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Divine Comforts to God's Nation.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON, PREACHED AT SUTTON
COLDFIELDS, AUGUST 5TH, 1903, BY MR. H. GRUBER,
OF MANCHESTER.

“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; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.”—ISAIAH XL. 1, 2.

THROUGHOUT the inspired Book of God we find it clearly set forth that God, who is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, has a people on the earth amongst the nations of the world; that He calls His own people, in a very special way and manner. My heart's desire is that we all in this assembly may be found among those people. They are a people that God has loved from everlasting. Their worthless names have been enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life before the world began or was called into being. They were given to Jesus as a gift; the Father gave them to His Son and blessed them in Him with all spiritual blessings. What can we say to these things?

But in this world (especially when the Lord begins His work of grace in their souls) they are a troubled people, an afflicted, tempted, downcast, and persecuted people; often they are comfortless, and they need Divine comfort and consolation, that comfort that flows through the channel of the everlasting Gospel. The eternal salvation of the Church is from God the Father, in its origin and source it flows through God

the Son, and comes to us by God the Holy Ghost, who brings the blessing nigh, and applies it to every vessel of mercy whom God delights to save. There is no peradventure, no chance work whatever in the redemption of the Church. There is a sound of certainty in it from start to finish. God "will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by My name, for I have created him for My glory." And what is there that can obstruct the arm of omnipotency? What God desires in His heart He has power to carry out. "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?"

My friends, let us not dishonour the infinite and glorious majesty of God in the redemption of His people by putting in "may-be's" or "peradventures" of any kind whatever. The important thing for us to find out is, do we belong to these people? These people that God calls His own will be called out of darkness into His marvellous light, and that special calling is the work of the eternal Spirit, through the Gospel. The Gospel is the instrument of God by which He gathers together His elect from all parts of the world. He makes it His power unto salvation to them, and the rest of the world are left to fall by their iniquity. When the apostles preached the Gospel to the multitudes, some blasphemed and mocked, but a few here and there received it. We read "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." As it was then, so it is now, and so it will be to the end of the world.

These people that God calls His own, He makes in due time true and sincere followers of His only begotten

Son. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." He did go in a path of untold sorrow, and affliction and temptation. These are the people who stand in need of comfort; and our text is a message to the ministers of the Gospel. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people." They need comforting; they have so much to distract and confound them—mighty enemies without, much mightier within. They are very feeble, and their enemies are very strong. That great enemy, the devil, often prevails over them; how often he drives them into a corner and binds them down. He well-nigh breaks their hearts by one thing and another. I can soon tell you the reason of the intense hatred and malice of Satan against the people of God. Remember that Satan, the god of this world, and all the devils were once angels of God, but they kept not their first estate. They fell, and were cast out of heaven and bound down in chains of darkness. The eternal Son of God passed by the fallen angels. They are left in hopeless despair, and they know it; and because nothing was done for them to recover them, but because God had mercy on man, and the Son of God took upon Him the seed of Abraham, that is the reason why the devils are filled with implacable hatred, fury, and anger against God and all His people. They declare war against everyone they can see the image of Christ in. And these people have to fight against sin, the flesh, and the world; and, alas, how often they are overthrown in the conflict. How often they are cast down! But they can never be destroyed. And then they sink in their feelings, and their foolish hearts suggest to them that they themselves

will have to obtain the victory; and they forget what the glorious Gospel is, in its majestic fulness and freeness, and its unconditional nature; they lose sight of that, and look for comfort and consolation where it is never to be found.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem." Here we have the entire Church of God set before us. In the Psalm I read you (cxxxii.) it says, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Now you know a city is constituted of a number of houses; the more houses the larger the city. And if you go on a high site, near a city, especially in cold weather, you may soon observe out of every house a curl of smoke rising, and that smoke indicates that a fire is burning. The Church of God is compared to a city. Now, what is the body of a child of God? The body is a house, a house of clay. The soul is dwelling in that house, and as sure as the fire of eternal life is kindled there, there will be the smoke of prayer and supplication, and groaning and sighing, ascending up to God. You know praying and longing are compared to smoke. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?" It is the Church, the people of God who are in the enemy's land in the wilderness.

"Cry unto her"—not simply speak, but "Cry unto her." As much as to say, they are always forgetting; drill it into them; impress it upon them. What is it that has to be impressed upon them? It is the very sum and substance of the comforts and consolations God has laid up in store for them, for His afflicted, tempted, and

erring people. We have to turn away our eyes from self.

"No help in self I find,
And yet have sought it well,
The native treasure of my mind
Is sin, and death, and hell,
To Christ for help I flee."

That is it.

"Death's within thee, all about thee,
But the remedy's without thee,
See, it shines in Jesu's face."

Now, we are to cry unto these people who are so afflicted by sin and their infirmities, for sin is the affliction of the heaven-born soul. And, what is very strange, these people sometimes afflict each other. I have always looked upon sheep as such docile, amiable, and harmless creatures, and they are in a sense, but some years ago, whilst in a field, I was watching a flock, I noticed two, they *were* sheep, not goats, and they must have been quarrelling about something, for they dashed each other's heads, and nearly fought each other to death. That taught me a lesson. And you know many of the sheep of Christ are doing the same thing. What strange quarrelsome spirits there are among the people of God! How they try to afflict one another! If you can find a man with a loveable, sympathetic disposition, and the grace of God with it, then it is a beautiful sight. But very often we can see the grace of God in very crooked sticks, their natural disposition being so offensive. The Lord lives with many people that we should not care to live with.

