

Suffering and Consolation

by Thomas Bradbury

The sufferings of Christ abound in us, and our consolation also abounds by Christ, as we participate in His sufferings and are comforted by His presence.

Scripture: Psalm 23:4, Isaiah 49:14, Luke 23:42, John 8:11, John 16:33, 2 Corinthians 1:5, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 11:24, 1 Peter 4:12

Topics: "Christ's Suffering", "Christian Consolation"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches about the sufferings of Christ and how they abound in believers, leading to consolation through Christ. He emphasizes that from the time of Adam's sin, trials and tribulations have been part of the journey for God's chosen ones. The sermon delves into the physical, mental, and spiritual sufferings of Christ, highlighting His endurance and sacrifice for the salvation of His people. Bradbury encourages believers to find comfort in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, knowing that their consolation also abounds through Him.

Transcript

"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:5)

"Toil, trial, sufferings still await

On earth the pilgrim throng;

Yet learn we, in our low estate,

The Church triumphant's song."

From the day that Adam sinned, temptation, trial, and tribulation have attended the heirs of glory all along their journey through this vale of tears. Since Adam by transgression fell, every elect vessel of mercy, every redeemed one from the fall has sought a resting-place in the very spot where God had designed that he should find disappointment and dissatisfaction. Such a truth is not pleasant to flesh and blood, and nothing short of sovereign power can influence those who are taught and sent of God to declare this Divinely-communicated message "In the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33)

Moses, the first writer of God's inspired Book, is thus described in Heb. 11:24-26: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Just you think of that, any of you who are desiring to identify yourselves with a Church, or are longing to have your names enrolled as members of a Christian community. What are you expecting? Is it to suffer affliction with the Lord's members here upon earth, or is it to be petted and pampered by the pastor and caressed by the people? If such are your expectations, as assuredly as you belong to the Lord, disappointment will be your lot. I did not think so once, and my wretched nature would not have me think so now, but it must be so. If I am elected, redeemed, and called of God, I must feel that the legacy of the Master tribulation and peace is burnt in by the power of the Holy Ghost. To this I have been taught to say, Amen; but you may rest assured the training which has brought me to say it has been very painful.

Peter, after many a hard conflict with Satan, sin, and self, was brought to add his testimony to this heaven-born truth. Weary pilgrims and groaning veterans have sipped sweet encouragement from this precious declaration: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:12,13)

Paul, from heart-felt and Spirit-wrought experience, was weary of the world's deceit, and prayed thus: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." (Phil. 3:10) In the blessed realization of his union with a once suffering Christ, and the afflicted members of the one body, he rejoiced and sympathized with the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." (Col. 1:24)

Borne on the wings of the heavenly wind, sweet strains of heavenly music greet our ears. The testimony from the better land concerning those who dwell there, we find in Rev. 7:13,14 "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence come they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God." Do notice, it is through great, not little, tribulation that the redeemed family pass to their glory home.

During their travels, Paul and Barnabas taught the same truth. See Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." This is not only true of the entrance into God's kingdom of glory hereafter, but of His kingdom of grace here. As we are led into a spiritual apprehension of God's mind and will, and as sure as we shall see His face in glory, so sure shall we have tribulation, temptation, and trial during our pilgrimage.

This is fully exemplified in the life and labours of the apostle Paul. At the commencement of his apostolic career, His Lord declared concerning him, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My sake," (Acts 9:16) which he found all true to the letter, according to his confession to the Ephesian elders, as recorded in Acts 20:22,23 "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide (or wait for) me."

The second epistle to the Corinthians gives a lengthened and detailed description of the tribulations which he was called to pass through and endure for the sake of his loving Lord and Master. Look at the first chapter, and notice how applicable is the title given by the apostle to God THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

See! I cannot reach your hearts, or communicate a single truth to your spiritual understandings; but He who sent me here, and sometimes touches my lips with the live coal from off the Altar, He alone can convey, communicate, and apply His own precious promises to the hearts of His tried and tempted people. But I wish you to notice that almost every chapter in this epistle relates something of the apostle's sufferings for Christ's sake. Turn with me to chapter 4:8-10: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair."

Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." Troubled on every side. The devil and the world outside, and a deceitful heart inside. Isn't that enough? Such an experience makes a poor fellow feel all at sea, amid rough waves and stormy skies; yet the stress of weather is never so great as to work the destruction of the faith of the spiritual mariners, who, in their distress, cry unto the Captain, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?"

