

THE  
PROMISES OF GOD;

THEIR  
NATURE AND PROPERTIES,  
VARIETY AND VALUE.

BY  
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## THE PROMISES OF GOD.

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IN the Sacred Scriptures, a *promise* sometimes means an engagement on God's part, to do some good or to confer some benefit. This is the meaning of the term in the following passages :

2d Chronicles 1 : 9. " Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David, my father, be established ; for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude."

Ps. 77 : 8. " Is his mercy clean gone forever ? Doth his promise fail forevermore ?"

Act 2: 33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

Rom. 4: 20. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith," etc.

1 Tim. 4: 8. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

2 Pet. 3: 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;"—and in many other places.

Sometimes *promise* refers to the thing promised, the performance of the engagement made. This is

doubtless the meaning of the word in Luke 24:49. "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Acts 7:17. "But when the time of the promise drew nigh which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt." Gal. 3:14. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith." Heb. 6:15. "And so, after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise ;"—and in other places.

Nor is it always possible to determine with certainty which of these meanings belongs to the word prom-

ise, because both meanings are Scriptural, and because we find places where either meaning makes good sense, agrees with history and with the context. Thus in Heb. 11:33. "Who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises," etc. Some insist that the meaning here is that the worthies of old obtained the fulfillment of God's promises to them. This makes good sense, agrees with the course of Paul's argument, is historically verified in the birth of Isaac, in David's full possession of the throne of Israel, and in many other events, and is supported by the judgment of many able scholars and respectable expositors, as Boehme, Owen, De Wette, Diodati, Bloomfield, the Dutch Annotations,

Guyse, Scott, Lindsey, Mott, etc. Others seem firmly persuaded that the meaning is that these ancient worthies obtained engagements from God in promises which he made to such men as Caleb, Joshua, Phineas and David, and refer to Num. 14:24, 30, and 25:10-13; 2 Sam. 7:12-15; Ps. 106:30, 31. This mode of explaining the phrase has been approved by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Bengel, Bleek, Doddridge, Macknight, Clarke, Ebrard, and others. In the Study Bible of the Rev. Samuel Davies, is a blank note stating that "of all the achievements of faith, none is more sublime than this of obtaining promises." This exposition agrees with the argument Paul is conducting, and has this in its favor that

while every believer on earth obtains the fulfillment of many promises, even the greatest God has ever made, it is not true that many individuals have obtained promises in the sense here admitted. So pleasing and coincident with the tenor of Scripture are both of these modes of exposition, and such is the weight of authority for each, that some expositors admit both. And, in fact, it is true that, to some, God made the promise and granted the fulfillment of it in their own persons and during their natural lives.

When man broke covenant with God by sinning against him, the whole heavens grew black, not a ray of hope reached him, not a ray from the sun of righteousness appeared. The darkness was terrible, until at

length God said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This was the star of hope. Soon other promises were given, and when the canon of the Scripture was closed, the whole heavens were bespangled with these lights of God's word to cheer and guide pilgrims homeward. So that now no good man desires any more promises than are found in God's word. All that faith desires is the fulfillment of those already made, and this it unwaveringly expects. Let us take up the matter in order.

I. God's promises are either *expressed* or *implied*. The following are samples of *express* promises: "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine

heart ;” “ If any man keep my saying, he shall never see death ;” “ Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved ;” Ps. 37 : 4 ; John 8 : 51 ; Rom. 10 : 13.

A promise is *implied* in the threatenings of Scripture. Thus, when we are told, “ God shall laugh at the wicked,” it is clearly implied that he will pity and care for all the righteous. Again, “ In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same ; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.” Here is an implied promise that none of the righteous shall ever drink of the wine of the wrath of God. So when it is said, “ Wo unto you that

are rich! for ye have received your consolation;" there is an implied promise that all those humble, heavenly-minded souls, who thank God for a portion in the world, but who refuse to take the world for a portion, shall be blessed with unspeakable consolations hereafter. "The wicked plot-teth against the just and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him," etc. Ps. 37 : 12, 13; Luke 6 : 24; Ps. 75 : 8. In like manner, all the examples of mercy shown to good men, as recorded in Scripture, imply an engagement, on God's part, to grant like mercies to his people in all time to come.

II. God's promises are either *uni-versal* or *particular*. Universal promises embrace the whole race of man.

They are such as God made to Noah as the new father of his race. These are some of them : “ While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and night and day, shall not cease ;” “ The fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air ;” “ Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood ; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth ;” Gen. 8 : 22 ; 9 : 2, 11.

