

SOLACE FOR SAD HEARTS

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“To console them that mourn in Zion.”
Isaiah 61:3.

IT is no small advantage to know beyond mistake of whom this is declared. Our gracious Master has appropriated this as His very own and we can be under no possible delusion now when we see in this Servant of the Lord, the Son of God, Himself. When in the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath, He read before the astonished congregation this marvellous passage from the Scripture roll and then handed it back to the leader of the synagogue. He began to interpret it by saying, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” It is no surprise for us to find that His hearers fastened their eyes upon Him in admiring wonder because of “the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.”

Think what was the burden of this unique discourse! It was concerning Himself as the preacher of good tidings—as the binder up of the brokenhearted and the liberator of the enslaved!

No doubt there was an allusion here to the ancient Jewish Jubilee. When the silver trumpet sounded in the morning because the 50th year had come, that moment every captive throughout Judaea’s land was free and none could hold him in bondage—

*“The year of Jubilee is come,
Return, you ransomed captives, home.”*

That is the song I want my hearers to sing now. Jesus Christ proclaims it—*proclaims* it. Do you notice that! A proclamation is a message which all loyal subjects are sure to attend to. It is not headed V. R.—*Vivat Rex!* But *Vivat Rex Jehovah!* Long live Jehovah the King! He issues the proclamation from His Throne and bids His Son tell captive souls that Christ Jesus sets them free! Let them but believe Him and they shall rise to instant liberty! The Lord grant that many may accept this good news! We may expect it, for the Spirit of God rests upon the preaching of Christ.

But there is yet another proclamation, and that of a double kind. There is a necessary connection between the two, “the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God.” It is because God has visited and executed vengeance upon our sins when laid on His dear Son as our Savior, that now it is possible for us to find acceptance through Him. Out of this there springs, therefore, the reasonable ground of comfort for them that mourn. The Savior’s Sacrifice is a full fountain of hope for hearts that sorrow for sin. No mourner need despond, much less despair, since God has executed the sentence of His wrath upon the Great Substitute, that He might freely accept every sinner that believes! We are now going a step farther and instead of reminding you that those who mourn may be comforted, we shall proclaim the loving kindness of the Lord and make it clear that God has a peculiar regard to mourners—and that he has appointed, provided and reserved special blessings for them. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” So runs the Eternal Purpose and so did our Lord declare in the opening of His Sermon on the Mount.

The anointed Savior came “to console them that mourn in Zion.” Consider carefully four things. *What are they doing?* They mourn. *Where are they doing it?* In Zion. *Who thinks of them?* The Great God who here speaks about them. And *what is He doing for them?* His purposes are “to console them that mourn in Zion.” First, then—

I. WHAT ARE THEY DOING—these people of whom the text speaks? They are *mourning*. Not a very cheerful occupation. Nobody will be very much attracted towards them by that fact. Most men choose lively, happy company—and mourners are generally left alone. Are they not to be greatly pitied? Reason thinks not! But Faith has heard Jesus say, “Blessed are they that mourn” and, therefore, she believes it to be better to be a mourning saint than a merry sinner—and she is willing to take her place on the stool of penitence and weep, rather than sit in the seat of the scorner and laugh!

Because these people mourn, *they differ from other people*. If they are mourning in Zion, their case is peculiar. There is evidently a distinction between them and the great majority of mankind, for men of the world are often lighthearted and frivolous, never thinking or looking to the future. So unreal is their happiness that it would not bear the weight of an hour's quiet consideration! And so they make mirth in order to drown all thought of their true state. They are all for pastimes, amusements, gaieties—these are your lighthearted, jolly fellows who drink wine in bowls and “drive dull care away.” It is greatly wise for a man to commune with his own heart upon his bed and be still, but these foolish ones never do this and, therefore, they flash with the effervescence of mirth and sparkle with false joy! Those who mourn in Zion are very different from these giddy, superficial people. In fact, they cannot bear them, but are grieved with their foolish conversation—as any man of sense may well be! Who wants to have these blowflies forever buzzing about him? The gracious ones who mourn in Zion are as different from them as the lily from the hemlock, or as the dove from the hawk. He who allows reason to take its proper place and to be taught right reason by the Word of God, from that time separates himself from the giddy throng and takes the cool sequestered path which leads to God.

