

The Consolation

by Henry Law

Jesus Christ is our Consolation, and He can bring comfort, peace, and joy to our hearts in times of need.

Scripture: Genesis 5:29, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 119:50, Isaiah 40:1, Isaiah 66:13, Matthew 5:4, John 14:16, 2 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Thessalonians 2:16

Topics: "Divine Comfort", "Christian Consolation"

Description

Henry Law preaches on the comforting presence of God in the midst of a tearful and sorrowful world, emphasizing that Jesus Christ is the Consolation provided for our woe-worn souls. He highlights the extreme distress of a conscience awakened to the nature of sin and the need for comfort that can only come from heaven through the reconciliation and forgiveness found in Christ. Law encourages believers to lean on Jesus as their Consolation in all seasons, meditating on His promises, holding close communion with Him, and finding comfort in the fellowship of faithful pilgrims of old who endured trials yet were always comforted by the presence of God.

Transcript

"He will comfort us." Genesis 5:29

Thus speaks the patriarch Lamech. Such is his voice of joy, when he receives his first-born Noah. He was tilling a soil hardened by the curse--fruitful only in thorns and thistles. But now a son is given to share the painfulness of his daily toil. Cheered by this hope, he calls his name Noah, which has the meaning of Rest or Comfort. Reader! in these simple pages there is but one thing sought: the best good of undying souls. Therefore I examine not whether this name was designed as another ray of the coming Savior. I rather proceed to realities, which all experience. I rather turn to tidings, which are bright on the Gospel surface.

I first state a fact, which is ancient as the fall, and wide-spread as man. It is this--A sinful world is a tearful world. Wherever we stand, our shadow is sorrow. It s so before the flood. It is so now. In all climates and ranks, the head is weary, and the heart is sick.

I next state a truth, which came in, as twin-born, with the earliest promise. It is this--Consolation is provided. God has sent forth Christ Jesus from the bosom of His love to be the Consolation of this woe-worn world. It is my longing desire that this heavenly knowledge would more largely shed its pure balm. I mourn that men should drink nothing but the dregs of bitterness, while healing streams flow close beside them. Let me invite you, then, to come with me for a few moments into some of the chambers of

earth's grief. I can show you there, with the Spirit helping, that in Jesus Christ there is a pillow for the throbbing brow--a cordial for the fainting spirit--a plank for the sinking--a haven for the tempest-tossed.

I need scarcely say that the heart of misery is misery of heart--the soul of anguish is anguish of soul. But where is the home of this extreme distress? Surely in the breast of him whose conscience is awake to discern the nature--the evil--the wages--of his sins. The nest of self-delusion has now become a bed of thorns. Before his eyes God frowns, dreadful in justice. In his ears the law thunders a tremendous curse. He moves forward, and there is a gaping hell. Shall he stir--the next step may cast him headlong into flames. Shall he sleep--he may awake among the lost. Where can comfort reach a mind thus tortured? It cannot spring from earth. For let the world now present its every charm; how worthless are they! The world has nothing, but for a sin-blinded man. When things are seen as they really are, earthly toys are worse than empty bubbles.

Comfort, to be comfort now, must come from heaven. All is mockery, except it can tell of God reconciled--sin pardoned--the soul safe. Now Jesus can raise out of these lowest depths; and He alone. He can guide the trembler to His cross. He can reveal to him there a heavenly Father, arrayed in glories of eternal love. He can point to His own dying as the death of wrath. He can show the sword of justice sheathed in His own heart--the flames of vengeance quenched in His own blood--the hand, that was uplifted to strike, now extended to bless--all hell piled upon the Guiltless, and heaven freely given to the guilty! Is not this Consolation? It is! And Jesus pours it from His wounded hands and pierced side!

Is not this, I repeat, Consolation? Ask those who have tasted it. Ask the jailor. Terror-stricken he sprang in--wrath was at his heels--he heard of Jesus--peace soothed his fears, and he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. But it occurs, alas! too often, that they who have escaped, as drowning mariners, to this rock, are enticed again to stray. They cease to watch and pray. Then the tempter finds an open door. They neglect the preserving means of grace. Then the foe creeps in. The Spirit is grieved and withdraws. Corruptions regain their power. Woe to backsliders! what wretchedness is theirs! Consciousness of peril returns, and it is embittered by keen self-reproach. They see how basely they have deserted the Friend, who had said to them, while in their blood, Live.

Reader! perhaps this agony is yours. You once had rest in Jesus, but it is gone. The fault is wholly your own. He did not drive you from Him. You have departed from Him. And now you sigh, Oh! that it were with me, as in the days when the Sun of Righteousness shone upon my path. Do not be tearless, for grievous is your fall. But do not be hopeless, for Jesus is yet near. His voice still follows you, "Return, and I will not cause My anger to fall upon you." In nothing is His tenderness more tender, than in stilling the sobs of those who sob in penitence before Him. Return then. The Lord still extends the arms of His pitifulness. He is the balm in Gilead. He is the Physician there. He cannot be silent to the cry, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation."