Blessed be God, though Christ's poor disciples perish often in their feelings and experiences, yet "they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of the Master's hand." They may be perplexed, but not left altogether without help or means (as you may read in the margin.) "God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble." (Ps. 46:1) "Not altogether without means." What means? Arminians are ever ready with their so-called means of grace; but I do not want any means that are left to my own disposal.

Look at Jer. 5:30,31 "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means (take into their hands the means margin,) and My people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Means of grace which are of any avail to us must be in the hands of a merciful and gracious God, and in none else.

Look at chapter 6:4-10. Here we have a lesson for pastors. "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults (or tossings to and fro,) in labours, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned. By the Word of Truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report. As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." It must be painful to suffer thus, yet pleasant to serve so blessed a Master. Yes, we can be satisfied with it all, as we are privileged to lay our weary heads upon His loving bosom. If our character and reputation appear to be at stake, we have in Him a glorious Vindicator. In chapter 11, we have Paul asserting, yet renouncing his right to self-vindication. "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often: in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by

the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." There you have the predestinated pathway of a God-sent minister of Christ faithfully portrayed; and it is from such as these who experience oneness in suffering with a precious Christ, that the tried members of the one body are comforted, nourished, and edified in the faith of God.

The union existing between the Lord Jesus Christ and His people is manifested by life, fruit-bearing, and sympathy. "I am the true Vine," (John 15:1) was the language of our blessed Lord at a time when blessed sympathy and communion flowed from His heart to that of His disciples. "The true Vine." Nothing false or hypocritical in it. Not an allusion to be found here concerning that erroneous notion of being grafted into Christ by mere profession. All the branches were growing out of Him, their Root and Stem, from whom all vitality flows, and from whom all fruit is found. The illustration employed by the Holy Ghost to set forth mutual communion, consolation, and sympathy of Christ and His Church is that of the human body, head and members. This we read in Rom. 12:4,5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." We see this again in 1 Cor. 12:12-27: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." What is Christ? We generally in our weak apprehension of God's truth limit His Christ to the Man, who ever lives before Him to make intercession for us; but God's Christ is the anointed Head and all the anointed members in union with Him. Jesus is the Head of all grace and sympathy to His redeemed body, and it is our mercy to know that God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body. But now are they many members, yet but one body. "And the Eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the Head to the feet, I have no need of you." Look at the beauty, order, and arrangement of Divine revelation. The Eye in the Head, which denotes Divine omniscience, cannot say to the hand, the working member, I have no need of thee; neither can the Head say to the feet, those members which are nearest the ground and are oftentimes soiled with earth's mud and mire, I have no need of you. The humblest, weakest, and, to human eyes, the most uncomely members in the body of Christ, are oftentimes the objects of His tendermost care and concern. Look at this: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Then, if the head aches, as mine does now, the whole body is out of tune. As the nerves of the natural body are influenced by the head, so the Church of the living God is influenced and moved by the love and sympathy of her glorious Head who ever lives and reigns for her up yonder.

"In every pang that rends the heart

The Man of sorrows bears a part;

He sympathises with the grief,

And brings the suffering saint relief."

That is a precious truth, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," or, spiritually one with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17) Having thus proved from God's Word the spiritual union of the Head with the members, we shall be able to enter into the meaning of the words of the text: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

We will notice,

I. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST "For as the sufferings of Christ."

II. THE SAINTS' FELLOWSHIP THEREIN "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us."

III. THE SAINT'S CONSOLATION-"So our consolation aboundeth by Christ."

I. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST "For as the sufferings of Christ." Let consider the sufferings of our blessed Saviour in three aspects. 1. Physically; 2. Mentally; 3. Spiritually.