Then we have promises to *particular persons or classes of persons*, as prisoners, strangers, the poor, the oppressed, the widow, the fatherless, the believer, the penitent, the meek, the humble, the diligent, the upright,

the prudent, the patient, the slandered, the reviled, the forgiving, the peacemaker, the charitable, the persevering. Time would fail us to rehearse all the good things the Lord has said to particular classes of persons. Some of them will be set forth hereafter.

III. God's promises are, as to the *matter* of them, either *general* or *special*. General promises are such as these: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;" "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings;" "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters;" Ps. 97:11; Isa. 3:10; 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. The ful-

filling of either of these promises necessarily brings with it all real good, corporeal and spiritual, temporal and eternal. Other promises are *special*, descending to the varied wants and states of good men, such as, "A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked;" "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous;" "My grace is sufficient for thee;" Ps. 37: 16; 125: 3; 2 Cor. 12: 9. In still other cases, we have general and special promises wondrously united in the same Scripture, as: "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence

shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Ps. 84: 11; Isa. 33: 16; Rom. 8: 32.

IV. God's promises are *immutable* and *perpetual*. In their true intent and spirit, they are irrevocable. Jehovah never has revoked any of them made to the race of man, or to his church and people. The first gospel promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head"—is in as regular a course of fulfillment now as on the day of Pentecost. God's promises are not fulfilled at certain periods only; but they stand from age to age. Thus

the promise of a rich blessing on children, who honor their parents, and "show piety at home," is just as fixed and unalterable as the fifth commandment. It is so abundantly and manifestly in force that I have never seen a serious person who contended that he ever knew a man to be a loser, in the long run, by respect and kindness to a parent. In like manner, all the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are, and to the end of time will be, in force. Like the gifts and calling of God, his promises are "without repentance."

V. The promises of God are *affirmative*, not negative; *positive*, not uncertain; *absolute*, not accompanied with hesitancy. So the apostle, speaking of our Lord, says: "All

the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Cor. 1:20. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances." Ps. 119:89-91. There is no cause of doubt concerning the promises.

VI. The promises of God are all *true*, not fictitious; all *faithful*, not false. "Not one jot or tittle" of them can fail. It is only despondency or unbelief that ever cries out, "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" Ps. 77:8. Faith and Scripture say: "Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." Isa. 25:1. "Thy faithful-

ness reacheth unto the clouds." Ps. 36:5. "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son." 1 Cor. 1:9. So remarkable are the truth and fidelity of God to all his engagements, that, at the dedication of the temple, Solomon felt bound to say before all Israel and the world, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant." 1 Kings 8:56. "Faithful is he that calleth you." 1 Thess. 5:24.

VII. Sometimes the question is raised, are the promises of God *conditional*, or are they *unconditional*?

Occasionally there have been rash and untrue things said on this point. Persons, who were not well informed, have spoken unadvisedly and unhappily. Perhaps no sensible man, who reveres the Scriptures, will deny that the promises of God respecting Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection and second coming, are all, in every ordinary sense of the word, unconditional. Not one of them was limited by any terms whatever.

Other promises of God are *conditional*, but let no one mistake this language. There are two distinct kinds of condition. One is a condition meritorious. If any such condition were now connected with the promises of God to us, they could be of no avail; for we have and can have no merits

of our own. We "have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." We deserve wrath, not pity. The only meritorious condition concerning man's salvation, was fulfilled in the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there are conditions of another kind, not meritorious, yet indispensable. Faith is a standing condition of salvation. This is called a condition *sine qua non*, that is, a condition without which there is no salvation. The same may be truly said of repentance. So also perseverance in holiness is an essential condition of salvation. No man can prove, and no good man ought to desire to prove that the unaccepted and unapplied righteousness of Jesus Christ can save any person.

A rejected Jesus is a stone of stumbling, not a rock of salvation. We must receive the Lord Christ by faith or miserably perish.

But this kind of condition ought to offend no man; I dare say it does offend no humble man. Has the starving beggar any right to find fault because he must receive and eat the food offered him in kindness, or die a miserable death? It is a condition of the continuance of natural life that men breathe the air. If they refuse to do that, they must soon give up the ghost. So it is a condition of salvation that men receive Christ and rest on Him alone.

VIII. The promises of God are neither few nor small, but *many* and *very large*. The apostle of the cir-

cumcision says, they are "exceeding great," literally the *greatest*; 2 Pet. 1:4. They include this life and the next. They reach from eternity to eternity. They suit all cases. They meet all emergencies. No man, who believes in Jesus and hates sin, needs any greater promises than God has already given, It is common with good men to wish that they had a firmer and stronger faith; but what intelligent child of God ever expressed a wish that God had promised more than he has already and graciously engaged to do?

