"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED"

NO. 1741

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself;
that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."
John 14:1-4

WE may well feel glad that God's people, whose lives are recorded in the Old and New Testaments, were men of like passions with ourselves. I have known many a poor sinner pluck up hope as he has observed the sins and struggles of those who were saved by grace, and I have known many of the heirs of heaven find consolation as they have observed how imperfect beings like themselves have prevailed with God in prayer, and have been delivered in their time of distress.

I am very glad that the apostles were not perfect men. They would then have understood all that Jesus said at once, and we would have lost our Lord's instructive explanations. They would also have lived above all trouble of mind, and then the Master would not have said to them these golden words, "Let not your heart be troubled."

It is, however, most evident from our text that it is not according to our Lord's mind that any of His servants should be troubled in heart. He takes no delight in the doubt and disquietude of His people. When He saw that because of what He had said to them sorrow had filled the hearts of His apostles, He pleaded with them in great love, and besought them to be comforted. As when a mother comforts her child, He cried, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Jesus says the same to you, my friend, if you are one of His downcast ones. He would not have you sad. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem," is a command even of the old dispensation, and I am quite sure that under this clearer revelation, the Lord would have His people free from heartbreak. Has not the Holy Ghost especially undertaken the work of comfort in order that it may be effectually done?

Trials depress the hearts of God's children, for which the tenderest ministry fails to afford consolation. And then it is most sweet for the failing comforter to remember the unfailing Comforter, and to commit the case of the sorrowful spirit into the divine hands. Seeing that one person of the blessed Trinity has undertaken to be the Comforter, we see how important it is that our hearts should be filled with consolation. Happy religion in which it is our duty to be glad! Blessed Gospel by which we are forbidden to be troubled in heart!

Is it not a thing greatly to be admired that the Lord Jesus should think so carefully of His friends at such a time? Great personal sorrows may well be an excuse if the griefs of others are somewhat overlooked. Jesus was going to His last bitter agony, and to death itself, and yet He overflowed with sympathy for His followers. Had it been you or I, we would have asked for sympathy for ourselves. Our cry would have been, "Have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me!"

But instead of that, our Lord cast His own crushing sorrows into the background, and bent His mind to the work of sustaining His chosen under their far inferior griefs. He knew that He was about to be "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He knew that He should soon be in an agony through bearing

"the chastisement of our peace." But ere He plunged into the deep, He must needs dry the tears of those He loved so well, and therefore He said most touchingly, "Let not your heart be troubled."

While I admire this condescending tenderness of love, I at the same time cannot help adoring the marvelous confidence of our blessed Lord, who, though He knows that He is to be put to a shameful death, yet feels no fear, but bids His disciples to trust implicitly to Him. The black darkness of the awful midnight was beginning to surround Him, yet how brave His word—"Believe also in me!"

He knew in that threatening hour that He had come forth from the Father, and that He was in the Father and the Father in Him, and so He says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." The calm bearing of their Master must have greatly tended to confirm His servants in their faith.

While we see here His confidence as man, we also feel that this is not a speech which a mere man would ever have uttered had he been a good man, for no mere creature would thus match Himself with God. That Jesus is a good man few question, that He must be God is therefore proven by these words. Would Jesus bid us trust in an arm of flesh? Is it not written—"Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm"?

Yet the Holy Jesus says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." This association of Himself with God, as the object of human confidence in the time of trouble, betokens a consciousness of His own divine power and Godhead. And it is a mystery in whose difficulties faith takes pleasure, to see in our Lord Jesus the faith of a man for Himself, and the faithfulness of God for others.

Come then, dear friends, close up to the text, and may the Spirit of God be with us! I will read the text again very distinctly. Ask that you may feel the words even more powerfully than the apostles felt them, for they had not yet received the Comforter, and so they were not yet led into all truth. In this we excel them as they were that night. Let us therefore hopefully pray that we may know the glory of our Lord's words, and hear them spoken into our very soul by the Holy Spirit.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

These words are in themselves much better than any sermon. What can our discourse be but a dilution of the essential spirit of consolation which is contained in the words of the Lord Jesus? Now let us, first, *taste of the bitter waters of heart-trouble*, and secondly, let us *drink deep of the sweet waters of divine consolation*.