Equally does this mourning separate the Gospel mourner from the obstinate and the daring, for alas, many are so wicked as to wear a bronze brow and exhibit a heart of steel in the Presence of the Lord. They defy the Divine Wrath and impudently scorn the punishment due to sin! Like Pharaoh, they ask, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?” They despise death, judgment, eternity and set themselves in battle array against the Almighty! Those who mourn in Zion are not of this company, for they tremble at the Word of the Lord. Their hearts are sensitive to the faintest sign of God's displeasure and when they know that they have done that which is grievous in His sight, immediately their sorrow overflows! They deeply lament their provocations and humbly pray that they may be kept from further offenses.

Zion's mourners are also very different from the self-conceited who are puffed up with high notions of their own excellence. They are never known to assert that from their youth up they have kept all the commandments, nor do they even *dream* of thanking God that they are better than others! Room for boasting they find not, for they rather abhor themselves in dust and ashes! Their sins, follies and failings are a daily burden to them and they loathe the very idea of self-satisfaction!

Those who mourn in Zion are not among those loud professors who glory in the abundance of their Grace and reckon that they are out of the reach of temptation. You will never hear them cry, “My mountain stands firm! I shall never be moved!” No, their prayer is, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe.” Holy anxiety to be found sincere and acceptable with God prevents all self-confidence. I would not encourage doubts and fears, but I will go the length of the poet and say—

*“He that never doubted of his state,
He may, perhaps he may, too late.”*

I fear that not a few who dream that they possess strong faith are under a strong delusion to believe a lie. And instead of having the confidence which is worked of the Spirit of Lord, which is quite consistent with holy mourning, they feel a false confidence based upon themselves and, therefore, founded upon the sand! This puffs them up with a false peace and makes them talk exceedingly proud, to the sorrow of the Lord's wounded ones. The Lord's people should prudently get out of the way of these lofty spirits who grieve the humble in heart! They are the strong cattle of whom Ezekiel speaks, which thrust with horn and shoulder, and despise the weak ones whom God has chosen! Lord, let my portion be with the mourners, and not with the boasters! Let me take my share with those who weep for sin and weep after You! And as for those who are careless, or those who are rebellious, or those who are self-righteous—let them take their frothy joy and drain the cup—for true saints desire not its intoxicating draught!

The mourners in Zion are not only different from other people, but they are also *much changed from their former selves*. They are scarcely aware of the great change which they have undergone, but even their mourning is an evidence of their being new creatures. The things wherein they formerly rejoiced are now their horror, while other things which they once despised, they now eagerly desire. They have put away their ornaments—their finery of pride they have exchanged for the sackcloth of repentance! Their noisy merriment for humble confession! They now wonder how they could have thought the ways of sin to be pleasurable and feel as if they could weep their eyes out because of their extreme folly! You would not think that they were the same people! In fact, to tell you the truth, they are *not* the same, for they have been born-again and have undergone a new creation of which their humiliation before God is no mean sign. Their hearts of stone have been taken away and the Lord has given them hearts of flesh—to feel, to tremble, to lament and to seek the Lord!

God's mourners also find themselves *different from what they are at times even now*, for they see themselves wander and immediately they quarrel with themselves and smite upon their offending breasts! Such occasions of self-abhorrence they find daily. The man who is satisfied with himself had better search his heart, for there are signs of rottenness about him. The man who is deeply discontented with himself is probably growing fast into the full likeness of Christ. Do you, dear Friend, feel that you could justify yourself as to all that you have done, or thought, or felt today from morning to evening—at home or abroad, in the shop or in the street? Oh, no! I am sure you will confess that in many things you have fallen short and you will penitently grieve before the living God. You would not on any account do or say again all that you have done and said! You bless God who has sanctified you and delivered you from the dominion of sin, but still you have to complain that sin has a fearful power to lead you into captivity and, therefore, you are not pleased with yourself—and are more ready to join in a confession, than in a hymn of self-glorifying. The text says of mourners of that kind that God has appointed great things for them, and therefore let us pray the Holy Spirit to work this mourning in us.

