

## NOTES OF ADDRESSES

BY THE LATE

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## TRIAL MADE SWEET.

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“PATIENT IN TRIBULATION.”—*Romans XII. 12.*

**I**F, while earthly good is removed, Divine consolation is given instead, the believer gets back an hundred-fold what he gave up, by receiving that which is an hundred-fold better.

What an example of this we have in Moses. He deliberately chose present reproach with the people of God, and then he straightway esteemed it “greater riches.” Reproach is not a sweet thing in itself; it is only when it is Christ’s reproach that it becomes sweet; and when it is thus suffered, believe the testimony of all the saints, that any suffering, when borne along with Christ, is sweeter than any joy enjoyed without Him. Another thing that sweetens reproach, is when it is borne in company with the Lord’s dear children: and indeed, there is just one company that it is good to be in, and that is the despised company of the Lord’s children. Not that their outward circumstances, either always or often, make it pleasant to be with them. One does not naturally like to be shut up in the city where famine is raging, or in the dwelling infested by the plague: that cannot be desirable for itself, unless there is some circumstance apart from these that makes it so. Now, God’s people are often in the greatest straits, sorely reduced, and seemingly forsaken; but it is best, it is safest, to be among God’s people. And believe it, brethren, if there is any day when it is specially good to be among them, it is not when they are saying with Job, “I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days;” and when all earthly things go so well with them that they have nothing more to wish for. It is safest, it is best, it is sweetest to be among them in dark and troubrous times, when they find a hedge about their path, and when thorns are on the road; when they are wandering hither and thither in the valley of Achor, and are looking out at the door of hope. Theirs is now a waiting-time and a watching-time; a short-day, or, as they are tempted to think it, a long day, of labour and of prayer, during which they have oftentimes no comfort but that of the hope of brighter days to come. How often that expression forces itself on us, “Thou shalt abide for me many days.” What a striking word! What a type of the faithful, constant self-dedication of the Church, or of the believer, to his absent Lord. Ah! this reminds us, and reassures us that the marriage-covenant is not broken, it is not annulled. It was formed when the sinner gave his heart in solemn covenant to the Lord, and when the Lord Himself said, “Thou art mine;” shall it ever

be forgotten, come what may? True, it is not yet complete, “The top-stone hath not yet been brought forth with shouting.” Believers have got a time of trial given them meanwhile, an opportunity to prove their love for Immanuel; they are to be employed in waiting for Him, and living to Him; and He does not even now leave them comfortless. No, He comforts them in ways as various as their individual needs and desires.

Let us mention three of them. The first is *tidings of Himself*, through the word of God, which tells them all He was on earth, and much of what He is in heaven since He sat down upon His throne. The second way is by the visits of His Spirit, which are frequent, heart-supporting, and refreshing to the weary soul. And the third is the blessed hope of seeing Him again; it may be soon, very soon; and it shall be a vision of Him “as He is,” whenever it shall come. By these and other means, after which we would earnestly entreat you to seek to profit,—and He has infinite resources of grace and glory,—he does support his Church and carry her through the deepest waters, and across the raging surge, even beyond the river of death till He place her at His own right hand. And remember, my beloved friends, that it is no new thing for Him to do this: nay, He can lead her through flames of fire, and seven-times heated furnaces, to the city of habitation, just as securely and as happily as by an ordinary path.

Oh! bear this in mind, that it is not an untried Gospel that we are called to lean upon. It is no new thing to pass through fire and water before coming into the wealthy place prepared before the foundations of the world; nor is it an unbeaten path that the ransomed of the Lord have to pass over. It is a blessed thing when by trials the Lord leads His people on to his own future promised glory, and it is a safe thing when He leads them into the wilderness, because He has the power to carry them also through the wilderness, and out of the wilderness, all the journey through. Safe are they who are leaning on such an arm. They will be borne through, and, though they may have to seal their testimony with their blood, they will yet be borne testimony to. You may say, “Why speak so much of these things?” Brethren, because we may need these things before we meet again,—we cannot tell,—yes, ere then the time may be come, when we shall have to enter into our chambers and shut the doors about us until calamity be overpast, and when, had we not such real supports as these to look to, we might be desolate enough. Ah! we would need to be having our anchor cast within the veil, to be learning to lay faster hold upon Jehovah’s word, and leaning on His faithful promises. What an amazing ground of consolation does that word afford to the weakest saint: the Lord has provided the very surest and best foundation that His wisdom could have devised to invite and to secure the poor sinner’s confidence. Build then upon it. Remember that “he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.” “Strait is the gate,

and narrow is the way, and few there be that go in thereat. Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” “He that loseth his life for my name’s sake shall keep it;” keep it, defend, protect it unto life eternal. “If any man serve me, him shall my Father honour.”