I. First, then, LET US TASTE OF THE BITTER WATERS.

"Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." I would not confine the comfort to any one form of affliction, for it is a balm for every wound. But still it will be well to inquire, what was the particular trouble of the disciples? It may be that some of us are passing through it now, or we may be plunged in it ere long.

It was this—*Jesus was to die*. Their Lord, whom they sincerely loved, was about to go from them by a shameful, painful death. What tender heart could bear to think of that? Yet He had told them that it would be so, and they began to remember His former words wherein He had said that the Son of man would be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and would be scourged and put to death. They were now to pass through all the bitterness of seeing Him accused, condemned, and crucified.

In a short time He was actually seized, bound, carried to the high priest's house, hurried to Pilate, then to Herod, back to Pilate, stripped, scourged, mocked, insulted. They saw Him conducted through the streets of Jerusalem bearing His cross. They beheld Him hanging on the tree between two thieves, and heard Him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" A bitter draught this! In proportion as they loved their Lord, they must have deeply grieved for Him, and they needed that He should say, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Today those who love the Lord Jesus have to behold a spiritual repetition of His shameful treatment at the hands of men. For even now He is crucified afresh by those who account His cross a stumbling-

block, and the preaching of it foolishness. Ah me! How is Christ still misunderstood, misrepresented, despised, mocked, and rejected of men! They cannot touch Him really, for there He sits enthroned in the heaven of heavens, but as far as they can, they slay Him over again.

A malignant spirit is manifested to the Gospel as once it was to Christ in person. Some with coarse blasphemies, and not a few with cunning assaults upon this part of Scripture, and on that, are doing their best to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. It is a huge grief to see the mass of mankind pass by the cross with averted eyes as if the Savior's death was nothing—nothing at least to them.

In proportion as you feel a zeal for the Crucified, and for His saving truth, it is wormwood and gall to live in this age of unbelief. Christ Jesus is nailed up between the two thieves of superstition and unbelief, while around Him still gathers the fierce opposition of the rude and the polished, the ignorant and the wise.

In addition to this, the apostles had for an outlook the expectation that *their Lord would be away from them*. They did not at first understand His saying, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." Now it dawned upon them that they were to be left as sheep without a shepherd, for their Master and head was to be taken from them.

This was to them a source of dread and dismay, for they said to themselves, "What shall we do without Him? We are a little flock, how shall we be defended when He is gone, and the wolf is prowling? When the Scribes and Pharisees gather about us, how shall we answer them? As for our Lord's cause and kingdom, how can it be safe in such trembling hands as ours. Alas for the Gospel of salvation, when Jesus is not with us!"

This was a bitter sorrow, and something of this kind of feeling often crosses our own hearts as we tremble for the ark of the Lord. My heart is sad when I see the state of religion among us. Oh for an hour of the Son of man in these darkening days! It is written, "There shall come in the last days scoffers," and they have come, but oh, that the Lord Himself were here in person! Oh, that the Lord would pluck His right hand out of His bosom, and show us once again the wonders of Pentecost, to the confusion of His adversaries, and to the delight of all His friends.

He has not come as yet! Well-nigh two thousand years have rolled away since He departed, and the night is dark, and there is no sign of dawn. The ship of the church is tossed with tempest, and Jesus is not come unto us. We know that He is with us in a spiritual sense, but oh, that we had Him in the glory of His power! Surely He knows our need, and the urgency of the times, yet we are apt to cry, "It is time for thee, LORD, to work, for they make void thy law."

But they felt a third grief, and it was this, that *He was to be betrayed by one of themselves*. The twelve were chosen men, but one of them was a devil, and sold his Lord. This pierced the hearts of the faithful—"the Son of man is betrayed." He is not taken by open seizure, but He is sold for thirty pieces of silver by one whom He entrusted with His little store. He that dipped with Him in the dish had sold Him for paltry gain. This cut them to the heart, even as it did the Master Himself, for our Lord felt the treachery of His friend.

Of this bitter water the faithful at this hour are made to drink, for what do we see at this day? What see do we in various places but persons that are reputed to be ministers of the Gospel whose main business seems to be to undermine our holy faith, and batter down the truths which are commonly received in the Christian church? Certain of them preach as if they were ordained not of God, but of the devil, and anointed not by the Holy Spirit, but by the spirit of infidelity.

