

THE FAITHFUL PROMISER

by John MacDuff

MacDuff's daily devotional meditating on God's pardoning grace and faithfulness to His promises, emphasizing God's willingness to extend grace, comfort, and restoration to those who trust Him.

34 Chapters

Table of Contents

- 0.** The Faithful Promiser
- 1.** The Faithful Promiser.
- 2.** 1ST DAY OF MONTH. Pardoning Grace.
- 3.** 2D DAY. Needful Grace.
- 4.** 3D DAY. All-Sufficient Grace.
- 5.** 4TH DAY. Comforting Grace.
- 6.** 5TH DAY. Restraining Grace.
- 7.** 6TH DAY. Restoring Grace.
- 8.** 7TH DAY. Sanctifying Grace.
- 9.** 8TH DAY. Reviving Grace.
- 10.** 9TH DAY. Persevering Grace.
- 11.** 10TH DAY. Dying Grace.
- 12.** 11TH DAY. After Grace, Glory.
- 13.** 12TH DAY. Another Comforter.
- 14.** 13TH DAY. Providential Overruling.
- 15.** 14TH DAY. Safe Walking.
- 16.** 15TH DAY. Love in Chastisement.
- 17.** 16TH DAY. A Condition in Chastisement.
- 18.** 17TH DAY. Strength in the Weak.
- 19.** 18TH DAY. Encouragement to the Desponding.
- 20.** 19TH DAY. Peace in Believing.
- 21.** 20TH DAY. Bliss in Dying.
- 22.** 21ST DAY. A Due Reaping.
- 23.** 22D DAY. An End of Weeping.
- 24.** 23D DAY. A Speedy Coming.
- 25.** 24TH DAY. Eventide Light.
- 26.** 25TH DAY. Heavenly Illumination.
- 27.** 26TH DAY. A Glorious Reunion.
- 28.** 27TH DAY. Everlasting Espousals.
- 29.** 28TH DAY. A Joyful Resurrection.
- 30.** 29TH DAY. A Nightless Heaven.
- 31.** 30TH DAY. A Crown of Life.
- 32.** 31ST DAY. The Vision and Fruition of God.
- 33.** TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

The Faithful Promiser

The Faithful Promiser.

It has often been felt a delightful exercise by the child of God, to take, night by night, an individual promise and plead it at the mercy-seat. Often are our prayers pointless, from not following, in this respect, the example of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, the Royal Promise pleader, who delighted to direct his finger to some particular "word" of the Faithful Promiser, saying, "Remember Thy word unto Thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope!" The following are a few gleanings from the Promise Treasury, -- a few crumbs from "the Master's Table," which may serve to help the thoughts in the hour of closet meditation, or the season of sorrow. ST. M -- -- ,

December, 1849.

1ST DAY OF MONTH. Pardoning Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "Come now, 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. Pardoning Grace. 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 conferences. 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." "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

2D DAY. Needful Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." -- DEUT. xxxiii.25. Needful Grace. 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 fulness" -- 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! "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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3D DAY. All-Sufficient Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." -- 2 COR. ix.8. All-Sufficient Grace. "All-sufficiency in all things!" Believer! surely thou art "thoroughly furnished!" Grace is no scanty thing, doled out in pittances. 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 three-fold 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 want 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 fulness 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 every thing, 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 un murmuring spirit, -- grace to have prosperity sanctified, -- grace to say, through tears, "Thy will be done!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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4TH DAY. Comforting Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to