IX. God's promises are *consolatory*. Peter calls them "precious." David says, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth;" Ps. 119: 103. Per-

haps there is not a promise in God's word, which has not been a staff to some, probably to many pilgrims. Now God's promises were intended to console his people; so we are expressly told: "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. 6: 17, 18. God cannot break his word; He cannot violate his oath. Our joy may abound.

X. All the promises of God are the *fruit of his free grace*. They were not obtained by our doings nor by

our sufferings. One apostle says, they "are given unto us," 2 Pet. 1 : 4. Another says, "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe," Gal. 3 : 22.

This property of the promises is important in many ways ;—important to the glory of divine grace ;—important to the comfort of humble Christians. For, if the promises had been obtained by money or price, by human merits or sufferings, by our own power or holiness, we should have had good ground of constant suspicion that we must do something more to secure the fulfillment of them. But they were all made most freely, irrevocably, and in a

way wholly sovereign. Perhaps there is nothing in the promises, which, to the reflecting mind, more endears them than the fact that they are wholly gracious. They all spring, as did creation itself, from love,—love infinite and eternal; rather, as the whole plan of redemption, from love infinite, eternal, unaccountable, unparalleled. Those are wonderful words of God by the weeping prophet: “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee,” Jer. 31: 3.

XI. Another charm about the promises is that they are *plain* and *easily understood*. The doctrines of Scripture are often mysterious. Prophecies, especially those unfulfilled,

are frequently quite beyond our power to interpret. But, if the promises are mysterious, it is chiefly because of the wondrous grace from which they spring, and from the immeasurable largeness of the blessings, which they convey. This plainness of the promises is of great importance to the learned and the unlearned Christian. During the last four years of his life, Dr. Isaac Watts was full of bodily infirmities. As his end approached he was very feeble. His biographer says: "When he was almost worn out by his infirmities, he observed, in conversation with a friend, that he remembered an aged minister used to say, that the most learned and knowing Christians, when they come to die, have only the same

plain promises of the gospel for their support, as the common and unlearned; 'and so,' said he 'I find it is the plain promises of the gospel that are my support, and I bless God they are plain promises, that do not require much labor and pains to understand them; for I can do nothing now but look into my Bible for some promise to support and live upon.' "

It is a remarkable fact that many of the promises *are in monosyllables*, as, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;" "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;" "I will be his God, and he shall be my son;" Ps. 126:5; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 21:7. But there are hundreds of promises containing longer words and just as plain as these; such as abound in

the Psalms, in Isaiah, in the Sermon on the Mount and in the fourteenth chapter of John. The difficulty in laying hold of these arises from the weakness of our faith and the greatness of the blessings pledged to us by the Lord, the Giver ; but, in themselves, they are plain.

XII. It is a pleasing fact that the promises are *often repeated*. We have "line upon line," promise upon promise. For example, take the promises made to the feeble. All good men feel that their strength is as nothing compared with their adversaries and their burdens. They know that God can hold them up and make them safe. And they believe that he will, if he has said he would. Let us then open God's word, and see what is

there written: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be;" "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms;" "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul;" "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall;" "Let the weak say, I am strong;" "In that day, shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them;" Deut. 33:25, 27; Ps. 138:3; Isa. 25:4; Joel 3:10; Zech. 12:8. Compare

John 10:28-30; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 3:8-10. In like manner it might be shown that, in a great variety of cases, God has heaped promise upon promise, respecting both temporal and spiritual blessings.

XIII. It has already been shown how God has *confirmed his promise by an oath* (Heb. 6:17, 18), greatly to the support and joy of his people. But he has done more. He has given *pledges and earnest*s of the good things he has engaged to bestow. His bringing his people through the Red Sea was a token of what he would do for them all, if they would but hope in him. His saving David from the lion and the bear was a token of all the prowess and deliverances of his subsequent life. So the regeneration of

one of his people is good ground of unwavering confidence in him for every coming emergency. Thus argued the apostle of the circumcision: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Pet. 1:3-5.

But the greatest confirmation of the promises ever given to the people of God is found in the *gift of Jesus Christ*. The old covenant was good, but the new is better, for it is "estab-

lished upon better promises;" Heb. 8:6. The apostle Paul sums up this matter in few words: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. Nay, he makes it, if possible, still stronger by saying: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. 5:10. Can stronger reasoning than this be possibly imagined? And, as if all this were not enough, the Holy Spirit is given as the pledge and earnest of salvation to all who believe in Jesus. Rom. 8:23: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we our-

selves groan within ourselves, etc.” The same is taught in 2 Cor. 1:21, 22: “Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

#### APPLICATION OF THESE TRUTHS TO CASES.

These truths and principles admit of a wide application. So long as we do not pervert the meaning of a gracious promise by applying it to persons or characters wholly diverse from those to whom the engagement was made, we can hardly go too far in comforting pious souls by the words spoken for the solace of saints of old. Let us then briefly apply what

has been said, to quite a number of cases.