Under the banner of "advanced thought," they make war upon those eternal truths for which confessors contended and martyrs bled, and by which the saints of past ages have been sustained in their dying hours. It is not an enemy—then we could have borne and answered it. If the outward and avowed infidel attacks inspiration, let him do so. It is a free country, let him speak.

But when a man enters our pulpits, opens the sacred volume, and denies that it is inspired, what does he there? How does his conscience allow him to assume an office which he perverts? To make him a shepherd who is a wolf, to make him a dresser of the vineyard who, with his axe, cuts up the very roots

of the vines—this is an incomprehensible folly on the part of the churches. It is a dagger to every believing heart that Judas should be represented in the Christian church by so many of the professed ministers of Christ. They betray their Master with a kiss.

Then there came another pang at the back of this, for one of them, though true-hearted and loyal, would that night *deny his Lord*. Peter, in many respects the leader of the little company, had been warned that he would act the craven and vehemently deny his Lord. This is bitterness indeed, of which those that love the church of God are compelled full often to drink, to see men whom we cannot but believe to be the disciples of Jesus Christ carried away by temptation, by fear of man, or by the fashion of the times, so that Christ and His Gospel are virtually denied by them.

The fear of being thought dogmatic or Puritanic closes many a mouth which ought to be declaring Him to be the Son of God with power, and extolling His glorious majesty in defiance of all that dare oppose Him. The hearts of some who best love Jesus grow heavy at the sight of the worldliness and lukewarmness of many of His professed followers.

Hence it seems to me to be a most seasonable hour for introducing you to the sweet waters of our text, of which I bid you drink till every trace of bitterness is gone from your mouth. For the Master says to you, even to you, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

II. Under our second head LET US DRINK OF THE SWEET WATERS and refresh our souls.

First, in this wonderful text our Master indicates to us the true means of comfort under every sort of disquietude. How puts He it? "Let not your heart be troubled"—*believe*. Kindly look down your Bibles, and you will see that this direction is repeated. He says, in the opening of the eleventh verse, "Believe me," and then, again, in the second clause, "Believe me."

I thought, as I tried to enter into the meaning of this sacred utterance that I heard Jesus at my side saying thrice to me, "Believe Me! Believe Me! Believe Me!" Could any one of the eleven that were with Him have disbelieved their present Lord? He says, "Believe Me! Believe Me! Believe Me!"—as if there was great need to urge them to faith in Him. Is there no other cure, then, for a troubled heart?

No other is required. This is all-sufficient through God. If believing in Jesus you still are troubled, believe in Him again yet more thoroughly and heartily. If even that should not take away the perturbation of your mind, believe in Him to a third degree, and continue to do so with increasing simplicity and force. Regard this as the one and only physic for the disease of fear and trouble. Jesus prescribes, "Believe, believe, believe in *Me*!"

Believe not only in certain doctrines, but in Jesus Himself—in Him as able to carry out every promise that He has made. Believe in Him as you believe in God. One has been at times apt to think it easier to believe in Jesus than in God, but this is a thought of spiritual infancy. More advanced believers find it not so. To a Jew, this was certainly the right way of putting it, and I think to us Gentiles it is so also, when we have been long in the faith. For we get to believe in God as a matter of course, but faith in Jesus requires a further confidence.

I believe in God's power in creation, He can make what He wills, and shape what He has made. I believe in His power in providence, that He can bring to pass His eternal purposes, and do as He wills among the armies in heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world. I believe concerning God, that all things are possible unto Him.

Just in that way I am called upon to believe in Jesus, that He is as omnipotent in power, and as sure in His working as the Lord from whom come all the forces of nature. And just as certain to accomplish His purposes as God is to achieve His design in the works of providence.

Relying upon the Savior with the implicit faith which every right-minded man renders towards God, we shall only give our Lord the faith which He justly claims. He is faithful and true, and His power can effect His promise. Let us depend trustfully upon Him, and perfect peace shall come into our hearts.