you." -- JOHN xiv.18. Comforting Grace. 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 more than deserved. How different, O Spotless Lamb of God, those pangs which rent Thy guiltless bosom! How sweet those 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!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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5TH DAY. Restraining Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." -- LUKE xxii.31, 32. Restraining Grace. What a scene 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 farther?" God often permits His people to be on the very verge of the precipice, to remind them of their own weakness; but never farther 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? "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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6TH DAY. Restoring Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "I will heal their backsliding." -- HOSEA xiv.4. Restoring Grace. 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." "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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7TH DAY. Sanctifying Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." -- PHIL. i.6. Sanctifying Grace. Reader! is the good work begun in thee? Art thou holy? Is sin crucifying? Are thy heart's idols, one by one abolished? Is the world less to thee, and eternity more to thee? Is more of thy Saviour's image impressed on thy character, and thy Saviour's love more enthroned in thy heart? Is "Salvation" to thee more "the one thing needful?" Oh! take heed! there can be no middle ground, no standing still; or if it be so, thy position must be a false one. The Saviour's blood is not more necessary to give thee a title to Heaven, than His Spirit to give thee a meetness for it. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His!" "Onwards!" should be thy motto. There is no standing still in the life of faith. "The man," says Augustine, "who says 'Enough,' that man's soul is lost?" Let this be the superscription in all thy ways and doings, "Holiness to the Lord." Let the monitory word exercise over thee its habitual power, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Moreover, remember, that to be holy, is to be happy. The two are convertible terms. Holiness! It is the secret and spring of the joy of angels; and the more of holiness attained on earth -- the nearer and closer my walk is with God -- the more of a sweet earnest shall I have of the bliss that awaits me in a holy Heaven. Oh! my soul, let it be thy sacred ambition to "Be holy!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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8TH DAY. Reviving Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." -- ISAIAH xl.31. Reviving Grace. "Wilt thou not revive us, O Lord?" My soul! art thou conscious of thy declining state? Is thy walk less with God, thy frame less heavenly? Hast thou less conscious nearness to the mercy-seat, -- diminished communion with thy Saviour? Is prayer less a privilege than it has been? -- the pulsations of spiritual life more languid, and fitful, and spasmodic? -- the bread of life less relished? -- the seen, and the temporal, and the tangible, displacing the unseen and eternal? Art thou sinking down into this state of drowsy self-contentment, this conformity-life with the world, forfeiting all the happiness of true religion, and risking and endangering the better life to come? Arise! call upon thy God! "Wilt thou not revive us, O Lord?" He might have returned nothing but the withering repulse, "How often would I have gathered thee; but thou wouldst not!" "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone!" But "in wrath He remembers mercy." "They shall revive as the corn." "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." How and where is reviving grace to be found? He gives thee, in this precious promise, the key. It is on thy bended knees -- by a return to thy deserted and unfrequented chamber! "They that wait upon the Lord!" "Wait on the Lord; be of good cheer, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

9TH DAY. Persevering Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "The righteous shall hold on his way." -- JOB xvii.9. Persevering Grace. Reader! how comforting to thee amid the ebbings and flowings of thy changing history, to know that the change is all with thee, and not with thy God! Thy spiritual bark may be tossed on waves of temptation, in many a dark midnight. Thou mayest think thy pilot hath left thee, and be ready continually to say, "Where is my God?" But fear not! The bark which bears thy spiritual destinies is in better hands than thine; a golden chain of covenant love links it to the eternal throne! That chain can never snap asunder. He who holds it in His hand gives thee this as the pledge of thy safety, -- "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Why art thou then cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God!" Thou wilt assuredly ride out these stormy surges, and reach the desired haven. But be faithful with thyself: see that there be nothing to hinder or impede thy growth in grace. Think how little may retard thy progress. One sin indulged -- one temptation tampered with -- one bosom traitor, may cost thee many a bitter hour and bitter tear, by separating between thee and thy God. Make it thy daily prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

