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The Bible's First Promise

Jan. 1

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

This is the first promise to fallen man. It contains the whole gospel and the essence of the covenant of grace. It has been in great measure fulfilled. The seed of the woman, even our Lord Jesus, was bruised in His heel, and a terrible bruising it was. How terrible will be the final bruising of the serpent's head! This was virtually done when Jesus took away sin, vanquished death, and broke the power of Satan; but it awaits a still fuller accomplishment at our Lord's second advent and in the Day of Judgment. To us the promise stands as a prophecy that we shall be afflicted by the powers of evil in our lower nature, and thus bruised in our heel; but we shall triumph in Christ, who sets His foot on the old serpent's head. Throughout this year we may have to learn the first part of this promise by experience, through the temptations of the devil and the unkindness of the ungodly, who are his seed. They may so bruise us that we may limp with our sore heel; but let us grasp the second part of the text, and we shall not be dismayed. By faith let us rejoice that we shall still reign in Christ Jesus, the woman's seed.

Conquest to Victory

Jan. 2

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. (Romans 16:20)

This promise follows well upon that of yesterday. We are evidently to be conformed to our covenant Head, not only in His being bruised in His heel but in His conquest of the evil one. Even under *our* feet is the old dragon to be bruised. The Roman believers were grieved with strife in the church; but their God was "the God of peace" and gave them rest of soul. The archenemy tripped up the feet of the unwary and deceived the hearts of the simple; but he was to get the worst of it and to be trodden down by those whom he had troubled. This victory would not come to the people of God through their own skill or power; but God Himself would bruise Satan. Though it would be under their feet, yet the bruising would be of the Lord alone.

Let us bravely tread upon the tempter! Not only inferior spirits but the prince of darkness himself must go down before us. In unquestioning confidence in God let us look for speedy victory. "Shortly." Happy word! *Shortly* we shall set our foot on the old serpent! What a joy to crush evil! What dishonor to Satan to have his head bruised by human feet! Let us by faith in Jesus tread the tempter down.

Jan. 3

Rest on a Promise

The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it. (Genesis 28:13)

No promise is of private interpretation: it belongs not to one saint but to all believers. If, my brother, thou canst in faith lie down upon a promise and take thy rest thereon, it is thine. Where Jacob "lighted" and tarried and rested, there he took possession. Stretching his weary length upon the ground, with the stones of that place for his pillows, he little fancied that he was thus entering into ownership of the land; yet so it was. He saw in his dream that wondrous ladder which for all true believers unites earth and heaven, and surely where the foot of the ladder stood he must have a right to the soil, for otherwise he could not reach the divine stairway. All the promises of God are "Yea" and "Amen" in Christ Jesus, and as He is ours, every promise is ours if we will but lie down upon it in restful faith.

Come, weary one, use thy Lord's words as thy pillows. Lie down in peace. Dream only of Him. Jesus is thy ladder of light. See the angels coming and going upon Him between thy soul and thy God, and be sure that the promise is thine own God-given portion and that it will not be robbery for thee to take it to thyself, as spoken *specialy to thee*.

Jan. 4

In Calm Repose

I will make them to lie down safely. (Hosea 2:18)

Yes, the saints are to have peace. The passage from which this gracious word is taken speaks of peace "with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground." This is peace with earthly enemies, with mysterious evils, and with little annoyances! Any of these might keep us from lying down, but none of them shall do so. The Lord will quite destroy those things which threaten His people: "I will break the bow and the sword, and the battle out of the earth." Peace will be profound indeed when all the instruments of disquiet are broken to pieces.

With this peace will come rest, "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Fully supplied and divinely quieted, believers lie down in calm repose.

This rest will be a safe one. It is one thing to lie down but quite another "to lie down safely." We are brought to the land of promise, the house of the Father, the chamber of love, and the bosom of Christ: surely we may now "lie down safely." It is safer for a believer to lie down in peace than to sit up and worry.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." We never rest till the Comforter makes us lie down.

I will strengthen thee. (Isaiah 41:10)

When called to serve or to suffer, we take stock of our strength, and we find it to be less than we thought and less than we need. But let not our heart sink within us while we have such a word as this to fall back upon, for it guarantees us all that we can possibly need. God has strength omnipotent; that strength He can communicate to us; and His promise is that He will do so. He will be the food of our souls and the health of our hearts; and thus He will give us strength. There is no telling how much power God can put into a man. When divine strength comes, human weakness is no more a hindrance.