1. Physically. From Bethlehem's lowly manger to Calvary's bitter cross His sacred body was burdened with weariness, fatigue, and suffering. That is a sweet Scripture by Paul: "For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, that for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." (2 Cor. 8:9) Yes, blessed be His adorable name, He became poor. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 2:17,18; 4:15) Through a life of self-renunciation and self-abnegation He endured fatigue and suffering under the most painful circumstances, for those who oftentimes treated Him with shameful indifference. The wilderness witnessed His hunger and bitter temptation. In search of one so near and dear to His heart, "He must needs go through Samaria." Superficial religionists see here a geographical necessity for His going through Samaria; but the Spirit-taught child of God sees a covenant necessity flowing from the love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well." (John 4:6) Have not you held a little communion with Him there? I have. He said to the poor harlot of Samaria, "Give Me to drink," and received a rebuff from one whom He was about to bless with that salvation which is only in Himself. Here He experienced, physically, suffering toil and thirst on the behalf of His elect and loved brethren and sisters. He worked hard, and laboured long to alleviate the necessities of poor suffering humanity. After a day's hard toil He sought repose upon a pillow amid the wild waves and raging billows of the sea of Galilee. Here we behold marvellous grace. Rough winds and howling tempests disturb not His repose, but the moment a cry of distress ascends from the heart of His disciples, He is all attention to them. He rebuked the winds and the waves, but not a word of censure for His doubting and fearing companions.

A hard lot was that of the Man of sorrows, our Brother born for adversity, as He prosecuted His mission of love and mercy. The Father must be glorified, and His people must be saved, though an overwhelming host of troubles and sufferings assail Him. Look at Him in gloomy, dark Gethsemane. Luke thus describes the treading of the winepress of Jehovah's anger: "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Oh, what physical and mental suffering must have been His at that dread moment! His agony so intense as to force His precious blood through His sacred pores, and all for you and me. See how He is hurried to the judgment hall, where He patiently gave His "back to the smiters, His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not His face from shame and spitting." (Isa. 50:6) His sacred head is smitten with the reed and crowned with cruel thorns. From thence He is hurried to the scene of death and damnation. Bearing the transverse beam of His cross, He is helped by Simon of Cyrene. Calvary sees Him lifted up a spectacle to angels, devils, and to men. His hands of blessing are pierced with cursed nails. His feet, which were oftentimes weary in errands of mercy, are fixed in pain to the tree. He cries, "I thirst." None can tell the intensity of that physical and spiritual thirst. Oh, ye whose heads are aching, and whose hearts are weary with your toilsome journey, where are you tonight? Whose company do you keep? You have a grand specific for all your aches and pains in the contemplation of the Saviour's sufferings for every one in eternal and experimental union with Him. The thought of this causes the heart to cry,

"Lord, I would stand with thoughtful eye
Beneath Thy fatal tree,
And see Thee bleed, and see Thee die,
And think what love to me.
Dwell on the sight, my stony heart,
Till every pulse within
Shall into contrite sorrow start,
And hate the thought of sin.
Didst Thou for me, my Saviour, brave
The scoff, the scourge, the gall,
The nails, the thorns, the spear, the grave,
Whilst I deserved them all?"

2. Mentally a precious Jesus suffered. His pains were not confined to the body, for when He was an hungered, the fierce temptations of Satan assailed Him. At the barren fig-tree He expected to find fruit, but met with bitter disappointment. Precious little is known of the tender sympathy of Jesus with His poor afflicted people flowing from that bitter spot. Persecution told a sad tale upon the desolate heart of the suffering Saviour, while persistent ridicule sorely distressed Him. His lowly parentage was thrown into His face with sneers, in which indignity we behold with wonder His identity with very many of His lowly and despised ones. Though His motives were purity itself, yet He was reviled, slandered, and belied. As He displayed His omnipotence in raising the dead, He was laughed to scorn. As He sought to set up His kingdom in the hearts of His covenant people, He was met with the derisive cry, "Hail, King of the Jews." As He plucked poor sinners from the everlasting burnings, He was mocked, insulted, and blasphemed; ay, and by the very sinners to whom He afterwards revealed His love and saving power. Who can tell the anguish of His sorrowing soul when Men styled Him Drunkard, Glutton, Devil? Yet all this, He patiently endured. The Good Physician healed ten lepers, but only one gave glory to the God who had cleansed him, which called forth the sorrowful inquiry, "Where are the nine?" Five thousand hungry people were fed from the bounty of His hands; but when He unfolded to them the truths of Divine sovereignty and human inability, they all turned their backs upon Him and walked no more with Him. From Peter, James, and John, in dark Gethsemane, He received no sympathy, as described in the plaintive language of Hart,

"Backwards and forwards thrice He ran,
As if He sought some help from man."

Judas betrayed Him. Peter denied Him. All forsook Him. He groaned in spirit. "JESUS WEPT."