10TH DAY. Dying Grace.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "I have the keys of hell and of death." -- REV. i.18. Dying Grace. And from whom could dying grace come so welcome, as from Thee, O blessed Jesus? Not only is Thy name, "The Abolisher of Death;" but Thou didst thyself die! Thou hast sanctified the grave by Thine own presence, and divested it of all its terrors. My soul! art thou at times afraid of this, thy last enemy? If the rest of thy pilgrimage-way be peaceful and unclouded, rests there a dark and portentous shadow over the terminating portals? Fear not! When that dismal entrance is reached, He who has "the keys of the grave and of death" suspended at His golden girdle, will impart grace to bear thee through. It is the messenger of peace. Thy Saviour calls thee! The promptings of nature, when, at first, thou seest the darkening waves, may be that of the affrighted disciples, when they said, "It is a spirit, and cried out for fear!" But a gentle voice will be heard high above the storm, "It is I! Be not afraid!" Death, indeed, as the wages of sin, must, even by the believer, be regarded as an enemy. But, oh! blessed thought, it is thy last enemy -- the cause of thy last tear. In a few brief moments after that tear is shed, thy God will be wiping every vestige of it away? "O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Welcome, vanquished foe! -- Birthday of heaven! -- "to die is gain!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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11TH DAY. After Grace, Glory.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "The Lord will give grace and glory." -- PSALM lxxxiv.11. After Grace, Glory. Oh! happy day, when this toilsome warfare will all be ended, Jordan crossed, Canaan entered, the legion-enemies of the wilderness no longer dreaded; sorrow, sighing, death, and, worst of all, sin, no more either to be felt or feared! Here is the terminating link in the golden chain of the everlasting covenant. It began with predestination; it ends with glorification. It began with sovereign grace in a by-past eternity, and no link will be awaiting till the ransomed spirit be presented faultless before the throne! Grace and glory! If the earnest be sweet, what must be the reality? If the wilderness table contain such rich provision, what must be the glories of the eternal banqueting house? Oh! my soul, make sure of thine interest in the one, as the blessed prelude to the other. "Having access by faith into this grace, thou canst rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" for "whom He justifies, them He also glorifies!" Has grace begun in thee? Canst thou mark -- though it should be but the drops of the incipient rill which is to terminate in such an ocean -- the tiny grains which are to accumulate and issue in such "an exceeding weight of glory!" Delay not the momentous question! The day of offered grace is on the wing; its hours are fast numbering; and, "No grace, no glory!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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12TH DAY. Another Comforter.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." -- JOHN xiv.16. Another Comforter. Blessed Spirit of all grace! how oft have I grieved Thee! resisted Thy dealings, quenched Thy strivings; and yet art thou still pleading with me! Oh! let me realize more than I do the need of Thy gracious influences. Ordinances, sermons, communions, providential dispensations, are nothing without Thy life-giving power. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." "No man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Church of the living God! is not this one cause of thy deadness? My soul! is not this the secret of thy languishing frames, repeated declensions, uneven walk, and sudden falls, that the influences of the Holy Ghost are undervalued and unsought? Pray for the outpouring of this blessed Agent for the world's renovation, and thine own. "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh," is the precursor of millennial bliss. Jesus! draw near, in thy mercy, to this torpid heart, as thou didst of old to thy mourning disciples, and breathe upon it, and say, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It is the mightiest of all boons; but, like the sun in the heavens, it is the freest of all: "For if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

13TH DAY. Providential Overruling.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." -- ROM. viii.28. Providential Overruling. My soul! be still! thou art in the hands of thy Covenant God. Were these strange vicissitudes in thy history the result of accident, or chance, thou mightest well be overwhelmed; but "all things," and this thing (be what it may) which may be now disquieting thee, is one of these "all things" that are so working mysteriously for thy good. Trust thy God! He will not deceive thee, -- thy interests are with Him in safe custody. When sight says, "All these things are against me," let faith rebuke the hasty conclusion, and say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" How often does God hedge up our way with thorns, to elicit simple trust! How seldom can we see all things so working for our good! But it is better discipline to believe it. Oh! for faith amid frowning providences, to say, "I know that thy judgments are good;" and, relying in the dark, to exclaim, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!" Blessed Jesus! to thee are committed the reins of this universal empire. The same hand that was once nailed to the cross, is now wielding the sceptre on the throne, -- "all power given unto thee in heaven and in earth." How can I doubt the wisdom, and faithfulness, and love, of the most mysterious earthly dealing, when I know that the Roll of Providence is thus in the hands of Him who has given the mightiest pledge Omnipotence could give of His tender interest in my soul's well-being, by giving Himself for me? "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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14TH DAY. Safe Walking.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "All the Paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." -- PSALM xxv.10. Safe Walking. 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 hardship 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!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

15TH DAY. Love in Chastisement.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." -- REV. iii.19. Love in Chastisement. 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 that Father's smile. 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!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