Do we not remember seasons of labor and trial in which we received such special strength that we wondered at ourselves? In the midst of danger we were calm, under bereavement we were resigned, in slander we were self-contained, and in sickness we were patient. The fact is that God gives unexpected strength when unusual trials come upon us. We rise out of our feeble selves. Cowards play the man, foolish ones have wisdom given them, and the silent receive in the self-same hour what they shall speak. My own weakness makes me shrink, but God's promise makes me brave. Lord, strengthen me "according to thy word."

Help from Without

Jan. 6

Yea, I will help thee. (Isaiah 41:10)

Yesterday's promise secured us strength for what we have to do, but this guarantees us aid in cases where we cannot act alone. The Lord says, "I will help thee." Strength within is supplemented by help without. God can raise us up allies in our warfare if so it seems good in His sight; and even if He does not send us human assistance, He Himself will be at our side, and this is better still. "Our August Ally" is better than legions of mortal helpers.

His help is timely: He is a very present help in time of trouble. His help is very wise: He knows how to give each man help meet and fit for him. His help is most effectual, though vain is the help of man. His help is more than help, for He bears all the burden and supplies all the need. "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me."

Because He has already been our help, we feel confidence in Him for the present and the future. Our prayer is, "Lord, by thou my helper"; our experience is, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities"; our expectation is, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help"; and our song soon will be, "Thou, Lord, hast holden me."

Jan. 7

Always Growing

Thou shalt see greater than these. (John 1:50)

This is spoken to a childlike believer, who was ready to accept Jesus as the Son of God, the King of Israel, upon one convincing piece of argument. Those who are willing to see shall see; it is because we shut our eyes that we become so sadly blind.

We have seen much already. Great things and unsearchable has the Lord showed unto us, for which we praise His name; but there are greater truths in His Word, greater depths of experience, greater heights of fellowship, greater works of usefulness, greater discoveries of power, and love, and wisdom. These we are yet to see if we are willing to believe our Lord. The faculty of inventing false doctrine is ruinous, but power to see the truth is a blessing. Heaven shall be opened to us, the way thither shall be made clear to us in the Son of Man, and the angelic commerce which goes on between the upper and the lower kingdoms shall be made more manifest to us. Let us keep our eyes open toward spiritual objects and expect to see more and more. Let us believe that our lives will not drivel down into nothing but that we shall be always on the growing hand, seeing greater and still greater things, till we behold the great God Himself and never again lose the sight of Him.

Jan. 8

Purity of Heart and Life

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8)

Purity, even purity of heart, is the main thing to be aimed at. We need to be made clean within through the Spirit and the Word, and then we shall be clean without by consecration and obedience. There is a close connection between the affections and the understanding: if we love evil we cannot understand that which is good. If the heart is foul, the eye will be dim. How can those men see a holy God who love unholy things?

What a privilege it is to see God here! A glimpse of Him is heaven below! In Christ Jesus the pure in heart behold the Father. We see Him, His truth, His love, His purpose, His sovereignty, His covenant character, yea, we see Himself in Christ. But this is only apprehended as sin is kept out of the heart. Only those who aim at godliness can cry, "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord." The desire of Moses, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," can only be fulfilled in us as we purify ourselves from all iniquity. We shall "see him as he is," and "every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." The enjoyment of present fellowship and the hope of the beatific vision are urgent motives for purity of heart and life. Lord, make us pure in heart that we may see Thee!

The liberal soul shall be made fat. (Proverbs 11:25)

If I desire to flourish in soul, I must not hoard up my stores but must distribute to the poor. To be close and niggardly is the world's way to prosperity, but it is not God's way, for He saith, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Faith's way of gaining is giving. I must try this again and again, and I may expect that as much of prosperity as will be good for me will come to me as a gracious reward for a liberal course of action.

Of course, I may not be sure of growing rich. I shall be fat but not too fat. Too great riches might make me as unwieldy as corpulent persons usually are and cause me the dyspepsia of worldliness, and perhaps bring on a fatty degeneration of the heart. No, if I am fat enough to be healthy, I may well be satisfied; and if the Lord grants me a competence, I may be thoroughly content.

But there is a mental and spiritual fatness which I would greatly covet, and this comes as the result of generous thoughts toward my God, His church, and my fellow men. Let me not stint, lest I starve my heart. Let me be bountiful and liberal, for so shall I be like my Lord. He gave Himself for me; shall I grudge Him anything?

