

“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. ... Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” Jn. 14:1-9.

I would title this sermon, “Jesus, Comforter of His People.” Or, the sermon that poses – and then proposes to answer – the essential question: “How Does the Dear Lord Jesus Comfort His Mourning Captives?” *“I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”* Zeph. 3:12,13. *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”* Lk. 12:32. How, then, does the dear Lord Jesus comfort His **“AFFLICTED AND POOR PEOPLE?”** First, by recognizing and understanding clearly that our Heavenly Father is *“The Father of Mercies, and THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT;”* to wit:

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father our Lord Jesus Christ, THE FATHER OF MERCIES, AND THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT.” (2 Cor. 1:2,3)

Second, by acquiescing in the solid fact – for, SOLID FACT IT IS, howsoever things may appear at first blush to be – I say, by acquiescing in the rock-ribbed fact that our faithful Father in Heaven *“comforteth us in ALL our tribulation;”* to wit:

“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.” (1 Cor. 1:4)

We have now come upon something of a mystery of the Gospel, the study of which may yield immense COMFORT. Here the apostle begins an exposition of the sort of holy afflictions and suffering, requiring the greatest of COMFORT for the suffering saint. It’s a special kind of glorious affliction and suffering, which inevitably brings on a special kind of glorious comfort; to wit: *“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation (i.e., comfort) also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation (i.e., comfort) and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation (i.e., comfort) and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation (i.e., comfort).”* 2 Cor. 1:5-7.

Beloved, pursuant to this blessed and mysterious doctrine, all the afflictions and sufferings of the Elect of God in this life are in fact the afflictions and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ; and are thus said to be the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow which the Old Testament prophets testified of and then searched their own words diligently as to the meaning of this glorious and blessed doctrine; to wit:

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST (I.E., THE SUFFERINGS OF GOD’S ELECT FOR CHRIST), and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into.” (1 Peter 1:9-12)

This is indeed a comforting thought to the suffering and afflicted saints on earth, waging fierce war in the spirit realm against Satan and his hellish hosts; to wit: “Well,” says the true Christian in pain of body or mind, “I see very clearly from God’s Holy Word, that these afflictions and sufferings of mind and body that I am presently experiencing, are all, in reality, the sufferings and afflictions of my dear Lord Jesus, which I am glad to endure for His precious sake, together with all the saints of all time; until the appointed measure of such sufferings and afflictions shall be fulfilled. Then cometh the end. It is called the making up of that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ;” to wit:

“Whereof I Paul am made a minister; 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. 1:23,24)

Beloved, this is a glorious mystery, well-calculated to bring COMFORT to the suffering saint. It brought great rejoicing to the apostle, who said of himself: “*who now rejoice in my sufferings.*” Col. 1:24. And this high mystery appears to be the same – or nearly so – as that immediately following Col. 1:24; to wit: “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”

For it is only reasonable to analyze thusly, that the afflictions of Christ are a part of the warp and woof of the blessed Savior, and that since the afflictions are “*in*” you, then Christ is “*in*” you; to wit: “*Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; EVEN THE MYSTERY which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU, (AND, CHRIST IS IN YOU, SUFFERING IN YOU) THE HOPE OF GLORY; Whom we preach*” – (i.e., yes, we preach the Christ who is described and functioning within the passage of Scripture and the exposition of same immediately above in this sermon) – I say, “*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*” Col. 1:25-29.

Beloved. What could be more comforting than to have a well-grounded belief in this glorious doctrine? If the Almighty Lord of Heaven and earth is living in me, and working in me to accomplish His will, what fear or anxious pain can find lodging there? – only prevailing peace and comfort; to wit:

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, AND MAKE OUR ABODE WITH HIM.” (Jn. 14:23)

Our blessed Lord Jesus (the Second Person in the Godhead, God the Son) has promised that the First Person (i.e., the Father) and the Third Person in the Godhead (i.e., the Holy Ghost) would dwell in them; to wit:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that HE MAY ABIDE WITH YOU FOR EVER; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth

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him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you AND SHALL BE IN YOU. I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS; I WILL COME TO YOU. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, AND YE IN ME, AND I IN YOU.” (Jn. 14:15-20)
“FOR IT IS GOD WHICH WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.” (Phil. 2:13)

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

Thus in manifold ways throughout the Bible there is set forth the doctrine of the mystery of the indwelling Trinity (i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), as being a grand and glorious source of irresistible COMFORT to the long-suffering Believer. Another source of all-prevailing COMFORT to the Saints of God in their afflictions, is to spend time in serious contemplation upon an angry God's eternal punishment of all impenitent rebels against Him; or, as Jonathan Edwards would put it: “Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God.”