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16TH DAY. A Condition in Chastisement.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "If need be." -- 1 PETER i.6. A Condition in Chastisement. Three gracious words! Not one of all my tears shed for nought! Not one stroke of the rod unheeded, 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?" or "How 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!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

17TH DAY. Strength in the Weak.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench." -- MATT. xii.20. Strength in the Weak. 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 repeated declensions? 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 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?" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

18TH DAY. Encouragement to the Desponding.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast

out." -- JOHN vi.37. Encouragement to the Desponding. "Cast out!" My soul! how oft might this have been 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 nowise receive!" But "it is better to fall into the hands of God, than into the hands of man;" for He says, "I will in nowise cast out!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

19TH DAY. Peace in Believing.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth." -- JOHN xiv.27. Peace in Believing. "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." "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

20TH DAY. Bliss in Dying.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." -- REV. xiv.13. Bliss in Dying. My Soul! is this blessedness thine in prospect? Art thou ready, if called this night to lie down on thy death-pillow, sweetly to fall asleep in Jesus? What is the sting of death? It is sin. Is death, then, to thee, robbed of its sting, by having listened to the gracious accents of pardoning love, "Be of good cheer, thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee?" If thou hast made up thy peace with God, resting on the work and atoning blood of His dear Son, then is the Last Enemy divested of all his terror, and thou canst say, in sweet composure, of thy dying couch and dying hour, -- "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, because Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety!" Reader! ponder that solemn question, "Am I ready to die? Am I living as I should wish I had done when that last hour arrives?" And when shall it arrive? To-morrow is not thine. "Verily, there may be but a step between thee and death." Oh! solve the question speedily, -- risk no doubts and no peradventure. Every day is proclaiming anew the lesson, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Seek to live, so that that hour cannot come upon thee too soon, or too unexpectedly. Live a dying life! How blessed to live, -- how blessed to die, with the consciousness, that there may be but a step between thee and glory! "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

21ST DAY. A Due Reaping.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." -- GAL. vi.9. A Due Reaping. Believer! all the glory of thy salvation belongs to Jesus, -- none to thyself; every jewel in thine eternal crown is His, -- purchased by His blood, and polished by His Spirit. The confession of time will be the ascription of all eternity: "By the grace of God I am what I am!" But though "all be of grace," thy God calls thee to personal strenuousness in the work of thy high calling; -- to "labour," to "fight," to "wrestle," to "agonize;" and the heavenly reaping will be in proportion to the earthly sowing: "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully!" What an incentive to holy living, and increased spiritual attainments! My soul! wouldst thou be a star shining high and bright in the firmament of glory? -- wouldst thou receive the ten-talent recompense? Then be not weary. Gird on thine armour for fresh conquests. Be gaining daily some new victory over sin. Deny thyself. Be a willing cross-bearer for thy Lord's sake. Do good to all men as thou hast opportunity; be patient under provocation, "slow to wrath," resigned in trial. Let the world take knowledge of thee that thou art wearing Christ's livery, and bearing Christ's spirit, and sharing Christ's cross. And when the reaping time comes, He who has promised that the cup of cold water cannot go unrecompensed, will not suffer thee to lose thy reward! "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

22D DAY. An End of Weeping.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "The days of thy mourning shall be ended." -- ISAIAH lx.20. An End of Weeping. Christ's people are a weeping band, though there be much in this lovely world to make them joyous and happy. Yet when they think of sin -- their own sin, and the unblushing sins of a world in which their God is dishonoured -- need we wonder at their tears? -- that they should be called "Mourners," and their pilgrimage-home a "Valley of Tears?" Bereavement, and sickness, and poverty, and death, following the track of sin, add to their mourning experience; and with many of God's best beloved, one tear is scarce dried when another is ready to flow! Mourners! rejoice! When the reaping time comes, the weeping time ends! When the white robe and the golden harp are bestowed, every remnant of the sackcloth attire is removed. The moment the pilgrim, whose forehead is here furrowed with woe, bathes it in the crystal river of life, -- that moment the pangs of a lifetime of sorrow are eternally forgotten! Reader! if thou art one of these careworn ones, the days of thy mourning are numbered! A few more throbbings of this aching heart, and then the angel who proclaims "time," shall proclaim also, sorrow, and sighing, and mourning, to "be no longer!" Seek now to mourn thy sins more than thy sorrows; reserve thy bitterest tears for forgetfulness of thy dear Lord. The saddest and sorest of all bereavements, is when the sins which have separated thee from Him, evoke the anguish-cry, "Where is my God?" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

