

TRUST IN GOD

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" Isaiah 26:3-4.

Trust in God is one of the easiest of all things to express, and one of the hardest to practice. There is no grace more necessary, and when attained there is no grace more blessed and comforting. But, it is difficult of attainment. It requires a deep realization of the divine presence, of the divine wisdom, and of the divine love.

Trust in God implies an entire resignation to the wisdom of God, a dependence on the power of God, and a firm assurance of the goodness and veracity of God. It implies an humble dependence on Him for that protection and those blessings which His supreme perfections both enable and incline Him to bestow on His creatures; a full conviction of His goodness and mercy; and a steady hope that that mercy will, on all occasions, in all our dangers and necessities, be extended to us, in such a manner as to His wisdom appears most conducive, if not to our tranquility in this life, to our everlasting felicity in the next.

Trust in God is built on acquaintance with God. It is an intelligent act of the soul. It is a fruit of religious knowledge. It is begotten of belief in God, and of faith in the promises of God. It is a fruit of reconciliation with God. It involves the quiet assurance that God will be all that He promises to be, and will do all that He engages to do; and that, in giving and withholding, He will do that which is kind and right.

To trust in the Lord is to be persuaded that He is able to counsel thee what to do, to give wholesome advice to all who need it, and on the basis of this conviction to look unto Him for counsel, confidently expecting seasonable directions from Him.

I. The Requirement.

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever" Isaiah 26:4.

"Trust in the Lord and do good" Psalm 37:3.

This is certainly wise counsel. Today is a time of trouble all over the world. Distress and misery are abroad everywhere. What has our religion to say under the present circumstances? "Trust in the Lord and do good". This statement expresses the sum and substance of religion, and the great secret of right living. Trust God for all the future. His laws will never play false with us; His mercy will never fail us. With one of our modern seers, we surely can say: "All I have seen bids me trust the Creator for all I have not seen." "Do good," — there is our duty in the region of the known, in the realm of daily life. We cannot choose our lives, but we can choose the way that we shall live them. We can resolve and strive, whatever betides, to be good and to do good; ever to be loyal and true to the best we know, and thus to compel the rapidly vanishing days to leave a blessing behind. The trust comes before the doing good. Trust is the living root out of which all living goodness springs.

The trust required is a sincere trust, such as arises from a consciousness of need and weakness, and such as goes out toward a Being who is able to strengthen, to comfort, and to save. It is leaning and resting upon God. It is the trust of the scholar in the teacher, the patient in the physician, the traveller in the guide, the child in the parent. It is a perpetual trust — for ever, in all circumstances, for all time, and unto eternity. We must trust God with all our concerns; family, trade, concerns in life, and affairs in general. The Christian commits his soul to God. He should therefore form his plans according to the best of his judgment and leave the rest with God. There is a point at

which he must give up, stand still, and say, "I can do no more." We can cast our burdens on the Lord by telling Him about them, asking His help in the bearing of them, and submitting to His will in reference to them. Reliance on God is founded on His goodness, the relation between Him and us, and His promises. The way of wisdom is to rely simply and entirely on God.

1. The source of faith or trust is Divine.

(1) Faith is divine in its inception.

God is the author and object of faith. He is the Rock of Ages. Many parts of nature alter. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, man dieth. We turn to the Rock, and it appears to possess "everlasting strength." Such is God to faith. The very idea of trust implies unchangeableness. In summer and winter alike the Rock is the same, "For I am the Lord, I change not." This grand Rock has reappeared, "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday today, and forever." It is on this Rock that we build our hope of eternal life. There are two great facts which sway human minds. One is the transitoriness of created things, and the other is the continuance of human desire. That we change in the objects of desire is only a proof that desire itself is in search of the immutable. The Gospel presents the immutable Saviour on Whom to rest.

(2) Faith is divine in its inspiration.

Trust in God is not a single act, but a condition of restfulness. Fellowship with Him guarantees the necessary strength whenever trials come.

