

From 'Gems of Sacred Poetry.'

THE GLORIFIED SPIRIT'S ADDRESS TO MOURNING FRIENDS.

Friends in Jesus, why those tears,  
O'er my dull and lifeless clay?  
Could you see my present bliss,  
Tears to joys would pass away.  
Do you envy my delights?  
Do you mourn that I am bless'd?  
Freed from pain, and doubt, and sin,  
Enter'd into perfect rest?  
Would the captive, now made free,  
Choose his dark and dreary cell?  
Can the ransom'd spirit grieve  
Near the Saviour's face to dwell?  
Would you wish my joys to cease?  
Drag me downwards from the skies?—  
Rather soar with strong desires,  
After me to heaven arise.  
Could you take a moment's glance  
Of His face whom now I view;  
All your tears would be exhaled  
Like the drops of morning dew.  
Here, the spirits of the just,  
Here, the holy angels dwell;  
Here, our friends are hastening fast,  
Here, is our Immanuel.  
Earth grows poor and heaven more rich  
As our friends attain this place—  
Hasten, loiterers, hasten then,  
In your heavenward, homeward race.  
Dry your tears, and seize your harps,  
Join to praise the Saviour's grace;  
Hither let your hearts ascend,  
Till you see him face to face.  
Now to Him who died to save,  
Saints on earth, and saints above,  
Join in one harmonious song,  
Join to praise his endless love.

The above hymn was handed to us a few days ago, in a house of mourning, by an afflicted parent, who had just been deprived of two fine children, with a request that it should be inserted in our columns.—Ed. C.C.

For the Colonial Churchman.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MOURNER.

The following extracts from a sermon lately preached in a country Church, during a season of unusual affliction, are published in compliance with the request of "a number of those who heard the discourse," and in the hope that they may convey a word in season, to some at a distance who may be "afflicted in mind, body, or estate," of whom so many are always to be found in every land.

ST. MATTHEW, 5 ch. 4 v.—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

These are the words of the blessed Author of our religion, of Him whose office is described by Isaiah as being "to preach good tidings to them that are poor, to heal the broken in heart, to appoint to them that mourn in Zion, to give them the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

It was the recommendation of one who had himself tried its efficacy, and who I trust is now with God, that if ever through the crosses and disappointments, and troubles of life, my spirit should sink within me, I should open the 5th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and read it with a devout and humble temper; adding his belief that I would arise from the perusal with a heart fortified against all the evils of the worst situation, and filled with the peaceful comforts of that Religion which points us onward to a better world. I can safely recommend the same course to you, my hearers, as an exercise likely to allay the smart of temporal sorrow, to calm the stormy passions which are too apt to arise in our bosoms, and to sweeten those rebellious tempers which are too apt to become soured by the crosses of life, and by collision with the like tempers among those with whom our earthly portion is cast.

The heavenly declaration in our text—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," is one that comes with a sweet and pleasing sound to every ear. There is that disposition in our nature that we always love the voice that speaks to our hearts in the soothing strains of consolation. Who

has not experienced in the dreary hours of sickness, an inward pleasure which has for a while beguiled the influence of pain and languor, when the voice of a kind friend has been heard at the bedside making some tender enquiry, or offering some word of comfort. And in the still darker hours which the visitations of death may have brought upon our dwellings, who has not found their gloominess in some degree cheered and brightened by the presence of those we love, and by the expression of their sympathy in our sorrows? And yet how insufficient will all these comforters, however kind, be found, in comparison with Him who says in my text—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

But with regard to our text we must be careful not to extend its meaning too widely, so as to include within its comfortable limits, those who have no right to be there. It is evident that all who mourn are not therefore blessed, nor on that account entitled to expect the comforts to which our Lord has reference. If this were so, this would be a world of blessedness, since there is not a path in it wherein the mourner of some sort or other may not be found. At some time or other in the lives of all, the hour will come that calls aloud for comfort. But it is not every one who then will find it: because it is not every one that seeks it in that quarter, where alone abiding comfort is to be found. When assaulted by any of the troubles or calamities of life, there are many who in place of seeking their consolation in religion, look for it in quarters which the word of God either wholly condemns, or which are broken cisterns that hold no waters of comfort. Thus many a man when poverty or distress assaults him, if he does not yield himself up at once as a prey to despair, will take no less deadly course of intemperance; and by way of drowning his cares, will increase their weight and bitterness a hundred fold; forcing his senses into a brutal sleep for a short time, only to awaken afterwards to a keener and more overwhelming conviction of his troubles whatever they are, and of his own degradation. Whereas, had he taken the more manly and rational and christian course of staring his difficulties in the face, and applying for the grace of God to bear him through them, he would have experienced a far different result and been comforted under them all. But casting away from him religion, he casts away from him the only substantial comfort, and bears his troubles uncheered and unblessed from on high. And of those numbers who are continually made mourners by the hand of Providence in the visitations of death, there are many who exclude themselves from the blessedness and the comfort of the text, by a mistake somewhat similar. When the Lord thus lays his afflicting hand upon them, and ranges them among the number of those that mourn, they too often fail to look unto Him as the 'God of all comfort.' They find the seriousness and the solemnity of the house, and the garb of mourning, irksome to their feelings and unsuited to their previous habits; and they are generally in too great a hurry to be rid of them for the good of their souls. They seek for comfort to their drooping spirits, by plunging afresh into the business or the pleasures of the world, whereby they dissipate every salutary feeling which affliction might create, and cast away from their bosoms that which in the end turns out the only substantial consolation in the trying cases of domestic sorrow. These persons come out of the severe school of affliction no better than they go in, no more fitted for the future scene—and no more weaned from this. And they are not of that happy troop of mourners whom our Lord pronounces blessed, because theirs are the comforts of his religion and of God. But if when trouble comes upon us we fly unto Him that says—"Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will hear you;" "Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—then blessed are we, for we shall be comforted. If when the Lord takes from us the joy of our hearts, we look to Him for strength and resignation, and comfort,—then blessed will we be. In the days of our mourning we shall assuredly be comforted. He will come down into our hearts in the endearing character of 'the Holy Ghost the Comforter.' He will heal the wounds which his hand has made. He will bring home to our minds the consolations of the Gospel. He will turn the thoughts of the mourning parent from earth