23D DAY. A Speedy Coming.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "Behold, I come quickly." -- REV. iii.11. A Speedy Coming. "Even so! come, Lord Jesus!" "Why tarry the wheels of Thy chariot?" Six thousand years this world has rolled on, getting hoary with age, and wrinkled with sins and sorrows. A waiting Church sees the long-drawn shadows of twilight announcing, "The Lord is at hand." Prepare, my soul, to meet Him. Oh! happy days, when thine adorable Redeemer, so long dishonoured and despised, shall be publicly enthroned, in presence of an assembled universe, crowned Lord of All, glorified in His saints, satisfied in the fruits of His soul's travail, destroying His enemies with the brightness of His coming -- the lightning-glance of wrath, -- causing the hearts of His exulting people to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Prepare, my soul, to meet Him! Let it be a joyous thought to thee, -- thy "blessed hope," -- the meeting of thine Elder Brother. Stand oftentimes on the watchtower to catch the first streak of that coming brightness, the first murmur of these chariot wheels. The world is now in preparation! It is rocking on its worn-out axle. There are voices on every side proclaiming, "He cometh! He cometh! to judge the earth." Reader! art thou among the number of those who "love His appearing?" Remember the attitude of His expectant saints: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, will find WATCHING!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

24TH DAY. Eventide Light.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "At evening-time it shall be light." -- ZECH. xiv.7. Eventide Light. How inspiring the thought of coming glory! How would we rise above our sins, and sorrows, and sufferings, if we could live under the power of "a world to come!" Were faith to take at all times its giant leap beyond a soul-trammelling earth, and remember its brighter destiny. If it could stand on its Pisgah Mount, and look above and beyond the mists and vapours of this land of shadows, and rest on the "better country." But, alas! in spite of ourselves, the wings oftentimes refuse to soar -- the spirit droops -- guilty fears depress -- sin dims and darkens -- God's providences seem to frown -- God's ways are misinterpreted -- the Christian belies his name and his destiny. But, "At eventide it shall be light." -- The material sun, which wades through clouds and a troubled sky, sets often in a couch of lustrous gold? So, when the sun of life is setting, many a ray of light will shoot athwart memory's darkened sky, and many mysterious dealings of the wilderness will then elicit an "All is well!" How frequently is the presence and upholding grace of Jesus especially felt and acknowledged at that hour, and griefs and misgivings hushed with His own gentle accents, "Fear not! it is I; be not afraid." A triumphant death-bed! It is no unmeaning word; the eye is lighted with holy lustre, the tongue with holy rapture, as if the harps of heaven were stealing on it. My soul! may such a life's evening-tide be thine! "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

25TH DAY. Heavenly Illumination.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." -- JOHN xiii.7. Heavenly Illumination. As the natural sun sometimes sinks in clouds, so, occasionally, the Christian who has a bright rising, and a brighter meridian, sets in gloom. It is not always "light" at his evening-time; but this we know, that when the day of immortality breaks, the last vestige of earth's shadows will for ever flee away. To the closing hour of time, Providence may be to him a baffling enigma: but ere the first hour has struck on heaven's chronometer, all will be clear. My soul! "in God's light thou shalt see light;" the Book of His decrees is a sealed book now, -- "A great deep" is all the explanation thou canst often give to His judgments; the why and the wherefore He seems to keep from us, to test our faith, to discipline us in trustful submission, and lead us to say, "Thy will be done!" But rejoice in that hereafter-light which awaits thee! Now we see through a glass darkly; but then, face to face. In the great mirror of eternity all the events of this chequered scene will be reflected; the darkest of them will be seen to be bright with mercy, -- the severest dispensations, "only the severer aspects of His love!" Pry not, then, too curiously; pronounce not too censoriously on God's dealings with thee. Wait with patience till the grand day of disclosures; one confession shall then burst from every tongue, "Righteous art thou, O Lord!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