### I.—OUR WORLDLY AFFAIRS.

The word of God requires us to “provide things honest in the sight of all men.” It declares that “if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;” Rom. 12 : 17 ; 1 Tim. 5 : 8. On the other hand, it as clearly teaches that “if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ;” and says, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.” 1 Jno. 2 : 15 ; Matt. 7 : 19. Compare Luke 12 : 22–30. These are our solemn

circumstances. Dangers are on either hand. If we are improvident, we sin; if we love the world, we no less sin. "We have been industrious and careful, and yet we are poor and in straits." Do the promises of God meet such a case? The answer is, they do fully meet it in both Testaments.

1. If we do our duty, we may safely leave results with God. Under a dispensation much darker than this, a prophet said: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the

God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon my high places." Heb. 3:17-19. Does not this cover the whole case? Take another promise: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water." Isa. 41:17, 18.

2. If we are poor, we shall have the less account to give for the abuse of worldly possessions. One of the richest monarchs when dying, said,

“What have I left of all my possessions except that they have fearfully swelled my account at the tribunal of God!” As riches increase, the responsibility increases also. To whom much is given, of him shall be much required.” Luke 12 : 48. Nor is this principle unjust, for, the world over, it is true that “to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

3. If we, instead of regretting that our worldly goods are small, do but remember that riches often prove a fatal snare, we shall probably be satisfied with little. It is very difficult to have riches and not trust in them. So teach both Scripture and experience. If they steal away our hearts from God and heavenly things, we

ought to be thankful that God withholds them. It was not an idle message that Paul sent to a young minister: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. 6: 17-19.

4. We ought never to forget that the great mass of God's people has been from the humbler walks of life. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are

called ; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" 1 Cor. 1 : 26-28 ; Jas. 2 : 5. When the church at Smyrna was bowed down with tribulation and poverty, He who never errs in judgment, said for her comfort : "Thou art rich ;" Rev. 2 : 9. He knew the truth and he spoke it.

5. To the pious poor, a state of depression shall not last always. It may last during natural life, but it shall then forever terminate. God can and will, in his own time,—the very best time,—exalt his humble servants, and enrich them for ever. “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.” Ps. 113: 7, 8.

6. “It is enough that the disciple be as his master and the servant as his Lord.” Jesus had not where to lay his head. During his public life, he seems to have subsisted very much upon the pittance given him by the poor. Let us love, and praise, and be like him. “Ye know the grace

of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. It is true that Christ's poverty here mentioned includes infinitely more than his want of earthly goods; but it includes that also. If Christ's followers have a better lot in life than their adorable master, all murmuring should be silenced.

7. Whatever may be the worldly estate of God's people, they have immense wealth. So says Paul: "All things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:21-23. Every child of God

has an indefeasible title to what our Saviour calls "the true riches," Luke 16: 11; and to what Paul calls the "riches of his grace," the "riches of his glory," and "the unsearchable riches of Christ," Rom. 9: 23; Eph. 1: 7; 3: 8. The same doctrine is taught at almost the very close of the canon of Scripture: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," Rev. 21: 7.

8. Moreover, such is the infinite wisdom employed in the arrangement of the covenant of grace that the most adverse things often result in the most blessed issues. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4: 17. So that "he that goeth forth and

weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Ps. 126 : 6.

9. Let us learn to imitate those great and good men who, in days of persecution, "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." Heb. 10 : 34. When the noble Marquis of Vico had all his property confiscated in one day, he said, "Their gold and silver perish with them who count all the wealth of the world worth one hour's communion with Jesus Christ." Whatever may be our worldly state we have an infallible assurance that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." And what more do we need than that? If

anything, it is found in Ps. 23 : 6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Ps. 34 : 9, "O fear the Lord ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger ; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Ps. 37 : 3, "Trust in the Lord and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Matt. 6 : 25-32.

io. The everlasting establishment of the redeemed in glory is enough to settle every right mind on such a subject. No good man on earth believes that Lazarus now regrets his earthly wants, or has ever looked

back upon his sores and sorrows, and wished he had not felt them.

11. Then the good man has God's blessing on his person and his estate. And a little with his blessing is better than much with his curse. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Ps. 37 : 16 ; Pr. 10 : 22 ; 15 : 16. How large that blessing is may be seen in Deut. 28 : 3-8 : "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest

out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face; they shall come out against thee one way and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store houses, and in all thou setteth thine hand unto, and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Yea, more.