Now, *this mourning*, of which we are speaking, *is part and parcel of these people's lives*. When they began to live to Christ, they began to mourn. Every child of God is born-again with a tear in his or her eyes. Dry-eyed faith is not the faith of God's elect. He who rejoices in Christ, at the same time mourns for sin! Repentance is joined to faith by loving bonds, as the Siamese twins were united in one. The new birth always takes place in the chamber of sorrow of sin—it cannot be otherwise! The true Christian was a mourner at conversion and since then he has been a mourner, even in the happiest day he has known. When was that? The happiest day I ever knew was when I found Jesus to be my Savior and when I felt the burden of my sins roll from off me. “Oh, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away,” but I mourned that day to think that I had been so greatly polluted and had needed that my Lord should die to put away my sin! I mourned to think that I had not loved and trusted the Savior before—and before the sun went down I was mourning to think that I did not—even then—love my Lord as I desired! I had not gone many paces on the road to Heaven before I began to mourn that I limped so badly, that I traveled so slowly and was so little like my Lord. So that I know by experience that on the very brightest day of his spiritual experience, a true Believer still feels a soft, sweet mourning in his heart, falling like one of those gentle showers which cool the heat of our summer days and yield a pleasurable refreshment. Holy mourning is the blessed pillar of cloud which accompanies the redeemed of the Lord in their glad march to Heaven! Dear Brothers and Sisters, to some extent we live by mourning! Do not imagine we do not rejoice, for in truth, “we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of Glory,” but this is quite consistent with holy mourning. We sorrow every day that there should be any remains of sin in us, that we should still be open to temptation and should have the slightest inclination to evil. We mourn that our eyes should look so longingly on vanity and that our tongue should be so apt to speak unadvisedly. We mourn that our right hand should be so unskillful in holy service and that we should be so apt to let it be seen of men when we are giving to the Lord! We mourn especially that our heart should still be unbelieving, unfeeling and fickle. Yet, we are very happy, but we mourn to think that being so happy, we are not more holy—that, being so favored, we are not more consecrated! We “rejoice with trembling.”

To the Lord's mourners godly sorrow is so essentially a part of themselves that *they grow while they mourn* and even grow by mourning. A man never becomes better till he is weary of being imperfect. He who is satisfied with his attainments will stay where he is. But he who mourns that he is not yet up to the standard will press forward till he reaches it. He that says, “My faith is weak,” is the man who will become stronger in faith. He who confesses that his love is not so intense as it ought to be, will have more love before long. He who mourns daily that he has not obtained that which he desires is by that very agony of spirit approaching the goal! It will be well that mourning should be our companion till we come to the gates of Paradise—and there we shall mourn no longer! I was going to say, so precious is the mourning which the Spirit works in us that we might almost regret parting with it! Rowland Hill used to say he felt half sorry to think that he must part with the tears of repentance at the gates of Heaven. And he was right, for holy mourning is blessed, sweet, safe and satisfying. The bitterness is so completely evaporated that we can truly say—

*“Lord, let me weep for nothing but sin,
And after none but Thee!
And then I would—oh that I might—
A constant weeper be.”*

Dear Friends, *holy mourning is no mere melancholy or sickly fancy*—it has abundant reasons whereby to justify it. We do not mourn because we give way to needless dependency, but we lament because it would be utter madness to do otherwise! We cannot help mourning. A Christian grieves over himself and his shortcomings. And this not from mock modesty, but because he sees so much to sigh over. He will tell you that he never thinks worse of himself than he ought to do—that the very worst condemnation he has ever pronounced upon himself was most richly deserved. If you praise him, you pain him. If you commend him, he disowns your approbation and tells you that if you knew him better, you would think less of him and you would see so much infirmity and imperfection within him that you would not again expose him to danger by uttering flatteries!