He that watereth shall be watered also himself. (Proverbs 11:25)

If I carefully consider others, God will consider me, and in some way or other He will recompense me. Let me consider the poor, and the Lord will consider me. Let me look after little children, and the Lord will treat me as His child. Let me feed His flock, and He will feed me. Let me water His garden, and He will make a watered garden of my soul. This is the Lord's own promise; be it mine to fulfill the condition and then to expect its fulfillment.

I may care about myself till I grow morbid; I may watch over my own feelings till I feel nothing; and I may lament my own weakness till I grow almost too weak to lament. It will be far more profitable for me to become unselfish and out of love to my Lord Jesus begin to care for the souls of those around me. My tank is getting very low; no fresh rain comes to fill it; what shall I do? I will pull up the plug and let its contents run out to water the withering plants around me. What do I see? My cistern seems to fill as it flows. A secret spring is at work. While all was stagnant, the fresh spring was sealed; but as my stock flows out to water others the Lord thinketh upon me. Hallelujah!

Jan. 11

Faith Sets the Bow

And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. (Genesis 9:14)

Just now clouds are plentiful enough, but we are not afraid that the world will be destroyed by a deluge. We see the rainbow often enough to prevent our having any such fears. The covenant which the Lord made with Noah stands fast, and we have no doubts about it. Why, then, should we think that the clouds of trouble, which now darken our sky, will end in our destruction? Let us dismiss such groundless and dishonoring fears.

Faith always sees the bow of covenant promise whenever sense sees the cloud of affliction. God has a bow with which He might shoot out His arrows of destruction. But see, it is turned upward! It is a bow without an arrow or a string; it is a bow hung out for show, no longer used for war. It is a bow of many colors, expressing joy and delight, and not a bow blood-red with slaughter or black with anger. Let us be of good courage. Never does God so darken our sky as to leave His covenant without a witness, and even if He did, we would trust Him since He cannot change or lie or in any other way fail to keep His covenant of peace. Until the waters go over the earth again, we shall have no reason for doubting our God.

Jan. 12

“Loved unto the End”

For the Lord will not cast off for ever. (Lamentations 3:31)

He may cast away for a season but not forever. A woman may leave off her ornaments for a few days, but she will not forget them or throw them upon the dunghill. It is not like the Lord to cast off those whom He loves, for “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” Some talk of our being in grace and out of it, as if we were like rabbits that run in and out of their burrows; but, indeed, it is not so. The Lord’s love is a far more serious and abiding matter than this.

He chose us from eternity, and He will love us throughout eternity. He loved us so as to die for us, and we may therefore be sure that His love will never die. His honor is so wrapped up in the salvation of the believer that He can no more cast him off than He can cast off His own robes of office as King of glory. No, no! The Lord Jesus, as a Head, never casts off His members; as a Husband, He never casts off His bride.

Did you think you were cast off? Why did you think so evil of the Lord who has betrothed you to Himself? Cast off such thoughts, and never let them lodge in your soul again. “The Lord hath not cast away his people which he foreknew” (Romans 11:2). “He hateth putting away” (Malachi 2:16).

Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

Is there any instance of our Lord's casting out a coming one? If there be so, we would like to know of it; but there has been none, and there never will be. Among the lost souls in hell there is not one that can say, "I went to Jesus, and He refused me." It is not possible that you or I should be the first to whom Jesus shall break His word. Let us not entertain so dark a suspicion.

Suppose we go to Jesus now about the evils of today. Oh, this we may be sure—He will not refuse us audience or cast us out. Those of us who have often been and those who have never gone before—let us go together, and we shall see that He will not shut the door of His grace in the face of any one of us.

"This man receiveth sinners," but He repulses none. We come to Him in weakness and sin, with trembling faith, and small knowledge, and slender hope; but He does not cast us out. We come by prayer, and that prayer broken; with confession, and that confession faulty; with praise, and that praise far short of His merits; but yet He receives us. We come diseased, polluted, worn out, and worthless; but He doth in no wise cast us out. Let us come again today to Him who never casts us out.

Rest Is a Gift

Jan. 14

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

Who are saved find rest in Jesus. Those who are not saved will receive rest if they come to Him, for here He promises to "give" it. Nothing can be freer than a gift; let us gladly accept what He gladly gives. You are not to buy it, nor to borrow it, but to receive it as a gift. You labor under the lash of ambition, covetousness, lust, or anxiety: He will set you free from this iron bondage and give you rest. You are "laden," yes, "heavy laden" with sin, fear, care, remorse, fear of death; but if you come to Him He will unload you. He carried the crushing mass of our sin that we might no longer carry it. He made Himself the great Burden-bearer, that every laden one might cease from bowing down under the enormous pressure.

