel that we already have,—all this keeps us back from true peace and comfort.

All the candles in the world will not enable us to do without the sun. Some of you light your poor little candles, and try to get comfort that way. Put the extinguisher on every one of them, and go and stand in the sunshine, for then you will have light indeed. Give up all your carnal hopes, your earthly confidences, your good works, your own righteousnesses,—away with them all, and come as poor, guilty, condemned sinners, and trust in Jesus Christ, and you shall get comfort this very instant; for, the moment a sinner trusts in Jesus Christ, he is saved; peace and pardon immediately follow trust in Jesus. Only come to him with your sins and miseries, your burdens and your unworthinesses, your hardness of heart and your coldness of spirit; come to him just as you are, for "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." The Lord Jesus is a physician who heals the sick when their disease is at its worst. He does not want you to try to make yourselves better, but to come to him just as you are, and then he will heal you as you are. That was a beautiful act on the part of the good Samaritan who found the poor wounded man half dead by the roadside. He did not stand, and gaze at his injuries, and say to him, "My dear fellow, when your wounds are less painful to you, I will come back, and bind them up." He did not say to him, "My dear man, when you are more conscious of your need of my services, and can sit up, and ask me to help you, I will do what I can for you." He did not say, "My dear man, when you are very sorry that you ever came down this dangerous road, where you have been waylaid and injured, I will come and heal you." Oh, no!

there the poor man lay, half dead, and the good Samaritan went just where he was, and stooped over him, and looked at his wounds. Probably the man did not feel anything just then, for most likely he had been stunned, but the good Samaritan felt for him. The man could not plead for himself, but the heart of the good Samaritan pleaded for him; and he tenderly bound up his gaping wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and lifted him up, set him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, and there did all he could to ensure the completion of his cure. As the Samaritan went to the wounded man where he was, so Jesus Christ, "the good Samaritan" in the highest sense of the term, comes to the sinner where he is.

But, sinners, though you are trying to make your hearts ready for Christ, you will never succeed in doing it. You are wasting your strength upon a task that must end in failure. Remember that, if you cannot come to Christ *with* a broken heart, you can come to him *for* a broken heart. If you cannot come as you ought, come just as you are; and if you have no good thing to plead as a reason for your acceptance, so much the better will it be for you.

I have tried to put this matter of finding comfort plainly, and in as simple language as I could. O Sacred Spirit, come now, and bring the sinner to Jesus, for his dear name's sake! Amen.

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