A child of God also mourns because he is in sympathy with others. It is one part of the work of Grace in the soul to give us considerateness for our afflicted Brothers and Sisters. Is a child of God, himself, prosperous? He recollects others who are poor and in adversity and he feels bound with them. He is a member of the body and, therefore, he suffers with the other members. If each Believer were distinct and separate and kept his own joy to himself and his sorrow to himself, he might more often rejoice. But, being a member of a body which is always more or less afflicted, he weeps because others weep and mourns because others mourn. The more sympathy you have in your nature, the more sorrow you will experience. It is the unsympathetic man who laughs every day—but the friendly, tender, brotherly, Christlike spirit must mourn—it is inevitable!

And chiefly do Believers mourn because of the sins of others. This great city furnishes us with abundant occasion for deep concern. You can hardly go down a street but you hear such filthy language that it makes your blood chill in your veins! The sharpest blow could not cause us more pain than the hearing of profanity. And then the Sabbath—how little is it regarded! And the things of God—how little are they cared for! Everywhere a child of God with his eyes open must have them filled with tears. And if his heart is as it ought to be, it must be ready to break! Alas, the cause is frequently in the Christian's own family! He has an ungodly child or an unconverted wife. A Christian woman may have a drunken husband, or a godly daughter may have a dissipated father. These things make life gloomy beyond expression. Woe is me, cries the saint, that I dwell as among lions, with those who are set on the fire of Hell. Ill society makes a child of God sick at heart. As Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, and as David cried for the wings of a dove that he might fly away and be at rest, so do the saints pine in this world! Let such mourners take heart while they perceive in the text that Jesus has come to comfort all that mourn. Now, secondly, let us note—

II. WHERE THESE PEOPLE ARE MOURNING. They are mourning *in Zion*. They could not carry their griefs to a better place. Sorrow is so common that we find mourners in Babylon and Tyre, and even in Sodom and Gomorrah! But these are of a different order from the mourners in Zion.

If we are wearing our sackcloth in the House of the Lord, let us thank God, in the first place, that we are not mourning in Hell! We might have been there. We *should* have been there if we had received our due! But we are mourning where mourning meets with acceptance from God. We are lamenting where a dirge can be changed into a song. I thank God, also, that we are not mourning as those do who fiendishly regret that accidentally they have done a good thing. You remember how angry Pharaoh was with himself because he had let Israel go—I have known men who have never been penitent till they have, by mistake, done something good, or given too much away! They could gnaw their own hearts out for having done a good turn to another! God save us from such diabolical mourning as that! And yet it is not uncommon.

We have known some mourn, too, because they could not do others a mischief—because their hands were tied and they could not hurt God's people. Like Haman, they have fretted because of Mordecai. They cannot endure the prosperity of the godly, but would gladly take them for a prey and make them as the mire of the streets. That is a horrible mourning which makes a man have fellowship with Satan!

Some even mourn because they cannot take their fling of sin. They would like to indulge every vile passion, have a mint of money at their command and none to check them in any way—and they mourn because they are hedged up and hindered from destroying themselves! Such foolish ones mourn on the ale bench. They mourn in the synagogue of Satan. But as for God's people, they mourn in Zion!

Now let us indulge ourselves with a visit to the courts of Zion to see in what parts thereof the mourners may be found, for from her outer walls even to her innermost courts, you will find her inhabited by them! Some of them mourn just hard by the walls of the holy city. Like the Jews of the present day, they have their wailing place under the walls of Jerusalem. Poor souls! They dare not enter into the Holy Place, and yet they will not, cannot go away! They wait at the

gates of wisdom's house and they delight in the posts of her doors. They never like to be away when the saints assemble, yet they feel as if they had no right to be there. They are satisfied with any corner and are content to stand all the service through. They take the lowest seats and reverence the meanest child of God!

