

I've been given a very broad subject. So I think I'll start with one of the great passages of Scripture - Isa.40:1-12 reading from the NIV.

"Comfort my people says your God." I used to always wonder as I read that in KJV - Comfort ye, comfort ye. I wondered what that meant -- comfort ye. Was it a way of saying, Be comforted? Or what? In the Heb. it means "bring comfort to others." I don't think we quite get that in "comfort my people." Leave off the first - comfort my people is exactly what said. It is not be comforted but it is bring comfort. It is very hard to get those meanings into today's English. But comfort ye left me wondering. So I went to my Hebrew Bible and found what it means.

Comfort, comfort my people says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Now there's a hard verse to translate. Speak tenderly. KJV says speak comfortably. How do you speak comfortably to someone. I never quite knew. To speak tenderly gives a definite idea. It's not exactly the idea of the Hebrew. I sort of which they had translated it literally - speak to the heart. Speak tenderly has a lot of meaning, but I don't think it quite has all of it.

Proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed. KJV says her warfare. The word can mean warfare but it can equally mean the hard service whether warfare or otherwise. Her hard services . . . her sin has been paid for.

She has received from the Lord's hands double for all her sins. That was hard for me to get. For me to translate just what that means. Double for --- certainly doesn't mean she is to be punished twice as much as she deserves. Double here, I'm quite convinced is "the equivalent." She has received from the Lord that which is owed to God's justice for her sins, because Jesus Christ has paid completely for our sins.

A voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Surely that is exactly what the preacher's challenge is. Prepare in the desert the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Three hundred years ago circuit preachers were going around our country and they certainly could take this to heart. In the wilderness they went. Back in the little shacks. Back here and there bringing the message of salvation through Christ. They figured, We are bringing the message. We are establishing these people in the Lord. One of these days we'll have a great land here in which everyone knows the Lord and there will be peace, prosperity, happiness for all.

Doubtless a great deal did come certainly. It's wonderful the way our nation ~~is~~ moved forward. A German historian said that the American civil war was unique in the history of the world. He said ~~x~~ civil wars are ordinarily the most terrible wars. They of all most disregard human life and mistreat. But he said, In