

them to every motive, and attacks every point in the heart's citadel. He surrounds and hems us in with promises. He deluges us with promises to force us from our sinful refuges and sweep us into the kingdom. The sinner who goes to destruction has again and again to stumble over God's promises, and is lost only by hard struggling against them.

Not only are the promises in God's own words, but he gives full liberty also to the Bible writers to promise for him. It is as if he had given them blank forms and said, "whatever you see my people need; and in whatever variety of expression the promises will make the deepest impressions upon their hearts, so fill them up over my name, and I will honor them all." This same privilege he seems to give to his people. Said a Christian brother, "I thank God for his 'blank promises.' I read, 'ask and ye shall receive' and 'whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do,' and Jesus does not say what I shall ask, and so I am at liberty to fill up the blank myself. I insert whatever blessing I need. I put in the names of my children and friends and call upon God to honor his promises."

The Christian, the inquiring soul, the impenitent can wander nowhere this side of eternity, where feeling a desire to return to God he can say: "Here God's promises can not reach me." Blessed be God for his promises! They include the gifts of Pardon and Salvation from sin. They include also growth in grace, and sanctification through the Holy Spirit; peace and triumph in death and an abundant entrance into eternal life. The promises never leave us from the beginning until having led us through all the trials of life, and down through the grave, they land us safely with God. Then let the child of God dismiss his anxieties and go fearlessly forward surrounded and provided for at every step by these immutable promises. No accident can break them. No tide of earth can sweep them away: The gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

TO THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST.

In these dark and cloudy days, it is well for us to look to the source from whence our help cometh—to the rock of salvation on which we stand; for vain is the help of man. Outward circumstances easily affect us, and offer an apology for coldness and indifference to the cause of Christ. We think we do well to look at the stormy waves of the sea of Galilee, rather than to him who walks upon them; and yet our only safety lies in looking to him. He is Head *over all things* to the church, and can make all things contribute to the advancement of his cause on the earth. Evil, sin, and all unrighteousness are the predominant principles of the world. Now and then they reach a higher point of culmination, as at present; but at this we must not be moved nor shaken in our purpose. Jehovah reigns. Christ ever liveth. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Our duty, then, is plain. Our path runs through this world in a straight line, to the city of the Great King. We have nothing to do but to walk therein, and induce all others to do the same. This is the way, walk

ye in it, it is the voice of our Great Leader. He trod it before we did, and has left his footprints in blood along it. If it is rough and thorny, it is safe, and will lead us to the desired haven. I wish to point out a few things at the present crisis—demanding our special attention.

In the first place, let us remember, that the church is a *spiritual body*, composed of living, active, loving members. It is in the world—not of it. Our citizenship is in the heavens. Our names are enrolled there in the Lamb's book of life. Our aims, our objects, our hopes, our principles, are all spiritual. One body—one Spirit. Know you that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Our life is a life of faith, not of sense. The world and the fashion of it are passing away: the objects of our faith are permanent and abiding. "The times change, and we change with them," is a maxim of Cæsar's, not of our Lord's. The times change, we stand firm, is our true maxim. The things temporal should not affect us, but the things eternal should claim our highest, holiest affections.

Let us, in the second place, retain the faith once delivered to the saints, pure and unmixed with any foreign element. Carefully guard against every attempt to pervert the truth, to turn away the disciples from it, or to withhold it from the world. The cross has not lost either its offence or its power. It still lifts up its head above the surging billows which would cover it, and shines like a beacon on the sea of life. The darker the night, the brighter it shines. The more tempestuous and fearful, the greater the need. Keep thine eye, mariner upon it. Be not deceived by false lights: they will lead to dangerous seas, perilous breakers, and to certain destruction. Hold to the truth—preach it, live it. We have found, by most diligent search, the gospel that saves: we have tried it a thousand times and it has never failed. We will try no other. This is no time for speculation, nor for any side issues. The Lord is at hand! "Occupy till I come," says your Lord. Many things may be instructive, useful, pleasant—one thing is *needful*. Preach the Word: this is always in place. It will convert, sanctify and save. Salute no one by the way, was the command of Jesus to the seventy. "Go right on, and attend to the business I sent thee to fulfil." This is the spirit of the precept. "We are engaged in a great work, and cannot come down" to attend to the Sanballats and Tobias of the present day. With a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other we must work on the walls, for there is much to be done.

In the third place, remember that the strength of the church lies in its purity. This is its true, distinctive character. Let the world see it and mark the difference. As holy and devoted members of the family of God, as meek and humble disciples of the Lord Jesus, let us