They sometimes fear that the good Word is not for them and yet like the dogs, they come under the table hoping for a morsel. If it is a sermon full of thunder, "Yes," they say, "the minister means me!" But if it is very sweet and full of comfort they say, "Alas, I dare not think *that* it is for me." They would not stay away from the holy congregation, for they feel that their only hope must lie in hearing the Gospel—and they half hope that a word of comfort may be dropped for them—but yet they come trembling. They are like the robin redbreast in the winter time—they venture near the house and tap upon the window pane—and yet are half afraid to come in. When the cold is very severe and they are very hungry, they are daring and pick up a crumb or two. Still, for the most part, they stand at the temple door and mourn. They are in Zion and they sigh and cry because they feel unworthy so much as to lift their eyes towards Heaven! Ah, well, the Lord appoints great blessings for you—He is good to those who seek Him. He has regard to the cry of the humble. He will not despise their prayer. Now, if the archenemy should ever suggest to you that it is of no use for you to be found hearing the Word of God, for you have heard the preacher so many times and even for *years* have remained unblest and, therefore, it is all hopeless—tell him he is a liar! Be all the more diligent in your attendance and strive to lay hold of what is preached. He will persuade you not to come when you are most likely to get a blessing! Whenever you feel as if, "Really, I cannot go again, for I am so often condemned and find no comfort," say to yourself, "Now, I will go this time with all the more hope! Satan is laboring to prevent my going because he fears that Christ will meet with me." Oh, seeking mourner, forsake not the courts of Zion, though you flood them with your tears. Be found where the Gospel note tells of Jesus! Be found at the Prayer Meetings. Be found on your knees. Be found with your Bible open before you, searching for the promise and, above all, believe that Jesus came to save such as you are—and cast yourself upon Him!

Many ransomed ones have been enabled to enter the Temple a little way. At the entrance of the Holy Place stood *the laver* full of water, where the priests were known to wash themselves. He who frequents the courts of Zion will often mourn at that laver, for he will say, "Alas, that I should need such washing! Alas, that I should so frequently spot my garments and defile my feet! Cleanse You me, O God. Wash me day by day. Dear Savior, cleanse You me from secret faults." These mourners are deeply grieved at what others consider little spots, for sin hurts their tender consciences and in the Light of God sin is seen to be exceedingly sinful in those whom God so highly favors. Hard by the laver stood *the altar*, where they offered the victims. Now, he who sees the one great Sacrifice by which sin was put away, while he rejoices in the finished Atonement, also laments the sin which slew the Substitute! Many a time may you hear the plaintive sing—

*"Alas, and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"*

The more sure we are of our pardon the more we mourn over our sin. We look on Him whom we have pierced and a mourning takes hold upon us like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddo when Judah lamented the best of kings and saw her sun go down in blood. Awakened souls mourn for Jesus as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. You can never stand at the altar and see Jesus bleed without your own heart bleeding if, indeed, the life of God is in you! Can any but a heart of stone be unmoved at the sight of Calvary? Blessed are they who amidst their joy for pardoned guilt wash the pierced feet of Jesus with tears of love and grief!

Further on in the Holy Place, as you will recollect, there stood *the altar of incense*. It was placed before the veil which hid the Holy of Holies, but that veil is torn. Now, they whom mourn in Zion often stand and weep as they think of Him whose prayers are the incense which God accepts—even Jesus, by whose intercession we live! They think, "Alas, that I should be so cold in prayer when Jesus pleads so earnestly!" They look over their own intercessions and they see such faultiness, such wandering of thought, such coldness of heart, such forgetfulness, such pride, such lack of faith, such utter unworthiness that they cannot help deeply mourning! Besides, they remember when Satan desired to have them and sift them as wheat—and would have destroyed them if Jesus had not prayed for them—and they mourn the state of heart which placed them in such jeopardy. As by faith they perceive how sweet the merits of Jesus are, they remember their own ill savor and begin anew to loathe themselves. Their very sense of acceptance in the Beloved fills them with humiliation! It

seems too wonderful that Jesus should do so much for them and make them so sweet to the Lord. Great love is a melting flame. When we nestle like doves in the bosom of our Lord, we mourn like the loving turtledove—we mourn because of the great love which makes us almost too happy. We rejoice with trembling and feel both fear and exceedingly great joy!

