

Our Contributors.

COMFORTING WORDS.

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O Son of God our Captain of Salvation,
Thyself by suffering schooled to human grief
We bless Thee for Thy sons of consolation
We follow in the steps of Thee their chief."

In this world of weakness, weariness, sorrow and toil it is a thing to be coveted to be a son of consolation—to know how to speak a word to him that is weary,—to speak the right word.

The Apostle Paul writing to the troubled Thessalonians winds up his counsels with "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." To "comfort one another" is the blessed privilege of every member of the brotherhood in Christ.

Comfort one another with words. In the deep hour of sorrow of what avail are words? It depends upon the words. The words of Luther we are told were "half battles."

The words that Paul would have us use are revelations of God of His glorious promises, of the triumphant Christ—of His second coming and the completed kingdom.

It is not mere sentimental sympathy but the great rock truths of the gospel that can speak comfort to the sorrowing soul.

Paul himself thanks God for the experiences that helped to make him a real comforter of others.

Hear the strain in which he speaks of the effect great sickness and trial had upon him in this direction.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies and God of all *comfort* who *comforteth* us in all our affliction so that we may be able to *comfort* any that are in affliction, through the *comfort* where with we ourselves are *comforted* of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us even so our *comfort* also aboundeth through Christ. But whether we be afflicted it is for your *comfort* which worketh in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is steadfast among that as ye are partakers of the suffering so also are ye of the *comfort*."

We have quoted this whole passage from the revised version not only because of the great principle it inculcates but that we may see how he lingers upon and re-echoes that word *comfort*.

What is needed is not a few spasmodic words of sympathy spoken at the time when words seem idle, but the great and comfortable truths of God lodged clearly and firmly in the heart and coming up in rock like power to sustain in the time of trial.

"The darts of anguish fix not where the seat of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified by acquiescence in the supreme will."

Under all circumstances God has given us great words to speak to the heart of the distressed. Is it sorrow for sin? then what words of pardon; of cleansing by the blood; of restoration; deliverance from the power and penalty and pollution of sin.

There comes sometimes to a man keen distress because his pathway in life seems to be inexplicably tangled. How soothing then to have someone speak to him from God great comforting words that set his feet again upon the rock. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "Why art thou cast down my soul—still trust in God."

The words that have power to comfort must always be such as turn us away from brooding on self to looking into the face of a loving God.

If I walk with my face towards the sun I have nothing before me but brightness. walking the other way the dark shadow of myself is always before me.

So turned from God, the heart is distressed with the dark shadow of self, but with the face Godward we dwell in the light of His countenance and have happiness and peace and joy.

There are some among us who need a special word of comfort from their brothers and sisters in Christ. They are the weak and timid ones conscious of weakness and defect.

Milton makes one of the fallen angels say to a companion:

"Fallen cherub to be weak is to be miserable." The Christian Apostle says: "When I am *weak* then am I *strong*." One of the most comforting words ever written is "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

The very thought of our weakness and defects brings us more truly to realize the Divine helper.

So Phœbe Carey infers from her blindness.

"And sometimes in my house of grief,
For moments I have come to stand
Where, in the sorrows on me laid,
I felt the chastening of God's hand;
Then learned I that the weakest ones,
Are kept securest from life's harms,
And that the tender lambs alone
Are carried in the Shepherd's arms."

Christ was the great comforter. It is only in His Spirit and with His words we can speak real comfort to the heart of sorrow.

"Let not your heart be troubled," believe in God—and believe in me.

In my Father's house are many abiding places."

How often we have thanked God for this 14th chapter of John's gospel.

With its great *truths* we have comforted ourselves in the night of bitter sorrow and with these words how often have we spoken the only possible comfort to the hearts of others. Why is it that there is such power in this chapter to soothe and bless to bring calm to the troubled soul?

It is because of its clear simple revelation of our destiny. "We are travelling home to God," home to the Father's house—to the Father's hear—to all that infinite love can provide for us. But it is more than the revelation of our destiny that we feel to be here. We are here brought as it were right into the heart of Christ at a time when He is face to face with the keenest sorrow, disappointment and death itself. And we feel in that heart the throb of a triumphant peace. The spirit of Christ becomes ours. Yes

we believe in God as all loving, all-wise, omnipotent Father. And we believe in Jesus Christ crucified and risen, triumphant over sin and sorrow and death, and our hearts are no longer troubled.

We look into life and recognize that we are pilgrims, and along the way we cheer one another with comfortable words.

Is any one cast unto the fiery furnace? He sees by faith our like unto the son of man with him. In the dark and storm faith hears the voice coming over the waves "It is I be not afraid."

Bowed over the beloved dead with tears fast falling on the coffin lid we know One is standing beside us there and faith hears His whispered "weep not."

Taking the hand of God and submissive to His will and guidance we calmly pursue our pilgrim journey.

We do not know everything, but we know all is well, we comfort ourselves, and we comfort others on our pilgrim journey. As we listen to and repeat the great words concerning a loving Father and a victorious Saviour we have sweet comfort and deep peace confiding in Infinite Love.

I know not if the dark or bright
Shall be my lot;
If that wherein my soul delight
Be best or not
It may be mine to drag for years,
Till's heavy chain;
Or day or night my meat be tears
On bed of pain.

Dear faces may surround my hearth
With smiles and glee;
Or I may dwell alone and mirth
Be strange to me
My bark is wafted to the strand
By breath divine,
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail
I have on board;
Above the raging of the gale
I hear my Lord.

He holds me, with the billows might
I shall not fall;
If sharp 'tis short; if long 'tis light
He tempers all

Safe to the land—Safe to the land
The end is this;
And then with Him go hand in hand
Far into bliss.

Library For Western Missionaries.

In your issue of last week, I stated that a valuable library of Theological and other works could be purchased in the West for a little over \$200, their value being some \$1,500, and I asked for contributions to purchase these. If got, the Library will be divided, one half being retained in Calgary and the other in Edmonton for the use of ministers and missionaries in these two Presbyteries.

Mr. David Morrice of Montreal this morning intimated to me his readiness to contribute \$25.00 of the amount. I hope that other generous friends will aid in this matter, so that we may not lose the opportunity of securing these books. It is only open for a few days longer.

ROBT. H. WARDEN.
Toronto, 2nd Sept. 1902.

The Christian Intelligencer: If one is seeking wrongs to right, or noble cause to espouse, he will find that in the last analysis the conflict of one age does not differ from another. It is the old fight between good and evil, only assuming different forms amid different conditions.