

Suffering & Comfort in X^t.

II. Cor. i. 5.

Scripture-reading:-

Hymns:-

Suffering + Comfort in X^c.

II Cor. i, 5

For as the sufferings of X^c abound
in' us, ²so our consolation³ also
aboundeth by ⁴X^c.

R. V.:- 'unto ²insert even
³comfort ⁴thro'.

Ὁ ἡμεῖς ἀπορούμεν τὰ
παύματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν ἡμῶν,
οὕτως διὰ Χριστοῦ ἀπορούμεν καὶ
ἡ παρηγορία ἡμῶν.

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175

Bridgeton, ² West⁴

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the stricken heart flies to the
sanctuary of faith & pours out
its complaint ~~expectations~~ of the
aid of a pitying God. There
so often shall be found the sad-
faced, mournful ones, withdrawn
from the merry sunshine of the
world, as within the temple conse-
crated to holy thought & devout
worship? For, whatever melts
dignify & repel in other forms of
religion, the ~~the~~ faith ~~with~~ speaks
of the Supreme Being as the comfort-
er, & proffers peace & balm for
every weary soul. If among you
who ~~are~~ are gathered here today,
there are any whose sorrows are
new & keen: I am sure your
thoughts at once leap forth to
seize eagerly the repetition, tho' it
be but from your fellow-mortal,

Man is born to trouble, as the
sparks fly upward; & when suf-
fering is named, all of us are
constrained to give heed. Even the
children, whose years are count-
ed as yet by their summers only,
will not consent to be omitted
from the list of those who
suffer; much less they whose
seamed foreheads & mournful
attire declare their woe.

So also when comfort is
named; who but wants it?
who will not turn ~~the~~ ear one
word describing it? For the no-
bel desire consolation, as the
hungry seek food. Religion, among
us promising comfort ~~from~~
receives them turning toward it;

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of the consolation of religion,
more ~~valuable~~ than wealth or
all the ~~adornments~~ of pride.

Both the phrasology from
~~text~~ may seem reserved & lim-
ited, excluding your manner &
condition of affliction from the
promise of consolation which for
its favored ones it contains. As
the sufferings of X^s abound in us:
so, our comfort also aboundeth
in X^s. As this comfort here
mentioned, then, ready only for
those ~~who~~ in whom the suf-
ferings of X^s abound?

Certain it is, indeed that
the promises of the X^s faith are
not, cannot be, assured in their
sweetness & fullness to such persons
as are hostile to the character of

would produce; for its promises
involve an active acceptance of
truly as the healing remedies of
a physician. Nor can mere ab-
sence of hostility, a mere passive
assent to Xianity, stand in the
stead of such an active assimi-
~~lation~~ ^{lation}. The comforts of ~~the~~
our religion are treasures which
are not entrusted to the outer
chambers, but hidden far within
the secret recesses of the ~~Xu~~
building.

Yet even our text has a prom-
ise in it, which should not be
~~held~~ lightly refused, as tho' it
were of too ~~little~~ limited reference.
Many there are who avert
their faces from Xu friends &
institutions thro' mistakes of the

measure of 7 divine grace,
if they would ask, as X^c has said,
it would be given them according
to their need. And as ~~the~~ some
wholly ineligious, thus often mis-
much grace provided & ready
for them at the hands of a lov-
ing God; so also it may be that
the very children of the Covenant
may sometimes fail to grasp pre-
cious assurances fully capable
of giving them the comfort which
they suppose belongs only to others
~~more highly favored~~
more highly consecrated & favored.

What are "the sufferings of X^c"
which "abound in us" or (R.V.) "un-
to us," that are ~~mentioned~~ referred
to in this text as the measure of
our comfort... this 'X^c'?

We are shown⁸ in the Gospel
many of the sufferings which Xⁱ
underwent as ~~+~~ in order to become
our Atonement. He was made a
curse for us. The reproaches of
those who reproached God, fell
upon him. That he might be
healed, he received stripes. In all
these things he suffered vicari-
ously, i.e., in our behalf; how
then could these sufferings of his
exist at all, much less abound,
in us? And if they could, how
can this afford or secure us
consolation in our affliction?

That there is answer, & ade-
quate answer, to these seemingly
difficult questions, appears from
various words of Scripture in
which the relation of believers
to Xⁱ is very boldly set forth.