There are others who closely cling to the Lord, and yet are disquieted. They gratefully acknowledge, "Hitherto has the Lord helped us;" but heaven seems far off; the pilgrimage is long; adversaries are many; their own strength totters--they look to the winds and waves, and trembling takes hold upon them; they say with David, we shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.

Reader! perhaps you have such heart-felt misgivings. Truly if Jesus were other than He is, you might thus faint. But now I am bold to bid you arise and shake yourself from the dust. Open your eyes and read His heart. It speaks one language. It is all encouragement. It tells of faithful love, which, as it never had

beginning, so it can have no end. He draws you to the shelter of His wings, and there stifles each rising doubt by assurances as large as they are free--as gentle as they are countless. He tells you, "Because I live, you shall live also." "Your life is hidden with Christ in God." If you ask richer Consolation, you ask more than God can give.

But afflictions break upon you with ceaseless tide. This is to be expected. It is our common lot. There is no home so lowly, but some sorrow finds the door. There is no palace so upraised, but some sorrow mounts the steps. Faith shields not from this. "In the world you shall have tribulation." But welcome all sorrow, if Jesus enters by its side! This always is so to the true believer. Health may wither like a fading flower; languor and disease may feed upon the frame; there may be tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day. But Jesus can relax with smiles the pain-contracted brow, and charm with songs the wakeful night. Earthly possessions may crumble to decay; poverty may sit where affluence used to smile.

But can the believer's portion fail? Oh, no! he has all the treasures in the word, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack." Friends may forsake; averted looks may chill. There may be treachery or open hate, where once much love was pretended. Jesus knew this trial in its bitterest form. Hence He is quick to prove that He changes not with the changing world. He magnifies His sympathy by sticking closer than a brother. His own presence more than fills each void within.

But death draws on with rapid step. Yes! it will soon draw back the covers of your bed, and extend an icy hand to bear you there. You will then need strong Consolation. Long-tried props can prop no more. Alone you must go through the dark valley. But not alone! For Jesus whispers, "I am with you. Thus I guide to my many-mansioned home." So the last trial is the last and largest Consolation.

Believer, let me beg you to live and die leaning on Jesus as your Consolation. Would you be expert in this happy state? Make it, then, your daily habit to meditate upon Himself--His promises--His dealings. Hold close communion with Him. Measure the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of His office and His work. Be assured that all that He is, and all that He has, and all that He has done, and all that He is doing, and all that He will do, is yours. You have never been absent from His heart, and never can be. You are a member "of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Abide in Him at all seasons, and all seasons will be comfort.

Strike, too, the rock of the promises with the rod of faith. Sweet waters will gush out. They will flow very deep, and very broad, and all within this channel, "Comfort, comfort, my people, says your God." Take frequent walks also by the side of the faithful pilgrims of old. Precious is their companionship. They may be sorrowful, yet they are always rejoicing. They may be homeless wanderers, as Jacob was, yet they are comforted. They may pine long in dungeons and under evil fame, as Joseph did, yet they are comforted. They may be destitute of all things, as Elijah was, yet they are comforted. They may flee for their lives and hide themselves in caves of the earth, as David did, yet they are comforted. They may be in the hottest fire of persecution, as the three captive youths were, yet they are comforted. They may be in all perils, and in the wildest storms, as Paul was; they may be called to bear faithful witness in scoffing crowds, or before frowning tyrants, as this apostle was, yet they are comforted. They may die the martyr's death under showers of crushing stones, as Stephen did, yet they are comforted. They may lose all things, yet they never lose the Consolation, which is in Christ Jesus. It is the work of His Spirit. It is the gift of His grace. It is the token of His indwelling. It is the foretaste of His heaven!

Perhaps the eyes of some rest upon these pages, who are strangers to this deep well-spring of Consolation. Unhappy men! Your hearts are a disconsolate blank. You have been sowing vanity, and what do you now reap? You have made the world your all, what has it given you? If much be obtained, more is coveted. Possessions do not content. Pursuits only weary. This hour is fretfulness. The next is a dreaded abyss. You wander over fields of anxiety, and there is no place of rest. Society is a hollow insipidity. Solitude is a dismal gloom. Where are your comforts? There are none in the retrospect, none in hand, none in the horizon. The past upbraids, the present dissatisfies, the future terrifies! A condemning voice within tells you, that is true. Turn not, then, from the beseeching voice of this page. Be persuaded. Consent, consent to be happy. "Seek the Lord while He may be found." "Take with you words." Plead with Him His office, "The Lord has anointed Me to comfort all that mourn in Zion." Plead with Him His call, "Come unto Me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Plead with Him His promise, "I will not leave you comfortless." Plead with Him His title, "The Consolation of Israel." Plead with Him His tender voice, "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you." Plead with Him the dreadful gulf between the saved and the lost, "Now he is comforted, and you are tormented." Plead with him the command from heaven, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." Cease not thus to plead, until you can say of Him, who is far greater than Noah, "This same shall comfort us."

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