

## THE CHRISTIAN'S TREASURY

"Whereby 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." II Peter 1:4.

The Bible reveals God as a promisor and man as a promisee. To His dependent creatures He is the God of promises -- Covenant-maker and Covenant-keeper. So close is the connection between His character and His covenant that to get hold of His promises is to get hold of God Himself. Some one has well said: "God's promises are projections of Himself to the measure of our finite capacity, by which we, by appropriating them to ourselves, may draw in thus much of God to ourselves." This helps us to realize why Peter described the promises as being the greatest and most precious. They represent the superlative in the realm of contract and assurance.

It is good to remind ourselves that God has given His people exceeding great and precious promises. They are an expression of His loving kindness and tender mercy, and His indication of the bountiful provisions He has made for the manifold needs of His people. He has entered into a covenant with His people and has made certain guarantees to them. These guarantees have been reinforced by His gracious promises.

There is a promise in the Bible for every need known to man. Without a doubt God is able to supply every need of ours according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. We may fortify our souls by meditating on the promises of God.

It has been said that there are 30,000 promises in the Bible. I do not know whether or not this number is correct, but I do know that not one of the scripture promises will do us any good unless we utilize it by faith and prayer and receive its life-giving waters into our hearts. A promise is one thing, and possession is another. It is not a question of how many promises are in the Bible, but how many promises do we possess by actual experience through faith and prayer? To Joshua God said, "Go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them." Such was the promise, but the one condition of possession was the placing of the feet upon it. So God has many promises for the children of men, but how many have we as individuals placed our feet upon by faith and prayer?

The promises of the Bible are generally declarations which God has made of His intentions to bestow blessings upon His children. Spurgeon once said, "No one ever wanders where a promise does not follow him, an atmosphere of promise surrounds believers, as air surrounds the globe." Every promise is a note upon the bank of faith in which there are infinite resources, and God is the banker. A promise is a written or verbal declaration made by one person to another, which binds the person who makes it to do or to refrain from doing a certain specified act. God's promises cannot fail.

As one studies God's Word, he finds that it is a casket of precious promises backed by the oath of God, revealed through the sacrifice of Christ, and appropriated and corroborated by a multitude of believers. God's promises are ripened fruit to be plucked by the hand of prayer. The promises energize prayer, but prayer appropriates and obtains what has been promised. The

promises are like the rain and snow which come down from heaven, and prayer is like the pipes, which transmit, preserve and direct the rain and melted snow. Prayer takes hold of the promises and conducts them to personal fulfilment. Promise and prayer always go hand in hand. Prayer is a means which God's children may use to accomplish great and mighty things. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). Nothing is too great or too small to be the object of prayer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do" is the promise. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Prayer is the hand of faith stretched out to receive the blessings promised.

## I. The Promises Are Free.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." The promises are given unto us. We do not merit them. We cannot buy them. We cannot earn them. They are an expression of God's free and unmerited love for His children. Because He has given us these promises no one can ever take them away from us.

Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." "All things" include all grace, all love, all power, all wisdom, all patience and all courage that shall ever be needed by those who would live godly lives in an ungodly world. Marvelous is the fact, and thrilling is the contemplation of it, that God has looked down through your tomorrows and mine, has taken the measure of every foe we shall ever face, every temptation or test we shall ever encounter, every loss we shall ever experience, every sorrow through which we shall pass, every emergency that shall ever arise, and against the day of every such need He has laid up for us those divine resources that will, if appropriated, make us "more than conquerors." These promises are an essential part of this total provision.

A wealthy spendthrift ran through with his fortune. His only son inherited nothing more than the heavily mortgaged house in which the father lived and died. The son decided that the premises needed some attention. One day a workman, digging in the yard, turned up a lump of something which showed a bright spot at the point where the pick had struck it. The lump was tested and the report was "copper ore." So rich was the vein of copper thus discovered that from the profits derived therefrom the son was able to pay off the mortgage, buy up much of the surrounding property which had once formed his father's estate, and live thereafter in security and comfort. The father had died in virtual poverty when in point of fact he had been walking for a long time on unsuspected riches. Because he knew nothing about it, the wealth beneath his feet did not do him any good.

Spiritually speaking, our penury or near-penury must be due either to our ignorance of the mighty promises and provisions of our God or to our indifference. Our Heavenly Father does not want us to be starvelings on scant rations, but rather that we shall be fed, clothed and housed in a manner befitting those who are the children of the great King. With so many invitations to draw upon the bounty of the Lord, needy Christians

may ask and receive the fulness of a loving God. An account is given of an old lady in England, whose only son had gone away from home. In her loneliness and poverty she was visited by a minister of the Gospel. He said to her, "Has your boy not sent you any money?" "No," she replied, "not a cent since he went away." With that she took her well-worn Bible from the shelf, saying, "In every letter he sends these bits of paper." The mother handed the papers to the minister. On examination it was found that they were checks. How surprised the old mother was to learn that she was in comfortable circumstances, with plenty to live on until her son returned to his home. No matter what your need may be, God is able to supply it.

## II. The Promises Are Exceeding Great.

God's promises are not merely great, but they are exceeding great. They come from a great God, they come to great sinners, they deal with great matters, they assure us of great love and they produce in us great results. The salvation which is offered in God's promises is both negative and positive. Negatively, it is described as an escape -- a deliverance from "corruption." Positively, it is revealed as a participation -- a partaking of the divine nature. When Christ enters the heart the world's corruption, in standards, practice and habits, leaves us and we become conscious of a new love, a new motivation and a new life. If we only realized the meaning, the majesty and the might of God's promises, how much happier we would be! The promises of God are so great that they stretch through time into eternity, and cover every need of the spirit, mind and body.

God hath not promised  
Skies always blue,  
Flower-strewn pathways  
All our lives through;  
God hath not promised  
Sun without rain,  
Joy without sorrow,  
Peace without pain.

But God hath promised  
Strength for the day,  
Rest for the laborer,  
Light for the way,  
Grace for the trials,  
Help from above,  
Unfailing sympathy,  
Undying love."

The promises of God exceed all precedent and all imitation. They are as far above all other promises as the heavens are above the earth. God's promises also exceed all expectation. He does for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Moreover, the promises of God exceed all measurement. We can never measure the depth of their meaning, the height of their excellence or the length of their duration. They cover the whole of life from the cradle to the grave. Furthermore, God's promises exceed all experience. Regardless of how many years a person has known the Lord, he has never exhausted God's promises, and he never will.

### III. The Promises Are Precious.

Ordinarily, when we use the word "precious" we think of something which is extremely rare, costly or associated with an individual with whom you have had a very tender experience. Greatness and preciousness certainly go together, but in this instance they are superbly united. We think of precious stones in the material world and of the precious blood of Christ in the spiritual realm. The promises of God are precious because they are the outcome of His personal knowledge of and care for His children. When we regard them in this way, we can see how rich they are.

The scope of these precious promises is as wide as the needs of men. It is said that there is an antidote somewhere for every poison in the world. Whether that be correct or not, it is true that somewhere in the Word of God there is a promise or antidote for the virus of every sin, the venom of every Satanic assault, and the sting of every pain and sorrow. Let us note some of God's precious promises:

1. To the guilty.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

2. To the backsliders.

"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings" (Jeremiah 3:22).

3. To the penitent.

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

4. To the tempted.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

5. To the poor.

"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" (Isaiah 41:17).

6. To the needy.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

7. To the afflicted.

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). "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" (Isaiah 43:2).

8. To the sorrowful.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

9. To the lonely.

"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" (Isaiah 41:10).

10. To the perplexed.

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8).