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"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."— Paul.

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The Christian.

CONSOLATION IN CHRIST.

Man was created in the image of God. His powers of mind surpass all the animal creation. At birth he is the most helpless and knows the least of them all: he has to learn everything he ever knows; hence the Apostle Paul said, "What have we that we have not received?" Not so with every living animal, fowl, fish, or creeping thing. They have a routine of knowledge as perfect at birth as they ever have, and, to a certain extent only, are they susceptible of education. Every chicken knows how and when to break its shell and come out; it knows what is congenial for its food and what is not; it knows the hawk is an enemy and the crow is not. I introduce this as a sample of the whole animal creation except man. He has to learn what food is congenial to him and what is not, and has to learn how to eat it. A creeping child is easily attracted by the appearance of a "thousand-legged worm," and would as soon take and bite it as would a bit of sugar. Man has to learn the difference between a friend and a foe. All the other creatures, except fishes, have a language peculiar to themselves. They know the meaning of certain sounds; man does not—he has to learn all the language he ever knows. Language is composed of certain sounds brought into words, and words are the signs of ideas; and this is the medium through which God communicates His ideas to man, and *in no other way*. Although man is so helpless and ignorant at birth, he has the faculty of reason and speech, which all the other creatures are deprived of; and there appears to be no limit to the wonderful powers of man's reason and speech but one: "The world by wisdom knew not God." (I Cor. i. 21). With all man's wonderful powers of thought and reason, he could never find out how, or by whom, the world with all its grandeur was brought into being. That grand and central thought he had to learn from revelation. But apart from revelation man, by his reason and imagination, came up to a high standard of wisdom and morality. They saw man's wonderful intellect and powers far surpassing the whole creation, and reasoned that there was a something in him that death could not obliterate, that it would live somewhere; and having no knowledge of heaven they reasoned that the soul would find a home in some other being. Hence the doctrine of transmigration of souls. Now, with all the powers of man's wisdom, there is another point they could never reach but by revelation. In every human soul there is a vacuum that the world cannot fill. That man may come up to the eminence his Creator designed he should when He created him, God has sent His Son, His only Son, into the world with the glorious gospel, which

is God's power to the salvation of poor, wandering, helpless sinners. This gospel does not propose to save any such, unless he learns the way of life as set forth in that gospel, sees his ruined, lost condition, without a Saviour, and resolves, "I'll go to Jesus," and complies with his requirements as set forth in John iii.; Mark xvi. 16; Mat. xxviii. and Acts ii. 37-38. Submitting himself thus to the blessed Lord, he, like the Pentecostians, the eunuch, the jailer and his house, Saul of Tarsus, goes on rejoicing, his heart filled with consolation and hope.

Here now we have come to the point where the world has and must fail: it is to fill that vacuum in the human heart; and where the glorious gospel can and does do it. This is the point I designed to arrive at when I commenced this writing. If the religion of Christ cannot fill the heart of man with joy, gladness, consolation and hope, with a certainty of sins forgiven, and a hope of glory, honor and immortality, with a home in heaven, it is but little better than Buddhism. It is probable the Apostle Paul had this thought when he wrote to the church at Philippi; he says: "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfil ye my joy that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." Every child of God who has obeyed the Lord and has this consolation in Christ, and the other Christian graces, has the vacuum in his heart filled to overflowing. He can rejoice in the comforts of love, in the fellowship of the Spirit; all the trials in this mortal life cannot overthrow his consolation and comfort in Christ. No person out of Christ can have the real consolations of the gospel, because they are not legal heirs. They may, and often do, imagine they have; but this is only imagination, they do not know it. God will not take of the children's meat and give it to the dogs. (Mat. vii. 6). The consolations of religion are "in Christ," and are pure realities which we know. "If I go away," said Jesus, "I will send you another comforter (consoler), even the Spirit of truth, which the world (those not in Christ) cannot receive." (John xiv. 17). The angels, as ministering spirits, are sent forth to minister to those who will or shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. i). In all the afflictions, dark seasons and trials the child of God has to pass through he can see divine light glimmering. He knows that Jesus stands by him. Paul, in Rom. viii. 28, cheers the Christian in his dark seasons of trouble by saying: "All things work together for good to them that love God." "The Lord will not forsake his people." (I Sam. xii. 22).

The Lord says in John xvi. "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, that where I am there ye may be also." How consoling, how cheering are the words of Jesus to his suffering children. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." (John xvi. 33). God comforts his children in all their tribulations. (II Cor. i. iv). "He (Christ) was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to help us when we are tried." (Heb. iv. 5). He is our advocate, standing between us and His Father to intercede and plead our cause. He hears our prayers, and will send us relief or help us to bear our afflictions. Even at the trying hour of death, when we are looking at the dark valley, by knowing the Lord has told us to say: "Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (Ps. xxiii. 4). Although our bodies are laid away to rest, Jesus is coming again to earth to raise them from their sleeping, and change the loving ones, and take all with him in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Cor.) "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thess. iv 18). The children of God treasure these comforting, consoling words in their hearts, and on all occasions of distress, affliction or temptation, are ready to pour into the wounded spirit the oil of consolation and cheer. The fond and tender-hearted mother, whose affection is drawn out to the full for her darling babe, often sees it sicken, shrink and wither. She hears its coaxing and tender moanings for a mother's help, and sees its sparkling eyes meet her own. All her energies, her prayers and tears, are poured out over the couch of her little loved one. Day after day, and night after night are spent in the greatest anxiety. Sleep departs; food is not relished. All the power of medicine administered by skilful hands avails nothing. Death seems to be creeping on; hope fails, kind and sympathizing friends render all assistance possible, but all avails nothing. In this great extremity Jesus speaks, and says: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." O, what cheering and consoling words to the afflicted mother and friends. The father, mother, brothers and sisters all cheer up. If it dies Jesus will take it; and if we are children of God, and are faithful unto death, we shall see our darling little one again. The question is often asked, "Shall we know each other there?" Certainly; we know each other here, and shall we know any less there? By no means. We shall know all the saints by name, and all the angels. Heaven would be a poor place to live in if we did not know its inhabitants. We have the promise of being seated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the heavenly kingdom. Shall we not know them? Strange indeed if we shall not. When a dear Christian friend, it may be a loved, affectionate wife, or kind