And then, those who entered the Holy Place would see a table covered with loaves of bread. It was called *the table of the showbread*. Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is that Bread and we feed on Him as the priests of old did on the showbread. But I confess I never stand there, myself, and think of how He feeds my soul with His own Self, without mourning that I have not a larger appetite for Him and that I do not more continually feed upon Him. I lament that I ever hoped to find bread elsewhere, or tried to feed on the swine husks of the world. Oh, to hunger and thirst after Christ, for this is to be blessed! Oh, to feed upon a whole Christ, even to the fullest, for this is to be satisfied with royal dainties! We cannot feed on Jesus without mourning that others are starving and that we are not more eager to bring them to the banquet! We cannot feed on Jesus without mourning that we are not, ourselves, more familiar with Heaven's Bread, so as to know how to hand it out that the dying multitudes of our great cities may be fed! O Lord, cause Your people more and more to lay to heart the sad fact that millions are famishing for want of the Bread of Heaven!

Within the Holy Place also stood *the seven-branched candlestick*, which was always burning and giving forth its pearly light. Before it we also mourn. When we rejoice in the Light of God's Holy Spirit we cannot help mourning over our natural darkness and our former hatred of the Light of God. We also mourn to think that we, ourselves, shine with so feeble a ray that our light does not so shine before men as to glorify God to the fullest extent. We cannot enjoy the Light of the Divine Spirit without praying that we may have more of it. We acknowledge that if we have but little of it, it is our own fault, for He is ready to light us up with a splendor which shall make the sons of men to wonder from where such a luster came! We also mourn because the nations sit in darkness and death shade and refuses the heavenly Light of God. And thus, you see, we mourn in Zion, from the entrance even to the innermost court.

Even when we pass through the torn veil and stand at *the Mercy Seat*, and enjoy the Believer's true place and privilege, we still mourn. We think of the Law, covered by the Propitiatory and we mourn our breaches of it. We think of the pot of manna and mourn the days when we called the heavenly food, "light bread." We remember Aaron's rod that budded and say to ourselves, "Alas, it is a memorial of my own rebellion as well as of my Lord's power!" We ask ourselves, "Where is my pot of manna of remembered mercy? Alas, my rod does not bud and blossom as it should, but often it is dry and fruitless! Alas, that Law which my Lord hid in His heart—how little respect have I had for it or remembrance of it." And then, looking at the golden Mercy Seat, we wet it with our tears because here the blood drops fell, by which we are brought near. The Glory of Jehovah between the cherubim bows us down and we cry, "Woe is me, for I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" Our impurity prostrates us when, like Isaiah, we behold the Glory of the Lord! Is it not meet that it should be so?

Thus, you see, from the outer courts of Zion, right into the Holy of Holies, every spot suggests mourning! And true children of God yield to the influence thereof. In every place of mercy and privilege which they occupy they look down upon themselves with shame and confusion of face. Old Master Dyer used to say, "When the peacock shows his fine feathers, he ought to recollect that he has black feet and a horrible voice." And so, truly, whenever we are full of Divine Graces and blessings it becomes us to recollect what we are by nature—and what there is of impurity still lurking within us—that we may be humble and with our confidence in Jesus may mingle repentance of sin! Thus much upon where they mourn. And now, thirdly—

