

**JOY FOR THE SORROWFUL;
OR, COMFORT
IN SICKNESS, CALAMITY,
AND BEREAVEMENT**

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Joy for the Sorrowful; Or, Comfort in Sickness, Calamity, and Bereavement by J. McConnel
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J. MCCONNEL HUSSEY

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OR,

COMFORT IN SICKNESS, CALAMITY, AND
BEREAVEMENT.

With Passages, Introduced and Introductory,

BY THE

REV. J. McCONNEL HUSSEY, B.A.,

(OXON.)

AFTERNOON PREACHED AT THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, AND INCUMBENT OF
CHRISTY CHURCH, NORTH BATHON.

"HOPE THOU IN GOD."

Second Edition.

A. M. PIGOTT,
ALDINE CHAMBERS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND
KENNINGTON PARK CORNER, LONDON.

1856.

141. d. 200.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WHAT changes are ever evident around us—in man, in nature, in circumstance! Nothing here is stable and unvarying. In man we find the helplessness of infancy exchanged for the buoyancy of youth; the buoyancy of youth for the energy and activity of manhood; the energy of manhood for the decrepitude and infirmity of age. The stream of time rolls on, and on its waves the human being is borne along till the great and final change arrives. In nature we discover the same varying characteristics. The flower that, in all-blooming beauty, unshrouds its varied hues and emits its delightful perfumes, smitten by the blast and broken by the furious wind, droops, withers, and dies. The calm and waveless lake, mirroring on its placid surface the blue expanse of heaven, is aroused from its sleep by the howling blast, and, whitened by the shattered billows, which exhaust themselves in foam, pours its waters on its rugged shores, beneath a blackened sky. The streamlet, which in summer threaded its almost noiseless way amid the disordered rocks which easily impeded its course, is changed by the rains and snows of winter into the roaring and destructive torrent. The propitious gale, which with friendly aid urged forward our speeding

bark, and seemed to whisper in the ear, in softest accents, that was all fair and promising—that no anxiety need occupy the mariner's mind, no dark foreboding cast its gloom upon his brow—increases in its tones, till the loud howling rouses all to activity and watchfulness, and proclaims the dread reality, that the tempest is gathering round our vessel. In circumstances also we read the same great truth. In social station, in domestic happiness, in political popularity, in mercantile position, all undergo their variations. The noble are degraded, the rich are impoverished, the family is bereaved, the politician is distracted. The one flattered to-day is rejected to-morrow; the wealthy of this year becomes the ruined of the next; the happy home, full of merriment and mutual love, is invaded by death, and the night of sorrow settles in deep darkness upon the weeping survivors. In such a season, friendship is precious. Its voice is sweet; its words are notes of consoling music. They may partake of melancholy, yet they are the accents of sincerity; they lighten up the dreary solitude, and tell us we are not forlorn and forgotten. These "songs in the night" sound, too, the more pleasantly, if, in addition to the present sweetness, they tell of the prospect of a brighter future, and assure us that the night is not without its star of hope—that the morning cometh.

As a friendly visitor to you in the midst of your anguish and your sorrow, we desire this book to come. It pretends to nothing; it simply desires to speak a word of consolation to your wounded spirit. To find the balm, it has dug deep into the rich mines of men whose hearts

were moved by the Spirit of God, and who, as the sons of God, had themselves experienced the trial of affliction, and found the only solace to yield comfort in these seasons of grief. When you are alone, my readers, this book desires to be with you, that ye may enjoy the companionship of men who have sought to do men good, and some of whom, though dead, yet speak. They have gathered their consolations from the unchanging Word of God, and would woo you to that word, to glean sweet passages for yourselves. The air is sent from heaven; and men have composed their variations to that air, still retaining as the substance of them the heaven-sprung melody. Like our Lord and Master, then, we hear the sad intelligence that Lazarus is dead, and would hasten like him to the home of Martha and Mary, and with them mingle the tributary tears of sorrow.

We desire, in this our book, to bring Jesus to the mourner's home, and there to leave him sitting by the mourner's side; that the poor sorrower may listen to his voice of compassion and of mercy, and may learn from his lips the sweet assurance—"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Tempest-tossed and in fear, we would have you hear in the midst of your trials the voice of a loving Saviour—"It is I; be not afraid." I have sent, believer, this bereavement; I have cast the cloud before your pathway; I have roused the billows, so that they almost overflow you: but I am he also that, when my purpose is achieved, will say, 'Peace; be still.'

Oh what a calm will yours then be! Your safety is secured. "Ye have suffered with me here, ye shall reign with me hereafter."

Mourner, ours is a work of sympathy and love. We feel for your distress, and we desire to alleviate it. Accept, then, this basket of selected flowers. In it you will find, as best and fairest, richest in perfume and most influential in refreshing your dejected spirit, the Rose of Sharon. Keep this constantly before you, and cherish it most fondly. It has proved itself to be in all times the "consolation of Israel." In it you will find the Lily of the Valley. Contemplate it. Its place where found is humble; and imitate it here. It droops its head, indeed; and He whom it figures to us, when all was accomplished, "bowed his head," and so must we, in full resignation to the will of God. In it ye will find the Vine; seek to extract from its precious fruit the wine of spiritual consolation, "which maketh glad the heart of man." In it ye will find the Tree beneath whose shadow the believer sits with great delight, and whose fruit is sweet unto his taste. Take up this blessed position, and eat this nourishing food. If ye are brought by your affliction to find spiritual consolation and spiritual experience, the dark day will be a day of transport, joy, and triumph to you. It may be the day of your selection from amidst the crowds of the godless and the thoughtless, by the great Disposer of all events. It may fulfil in your case those words of the prophet Zechariah—"It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." Accept our offering of sympathy and love. Peruse its pages; and while

ye do, forget not the throne of grace, but plead with God that the sentences herein contained may emit sweet fragrance.

Go, book, then, and float far and wide! Pilot it, O God, to the homes where the waters of affliction have "come in unto the soul." Direct the mind of the mourner to select the passage that best can still the anguish. Accompany it always with thy Holy Spirit, that it may accomplish effectually its mission; for without the co-operation of the Spirit, all is vain. May that Spirit which, as the wind, bloweth where it listeth, carry on its wings these rich perfumes, and, bearing them into the mourner's heart, which is desolate and sad, make it as a palace rich in eastern fragrance! May it silence by the strains of consolation the wailings of anguish and despondency, and give the key-note to the loud anthems of praise which the believer, in his full trustfulness of God, pours out even from the gloomy darkness of the sick chamber! Make the advent of this book to the sorrower's home a blessing; and grant that the great result of this gathering of these gems from the treasury of Christian writings may be, the awakening true spiritual joy in the heart of the sorrowful, and the advancement of thy glory by the evidenced resignation of the afflicted to thy will! "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good will towards men!"

JAMES MCCONNELL HUSSEY.