26TH DAY. A Glorious Reunion.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." -- JOHN xiv.3. A Glorious Reunion. If the meeting of a long absent friend, or brother, on earth, be a joyous event, what, my soul, must be the joy of thy union with this Brother of brothers, this Friend of friends! "I will come again!" Oh! what an errand of love, what a promised honour and dignity is this! -- His saints to share, not His Heaven only, but His immediate presence. "Where I am, there ye shall be also!" "Father, I will (it was His dying wish, -- a wondrous codicil in that testamentary prayer) that those whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." Happy reunion! Blessed Saviour, if Thy presence be so sweet on a sin-stricken earth, and when known only by the invisible eye of faith, what must be that presence in a sinless Heaven, unfolded in all its unutterable loveliness and glory! Happy reunion! it will be a meeting of the whole ransomed family -- the Head with all its members -- the Vine with all its branches -- the Shepherd with all His flock -- the Elder Brother with all His kinsmen. Oh, the joy, too, of mutual recognition among the death-divided -- ties snapt asunder on earth, indissolubly renewed -- severed friendships reunited -- the triumph of love complete -- love binding brother with brother, and friend with friend, and all to the Elder Brother! My soul! what thinkest thou of this Heaven? Remember who it is that Jesus says shall sit with Him upon His throne, -- "Him that overcometh." "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

27TH DAY. Everlasting Espousals.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever." -- HOSEA ii.19. Everlasting Espousals. How wondrous and varied are the figures which Jesus employs to express the tenderness of His covenant love! My soul! thy Saviour-God hath "married thee!" Wouldst thou know the hour of thy betrothment? Go back into the depths of a by-past eternity, before the world was; then and there, thine espousals were contracted: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Soon shall the bridal-hour arrive, when thine absent Lord shall come to welcome His betrothed bride into His royal palace. "The Bridegroom tarrieth;" but see that thou dost not slumber and sleep! Surely there is much all around demanding the girded loins and the burning lamps. At "midnight!" (the hour when He is least expected) the cry may be -- shall be heard, -- "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" My soul! has this mystic union been formed between thee and thy Lord? Canst thou say, in humble assurance of thine affianced in Him, "My beloved is mine, and I am His!" If so, great, unspeakably great, are the glories which await thee! Thy dowry, as the bride of Christ, is all that Omnipotence can bestow, and all that a feeble creature can receive. In the prospect of those glorious nuptials, thou needest dread no pang of widowhood. What God has joined together, no created power can take asunder; He betroths thee, and it is "for ever!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

28TH DAY. A Joyful Resurrection.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "This corruptible must put on incorruption." -- 1 COR. xv.53. A Joyful Resurrection. Marvel of marvels? The sleeping ashes of the sepulchre starting at the tones of the archangel's trumpet! -- the dishonoured dust, rising a glorified body, like its risen Lord's? At death, the soul's bliss is perfect in kind; but this bliss is not complete in degree, until reunited to the tabernacle it has left behind to mingle with the sods of the valley. But tread lightly on that grave, it contains precious, because ransomed dust! My body, as well as my spirit, was included in the redemption price of Calvary; and "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Oh! blessed Jubilee-day of creation, when Christ's "dead men shall arise;" -- when, together with His dead body, they shall come; and the summons shall sound forth, "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust!" All the joys of that resurrection morn we cannot tell; but its chief glory we do know, -- "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Like Him! -- My soul, art thou waiting this manifestation of the sons of God? Like Him! -- Hast thou caught up any faint resemblance to that all-glorious image? Having this hope in thee, art thou purifying thyself, even as He is pure? Be much with Jesus now, that thou mayst exult in meeting Him hereafter. Thus taking Him as thy Guide and Portion in life, thou mayst lay thee down in thy dark and noisome cell, and look forward with triumphant hope to the dawn of a resurrection morn, saying, "What time I awake, I am still with Thee!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