These disciples knew that the Savior was to be away from them, so that they could not see Him nor hear His voice. What of that? Is it not so with God, in whom we believe? "No man hath seen God at any time"—yet you believe in the invisible God working all things, sustaining all things. In the same manner

believe in the absent and invisible Christ, that He is still as mighty as though you could see Him walking the waves, or multiplying the loaves, or healing the sick, or raising the dead. Believe Him, and sorrow and sighs will flee away.

Believe in Him as ever living, even as you believe in the eternity of God. You believe in the eternal existence of the Most High whom you have not seen, even so believe in the everlasting life of the Son of God. Ay, though you see Him die, though you see Him laid in the grave, yet believe in Him that He has not ceased to be.

Look for His reappearance, even as you believe in God. Yes, and when He is gone from you, and a cloud has received Him out of your sight, believe that He lives, even as God lives—and because He lives, you shall live also. You believe in the wisdom of God, you believe in the faithfulness of God, you believe in the goodness of God—"Even as you believe in God," says Jesus, "believe also in me."

Faith in Jesus Christ Himself, as an ever-living and divine person, is the best quietus for every kind of fear. He is the "King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible," "The Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," and therefore you may safely rest in Him. This is the first ingredient of this priceless comfort.

But now our Lord proceeded to say that though He was going from them, *He was only going to His Father's house*. "In my Father's house are many mansions." Ay, but this was sweet comfort. "I am going," said He, "and on my way you will see me scourged, bleeding, mocked, and buffeted. But I shall pass through all this to the joy and rest, and honor of my Father's house."

God is everywhere present, and yet as on earth He had a tabernacle wherein He specially manifested Himself, so there is a place where He in a peculiar manner is revealed. The temple was a type of that matchless abode of God which eye has not seen. We call it heaven, the pavilion of God, the home of holy angels, and of those pure spirits who dwell in His immediate presence. In heaven God may be said in special to have His habitation, and Jesus was going there to be received on His return to all the honor which awaited His finished service.

He was, in fact, going home, as a son who is returning to his father's house, from which he had gone upon his father's business. He was going where He would be with the Father, where He would be perfectly at rest, where He would be above the assaults of the wicked, where He would never suffer or die again. He was going to reassume the glory which He had with the Father or ever the world was. Oh, if they had perfectly understood this, they would have understood the Savior's words, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father."

Imagination fails to picture the glory of our Lord's return, the honorable escort which heralded His approach to the Eternal City, the heartiness of the welcome of the Conqueror to the skies. I think the psalmist gives us liberty to believe that, when our Lord ascended, the bright ones of the sky came to meet Him, and cried, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

May we not believe of bright seraphs and ministering angels that—

"They brought His chariot from on high
To bear Him to His throne;
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,
'The glorious work is done!'"?

"He was seen of angels." They beheld that "joyous re-entry," the opening of the eternal doors to the King of Glory, and the triumph through the celestial streets of Him who led captivity captive, and scattered gifts among men. They saw the enthronement of Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, but was then and there crowned with glory and honor. These are not things of which these stammering lips of mine can speak, but they are things for you to consider when the Spirit of the Lord is upon you. Muse upon them for your delectation.

Jesus has gone by the way of Calvary up to His Father's house. All His work and warfare done, He is rewarded for His sojourn among men as man. All the shame which His work necessitated is now lost in the splendor of His mediatorial reign.

You people of God, be no more troubled, for your Lord is King, your Savior reigns! Men may still scoff at Him, but they cannot rob Him of a ray of glory! They may reject Him, but the Lord God omnipotent has crowned Him! They may deny His existence, but He lives! They may rebelliously cry, "Let us break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from us," but the Lord has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion, and none can thrust Him from His throne. Hallelujah! "God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow."

Wherefore let not your hearts be troubled by the noise of controversy, and the blasphemy and rebuke of an evil age. Though there is confusion as when the sea roars and the fullness thereof, and the wicked foam in their rage against the Lord and against His anointed, yet the Lord sits upon the flood, the Lord sits King forever. Again let us say, "Hallelujah!" The Prince has come to His own again. He has entered into His Father's palace. The heavens have received Him. Why should we be troubled?