12. Observation shows how wonderfully God cares for his people. David says, Ps. 37: 25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

#### II.—OUR AFFLICTIONS AND TRIBU- LATIONS.

The afflictions and distresses of

God's people are both many and great. His waves and his billows often go over them. Our tribulations are exceedingly varied and commonly very unexpected. There is often an unaccountable strangeness in them. It was peculiarly trying on the patriarch to be so sadly separated from Joseph. David received some of his worst treatment from those who had received great kindness and services at his hands. How often does poverty come upon those who were born to affluence! But it should mightily quiet us to remember,

1. That God gave us fair notice that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts 14:22. The very first clause in the law of membership in

Christ's house is: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," Matt. 16: 24.

2. One dark sign attending the course of many a professor is his freedom from affliction. It was when Judah was in the saddest moral state that Jehovah said: "Why should ye be stricken any more?" Isa. 1: 5. And Paul expressly says: "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." Heb. 12: 8.

3. Affliction, so far from being a token against us, is more than once in Scripture spoken of as an attendant of discipleship. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom

the Father chasteneth not?"; "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Heb. 12:7; Rev. 3:10.

4. There is an unfailing promise of good to the people of God from all their sufferings. Indeed, Paul expressly informs us that God chastens us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness;" and again, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Heb. 12:10; Rom. 8:28.

5. God is with all his people; but, in a very remarkable manner, is he with his sorrowful ones. This is just what he promised long centuries ago: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that

formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isa. 43: 1-3. Did the three faithful young Hebrews ever have such a view of the Son of God as in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace? Dan. 3: 25. Such favors are not granted to ordinary sufferers. It is worth while to be scourged, and have one's feet made fast in the stocks, to behold such wonders as were wrought in

the jail at Philippi. Acts 16:25-40.

6. All these trials will make heaven the sweeter. There is no evidence that, after his conversion, Paul ever reckoned amiss ; and he says, “ I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ;” and he has preserved in one of his epistles what some regard as one of the songs sung in the primitive church. Whether this be so or not, the words are precious and are inspired : “ For, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer, we shall also reign with him : if we deny him, he also will deny us : if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful : he cannot deny

himself." Rom. 8:18; 2 Pet. 2:11-13.

Let us be therefore much more solicitous to get good out of our afflictions than to be rid of them. It is not necessary that we live lives of ease, but it is necessary that we learn to derive benefit from affliction. That is a sad record made of a famous people by one of their great prophets: "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." A later prophet brings a similar charge: "They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and

stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets ;” Jer. 5 : 3 ; Zech. 7 : 11, 12. And, as if all this were not enough,

7. God has promised full deliverance from all trouble at the right time and in the right way. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.” “Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold ;” “Come, and let us return unto the Lord ; for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath

smitten and he will bind us up;" Ps. 34:19; 68:13; Hos. 6:1. Yea, more,

8. Until he shall remove the affliction, he will give strength and support to every one that hopes in his mercy. "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble;" "Thou hast given commandment to save me: for thou art my rock and my fortress;" "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind" "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." Ps. 37:24, 39; 71:3; Isa. 27:8; 2 Cor. 1:5. Surely with such promises

the pious may well be quiet and submissive under any trials.

### III.—OUR TRIALS AND DANGERS IN YOUTH.

He must be silly who does not see that the young have great trials and are in great danger. Their want of experience is sadly to their disadvantage. Even when they have been taught of God so as to see and embrace the way of life, they know but little of the treachery of their own hearts, of the deceitfulness of the world, and of the machinations of the Wicked One. How natural for such to cry out for some one to help! Happy would it be for every one to hear the call of love: "Wilt thou not from this time cry

unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" Jer. 3:4. Our blessed Lord himself was once a youth, and knows from experience the trials of the young. If they can secure the friendship of this blessed One, all will be safe. Continually is he fulfilling the prediction: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Isa. 40:11. The case of the young and feeble, particularly those who feel themselves to be in great need of spiritual succor, is well provided for in the promises of God. Take a single passage: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the

ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." Isa. 40: 28-31.

To such as have had pious parents the promises are peculiarly rich and numerous. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge;" "The just man walketh in his integrity;" "The children of thy servants shall

continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." Prov. 14:26; 20:7; Ps. 102:28. Pious young people also have an interest in all the general promises given to such as make God their trust.

#### IV.—THE MIDDLE AGED.

These also have trials peculiar to themselves. The burdens of life come upon them with great weight. As riches increase they are increased also that consume them. They hardly provide for one class of wants before others clamor for their attention. Their duty is clear: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Ps. 55:22. What such need is not less toil, or less

care, but more resolution and greater confidence in God, who says: "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord;" "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense;" "I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord." Ps. 21:34; Isa. 35:4; Zech. 10:12. Strong men ought not to behave like little children, or like the aged and infirm. "Quit you like men, be strong." 1 Cor. 16:13. It is a shame to be chicken-hearted when you ought to be intrepid.