29TH DAY. A Nightless Heaven.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "There shall be no night there." -- REV. xxi.25. A Nightless Heaven. My soul! is it night with thee here? Art thou wearied with these midnight tossings on life's tumultuous sea? Be still! the day is breaking! soon shall thy Lord appear. "His going forth is prepared as the morning." That glorious appearing shall disperse every cloud, and usher in an eternal noontide which knows no twilight. "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light." Everlasting light! Wondrous secret of a nightless world! -- the glories of a present God! -- the everlasting light of the Three in One, quenching the radiance of all created orbs -- superseding all material luminaries. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning!" The haven is nearing -- star after star is quenched in more glorious effulgence -- every bound over these dark waves is bringing thee nearer the eternal shore. Wilt thou not, then, humbly and patiently endure "weeping for the night," in the prospect of the "joy that cometh in the morning?" Strange realities! a world without night -- a firmament without a sun; and, greater wonder still, thyself in this world, -- a joyful denizen of this nightless, sinless, sorrowless, tearless Heaven! -- basking underneath the Fountain of uncreated light! No exhaustion of glorified body and spirit to require repose; no lassitude or weariness to suspend the ever-deepening song: "They rest not!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON

WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

30TH DAY. A Crown of Life.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." -- 1 PETER v.4. A Crown of Life. What! is the beggar to be "raised from the dunghill, set among princes, and made to inherit a throne of glory?" is dust and ashes, a puny rebel, a guilty traitor, to be pitied, pardoned, loved, exalted from the depths of despair, raised to the heights of Heaven -- gifted with kingly honour -- royally fed -- royally clothed -- royally attended -- and, at last, royally crowned? O my soul, look forward with joyous emotion to that day of wonders, when He whose head shall be crowned with many crowns, shall be the dispenser of royal diadems to His people; and when they shall begin the joyful ascription of all eternity, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us KINGS -- -- ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Wilt thou not be among the number? Shall the princes and monarchs of the earth wade through seas of blood for a corruptible crown; and wilt thou permit thyself to lose the incorruptible, or barter it for some perishable nothings of earth? Oh! that thou wouldst awake to thy high destiny, and live up to thy transcendant privileges as the citizen of a Kingly Commonwealth, a member of the blood-royal of Heaven. What wouldst thou not sacrifice, -- what effort wouldst thou grudge, if thou wert included at last in the gracious benediction, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

31ST DAY. The Vision and Fruition of God.

"He is Faithful that Promised." "God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." -- REV. xxi.3, 4. The Vision and Fruition of God. Glorious consummation! All the other glories of Heaven are but emanations from this glory that excelleth. Here is the focus and centre to which every ray of light converges. God is "all in all." Heaven without God! -- it would send a thrill of dismay through the burning ranks of angels and archangels; it would dim every eye, and hush every harp, and change the whitest robe into sackcloth. And shall I then, indeed, "see God?" What! shall I gaze on these inscrutable glories, and live? Yes, God himself shall be with them, and be their God: they shall "see his face!" And not only the vision, but the fruition. Oh! how does sin in my holiest moments damp the enjoyment of Him! It is the "pure in heart" alone who can "see," far more, who can enjoy "God." Even if he did reveal himself now, these eyes could never endure His intolerable brightness. But then, with a heart purified from corruption -- a world where the taint of sin and the power of temptation never enters -- the soul again a bright mirror, reflecting the lost image of the Godhead -- all the affections devoted to their original high destiny -- the love of God the motive principle, the ruling passion -- the glory of God the undivided object and aim -- the will no opposing or antagonist bias, -- man will, for the first time, know all the blessedness of his chief end, -- "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever!" "REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!" All The Promises of God In Him Are Yea and in Him Amen. * * * * *

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Minor punctuation inconsistencies have been silently corrected. 11th Day: For consistency, "bypast" has been changed to "by-past". 16th Day: For consistency, "1 PETER 1." has been changed to "1 PETER i." 30th Day: The spelling of "transcendant" has been retained.

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