Thirdly, our Lord gave His servants comfort in another way. *He gave them to understand by implication that a great many would follow Him to His Father's house*. He did not only assure them that He was going to His Father's house, but He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." These mansions are not built to stand empty. God does nothing in vain, therefore it is natural to conclude that a multitude of spirits, innumerable beyond all count, will rise in due time to occupy those many mansions in the Father's house.

Now I see in this great comfort to them, because they doubtless feared that if their Lord was absent His kingdom might fail. How would there be converts if He were crucified? How could they expect, poor creatures as they were, to set up a kingdom of righteousness on the earth? How could they turn the world upside down, and bring multitudes to His feet whom He had purchased with His blood, if His conquering right arm was not seen at their head?

The Lord Jesus in effect said, "I am going, but I shall lead the way for a vast host who will come to the prepared abodes. Like the corn of wheat which is cast into the ground to die, I shall bring forth much fruit, which shall be housed in the abiding resting-places."

This is one part of our comfort at this hour. Little boots it how men fight against the Gospel, for the Lord knows them that are His, and He will ransom by power those redeemed by blood. He has a multitude according to the election of grace whom He will bring in. Though they seem today to be a small remnant, yet He will fill the many mansions. This stands fast as a rock—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

They boast that "they will not come unto Christ," but the Spirit of God foresaw that they would reject the salvation of the Lord. What said Jesus to those like them? "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life." The wicked unbelief of men is their own condemnation. But Jesus loses not the reward of His passion.

We fling back into the faces of the despisers of Christ the scorn which they pour upon Him, and remind them that those who despise Him shall be lightly esteemed, their names shall be written in the earth. What if *they* come not to Him? It is their own loss, and well did He say of them, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Their wickedness is their inability and their destruction. They betray by their opposition the fact that they are not the chosen of the Most High.

But "the redeemed of the LORD shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." This matter is not left to the free will of man, so that Jesus may be disappointed after all. Oh no, "they will not come unto him, that they may have life," but they shall yet know that the eternal Spirit has power over the human conscience and will, and can make men willing in the day of His power.

If Jesus be lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him. There shall be no failure as to the Lord's redeeming work, even though the froward reject the counsel of God against themselves. What Jesus has bought with blood, He will not lose. What He died to accomplish shall surely be performed, and what He rose again to carry out shall be effected though all the devils in hell, and unbelievers upon earth should join in league against Him. Oh, you enemy, rejoice not over the cause of the Messiah, for though it seem to fall, it shall arise again!

But our Lord went much further, for He said, "*I go to prepare a place for you*." I think He did not only refer to the many mansions for our spirits, but to the ultimate *place* of our risen bodies, of which I will speak before long. In our Lord's going away, as well as in His continuance in His Father's presence, He would be engaged in preparing a place for His own. He was going that He might clear all impediment out of the way.

Their sins blocked the road, like mountains their iniquities opposed all passage. But now that He is gone, it may be said, "The breaker is come up before them, and the Lord on the head of them." He has broken down every wall of partition, and every iron gate He has opened. The way into the kingdom is opened for all believers. He passed through death to resurrection and ascension to remove every obstacle from our path.

He went from us also to fulfill every condition, for it was absolutely necessary that all who entered heaven should wear a perfect righteousness, and should be made perfect in character, seeing no sin can enter the holy city. Now the saints could not be perfected without being washed in His precious blood, and renewed by the Holy Spirit, and so the Savior endured the death of the cross. And when He arose, He sent us the sanctifying Spirit, that we might be fitted for His rest. Thus He may be said to have prepared the place of our rest by removing from its gateway the sin which blocked all entrance.

He went away also that He might be in a position to secure that place for all His people. He entered the glory-land as our Forerunner, to occupy the place in our name, to take possession of heaven as the representative of all His people. He was going that He might in heaven itself act as Intercessor, pleading before the throne, and therefore be able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. He was going there to assume the reins of Providence, having all things put under His feet, and having all power given to Him in heaven and in earth He might bless His people abundantly.

By being in heaven, our Lord occupies a vantage-ground for the sure accomplishing of His purposes of love. As Joseph went down into Egypt to store the granaries, to prepare for Israel a home in Goshen, and to sit upon the throne for their protection, so has our Lord gone away into the glory for our good, and He is doing for us upon His throne what could not so advantageously have been done for us here.