## V.—THE AGED.

For these also, God has made ample provision. They have indeed great sorrows. They have seen better days, but they have now come to the years when they have no pleasure in them, The sun, the light, the moon and the stars are darkened; and the clouds return after the rain. The keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the window are darkened. Fears are in the way, and the almond-tree flourishes, and the grasshopper is a burden and desire fails. To such aged persons as trust in him God has promised, "Even to your old age, I

am he ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you ; I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you." " Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to shew that the Lord is upright : he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him ;" " This God is our God for ever and ever ; he will be our guide even unto death ;" Iſa. 46 : 4 ; Ps. 48 : 14 ; 92 : 14. No wonder if those who have these and like promises, " come to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

#### VI.—THE WIDOW AND ORPHAN.

Among the most trying situations in life are those of the widow and or-

phan. Such is the common judgment of mankind. Nor do the Scriptures intimate anything to the contrary, but rather confirm it. The trials of such are exceedingly great even where Christianity casts the shield of her protection around them. But God understands all their cases and has abundantly provided for them. Listen to his word; "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;" "A father of the fatherless and a judge of widows is God in his holy habitation;" "The Lord relieveth the fatherless and the widow;" "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me;" Ps. 27:10; 68:5; 146:9; Jer. 49:11. A mother was dying.

She was surrounded by Christian friends. She called for her new-born infant, and hopefully trusting in God, committed it to those in whom she had been taught by experience to trust, charging them to train it for the work of God among the heathen. She then bade farewell to earth. The child lived and waxed stronger and stronger. God had heard the maternal vow. Angels watched over the babe, and the boy, and the young man. The Holy Spirit changed his heart. He rose to great and amazing honors. Very few have done so much for the salvation of men and the glory of God. If you would know the whole story, read the life of Christian Frederic Swartz.

## VII.—TIMES OF COMMOTIONS.

In every age, our own not excepted, the most peaceful and quiet families have heard the blast of the tocsin of war. Sometimes civil war has made all hands faint and all hearts melt. Pangs and sorrows have taken hold of the strong, for the day of the Lord, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, had come to lay the land desolate. The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof gave not their wonted light, and God made a man more precious than fine gold. The great and good man then stood and cried, "I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound

of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; the mountains trembled and all the hills moved lightly, and the fruitful place became a wilderness, and lo, a voice is heard crying, saying, Wo is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers. At such a time, "vain is the help of man." But, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe;" "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord;" Prov. 18:10; Ps. 112:7. So that the most fearful may say, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety;" "Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth;"

Ps. 4:8; 124:8. Compare Ps. 121:1-8.

#### VIII.—A VARIETY OF CASES.

In one of the songs of Zion the sacred penman, having called on his soul to praise the Lord and having recounted some of the deeds of Jehovah, says of him that it is he, "Which executeth judgment for the oppressed; which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners: the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous: the Lord preserveth the strangers." Ps. 146:7-9. Any good concordance will, under the words oppressed, hungry, prisoners, blind, bowed down, and stranger,

open up fountains of joy and comfort to humble, believing souls. Particularly examine Ps. 9:9; 10:18; 103:6; Ps. 107:9, 36; Ps. 79:11; 102:20; Isa. 42:7; Isa. 29:18; 42:7, 16; Ps. 145:14; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11.

#### IX.—THE TROUBLE OF INDWELLING SIN.

Sad indeed would be the case of the true believer if he were to be left always to contend with inbred corruption. He knows by sad experience that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Such have been his narrow escapes, like those of David from the spear of Saul, that, like the son of Jesse, he is ready to say, "I shall one day perish by the hand of mine ene-

my." Like Paul, he has discovered that when he would do good, evil is present with him. In bitterness he cries out, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:24. The conflict is fearful but not desperate. The word of the great Shepherd is out and cannot be broken: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:27-29. And blessed Paul has shown in his powerful argument on the subject that the justification of

God's chosen in Christ is irrevocable. Rom. 8:33-39. In these conflicts the believer must fall entirely upon the promises of God, who alone can subdue our iniquities, as he shall finally subdue all things unto himself. The true doctrine on this subject however, has long been understood by the children of God: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me," Micah 7:8. When the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, was grievously afflicting Paul, Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," 2 Cor. 12:9. He does in mercy visit the iniquities of his people with the stripes of fatherly chastisement, but he will not give over to the power of

destruction any soul that hates "every false way," and lives and dies abhorring that which is evil.