Jesus gives rest. It is so. Will you believe it? Will you put it to the test? Will you do so at once? Come to Jesus by quitting every other hope, by thinking of Him, believing God's testimony about Him, and trusting everything with Him. If you thus come to Him the rest which He will give you will be deep, safe, holy, and everlasting. He gives a rest which develops into heaven, and He gives it this day to all who come to Him.

Jan. 15

Made Rich by Faith

For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. (Psalm 9:18)

Poverty is a hard heritage; but those who trust in the Lord are made rich by faith. They know that they are not forgotten of God, and though it may seem that they are overlooked in His providential distribution of good things, they look for a time when all this shall be righted. Lazarus will not always lie among the dogs at the rich man's gate, but he will have his recompense in Abraham's bosom.

Even now the Lord remembers His poor but precious sons. "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me," said one of old, and it is even so. The godly poor have great expectations. They expect the Lord to provide them all things necessary for this life and godliness; they expect to see things working for their good; they expect to have all the closer fellowship with their Lord, who had not where to lay His head; they expect His second advent and to share its glory. This expectation cannot perish, for it is laid up in Christ Jesus, who liveth forever, and because He lives, it shall live also. The poor saint singeth many a song which the rich sinner cannot understand. Wherefore, let us, when we have short commons below, think of the royal table above.

Jan. 16

Even the Faintest Call

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered. (Joel 2:32)

Why do I not call on His name? Why do I run to this neighbor and that when God is so near and will hear my faintest call? Why do I sit down and devise schemes and invent plans? Why not at once roll myself and my burden upon the Lord? Straightforward is the best runner—why do I not run at once to the living God? In vain shall I look for deliverance anywhere else; but with God I shall find it; for here I have His royal "shall" to make it sure.

I need not ask whether I may call on Him or not, for that word *whosoever* is a very wide and comprehensive one. Whosoever means *me*, for it means anybody and everybody who calls upon God. I will therefore follow the leading of the text and at once call upon the glorious Lord who has made so large a promise.

My case is urgent, and I do not see how I am to be delivered; but this is no business of mine. He who makes the promise will find out ways and means of keeping it. It is mine to obey His commands; it is not mine to direct His counsels. I am His servant, not His solicitor. I call upon Him, and He will deliver me.

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee. (Exodus 3:12)

Of course, if the Lord sent Moses on an errand, He would not let him go alone. The tremendous risk which it would involve and the great power it would require would render it ridiculous for God to send a poor lone Hebrew to confront the mightiest king in all the world and then leave him to himself. It could not be imagined that a wise God would match poor Moses with Pharaoh and the enormous forces of Egypt. Hence He says, "Certainly I will be with thee," as if it were out of the question that He would send him alone.

In my case, also, the same rule will hold good. If I go upon the Lord's errand with a simple reliance upon His power and a single eye to His glory, it is certain that He will be with me. His sending me binds Him to back me up. Is not this enough? What more can I want? If all the angels and arch-angels were with me. I might fail; but if He is with me, I must succeed. Only let me take care that I act worthily toward this promise. Let me not go timidly, halfheartedly, carelessly, presumptuously. What manner of person ought he to be who has God with him! In such company it behoveth me to play the man and, like Moses, go in unto Pharaoh without fear.

Christ and His Children**Jan. 18**

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. (Isaiah 53:10)

Our Lord Jesus has not died in vain. His death was sacrificial: He died as our substitute, because death was the penalty of our sins. Because His substitution was accepted of God, He has saved those for whom He made His soul a sacrifice. By death He became like the corn of wheat which bringeth forth much fruit. There must be a succession of children unto Jesus; He is "the Father of the everlasting age." He shall say, "Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given me."

A man is honored in his sons, and Jesus hath His quiver full of these arrows of the mighty. A man is represented in his children, and so is the Christ in Christians. In his seed a man's life seems to be prolonged and extended; and so is the life of Jesus continued in believers.

Jesus lives, for He sees His seed. He fixes His eye on us, He delights in us, He recognizes us as the fruit of His soul travail. Let us be glad that our Lord does not fail to enjoy the result of His dread sacrifice, and that He will never cease to feast His eyes upon the harvest of His death. Those eyes which once wept for us are now viewing us with pleasure. Yes, He looks upon those who are looking unto Him. Our eyes meet! What a joy is this!

Jan. 19

Mouth Confession; Heart Belief

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Romans 10:9)

There must be confession with the mouth. Have I made it? Have I openly avowed my faith in Jesus as the Savior whom God has raised from the dead, and have I done it in God's way? Let me honestly answer this question.