Especially as that everlasting punishment is directly related – and immediately related – to the rebels' ill-treatment of the Lord's People on earth. This is because the Elect of God on earth are the Apple Of His Eye (i.e., “the little man of the eye;” the pupil or ball of the eye; perhaps the most delicate and sensitive part of the body; and hence receives the most loving and careful attention and protection.) Thus, for God to refer to His Elect on earth, engaged in His cause of God and truth, as the Apple Of His Eye, (Dt. 32:10), means no less than that God Almighty has pledged Himself as the guardian, protector and avenger of those His People, and woe betide the sorry sons of Belial who would do them harm, offend, and persecute them; to wit:

“He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes; Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”(Psa. 105:14,15)

Beloved, I tell you that the Lord has even plainly said that His Righteousness is involved in this doctrine; and that one of the greatest of His attributes – (i.e., His Righteousness, or, His Holiness) – would be placed in jeopardy should He not recompense tribulation unto those rebels on earth who trouble His Elect. It is for this reason that His Elect find such huge COMFORT, SOLACE, CONSOLATION AND PEACE simply meditating on the doctrine of Hell-fire and Damnation, Eternal Retribution, PUNISHMENT OF THE REPROBATES; to wit:

“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; Which is a manifest token of the RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, FOR WHICH YE ALSO SUFFER; SEEING IT IS A RIGHTEOUS THING WITH GOD TO RECOMPENSE TRIBULATION TO THEM THAT TROUBLE YOU.”
(2 Thes. 1:4-6)

Contemplating the sufferings and afflictions of the precious saints at Thessalonica, and the consequent COMFORTS they enjoyed, yields up present wonderful COMFORT to the suffering saints at Westboro Baptist Church. First take note of the fact that such suffering for the cause of God and Truth in the Earth is a beautiful GIFT from our Heavenly Father, just as Saving Faith is; to wit:

“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries; which is to them an EVIDENT TOKEN OF PERDITION, but to you of salvation, and that of God. FOR UNTO YOU IT IS GIVEN in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also TO SUFFER for his sake.”
(Phil. 1:28,29)

Beloved, How comforting to know – in the midst of suffering – that the very suffering itself is a love-gift from Him who holds His loved ones as the Apple of His Eye (Dt. 32:10). And to know, that there is no testing taken you but such as is common to all God's Elect; but that God is faithful, Who will not allow us to be tried more severely than we are able to bear, but will with the very testing and trial itself make a way for us to escape. See, 1 Cor. 10:13.

“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you,” (2 Thes. 1:6)

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord;” (Rom. 12:19)

“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb. 10:30,31)

“The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth;” (Psa. 58:10,11)

“Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge (i.e., avenge, vindicate) his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left (i.e., there are no reserves left to draw upon).” (Deut. 32:34-36)

Herein we see that the Lord COMFORTS his weary people in their spiritual journeys and battles by causing them to see His great wrath visited upon His and their powerful enemies. They are refreshed thereby, symbolized by washing their feet in the blood of their enemies, their feet sliding in due time, the day of their calamity being at hand, etc.

Remember, ***“it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” 2 Thes. 1:6.*** It is a COMFORTING THING for God's longsuffering elect people to actually see great calamities (called Earth Judgments) fall upon their wicked persecutors; but it is also a COMFORTING THING merely to CONTEMPLATE or MEDITATE UPON such holy events.

Beloved, I have long been persuaded that such is the true meaning of **2nd Thes. 1:7-10**; to wit: ***“And to you who are troubled (i.e., to you who are COMFORTLESS) rest with us (i.e., join us in cogitating upon the wrath of God being poured out upon this sin-sick world), when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe ... in that day.” 2 Thes. 1:7-10.***

The proposition is simply this; to wit: Short of seeing our dear Lord Jesus Christ face to face and the times of the restitution of all things, meditating upon the wrath of God in the fiery destruction of impenitent, rebellious sinners is the finest and the surest way to TRUE COMFORT for God's Elect.

I love you.

Amen.