to heaven—from the darkness of the grave where he lays his dear child—to the bright mansions of the skies, where its spirit dwells;—assuring him that though his house is left unto him desolate, and though the cold blasts of winter sweep over the place where the body of his child is wrapped in frost and snow, the soul is returned to the Father's house on high, where they hunger no more, nor thirst any more, exchanging the sorrows of time for the joys of Eternity. And thus he is blessed with comfort.—But it is in an especial manner of the spiritual mourners that our Lord declares in the text that they are blessed, and shall be comforted. He has been pleased to annex to the enjoyment of every privilege of his religion, a corresponding duty on our part, or some corresponding disposition of the mind.—Thus He represents himself as the Physician ready to heal the sick—those that feel themselves labouring under sin, the disease of the soul, with all its evils. Again, He came into the world to save sinners, that is, those that feel and acknowledge themselves to be sinners. Thus He bids those that feel themselves weary and heavy laden with their sins to come to Him. And thus in the text He attaches the comforts of religion to those who feel their need of them. He confines them to those that mourn with spiritual sorrow over their miserable condition as sinners, so as to make it necessary in order to attain this comfort that men first should mourn. Indeed common sense suggests to us the same thing: for there is an absurdity in offering comfort to one that feels no sorrow. We never think of condoling with one who is sensible of no grief and no misfortune: neither are the sweet comforts of religion proposed to those that know nothing of the misery of sin, or the wretchedness of the creature that is not at peace with his Creator.

Now we meet with mourning enough, brethren, from various causes in our daily paths: there is affliction of mind, of body and estate, wheresoever we turn our eyes. We see the garment of heaviness on every side—worn for causes which relate only to this world. But it is not so common to find the sort of mourner to which we now allude. The tear of sorrow often flows, and the pang of sorrow is often felt for other causes: but it is very rare to find one mourning over his past sins, or to hear of tears flowing for aggravated offences against a gracious God; or of distress of heart being felt for the loss of His favour, and for our distance from Him. Every tender feeling of the heart is touched to the quick, and the bitterness of sorrow is sorely felt for the loss of friends; but it is rare to find any mourning for the loss of the best friend man can have, his gracious God, whom sin, the death of the soul, separates from the sinner. Yet surely, if the sinner duly considers his situation, he will find in it what every awakened soul does find in it,—matter not of joy, but of sorrow; not of exultation, but of mourning.

When we regard the perfection of God's law, and consider how much we come short of it,—when we reflect how great things God has done for us, and how little we have done for God,—when we turn our eyes backward upon the time we have already sojourned in the world, and consider how little progress we have made in the great business of life,—when we remember how much of our precious existence has been unprofitably and idly, and how many hours have been wickedly spent,—when we consider with candour and impartiality the deficiencies that mark our conduct even in the eyes of men, and much more its worthlessness before Him who seeth not as man seeth,—when we turn our thoughts with the seriousness which the subject demands to the hour of Death, and to the awful Day of Judgment which cometh after it, when an account so strict is to be required of us who are so ill prepared to give it,—when all this presses upon our thoughts, one would think it not unreasonable if mournful feelings should arise in our hearts as to our prospects in the world beyond the grave—instead of the coldness, the indifference, the ease and even gaiety, with which the sins of men too generally rest upon their minds. The truth is, brethren, that if our sins do rest in that light and easy manner upon us, we are not what we ought to be. If we are true penitents, such as can lay claim to Divine consolations, we will be of those that mourn for their numerous transgressions; their sins of omission and of commission—of thought, of word, and of deed;—we will consider just and