

January 15.

"I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth."—Isa. li. 12, 13.

The children of God have the only true comfort to be found amidst the sorrows of life; but they too often forget it, and seek for consolations of an inferior kind, so as to lose sight of Him who alone can give real comfort. Why do we deal thus with our God? Why do we sometimes refuse to believe that we can ever receive comfort, and at other times strive to get rid of sorrow by filling our minds with vain things, which may indeed distract us from our grief, but cannot comfort? And all the while He is waiting to be gracious; and His own voice is calling us to go to Him with our sad hearts, that He may pour into them the only balm of healing, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you!" Let us cast on Him our cares, our sorrows, our fears, whatever they may be. If they are caused by our fellow-men, let us think of the Lord our Maker. If He is on our side, what can man do unto us? Man can neither destroy those whom their God comforts, nor give true comfort to those whom God himself afflicts.

January 16.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."—Ps. xxiv. 7, 8.

"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."—Matt. xxi. 5.

"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."—1 Cor. ii. 8.

The question is still asked, "Who is this King of glory?" the world asks it scoffingly, — the princes of this world knew Him not when He came among them, as the meek and lowly King, "sitting upon an ass," and they crucified Him then, and would crucify Him still. "Who is this King of glory?" "Whom do men say that I am?" (Mark viii. 27.) It is Christ himself that asks the question. "What think ye of Christ" is He the King of glory *to you*? O, professing Christian, whether He comes in His royal majesty, as the Lord mighty in battle, or in His humiliation, calling on you to take up His yoke and burden, to be meek and lowly, like Him, to lift up to Him the gates of your heart, and let Him reign and rule within you; we must receive Him as our *own* King ; we must submit ourselves wholly to Him ; we must recognise Him in His lowliness, if we would see Him and dwell with Him in His glory. "If we *suffer*, we shall also *reign* with Him in glory."

January 17.

"Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."—Luke ix. 58.

How wonderful was the poverty of Jesus! a poverty (as far as His condition as Son of man is considered) so real, so deep, that He "had not where to lay His head." This verse gives us a most affecting glimpse of His human life; and we find another which wondrously connects His poverty with His riches of almighty power, in Matt xvii, 27, when He sends Peter to obtain from the first fish that came up the piece of money for the tribute, which apparently neither He nor Peter had at their command: "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor;" but when we think of the distance between the Divine nature and the human to which He descended, all the distances between the varied conditions of human life are as nothing. Earthly luxuries or the want of them could have made but little difference to Him; had He been as rich as Solomon in all his glory, He would still have wept over Jerusalem; had He been as poor as Job in his desolation, He would still have "rejoiced in spirit" over His Father's dealings.

"Think on the eternal home

The Saviour left for you;

Think on the Lord most holy come

To dwell with hearts untrue:

So shall ye tread untired His pastoral ways,

And in the darkness sing your carol of high praise."

January 18.

"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory."—1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.

The apostle does not say, "It *shall be* raised in incorruption and glory," but "*it is*." At first sight this is perplexing; but the more we consider these words the more we shall perceive the precious truth that lies contained in them. We would have looked *forward* in speaking of the resurrection; the apostle *looked back*; and seeing the members raised in the Head, he says, "*It is* raised in glory." One human body has been raised in incorruption, and Christ has become the "first-fruits of them that slept." His glorious rising is the earnest that His people shall be raised; therefore we may lay firm hold of the truth that He and His people are one; and, gazing on the grave, even now we may say, "*It is* raised in glory."

"He with the great shall share the spoil,

And baffle all His foes,

Though rank'd with sinners, here

He fell, A conqueror He rose.

"He died to bear the guilt of men,

That sin might he forgiven;

He lives to bless them, and defend,

And plead their cause in heaven."

January 19.

"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us."  
—Eph. ii. 4.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his  
Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—1 John iv. 10.

How marvellous is it that *God should love us!* We love those whose characters attract us; we can scarcely endure, much less *love*, those whom we know to be wicked; God loves sinners ! His eye sees, even in the best of men, much that is hateful to His holy sight; yet He loves. He sees His own children doubt Him, distrust Him, forget Him; yet He loves! He sees us cleaving to the dust, clinging to some creature, and forgetting Him who gave us all; yet He loves! Oh, may the thought of this wondrous love fill our hearts, and raise our affections to an unreserved devotion to Him who has so loved our poor guilty souls as to give His Son "to be the propitiation for our sins;" teaching us thereby the grand truth, that "*God is love!*"

"Thine is an unchanging love,  
Higher than the heavens above,  
Deeper than the depths beneath,  
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Lord, it is my chief complaint  
That my love is weak and faint;  
Yet I love Thee and adore,  
Oh, for grace to love Thee more!"

January 20.

"Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee."—Song of Solomon i. 3.

How significant is the name *Christ*—anointed! He is anointed by the Father, and set apart for His great work by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, shed upon Him without measure, so that in Him "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." As Prophet, as Priest, and as King, He is anointed, and "of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace," for the spirit of His anointing is upon His people also, descending like the holy anointing oil from the head of Aaron, down to the "skirts of his garments," to the meanest, the humblest of those who are the members of His body. Therefore there is a deep meaning in the name by which His people are called, the name of *Christians*, for Christians are also anointed ones in Him who is the anointed of the Father, *the Christ*. His name is dear to them; the virgins, the pure in heart, love Him, and love to be called after Him. Oh, may He grant us grace to be worthy partakers of such a hallowed name!

"Saviour, if of Zion's city

I through grace a member am,

Let the world deride or pity,

I will glory in Thy name."

January 21.

"He is the rock, his work is perfect."—Deut. xxxii. 4.

"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried."  
—2 Sam. xxii. 31.

The *work* of God, the *way* of God, the *Word* of God are *perfect*, but we cannot see how perfect they are till we search deeply into them. The man of science sees many wondrous perfections in the natural world which are hidden from ordinary observers; the more knowledge we gain of God's wonderful works, the more beauties do we discover. Marvellous proofs of design and wise adaptation meet us on every side; from the structure of the humblest flower or feeblest insect, to the motions of the glorious heavens above our heads.

"He gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
And wheels His throne upon the rolling spheres."

Therefore, O my God, as I behold Thy *work* in nature to be perfect, let me believe that Thy way in providence, though often dark, is full of wisdom and holy beauty; and that Thy *word*, as revealed in Scripture, is also full of perfection, whatever may be its apparent difficulties. The more I search into Thy *way* and Thy *Word*, as well as into Thy *works*, the more shall I find to admire, and the more beauty shall I find in that greatest of all Thy works—the Work of Redemption.

"Unfathomable wonder,  
And mystery divine—  
The voice that speaks in thunder,  
Says, 'Sinner, I am thine!'"