There must also be belief with the heart. Do I sincerely believe in the risen Lord Jesus? Do I trust in Him as my sole hope of salvation? Is this trust from my heart? Let me answer as before God.

If I can truly claim that I have both confessed Christ and believed in Him, then *I am saved*. The text does not say it may be so, but it is plain as a pikestaff and clear as the sun in the heavens: "Thou shalt be saved." As a believer and a confessor, I may lay my hand on this promise and plead it before the Lord God at this moment, and throughout life, and in the hour of death, and at the Day of Judgment.

I must be saved from the guilt of sin, the power of sin, the punishment of sin, and ultimately from the very being of sin. God hath said it—"Thou shalt be saved." I believe it. I shall be saved. I am saved. Glory be to God forever and ever!

Jan. 20

The Overcomer

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7)

No man may turn his back in the day of battle or refuse to go to the holy war. We must fight if we would reign, and we must carry on the warfare till we overcome every enemy, or else this promise is not for us, since it is only for "him that overcometh." We are to overcome the false prophets who have come into the world and all the evils which accompany their teaching. We are to overcome our own faintness of heart and tendency to decline from our first love. Read the whole of the Spirit's word to the church at Ephesus.

If by grace we win the day, as we shall if we truly follow our conquering Leader, then we shall be admitted to the very center of the paradise of God and shall be permitted to pass by the cherub and his flaming sword and come to that guarded tree, whereof if a man eat, he shall live forever. We shall thus escape that endless death which is the doom of sin and gain that everlasting life which is the seal of innocence, the outgrowth of immortal principles of Godlike holiness. Come, my heart, pluck up courage! To flee the conflict will be to lose the joys of the new and better Eden; to fight unto victory is to walk with God in paradise.

The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. (Exodus 7:5)

The ungodly world is hard to teach. Egypt does not know Jehovah and therefore dares to set up its idols and even ventures to ask, "Who is the Lord?" Yet the Lord means to break proud hearts, whether they will or not. When His judgments thunder over their heads, darken their skies, destroy their harvests, and slay their sons, they begin to discern somewhat of Jehovah's power. There will yet be such things done in the earth as shall bring skeptics to their knees. Let us not be dismayed because of their blasphemies, for the Lord can take care of His own name, and He will do so in a very effectual manner.

The salvation of His own people was another potent means of making Egypt know that the God of Israel was Jehovah, the living and true God. No Israelite died by any one of the ten plagues. None of the chosen seed were drowned in the Red Sea. Even so, the salvation of the elect and the sure glorification of all true believers will make the most obstinate of God's enemies acknowledge that Jehovah, He is the God.

Oh, that His convincing power would go forth by His Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel, till all nations shall bow at the name of Jesus and call Him Lord!

Christian Liberality

Jan. 22

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. (Psalm 41:1)

To think about the poor and let them lie on our hearts is a Christian man's duty; for Jesus put them with us and near us when He said, "The poor ye have always with you."

Many give their money to the poor in a hurry, without thought; and many more give nothing at all. This precious promise belongs to those who "consider" the poor, look into their case, devise plans for their benefit, and considerately carry them out. We can do more by care than by cash, and most with two together. To those who consider the poor, the Lord promises His own consideration in times of distress. He will bring us out of trouble if we help others when they are in trouble. We shall receive very singular providential help if the Lord sees that we try to provide for others. We shall have a time of trouble, however generous we may be; but if we are charitable, we may put in a claim for peculiar deliverance, and the Lord will not deny His own word and bond. Miserly curmudgeons may help themselves, but considerate and generous believers the Lord will help. As you have done unto others, so will the Lord do unto you. Empty your pockets.

Jan. 23

A Completed Sacrifice

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering: and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. (Leviticus 1:4)

If by that laying on of his hand the bullock became the offerer's sacrifice, how much more shall Jesus become ours by the laying on of the hand of faith?

My faith doth lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

If a bullock could be accepted for him to make atonement for him, how much more shall the Lord Jesus be our full and all-sufficient propitiation? Some quarrel with the great truth of substitution; but as for us, it is our hope, our joy, our boast, our all. Jesus is accepted for us to make atonement for us, and we are "accepted in the Beloved."

Let the reader take care at once to lay his hand on the Lord's completed sacrifice, that by accepting it he may obtain the benefit of it. If he has done so once, let him do it again. If he has never done so, let him put out his hand without a moment's delay. Jesus is yours now if you will have Him. Lean on Him—lean hard on Him—and He is yours beyond all question; you are reconciled to God, your sins are blotted out, and you are the Lord's.

