

GLORIOUS PROMISES.

SAFE WALKING.—"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep His covenant and his testimonies."—Psalms xxv. 10.—The paths of the Lord! My soul! never follow thine own paths. If thou dost so, thou wilt be in danger often of following sight rather than faith—choosing the evil, and refusing the good. But "commit thy way unto the Lord, and He shall bring it to pass." Let this be thy prayer, "Show me Thy ways; O Lord, teach me Thy paths." Oh! for Caleb's spirit, "wholly to follow the Lord my God,"—to follow Him when self must be sacrificed, and hardships must be borne, and trials await me. To "walk with God,"—to ask in simple faith, "What wouldst Thou have me to do?"—to have no will of my own, save this, that God's will is to be my will. Here is safety,—here is happiness. Fearlessly follow the Guiding Pillar. He will lead you by a right way, though it may be by a way of hardship, and crosses, and losses, and privations, to the city of habitation. Oh! the blessedness of thus lying passive in the hands of God; saying, "Undertake thou for me!"—dwelling with holy gratitude on past mercies and interpositions—taking these as pledges of future faithfulness and love—hearing His voice behind us, amid life's manifold perplexities, exclaiming, "This is the way, walk ye in it!" "Happy," surely, "are every people who are in such a case!" Happy, reader! will it be for thee, if thou canst form the resolve in a strength greater than thine own: "This God shall be my God for ever and ever; He shall be my Guide even unto death!"

LOVE IN CHASTISEMENT.—"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."—Rev. iii. 19.—Sorrowing believer! what couldst thou wish more than this? Thy furnace is severe; but look at this assurance of Him who lighted it. Love is the fuel that feeds its flames! Its every spark is love! Kindled by a Father's hand, and designed as a special pledge of a Father's love, How many of His dear children has He so rebuked and chastened; and all, all for one reason, "I love them!" The myriads in glory have passed through these furnace-fires,—there they were chosen—there they were purified, sanctified, and made "vessels meet for the Master's use"; the dross and the alloy purged; that the pure metal might remain. And art thou to claim exemption from the same discipline? Art thou to think it strange concerning these same fiery trials that may be trying thee? Rather exult in them as thine adoption privilege. Envy not those who are strangers to the refining flames—who are "without chastisement"; rather surely, the severest discipline with a Father's love, than the fullest earthly cup without the Father's mind. Oh! for grace to say, when the furnace is hottest, and the rod sorest, "Even so, Father." And what after all, is the severest of thy chastisements in comparison with what thy sins have deserved? Dost thou murmur under a Father's correcting love? What would it have been to have stood the wrath of an unpropitiated Judge, and that too for ever? Surely, in the light of eternity, the heaviest pang of earth is, indeed, "a light affliction!"

A CONDITION IN CHASTISEMENT.—"It need be."—1 Peter, i. 6.—Three gracious words! Not one of all my tears shed for naught! Not one stroke of the rod unneeded, or that might have been spared! Thy Heavenly Father loves thee too much, and too tenderly, to bestow harsher correction than thy case requires. Is it loss of health, or loss of wealth, or loss of beloved friends? Be still!—there was a need be. We are no judges of what that "need be" is; often through aching hearts we are forced to exclaim, "Thy judgments are a great deep!" But God here pledges Himself, that there will not be one redundant thorn in the believer's chaplet of suffering. No burden too heavy will be laid on him, and no sacrifice too great exacted from him. He will "temper the wind to the shorn lamb." Whenever the "need be" has accomplished its end, then the rod is removed—the chastisement suspended—the furnace quenched. "If need be!" Oh! what a pillow on which to rest thy aching head,—that there is not a drop in all thy bitter cup but what a God of love saw to be absolutely necessary. Wilt thou not trust Him, even though thou canst not trace the mystery of His dealings? Not too curiously prying into the "Why it is"; but satisfied that "So it is," and, therefore, that all must be well! "Although thou sayest thou canst not see Him, yet judgment is before Him, therefore trust thou in Him!"

STRENGTH TO THE WEAK.—"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench."—Matt. xii. 20.—Will Jesus accept such a heart as mine?—this erring, treacherous, traitor heart? The past! how many forgotten vows,—broken covenants,—prayerless days! How often have I made new resolutions, and as often has the reed succumbed to the first blast of temptation, and the burning flax been well-nigh quenched by guilty omissions and guiltier commissions! Oh! my soul! thou art low indeed,—the things that remain seem "ready to die." But thy Saviour God will not give thee "over unto death." The reed is bruised; but He will not pluck it up by the roots. The flax is reduced to a smoking ember; but He will fan the decaying flame. Why wound thy loving Saviour's heart by these repented declarations? He will not—cannot give thee up. Go, mourn thy weakness and unbelief. Cry unto the Strong for strength. Weary and faint one! thou hast an Omnipotent arm to lean on. "He fainteth not, neither is weary!" Listen to His own gracious assurance, "Fear 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!" Leaving all thy false props and refuges, be this thy resolve:—"In the Lord put I my trust, why say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?"

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE DESPONDING.—"I am that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."—John i. 37.—"Cast out!" My soul! how oft might this have been in thy history? Thou hast cast off thy God,—might He not oft have "cast out" thee? Yes! cast thee out as fuel for the fire of His wrath,—a sapless, fruitless cumberer. And yet, notwithstanding all thine ungrateful requital for His unmerited forbearance, He is still declaring, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Thy sins may be legion-like,—the sand of the sea may be their befitting type,—the thought of their turpitude and aggravation may be ready to overwhelm thee; but be still! thy patient God waits to be gracious! Oh! be deeply humbled and softened because of thy guilt, resolve to dedicate thyself anew to His service, and so coming, "He will by no means cast thee out!" Despond not by reason of former shortcomings,—thy sins are great, but thy Saviour's merits are greater. He is willing to forget all the past, and sink it in oblivion, if there be present love, and the promise of future obedience. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" Ah! how different is God's verdict from man's. After such sins as thine, man's sentence would have been, "I will in no wise receive!" But "it is better to fall into the hands of God, than into the hands of man;" for He says, "I will in no wise cast out!"

PEACE IN BELIEVING.—"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth."—John xii. 27.—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." "Perfect peace!"—what a blessed attainment! My soul! is it thine? Sure I am it is not, if thou art seeking it in a perishable world, or in the perishable creature, or in thy perishable self. Although thou hast all that the world would call enviable and happy, unless thou hast peace in God, and with God, all else is unworthy of the name: a spurious thing, which the first breath of adversity will shatter, and the hour of death utterly annihilate! Perfect peace! What is it? It is the peace of forgiveness. It is the peace arising out of a sense of God reconciled through the blood of the everlasting covenant,—resting sweetly on the bosom and the work of Jesus,—to Him committing thine eternal all. My soul! stay thyself on God, that so this blessed peace may be thine. Thou hast tried the world. It has deceived thee. Prop after prop of earthly scaffolding has yielded, and tottered, and fallen. Has thy God ever done so? Ah! this false and counterfeit world-peace may do well for the world's work, and the world's day of prosperity. But test it in the hour of sorrow; and what can it do for thee when most it is needed? On the other hand, what though thou hast no other blessing on earth to call thine own? Thou art rich indeed, if thou canst look upwards to Heaven, and say with "unpresumptuous smile," "I am at peace with God."

The ministry of Christ has fewer trials, larger spiritual emoluments and rewards, brighter inducements, higher development, grander joys, than any other occupation in all the earth.