X. One of the standing annoyances of many is the *apprehension of death*. Bildad called death "the king of terrors," Job 18:14. But, by death, Jesus Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death. He entered his dark dominions, and spoiled him of his possessions. It is for a joy that believers find the destruction of this enemy so early foretold and connected with the death and resurrection of the Saviour: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," Isa.

26: 19. The cotemporary of the evangelical prophet utters in the Master's name the glad words: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," Hos. 13: 14. And at the close of a powerful argument on the subject, Paul utters these words of triumph: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 15: 55-57.

Accordingly, in the history of the church, we have thousands of pages

filled with accounts of the triumphs of God's people over death in his most frightful form. Not a day passes without some saint of God on the verge of the grave leaving testimony to the power of the grace of God in sustaining his dying people. When Dr. Grosvenor was told, "You have seen the end of Dr. Watts; and you will soon follow him; what think you of death?" "Think of it?" he replied, "why, when death comes, I shall smile upon him, if God will smile upon me." Ralph Erskine's last words were, "Victory, victory." Dr. John H. Rice's last words were, "Mercy is triumphant." Jeremiah Evarts left the world far from home, among strangers, saying, "O wonderful, wonderful, wonderful glory! We

cannot comprehend; wonderful glory! I will praise him, I will praise him! Wonderful—glory—Jesus reigneth.” It would be easy to fill volumes with like blessed testimonies.

## REMARKS.

1. Let us look a little at some of the general promises of Scripture. Here are a few of them: “Them that honor me will I honor,” 1 Sam. 2: 30. Here is its companion in the New Testament: “If any man serve me, him will my Father honor,” John 12: 26. Here is one from the pen of David: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,” Ps. 30: 5. And here is one from the pen of Paul: “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. 4:17. With David it is "a *night*;" with Paul, "a *moment*;" with David it is "weeping;" with Paul, "light affliction;" with David there is a "morning of joy;" with Paul, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Solomon says: "A good man obtaineth favor of the Lord," Pr. 12:2. Paul speaks thus: "We are justified freely by his grace," Rom. 3:24. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," Rom. 5:20. Afterwards, he speaks of "the riches of his grace," and of the "exceeding riches of his grace," Eph. 1:7; 2:7. Solomon says: "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness and hon-

or," Pr. 21 : 21. Paul says, " All things are for your sakes," 2 Cor. 4 : 15 ; and teaches that though God's people " have nothing," yet they " possess all things," 2 Cor. 6 : 10. Jesus says, " Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14 : 19. Who has ever seen a child of God with faith so weak as to doubt whether his blessed Saviour was living? Long years after he ascended from Olivet, he, in a wonderful manner, revealed himself to John, and assured him and all the churches, of his living existence and supreme authority : " I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death," Rev. 1 : 18. Well, if Christ lives, his people shall live also ; they cannot perish. Here

is another promise : “ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ; and he will show them his covenant,” Ps. 25 : 14.

In the New Testament that which excels even this is : “ I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,” John 14 : 16, 17. Or, if any prefer it, here is another : “ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you,” John 14 : 27. Then, as it were for ever to hush every unbelieving thought, he says : “ Fear thou

not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isa. 41: 10. To crown all, he says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," Heb. 13: 5.

2. How clear is the obligation to *make ourselves acquainted with God's word*. The Bible is not a charm-book, though it is a charming book. It must be known, and meditated upon and practiced; otherwise how can it profit? The Saviour himself said, "Search the Scriptures," John 5: 39. How did our Lord resist temptation when the great adversary attempted to seduce him? Not by ingenious argument, but by saying, "It is writ-

ten, It is written, It is written." He drew against the tempter "the sword of the Spirit." Its heavenly metal was irresistible. Satan fled from before it. How can the promises cheer, or guide or comfort one, who knows not that God made them? There was prepared during the last century a little work by Rev. Samuel Clarke, D.D. It is a collection of the promises of Scripture. It has undergone many editions, and has doubtless done a world of good. In some respects it might, perhaps, be improved. But that can be said of all human works. Dr. Watts says, "he would dare put it into the hands of every Christian on earth;" and well he might, for it is made up of pure Scripture, without note or comment.

It would be well to study it. But it is still better to study the whole word of God ; for there we see the promises in their connection ; and there we find many gracious engagements not given in Clarke. O “search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they,” says Christ, “which testify of me.” We have as much need of the comfort of the Scriptures as we have of patience. Rom. 15 : 4.

3. The promises of Scripture respecting *prayer are very full and clear*. The word of God admits that we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but it comes to our relief when it adds, “The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered,” Rom. 8 : 26.