"From sinner and from saint,
They meet many a blow."

Every child of God knows something about it. I sometimes compare the children of God to evergreens. Look at the rhododendron and myrtle. They are beautifully smooth and comfortable to handle; but look at the holly, that is so prickly you cannot handle it. Some of the Lord's people are like it. But the people of God have to be tried right and left, within and without, to prove their faith and patience. In spite of it all they cleave to the Lord; they follow after Him; they have to cease from man. So they stand in need of comfort. They look within themselves, and cannot find it there. They are destitute. They are believing and praying souls, and walk as far as enabled in the ways of God. Now they are to be comforted.

I will tell you what her comfort and consolation consists of. "Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished." Their salvation is an accomplished fact. Their salvation is not in their own hands at all. It is in the hands of their Creator and Redeemer, who is almighty. He makes His people's cause His own, and for that special purpose came down from heaven. What wonderful condescension, that the Eternal God who made the world, should take into union with His Divine nature a human body. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." He came to fight His people's enemies. He triumphed over them all, and His victory is freely given to them. They are accepted in the Beloved, in whom they are complete. He is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. They are Christ's, and Christ is God's. He says, "Look unto

Me, and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else." There is none else to deliver from going down into the pit. These people are eternally emancipated from the curse and sin. What a warfare He fought! What a conflict He was engaged in! I gave you a glimpse of it this afternoon when expounding the Scriptures. What a tremendous conflict it was, that the Son of God had to fight out for His people. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah! this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?" And the answer came: "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Edom and Bozrah were enemies. They did always fight against the houses of Judah and Israel. That glorious Being came through the enemies' land as a triumphant conqueror over all. If that spotless holy Lamb of God could have made one single mistake, if such a thing had been possible, the whole fabric of salvation would have collapsed; but "He shall not fail or be discouraged." He shall prevail over His enemies, and so He did; and all His people shall sit down at His feet, and receive of His words.

"Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished." It is an accomplished fact. You and I can do nothing towards it. "I know that whatsoever God doeth is done for ever." It is the beauty of perfection, the work of Christ.

"Cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned." This is wonderful! That God, the everlasting Father should have collected all the sins—all the guilt and iniquity of His people, a number that no man can number, out of every nation, kindred, and tongue, from

the beginning of the world to the end of the world—and laid it upon Christ, the Holy Lamb of God. It pleased the Father to bruise Him, and lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. Who could have stood under that huge tremendous weight but Incarnate Deity? And He offered up Himself through the eternal Spirit, without spot to God, having obtained eternal salvation for us. When He hung upon the cross, when He bowed His head, when He uttered the words, "It is finished," the iniquity of that land, the entire Church, was removed in one day. He made an end of sin. Sin is still in existence. Sin worries and vexes the people of God, and casts them down; but the condemning power of it is clean taken away. It has no power to condemn. But the people of God, if they sin wilfully and deliberately, shall know what it is to sin against Him to their sorrow.

"Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." When I am drawn by the exercise of faith to the once crucified, but now risen and glorified Redeemer, who has finished the work, and taken possession of the joy, then my soul is in the right atmosphere. But sin is so strong, unbelief is so strong, and there seems so much to cast me down.

"She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." This is very beautiful. No doubt this will bear various interpretations. We would not confine the Word of God to one particular meaning. It is a two-edged sword. I will tell you what I believe about it. I have told you about the malice and hatred of Satan and his fallen angels against Christ and all His sheep. The devil was the author of sin, and brought sin into

the world; and by sin ruined the whole human race. It was the aim of Satan and the powers of darkness to eternally destroy all mankind, the Church of God with all the rest, by making them so vile, base, and guilty, that the Almighty could not but send them into everlasting fire. But, wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, instead of eternally destroying His people as Satan desired it, God has given them a *double portion*. How mortifying to the enemy! God says, the enemy shall be utterly confounded. God is giving His people a double portion, not for their goodness, but for their sin. What does it mean? Why, grace here and glory hereafter! What a wonderful God our God is! "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage. He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy." Well may it be said, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto Thee, O people saved by the Lord!" How kindly the Lord speaks of Ephraim! He was a type of the child of God, and what a disobedient child he was! God brings charge after charge against him, and God says, "Is Ephraim my dear son?" Yes, he is, notwithstanding all; relationship cannot be broken. Once a child, a child for ever. "For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

God brushes away all the sins and iniquities of His people, he brushes away every barrier. This is a free and full, and unconditional Gospel, without money and without price. It suits me, a lost, ruined rebel of a

sinner. I thank God no man can reproach me with any outward misconduct. What a mercy to be kept! but we feel within what we are.

“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: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” Where God gives grace, glory is sure to follow.

May the Lord bless these few remarks, for His name’s sake. Amen.



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