2. The seat of faith or trust is mental.

"Whose mind is stayed on thee." Text presents faith as the mind resting upon God. "Mind" includes imagination, idea and desire. Hope is ever accompanied with trust and reliance on something, and it is either well or ill-grounded. What is there besides God on which we are apt to repose our trust? Fortune or chance; the favor of the world; friends; riches and power; our own abilities. There is nothing in which we can safely trust except God.

(1) Faith is our strength in duty.

To do right is not always easy. Whatever may be the temptation to do wrong, or whatever may be the temptation to do wrong, or whatever may be the adverse criticism for doing right, trust in God will sustain us in the effort. A pure motive will be accompanied by wisdom and energy, so that duty will bear the impress of heaven and God will be glorified.

(2) Faith is our stay in trouble.

Man is born to trouble as the spark flieth upward. The ungodly are thrown into uncontrollable grief by tribulation. The soul without Christ is like a ship without a helm. The wicked in trouble are distracted by fear, and hurry hither and thither for help. Not so the righteous, whose faith is built on the Rock of Ages.

(3) Faith is our prospect in death.

Then we shall be tried to the utmost of the powers of faith. We shall fear no evil when passing through the valley; the Lord will be with us to lead us safely home.

II. The Result.

"Perfect peace." Is there any gift more desired by men than just peace? Peace of mind, peace of heart, the peace of soul that weary men and women crave in this hard, unsympathetic, work-a-day world of ours? Peace, inward peace, outward peace, peace with God, peace of conscience, peace at all times, under all circumstances, God's own peace, the peace which God's own Son knew, and left as His legacy to His disciples. While self-confidence, trust in man, distrust of God, etc., bring restlessness, faith brings peace. Peace of conscience, peace of heart, peace of life, are all included; and these may be enjoyed even in circumstances likely to disquiet and distress.

The author of this peace is God. Earthly honors, riches, friendships, leave the heart devoid of enduring peace, because they can do nothing to dispel the sense of guilt and the consequent apprehensions of the future which ever and anon disturb those who possess them most abundantly. We cannot have peace unless we have God for our portion. Peace is offered to all who will receive it as a gift, through our Lord Jesus Christ; but only from Him can it be obtained. The peace He imparts is perfect:--

1. In its source.
Since it is from the eternal and immutable God it is undisturbable.
2. In its measure.
It rises like a river, and swells and rolls onward until it bears sin and sorrow away into the land of forgetfulness.
3. In its adaptation to our needs.
It comes in when all other joys go out, and erects its brightest monuments on the ruins of earthly hopes. There is no trial which it cannot enable us to endure. No wonder Jesus considered it the best legacy which it was in His power to bestow.

To grant this deep and abiding peace is the prerogative of the Divine Saviour. Friends may leave us houses, lands, money, but only the Lord can give us peace. "My peace" means that mental peace which flows from perfect harmony with the Divine will. The more we obey the Master, the more implicit will be our submission to God, and the deeper our peace. God bestows this peace on every person whose mind is stayed on Him. Repentance and reconciliation with God through Christ are the essential preliminary conditions of "perfect peace." When we trust in Him, devote ourselves to His service, put ourselves into His care, His honor is pledged to the defense and maintenance of our welfare.

To trust in the Lord signifies to be free from anxiety concerning any events, present or future, under a firm persuasion that God careth for us, and will direct all events for our real happiness. The great sources of peace for man are these -- trust, submission, and obedience. Trust that says, "The Lord knoweth the way that I take." Submission that says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." Obedience that says, "My meat and my drink is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Peace with God, before we can have peace in God, and then the peace of God ruling in our hearts.

"Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." There is no peace of any kind for the man whose life ignores God. For those who know Him and serve Him there is peace "that passeth understanding" even in the face of trial. Anxiety cannot destroy this peace. A child of God is not immune from cares, but his troubles are tempered by that peace.