In his sermon on the mount our blessed Lord said : "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened," Matt. 7 : 7, 8. " If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children : how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," Luke 11 : 13. " If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," John 15 : 7. Even the Old Testament long since declared of God, " The prayer of the upright is his delight — He heareth the prayer of the righteous." Prov. 15 : 8, 29.

And the Apostle of the circumcision says, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers," 1 Pet. 3:12. Prayer constitutes a part of every form of religion known to man. Without it men are practical atheists. It forms a part of the worship due to God in the closet, in the family, in the social circle and in the great congregation. It is one of the first exercises of the new-born soul. Acts 9:11. It belongs to every part of the Christian life. Stephen entered heaven by prayer. He who believes not in the efficacy of prayer is "a reed shaken with the wind." The only cure for such uncertainty is found in the promises of God and the examples of Scripture. Let this matter be unalterably settled.

4. It is not wise for Christians to *harass themselves respecting the future events of life*. We know not what shall be on the morrow. The afflictions that befall good men are commonly such as they could by no possibility anticipate. Each day will bring with it sufficient cares and duties without our conjuring up others. In all cases it is our wisdom to obey the Scripture: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring birth thy righteousness as the light; and thy judgment as the noonday." Ps. 37: 3-6.

5. We cannot be *too guarded against unbelief* in every shape and degree. Total unbelief is the ruin of the world. Partial unbelief is the bane of piety. The just live by faith, and walk by faith. What we all most want is not fewer trials, afflictions or temptations, but *stronger faith*. In a letter to his aged mother, Dr. Alexander says, "The great secret of true comfort lies in a single word, TRUST." "Cast your burdens on the Lord, and he will sustain" them. If your evidences of being in the favor of God are obscured, if you are doubtful of your acceptance with him, still go directly to him by faith; that is, trust in his mercy and in Christ's merits. Rely simply on his word of promise. Be not afraid to exercise confidence.

There can be no deception in depending entirely on the word of God. It is not presumption to trust in Him when he has commanded us to do so. We dishonor him by our fearfulness and want of confidence. We thus call in question his faithfulness and his goodness. O “stagger not at any promise of God through unbelief.” Jacob was a great and good man, mighty in prayer, and a prophet of God. And yet even he misinterpreted God’s dealings with him: “Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me.” Gen. 42:36. But the good man lived to see that this was an utter mistake. “What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.”

6. *Saints are better off than sinners.*

The very principles of the divine government which make wrath certain to the wicked, make blessedness sure to the righteous. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall, of the Spirit, reap life everlasting." Gal. 6: 7, 8. In showing his uprightness, God will surely effect deliverance for his people, and as surely put down his enemies.

7. A great end of the promises of God is to *purify the hearts of his people*. So teach both Paul and Peter. The Apostle to the Gentiles, having recited to the Corinthians some of God's gracious offers and engage-

ments, says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7:1. And Peter says, that there "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Pet. 1:4. It is one of the horrid abuses of sound doctrine and of precious promises by Antinomians, that they take the glorious things of God and make them at least an apology for sin. Yea, some of them make Christ, himself, the minister of sin; denying that holiness is an evidence of acceptance; contending that sin

can in no way damage God's chosen people, and that to question our faith is to question God's veracity. All such errors are to be abhorred.

8. All the promises would come short of the necessities of God's people if they contained no assurance of a *state of blessedness beyond this life*. But, thanks to his name, there is "a promise left us of entering into his rest." "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 Jno. 2:25. Heavenly bliss is expressed in a variety of forms. Our best conceptions of it are poor and imperfect. This results in part from our unbelief. To Nicodemus Christ said, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believed not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly

things?" Jno. 3:12. But it results also from the exceeding glory of celestial objects. Even Paul, when he came back from his wonderful visions, could give us no better account than this: "I heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." 2 Cor. 12:4. We have no experience to enable us to understand what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, and what the heart of man has not conceived.

9. *Christ is every thing.* It is in him that the promises are Yea and Amen. Without that confirmation we could not rely upon them as we now do; for he is not only our surety to God, but he is God's image to us. How precious are the predictions respecting him! "A man shall be as a hiding

place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isa. 32: 2. "Who-soever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." 1 Jno. 4: 15. Let all saints unite in saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." Eph. 1: 3, 4, 7, 8.

GLORY BE TO GOD.

## HYMN.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word !  
What more can he say than to you he hath said,  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled ?

In every condition, in sickness, in health,  
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,  
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,  
"As thy days may demand, shall thy strength  
ever be.

"Fear not, I am with thee, O ! be not dismayed,  
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid ;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to  
stand,  
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow ;  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee, thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply ;  
The flames shall not hurt thee ; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

“E’en down to old age, all my people shall prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love ;  
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes ;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to  
shake,  
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”

HE IS FAITHFUL THAT PROMISED.