At the same time, I am inclined to think that there is a special sense in these words over and above the preparing of heaven for us. I think our Lord Jesus meant to say, "I go to prepare a place for you" in this sense—that there would in the end be a place found for their entire manhood. Mark that word, "*a place*." We are too apt to entertain cloudy ideas of the ultimate inheritance of those who attain unto the resurrection of the dead. "Heaven is a state," says somebody. Yes, certainly it is a state, but it is a *place* too, and in the future it will be more distinctly a place.

Observe that our blessed Lord went away in body, not as a disembodied spirit, but as one who had eaten with His disciples, and whose body had been handled by them. His body needed a "*place*," and He is gone to prepare a place for us, not only as we shall be for a while, pure spirits, but as we are to be ultimately—body, and soul, and spirit.

When a child of God dies, where does his spirit go? There is no question about that matter, we are informed by the inspired apostle—"absent from the body, present with the Lord." But that is a spiritual matter, and something yet remains. My spirit is not the whole of myself, for I am taught so to respect my body as to regard it as a precious portion of my complete self—the temple of God. The Lord Jesus Christ did not redeem my spirit alone, but my body too, and consequently He means to have a "place" where I, this person who is here, in the wholeness of my individuality, may rest forever.

Jesus means to have a place made for the entire manhood of His chosen, that they may be where He is and as He is. Our ultimate abode will be a state of blessedness, but it must also be a *place* suited for our risen bodies. It is not, therefore, a cloud-land, an airy something, impalpable and dreamy. Oh, no, it will be as really a place as this earth is a place. Our glorious Lord has gone for the ultimate purpose of preparing a suitable place for His people.

There will be a place for their spirits, if spirits want place, but He has gone to prepare a place for them as body, soul, and spirit. I delight to remember that Jesus did not go as a spirit, but in His risen body, bearing the scars of His wounds. Come, you that think you will never rise again, you who imagine that the scattering of our dust forbids all hope of the restoration of our bodies. We shall go where Christ has gone, and as He has gone. He leads the way in His body, and we shall follow in ours.

Ultimately there shall be the complete redemption of the purchased possession, and not a bone shall be left in the regions of death, not a relic for the devil to glory over. Jesus said to Mary, "Thy brother shall rise again." He did not need to say your brother's spirit shall live immortally, but your brother shall "rise again," his body shall come forth out of the tomb. Well might the apostles' hearts be comforted when they learned the blessed errand upon which their Lord was going!

The next consolation was *the promise of His sure return*, "If I go away to prepare a place for you, I will come again." Listen, then! Jesus is coming again. In the same manner as He ascended He will return—that is, really, literally, and in bodily form. He meant no play upon words when He so plainly said, without proverb, "I will come again," or more sweetly still, "I go away and come again *unto you*." This is our loudest note of joy, "Behold, he cometh!" This is our never-failing comfort.

Observe that the Savior, in this place, says nothing about death, nothing about the peace and rest of believers till He is come, for He looks on to the end. It is not necessary to put every truth into one sentence, and so our Lord is content to mention the brightest of our hopes, and leave other blessings for mention at other times. Here the consolation is that He will come, come personally to gather us in. He will not send an angel, or even a host of cherubim to fetch us up into our eternal state, but the Lord Himself will descend from heaven.

It is to be our marriage day, and the glorious Bridegroom will come in person. When the Bride is prepared for her Husband, will He not come to fetch her to His home? O beloved, do you not see where our Lord's thoughts were? He was dwelling upon the happy day of His ultimate victory, when He shall come to be admired in all them that believe.

That is where He would have His people's thoughts be. But alas! they forget His advent. The Lord shall come. Let your hearts anticipate that day of days. His enemies cannot stop His coming! "Let not your heart be troubled." They may hate Him, but they cannot hinder Him. They cannot impede His glorious return, not by the twinkling of an eye.

What an answer, will His coming be to every adversary! How will they weep and wail because of Him! As surely as He lives He will come, and what confusion this will bring upon the wise men who at this hour are reasoning against His deity, and ridiculing His atonement!