3. Spiritually. This part of our subject staggers angelic minds, and fills the hearts of those who are favoured with fellowship with Him therein with wonder. The Gethsemane sorrows and Calvary desolations none but Himself can truly or fully know. Fearful temptations assailed Him. Dark desertion overwhelmed

Him. Do men and devils revile Him? He reviles not again. Do earth and hell assail Him? He opens not His mouth. But see! The moment He feels the hidings of His Father's face behind the dark cloud of judgment, the cry ascends from His oppressed spirit, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." (Matt. 26:38) "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Ps. 22:1; Luke 27:46) Sore amazement seized Him. He was at His wits' end. "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away." Do notice that expression, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," or to die. This was not merely mental, but spiritual conflict. Elijah knew something of this when, under the juniper tree, he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough, now, O Lord, take away my life: for I am not better than my fathers." (1 Kings 19:4) And did not Jonah know a little of the same when he prayed to God saying, "Therefore, now, O LORD, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me: for it is better for me to die than to live?" (Jonah 4:3) Elijah and Jonah sinned, but Jesus, when He was tempted in all points like as they were, sinned not. O what a mercy to see the great and glorious Head pouring out His soul unto death, the Father making His soul an offering for sin, and to know that it was all for me. Then notice that in John 12:27: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" That is marvellous! No wonder that a poor worm like myself should be brought to straits and exclaim, What shall I say? But for Him in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to be brought to such a state of mental anxiety and spiritual concern is beyond all human conception. Some may object to this statement of spiritual truth; but let me ask, Why should the Lord Jesus pray, "Father, save Me from this hour," (John 12:27) when He knew He must come to it, and pass through all the sufferings which His loved ones deserved? It was that He might be feelingly able to meet me when I am driven to the same spot. Why should He cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Did He not know? Yes, He knew full well that I should be brought to the same experience of desertion, and cry with Him and His own loved Zion, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." (Isa. 49:14) Because every member of His body should pass through darkness and dreariness He came down to the very spots, so that He might succour, sustain, and sympathize with them.

"Past suffering now, the tender heart

Of Jesus on His Father's throne

In all our sorrows bears a part,

And feels them as He felt His own."

This has brought us into the very spirit of

II. THE SAINTS' FELLOWSHIP THEREIN "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us." We live in a day of religious fancies. Ideal saints and theoretical Christians are found on every hand. "Rejoicing novices" abound; but "groaning veterans" are thinly strewn in these days of godless profession. To all the elect of God, but despised of men, a sympathizing Saviour says, "Ye are they that have continued with Me in all My temptations." (Luke 22:28) The seven times' heated furnace and the surging flood, the scorching flame and the deep waterfloods, the barren heath and the dreary dungeon must all be experienced by the followers of the suffering Saviour. The lot of the Master which He had to the full, ay, without measure, must be the servant's in measure. He who is blessed with the high honour of keeping company with Jesus must bear the cross before He wears the crown. The soldier who marches to victory with the great Captain of salvation must first endure hardness in the conflict. Throughout the whole range of Divine revelation and spiritual experience you see the saint to be a man of temptation, trial, and tribulation. Sufferings and

sorrows of every shape and name attend him all the way through the wilderness. Now he is bowed down, then he experiences a gracious lift from his Elder Brother's hand. Now mourning under a deep sense of sin, then rejoicing with the sweet experience of pardoning mercy. Now assailed by Satan's fierce temptations, then encouraged with the enjoyment of restoring and preserving grace. Now begging at Mercy's door, then leaning and feasting upon the bosom of Everlasting Love. When sin and guilt distress the conscience, when repeated trials bow down the spirits, "when sore afflictions crush the soul," when headaches and heartaches distract the mind, when losses and crosses are endured, when temptations and sufferings abound, when the persecuting sneer annoys, when disappointments depress, when base and cruel misrepresentations disturb one's peace, and grovelling ingratitude tries the patience, then, if nothing can warm and cheer the heart but the presence and sympathy of Jesus, there is a blessed evidence of the sufferings of Christ abounding in us.