Paul repeatedly. makes use of such expressions as these: "being made conformable unto his death," Phil. iii, 10; "I fill up ~~that~~ on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of X^c in my flesh" Col. i, 24 (R. v); "always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus," II Cor. iv, 10; + exhorts Timothy (II, i, 8) to be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. These texts are consistent with these representations of the vital union of the individual believer with his Saviour, upon which the whole fabric of our faith is built. And in the light of these ~~things~~ truths, if we consider more carefully what may be involved in the expression "the sufferings of X^c," it may become

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become easy for us to per-
ceive how our relation to them
may enable us to understand &
enjoy the "consolation" or "com-
fort" which is the end of our
meditation this

I state it that the suffer-
ings of our Lord, numerous & va-
rious as they were, all resulted
from two general conditions or
causes:

1. His dwelling in this world
of sin, and
2. His conflict against the
power of sin dominant here.

It could not but be, we readily
perceive, that the mere fact of
existence here must have been
constant cause of anguish to the

incarnated Son " of God.

Of the felicity of that heavenly sphere which was from all eternity the home of the divine Son, we have but the faintest suggestions of thought; but they these enable us without hesitation to perceive it so ineffably superior to this, that separation from it were a pain, & restriction to this an anguish. There, was the field for unchecked, unlimited, heavenly powers; the scene of all glory; the realm of deity; the presence of God, his ~~unwearied~~ ~~invariable~~ unwearied & perpetual presence of God. Here, God cannot possibly be beheld; life here is as tho' one were absent from God; & here, indeed, Jesus did suffer the hiding of the Father's loving face.

Here, is no realm of deity, save
 as the divine ownership is
 retained while an evil steward
 is suffered a possession for the
 present almost unchecked. The
 scenes of glory common to the
 home of the divine Son, are not
 only unimitated, they are uncon-
 ceivable to the dwellers in this
 world. The mighty energies of
 free immortality which fill the
 heavenly sphere with blessed
 activities, are lost & unknown
 on this dark earth. What is
 freedom there, seems restraint
 here; the very secret of the joys
 there seems the one thing terrible
 here. From the Supreme per-
 fection of glorious Divine life
 there, the Son of God came hither to

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be shut in amidst the impotence,
the darkness, the vileness, of hu-
man affairs. What could such
a descent be, but pain? Even the
conscious possession of ~~that~~
the supreme rank in that upper
life should seem to us even & m-
ly to enhance the suffering of
~~the~~ dwelling within the bonds
of this contrasted, inferior con-
dition. Men account it a mis-
ery to be withdrawn from our civi-
lization to dwell within the bound-
aries of the savage lands; how
poor that contrast, compared
with a contrast between earth &
Heaven!

~~One of these causes of~~
these considerations point us
to a pain, afflicting our low lives

Xc., not ephemeral, like many of ours, but beginning with His life on earth, & continuing as long as He remained here. His existence was thus conditioned, perpetually here, by pain.

One of the features of this perpetual pain, was, the dwelling in a world of death. Our Lord came from a world of eternal life. The inevitable presence of death about Him here, ~~could not~~ therefore, could not but be a constant bitterness in His lot. How He showed it at the grave of a man whom He had loved as His personal friend, keeping as He approached that forbidding place!

Another ~~for~~ feature of the pain constant in Xc's life on

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earth, was the constant en-
vironment of physical miseries.
To an inhabitant of heaven, who
knows not how to say "I am
sick," how hideous must be the
companionships of our dis-
eased, distressed, wounded, de-
spendent, ruined humanity! How
X^p felt it, when, according the
bliss, we read that "He sighed!"
() Sighing & weeping, the
life of the Man of Sorrows went
on. How there ever human
sorrow which did not touch
his heart? affect him? work
doubly its pain, as in his con-
sciousness, the bright contrast
of a better life was ever a forbid-
den joy while he dwelt on earth?

2.

But these were not all, nor even the principal, sufferings of X^c. These were pains, to be endured, but known to be of limited duration, & presently to be past forever; & the promise of their destruction was the consolation which robbed them of much of their power to distress.

But the anguish of our Lord's life belonged in that part of his experience which was characterized by his struggle with evil. He suffered for us, but ~~was not hindered or hindered in~~ ~~his royal sphere of discourse~~ ~~or his existence, in the strong~~ ~~powerful efforts~~ ~~but~~ ~~with~~

evil. He suffered for us, in the
lifelong battle which he fought,
wounded & distressed the
whole by the pains belonging to
earthly life. Evil was rampant
everywhere: it was his work to
attack, to battle with it. And over
all, he had to dispute every posses-
sion with the prince of this
world. Beholding with a loving
heart the true needs of men, he
must behold ~~them~~ also their
self-surrender to that evil
prince. At every point of con-
tact, his heart was bruised, his
honor denied, his life threat-
ened } reason of men's sinners
thus to the devil. Death, & dis-
ease, & every form of evil, were

thus multiplied. ¹⁸ The Evil One
even threatened him within the
citadel of his own will, tempting
him / himself! this repeated; &
meanwhile stirring up every
manner of cruelty & repulse
which could embitter his already
sad & painful life on earth. The
constant conflict wore him
out, at last his heart burst
beneath its load of woe. He
had come, he had lived, he
saw a ruined race; he ac-
complished that salvation; but in
the task he lived a Man of
sorrows, & died at last of a broken
heart.