Again I say, "Let not your heart be troubled" as to the present state of religion. It will not last long. Do not worry yourselves into unbelief though this man may have turned traitor, or the other may have become a backslider, for the wheels of time are hurrying on the day of the glorious manifestation of the Lord from heaven! What will be the astonishment of the whole world when with all the holy angels He shall descend from heaven, and shall glorify His people!

For that is the next comfort—*He will receive us*. When He comes, He will receive His followers with a courtly reception. It will be their marriage reception. It shall be the marriage supper of the Son of God. Then shall descend out of heaven the new Jerusalem prepared as a bride for her husband. Then shall come the day of the resurrection, and the dead in Christ shall rise. Then all His people who are alive at the time of His coming shall be suddenly transformed, so as to be delivered from all the frailties and imperfections of their mortal bodies.

"The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Then we shall be presented spirit, soul, and body "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," in the clear and absolute perfection of our sanctified manhood, presented unto Christ Himself.

This is the sweetest idea of heaven that can be, that we shall be with Christ, that we shall see Him, that we shall speak to Him, that we shall commune with Him most intimately, that we shall glorify Him, that He will glorify us, and that we shall never be divided from Him forever and ever. "Let not your heart be troubled," all this is near at hand, and our Lord's going away has secured it to us.

For this was the last point of the consolation, that when He came and received His people to Himself, *He would place them eternally where He is, that they may be with Him*. Oh, joy! Joy! Joy! Unutterable joy! Can we not now, once for all, dismiss every fear in the prospect of the endless bliss reserved for us?

"See that glory, how resplendent!
Brighter far than fancy paints!
There in majesty transcendent,
Jesus reigns, the King of saints.
Spread thy wings, my soul, and fly
Straight to yonder world of joy.

"Joyful crowds, His throne surrounding,
Sing with rapture of His love;
Through the heavens His praises sounding,
Filling all the courts above.
Spread thy wings, my soul, and fly
Straight to yonder world of joy."

The Lord talks to us as if we now knew all about His goings and doings, and so we do as far as all practical purposes are concerned. He says, "Whither I go ye know." He is not gone to a place unknown, remote, dangerous. He has only gone home. "Whither I go ye know."

When a mother sends her boy to Australia, she is usually troubled because she may never see him again. But he replies, "Dear mother, the distance is nothing now, we cross the ocean in a very few weeks, and I shall speedily come back again." Then the mother is cheered. She thinks of the ocean as a little bit of blue between her and her son, and looks for him to return if need be.

So the Savior says, "Whither I go ye know." As much as to say—"I told you, I am going to your own Father's house, to the mansions whither your spirits will soon come, and I am going for the blessed purpose of making it ready to receive you in the entirety of your nature. You are thus made to know all about my departure and my business.

"I am going to a glorious place which eye has not seen, but my Spirit will reveal it to you. You know where I am going, and you know also the way by which I am going—I am going through suffering and death, through atonement and righteousness. This is the way to heaven for you also, and you will find it all in me.

"You shall in due time enter heaven by my atonement, by my death, by my sacrifice, for 'I am the way.' You know the way, but remember it is only the way and not the end. Do not imagine that the wicked can make an end of Me. But believe that Christ on the cross, Christ in the sepulchre, is not the end, but the way."

This, beloved, is the way for us as well as for our Lord. He could not reach His crown except by the cross, nor His mediatorial glory except by death. But that way once made in His own person is open for all who believe in Him. Thus you know where the Lord has gone, and you know the road. Therefore, be encouraged, for He is not far away, He is not inaccessible, and you shall be with Him soon. "Let not your heart be troubled."

Oh, brave Master, shall You be followed by a tribe of cowards? No, we will not lose heart through the trials of the day. Oh, holy Master, You did meet Your death with song, for "after supper they sang a hymn." Shall not we go through our griefs with joyful trust? Oh, confident Lord, bidding us believe in You as in God Himself, we do believe in You, and we also grow confident.

Your undisturbed serenity of faith infuses itself into our souls, and we are made strong. When we hear You bravely talking of Your decease, which You had to accomplish at Jerusalem, and then of Your after-glory, we also think hopefully of all the opposition of ungodly men, and waiting for Your appearing, we solace ourselves with that blessed hope.

Make no tarrying, O our Lord! Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.