Some of you can abundantly testify to the fact, that "in the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33) You have tugged and toiled to make ends meet and tie; but godless competition, worldly policy, and accursed selfishness which reign on every hand, blight your hopes, and ruin your prospects, while constant anxiety and care seem to eat away the very stamina of the brain. It is blessed in such a spot as this to be reminded by the covenant Remembrancer that a precious Christ, who, though He was rich, yet became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. Just think of this. There is scarcely one of us in this place but what is blessed with little luxuries and dainties now and then, and we should think it very hard if we had to go from place to place without a penny in our pocket. Yet this was the lot of our Jesus. When the tribute money was to be paid, a fish had to produce it. When He would confound His enemies, He had to say, "Show Me a penny," which indicates the fact that He who was Lord-Proprietor of all things possessed not a penny for His own comfort or convenience. What are our feelings when we are brought into such spots? Do the sufferings of Christ abound in us? Is the cry of our heart, "Not my will, but Thine be done?" We must answer these questions in the presence of Him of whom we are privileged to sing,

"A Pilgrim through this lonely world,

The blessed Jesus past;

A Mourner all His life was He,

A dying Lamb at last.

Now let me ask you who writhe under false charges and misrepresentations as to your character, Do you experience fellowship with Christ in His sufferings in these things? When the derisive title "Friend of sinners" (Luke 7:34) was thrown at Him, what did it mean? I scarcely want to tell you, for Isaiah 32:4 tells us, that "the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak elegantly," and I believe the pulpit is the place for purity of speech. But the enemies of our Lord charged Him with being the companion of fallen and abandoned women. Yet He, who was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, when He was reviled, reviled not again, neither did He open His mouth in self-vindication. Think of this, ye who complain of the cruel treatment ye receive at the hands of the world, and may He teach you to leave your characters and concerns in His hands who will settle matters with all your accusers and assailants, and thus teach you to "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:13) Man's utter weakness must be experienced, sin's hateful load dreaded, conflict with Satan endured, the burden of the flesh borne, the opposition of a

Christless world, and the enmity of "twice dead" professors must be met by those in whom the sufferings of Christ abound. Failing health and loved ones taken away by death will rend the heart, but the tears of the Weeping One of Bethany will yield sweet solace and precious consolation. Fear of death is an awful plague to many a child of God; but if He, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, reveals Himself, the fearing ones may conclude that the sufferings of Christ abound in them, and that, sooner or later, their consolation must abound by Christ. We now notice, briefly

III. THE SAINTS' CONSOLATION "So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." It is the gracious work of God the Holy Ghost to show, and cause the children of God to feel their need of Divine consolation. In providence, the Father's rod of loving correction, but not of wrath, is felt and endured, while the cry of the chastened child is, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good." (1 Sam. 3:18) As members of the body, the flesh, and the bones of Christ, the living in Jerusalem hate all sin, loathe themselves, renounce the world, and resist the devil; but in this spiritual conflict they are brought to feel and mourn over the weakness of their poor mortal nature. Desires will dwindle into dreariness, and determinations will result in utter defeat; schemes of earthly joy will be broken, while all created streams of consolations of Christ. Does the law curse and condemn? Do sins and fears prevailing rise? Are our spiritual enemies ever on the increase? Blessed be God, His purpose of love can never be frustrated. We must be brought to see and delight in the blessedness of that glorious Scripture: "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." (Isa. 40:1,2) Oppression from various sources will be the lot of all true Israelites, but the consolations of the covenant Three-in-One will not be lacking in the needful time of trouble. See Isaiah 51:12-15: "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exilic hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is His name." Look at that precious portion in Isaiah 46:13 "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." A precious but weak illustration of the consolations which yearn in the bowels of our God towards His children. Ephraim may waver, wander, and rebel against his Father-God; but we can never exhaust His patience or wear away His love.

Ah, my dear friends, the valley of the shadow of death must be trodden, but there the Good Shepherd, with the rod of Jehovah's covenant purposes and the staff of His Yea and Amen promises, will cheer and comfort. (Ps. 23:4) It was to this that the Father appointed Him, and the Holy Ghost anointed Him, as we read in Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Sore troubles, deep depths of sorrow, and "deaths oft," will be our lot here below; but our privilege will be to sing, "Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." (Ps. 71:20,21)

See how Simon pointed with the finger of scorn at the poor woman who was a sinner; but mark well how Jesus comforted her. "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved

much....And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." (Luke 7:47,48) Does a poor dying thief cry unto Him? He answers, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:42,43) Pietists would stone a poor waif and stray; but Jesus says, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord." In rich and mighty grace He said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:11)

"Why should the children of a King

Go mourning all their days?

Great Comforter, descend and bring

Some tokens of Thy grace."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-bradbury/suffering-and-consolation/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net