

## GLORIOUS PROMISES.

COMFORTING GRACE.—“*I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*”—John xiv. 18. Blessed Jesus! How Thy presence sanctifies trial, takes loneliness from the chamber of sickness, and the sting from the chamber of death! Bright and Morning Star! precious at all times, Thou art never so precious as in “the dark and cloudy day”! The bitterness of sorrow is well worth enduring to have Thy promised consolations. How well qualified, Thou Man of Sorrows, to be my Comforter! How well fitted to dry my tears, Thou who didst shed so many Thyself! What are *my* tears—my sorrows—my crosses—my losses, compared with Thine, who didst shed first Thy tears, and then Thy blood for me? Mine are all deserved, and infinitely less than deserved. How different, O Spotless Lamb of God, those pangs which rent Thy guiltless bosom! How sweet these comforts Thou hast promised to the comfortless, when I think of them as flowing from an Almighty *Fellow-Sufferer*,—“A brother born for adversity,”—the “Friend that sticketh closer than any brother!”—one who can say, with all the refined sympathies of a holy exalted human nature, “I know your sorrows!” My soul! calm thy griefs! There is not a sorrow thou canst experience, but Jesus, in the treasury of grace, has an exact corresponding solace, “In the multitude of the sorrows I have in my heart, thy comforts delight my soul!”

NEEDFUL GRACE.—“*As thy days, so shall thy strength be.*”—Deut. xxxiii. 25.—God does not give grace till the hour of trial comes. But when it does come, the amount of grace, and the nature of the special grace required is vouchsafed. My soul! do not dwell with painful apprehension on the future. Do not anticipate coming sorrows; perplexing thyself with the grace needed for future emergencies; to-morrow will bring its promised grace along with to-morrow’s trials. God wishing to keep His people humble, and dependent on Himself, gives not a stock of grace; He metes it out for every day’s exigencies, that they may be constantly “travelling between their own emptiness and Christ’s fullness,”—their own weakness and Christ’s strength. But when the exigency comes, thou mayest safely trust an Almighty arm to bear thee through! Is there, now, some “thorn in the flesh” sent to lacerate thee? Thou mayest have been entreating the Lord for its removal. Thy prayer has, doubtless, been heard and answered, but not in the way, perhaps, expected or desired by thee. The “thorn” may still be left to goad, the trial may still be left to buffet, but “more grace” has been given to endure them. Oh! how often have His people thus been led to glory in their infirmities and triumph in their afflictions, seeing the power of Christ rests more abundantly upon them. The strength which the hour of trial brings often makes the Christian a wonder to himself!

RESTORING GRACE.—“*I will heal your backslidings.*”—Hosea xiv. 4.—Wandering again! And has He not left me to perish? Stumbling and straying on the dark mountains, away from the Shepherd’s eye and the Shepherd’s fold, shall He not leave the erring wanderer to the fruit of his own ways, and his truant heart to go hopelessly onward in its career of guilty estrangement? “My thoughts,” says God, “are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways.” Man would say, “Go, perish! ungrateful apostate!” God says, “Return, ye backsliding children!” The Shepherd will not, cannot suffer the sheep to perish He has purchased with His own blood. How wondrous His forbearance towards it!—tracking its guilty steps, and ceasing not the pursuit till He lays the wanderer on His shoulders, and returns with it to His fold rejoicing! My soul! why increase by farther departures thine own distance from the fold?—why lengthen the dreary road thy gracious Shepherd has to traverse in bringing thee back? Delay not thy return! Provoke no longer His patience; venture no farther on forbidden ground. He waits with outstretched arms to welcome thee once more to His bosom. Be humble for the past, trust Him for the future. Think of thy former backslidings, and tremble; think of His forbearance, and be filled with holy gratitude; think of His promised grace, “and take courage.”

PARDONING GRACE.—“*Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*”—Isaiah i. 18.—My soul! Thy God summons thee to His audience chamber! Infinite purity seeks to reason with infinite vileness! Deity stoops to speak to dust! Dread not

the meeting. It is the most gracious, as well as wondrous of all confidences. Jehovah Himself breaks silence! He utters the best tidings a lost soul, or a lost world can hear: “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses.” What! *Scarlet* sins and *crimson* sins! and these all to be forgiven and forgotten! The just God “justifying” the unjust!—the mightiest of all beings, the kindest of all! Oh! what is there in thee to merit such love as this? Thou mightest have known thy God only as the “consuming fire,” and had nothing before thee save “a fearful looking for of vengeance!” This gracious conference bids thee dispel thy fears! It tells thee it is no longer a “fearful,” but a *blessed* thing to fall into His hands! Hast thou closed with these His overtures? Until thou art at peace with Him, happiness must be a stranger to thy bosom. Though thou hast all else beside, bereft of God thou must be “bereft indeed.” Lord! I come! As Thy pardoning grace is freely tendered, so shall I freely accept it. May it be mine, even now, to listen to the gladdening accents, “Son! Daughter! be of good cheer! thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee!”

RESTRAINING GRACE.—“*Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*”—Luke xxiii. 31—32.—What *could* does this unfold! Satan tempting—Jesus praying! Satan sifting—Jesus pleading! “The strong man assailing—the stronger than the strong” beating him back! Believer! here is the past history and present secret of thy safety in the midst of temptation. An interceding Saviour was at thy side, saying to every threatening wave, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no further!” God often permits His people to be on the very verge of the precipice, to remind them of their own weakness, *but never further than the verge!* The restraining hand and grace of Omnipotence is ready to rescue them. “Although he fall, yet shall he not be cast down utterly; (and why?) for the Lord upholdeth him with His right hand!” The wolf may be prowling for his prey; but what can he do when the Shepherd is always there, tending with the watchful eye that “neither slumbers nor sleeps”? Who cannot subscribe to the testimony, “When my foot slipped, Thy mercy, O Lord! held me up?” Who can look back on his past pilgrimage, and fail to see it crowded with Ebenezers, with this inscription, “Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling”? My soul, where wouldst thou have been this day, hadst thou not been “kept” by the power of God?

ALL-SUFFICIENT GRACE.—“*God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good word and work.*”—2 Cor. ix. 8.—“All-sufficiency in all things?” Believer! surely thou art “thoroughly furnished!” Grace is no scanty thing, doled out in pittance. It is a glorious treasury, which the key of prayer can always unlock; but never empty. A fountain, “full, flowing, ever flowing, overflowing.” Mark these three ALL’s in this precious promise. It is a threefold link in a golden chain, let down from a throne of grace by a God of grace. “All grace!”—“all-sufficiency!” in “all things!” and these to “abound.” Oh! precious thought! My wants cannot impoverish that inexhaustible treasury of grace! Myriads are hourly hanging on it, and drawing from it, and yet there is no diminution: “Out of that fullness all we too may receive, and grace for grace!” My soul, dost not thou love to dwell on that all-abounding grace? Thine own insufficiency in everything met with an “all-sufficiency in all things!” Grace in all circumstances and situations, in all vicissitudes and changes, in all the varied phases of the Christian’s being. Grace in sunshine and storm—in health and in sickness—in life and in death. Grace for the old believer and the young believer—the tried believer, and the weak believer, and the tempted believer. Grace *for* duty, and grace *in* duty—grace to carry the joyous cup with a steady hand—grace to drink the bitter cup with an unmurmuring spirit—grace to have prosperity sanctified—grace to say, through tears, “Thy will be done!”

## DARKNESS OF DOUBT TEMPORARY.—

“I stoop  
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud.  
It is but for a time: I press God’s lamp  
Close to my breast: its splendours soon or late  
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge ere long.”  
—Browning.