III. WHO THINKS OF THESE MOURNERS? Who consoles those that mourn in Zion? Who looks upon poor and needy souls? Very often their friends shun them—if they mourn much and long, their friends shun their society and their familiar acquaintances know them no more. There are places of worship where mourners in Zion might come and go by the year together and no one would utter a sympathetic word! A broken heart might bleed to death before any hand would offer to bind it up! I love to see Christian people anxious after poor mourners and eager to meet with penitent and desponding ones. It ought not to be possible, dear Friends, in an assembly of Believers, for a mourning soul to come and go many times without some Barnabas—some son of consolation, seeking him out and offering a word of good cheer in the name of the Lord! But mark this—whoever forgets the mourner, the Lord does not! There are three Divine Persons who remember the mourner! The first *is the Eternal Father*. Read the first part of the Chapter. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me because *the Lord* has anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek. *He has* sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted." God, the ever blessed Father, pities His sorrowing children and has respect unto their prayers! Poor

Soul, you are deeply wounded because of your sin and no one on earth knows it, yet your heavenly Father knows the thoughts of your heart and He tenderly sympathizes with your anguish of mind! Where are you standing, poor fretting Hannah? You woman of a sorrowful spirit, I come not, like Eli, to judge you harshly and censure you unjustly. Where are you? Do you mourn and sigh after your Lord? Then go in peace! The Lord grant you your petition. It shall surely be done unto you according to your faith. God, the eternal Father, first of all, remembers those who mourn. “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.”

Moreover, *God the Son* has the same kind thoughts towards His mourners. What does the first verse say? “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon *Me*.” And you know that it is Christ who speaks. “The Lord has anointed Me to bind up the brokenhearted.” Jesus, then, undertakes the cause of the troubled! He was a mourner all His days and, therefore, He is very tender towards mourners—

*“He knows what fierce temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.”*

“I know their sorrows,” He says. “In all their afflictions, He was afflicted.” He was made perfect through sufferings. Rejoice, O mourner, for the Man of Sorrows thinks upon you!

And then *the Holy Spirit*—the third Person of the blessed Trinity—according to the text remembers mourners. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,” He says, “because the Lord has anointed Me.” Yes, You blessed Spirit, You are the Comforter and who can You comfort but mourners? It were useless to comfort those who never knew a sorrow! It were a superfluity to attempt to offer consolation to those who were never depressed! The Holy Spirit hovers like a dove over the assemblies of the Sabbath and whenever He finds a heart which is broken with a sense of sin, He alights there and brings light and peace and hope! Be of good courage, then, you mourners, for the three Divine Persons unite on your behalf! The One God thinks upon you and the gentleness and tenderness of His almighty heart are moved towards you! Is not this good cheer? Our fourth and last point is this—

IV. WHAT DOES THE LORD DO FOR THEM?—“*To console them that mourn in Zion.*”

Let us take first the ordinary rendering of the text—“*To appoint them.*” God makes appointments to bless mourners. It is His decree, His ordinance, His purpose to bless those who mourn in Zion. Some mourners are greatly frightened at predestination—they are afraid of the Divine decrees. Be of good comfort, there is no decree in God’s great Book against a mourner! “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you Me in vain.” God’s terrible decrees are against the proud, whom His soul hates, and He will break them in pieces. But as for the humble and the meek, His purposes concerning them are full of Grace. Read the following verses and see—“To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” It is registered in the record office above and stands in His Eternal Book and so must it be, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they *shall be* comforted.” When you think of the decrees, remember this decree and be of good comfort.

But an equally accurate rendering of the text is, “*To provide* for those that mourn in Zion.” “To provide.” God not only purposes to bless, but He does bless His mourners. Our heavenly Father prepares good gifts for His mourning family. For whom did Jesus die but for mourners? For whom does He live but for mourners? For whom are the blessings of His coming but for mourners? O you that are troubled because of sin, and hate it—all God’s heart goes out towards you and all the riches of the Everlasting Covenant are yours! Make bold to take them, since for mourners they are provided. For whom are clothes but for the naked? For whom are alms provided but for the needy? For whom the bath but for the filthy? For whom the medicine but for the sick? For whom God’s Grace but for you that need it and mourn because of your need? Come and welcome! The Lord bring you to Himself at this very hour! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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