My afflicted heart! ~~but this~~
may not

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this inadequate recital of the
sufferings of K. suggest in some
manner to you, how even these
same sufferings may be the true
description of yours? ~~some~~

Has not your faith in the Lord
Jesus K. brought to you the con-
sciousness of that upper
world from which he was sepa-
rated, from the fellowship of
which sin has shut you out? ~~Is~~
~~not the contrast~~ Are not your
sorrows in this life, in known
& felt contrast to the perfec-
tion of that? a contrast which
but for your being united to K.
would never occur to you, but
which, while it may cheer in
prospect, intensifies the pain here?

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There are those who, far from
X^c, give themselves to ~~to the~~ resources
of this world, that their sorrows
are never enhanced by desires
after a holy world which is
now denied. But to X^c's people,
the degradation + loss of ~~of~~ from
dwelling in a world of sin,
is in itself a pain which ac-
companies those of bereave-
ment, disease, & disaster.

But the chief source of
X^c's sufferings, his conflict, and
the disadvantages of his estate
of humiliation, with the power
of evil: this is also the chief
cause of anguish in the X^c's
life. Do we suffer from the

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disappointments & hardships of
life! If we are followers of X^c
these things often come in the
line of our struggle with sin—
sin our own, or sin of others ag^t
which we strive in loyalty to
X^c. Bitter was the cry of the
Psalmist ag^t the prosperity of the
wicked, contrasted with his own
washing his hands in innocency.
Our pain is not merely the pain
of missing wealth, favor, or what
not; it is the pain of being de-
feated by the Adversary when we
have verily striven for the right.
And life from heavy, not because
we do not love the right which
our Lord has caught us to love, but
because our enemy seems stronger
than we. He slays our dear ones

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in death, he prostrates us with
sickness or losses, & we cannot
conquer him; & our hearts fail
us & we have that to deplore. If
we suffer these things in a true
care devotion to all that X^c has
laughed us, we are herein sharing
His work, His sorrow, & His labors
on earth.

II

It is the blessing of our text,
that ~~as these~~ sufferings of X^c
abound in us, so our comfort
also abounds thro' X^c.

There is one comfort, for
men & women in trouble; &
only one: the comfort that is
thro' X^c. The comfort which he
received while he lived on an earth,

that comfort was the only one
 available for even Him, the Son
 of God; it is available — it alone
 — for us also. Because it
 is the only one in the world, the
 only real comfort, therefore it is
 conditioned to us upon our hav-
 ing His sufferings in us. If our
 suffering is not akin to His,
 our comfort will not be; there
 is no real comfort for us; di-
 version, ~~it~~ maybe, intermission;
 but not comfort. But if we suf-
 fer like He we shall receive com-
 fort like He. If we share His
 sufferings, it is natural that we
 share also His consolation. We
 may be one with Him in both;
 we cannot be one with Him ex-

cept in both. ²⁴ A suffering
X^r, cannot miss of X^r's conso-
lation — he has the right wit, &
the assurance of it.

What was X^r's comfort, conso-
lation?

Two fold. For the future, it
was the infallible certainty of
ultimate triumph. For the pres-
ent, it was the ineffable delight
of being & doing good.

There ~~are~~ were times when our
sufferings are so keen, that ~~we~~
~~present comfort~~ we cannot
bear anything present. We
are crushed; inactive; incapable.
Bereavement has shut the door on
all our hopes & endeavor. Or, the
pain of physical disease holds us

like a man chained in a
 dungeon. We can do nothing.
 But we can think — never can
 stop thinking. The consolation
 that is in X^2 then, is the thought
 of ultimate triumph. 'It will not
 always be as now — the dead
 shall rise again — this pain
 shall die with this body — tri-
 umph shall be given me by X^2 .
 This thought belongs
 only, comes only, in its full sweet-
 ness, to those who have joined
 with X^2 . But theirs it is.

The other comfort is for the
 present activity. It comes in the
 hour of struggle; when the very
 anguish of fighting temptation is

on; when there is a painful pub-
 lic duty to do, at sore cost; when
 duty drags agonized energies to
 faithful action. The comfort of
 suffering then, is the comfort
 of being in the way with X^c.
 It is the inner consciousness
 of God's presence & approval. There
 is no comfort like that. With
~~that comfort~~, it is a joy to live, or
 to die; at the stake, in the study,
 at work, on the bed of disease;
 anywhere, anyway; Heaven is
 near, for X^c is there, where X^c
 is, now is Heaven.