

thus gives thanks for those present delights which cheer amid the trials of life : " 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 have to comfort those which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God : " " and our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the suffering, so shall ye be also of the consolation. " * " Therefore, " says he, in another place, " we are comforted in your comfort. " † It is interesting also to observe that in several passages of the Apostolic writings edification and comfort are placed in immediate connexion, thus indicating that wherever there is realized Christian establishment in the faith and hope of the Gospel, or " perfection " as it is commonly termed, there a high measure of comfort and joy may be reasonably expected ; and on the other hand, that wherever we find a believer walking in the " joy of the Lord " as " his strength, " there we are warranted to expect also an established and matured disciple. Paul, in addressing the Thessalonians, speaks of " sending Timotheus his brother and minister of God, and a fellow-labourer, " for the two-fold object " of establishing them and comforting them concerning their faith. " ‡ And in perfect harmony with this resolution, he exhorts them in the following chapter to act upon the principle of such an union ; " Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. " || In his second epistle to the same church, he thus beautifully embraces these kindred objects in one comprehensive prayer : " Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace ; comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work and work. " §

The precept in our text, " Be of good comfort, " is complied with, when the members of Christian Churches

* 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 7. † 2 Cor. vii. 13. ‡ 1 Thess. iii. 2.

|| 1 Thess. iv. 11. § 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.