Jan. 24

Care of Our Feet

He will keep the feet of his saints. (1 Samuel 2:9)

The way is slippery and our feet are feeble, but the Lord will keep our feet. If we give ourselves up by obedient faith to be His holy ones, He will Himself be our guardian. Not only will He charge His angels to keep us, but He Himself will preserve our goings.

He will keep our feet from falling so that we do not defile our garments, wound our souls, and cause the enemy to blaspheme.

He will keep our feet from wandering so that we do not go into paths of error, or ways of folly, or courses of the world's custom.

He will keep our feet from swelling through weariness, or blistering because of the roughness and length of the way.

He will keep our feet from wounding; our shoes shall be iron and brass so that even though we tread on the edge of the sword, or on deadly serpents, we shall not bleed or be poisoned.

He will also pluck our feet out of the net. We shall not be entangled by the deceit of our malicious and crafty foes.

With such a promise as this, let us run without weariness and walk without fear. He who keeps our feet will do it effectually.

He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. (Job 33:27-28)

This is a word of truth, gathered from the experience of a man of God, and it is tantamount to a promise. What the Lord has done, and is doing, He will continue to do while the world standeth. The Lord will receive into His bosom all who come to Him with a sincere confession of their sin; in fact, He is always on the lookout to discover any that are in trouble because of their faults.

Can we not endorse the language here used? Have we not sinned, sinned personally so as to say, "I have sinned"? Sinned willfully, having perverted that which is right? Sinned so as to discover that there is no profit in it but an eternal loss? Let us, then, go to God with this honest acknowledgment. He asks no more. We can do no less.

Let us plead His promise in the name of Jesus. He will deliver us from the pit of hell which yawns for us; He will grant us life and light. Why should we despair? Why should we even doubt? The Lord does not mock humble souls. He means what He says. The guilty can be forgiven. Those who deserve execution can receive free pardon. Lord, we confess, and we pray Thee to forgive!

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. (Numbers 23:23)

How this should cut up root and branch all silly, superstitious fears! Even if there were any truth in witchcraft and omens, they could not affect the people of the Lord. Those whom God blessed, devils cannot curse.

Ungodly men, like Balaam, may cunningly plot the overthrow of the Lord's Israel; but with all their secrecy and policy they are doomed to fail. Their powder is damp; the edge of their sword is blunted. They gather together; but as the Lord is not with them, they gather together in vain. We may sit still and let them weave their nets, for we shall not be taken in them. Though they call in the aid of Beelzebub and employ all his serpentine craft, it will avail them nothing: the spells will not work, the divination will deceive them. What a blessing this is! How it quiets the heart! God's Jacobs wrestle with God, but none shall wrestle with *them* and prevail. God's Israels have to prevail against them. We need not fear the fiend himself, nor any of those secret enemies whose words are full of deceit and whose plans are deep and unfathomable. They cannot hurt those who trust in the living God. We defy the devil and all his legions.

Jan. 27

Precious Repentance

And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. (Ezekiel 20:43)

When we are accepted of the Lord and are standing in the place of favor, and peace, and safety, then we are led to repent of all our failures and miscarriages toward our gracious God. So precious is repentance that we may call it a diamond of the first water, and this is sweetly promised to the people of God as one most sanctifying result of salvation. He who accepts repentance also gives repentance; and He gives it not out of "the bitter box" but from among those "wafers made with honey" on which He feeds His people. A sense of blood-bought pardon and of undeserved mercy is the best means of dissolving a heart of stone. Are we feeling hard? Let us think of covenant love, and then we shall leave sin, lament sin, and loathe sin; yea, we shall loathe ourselves for sinning against such infinite love. Let us come to God with this promise of penitence and ask Him to help us to remember, and repent, and regret, and return. Oh, that we could enjoy the meltings of holy sorrow! What a relief would a flood of tears be! Lord, smite the rock, or speak to the rock, and cause the waters to flow!

Jan. 28

Tears Shall Cease

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 21:4)

Yes, we shall come to this if we are believers. Sorrow shall cease, and tears shall be wiped away. This is the world of weeping, but it passes away. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, so says the first verse of this chapter; and therefore there will be nothing to weep over concerning the Fall and its consequent miseries. Read the second verse and note how it speaks of the bride and her marriage. The Lamb's wedding is a time for boundless pleasure, and tears would be out of place. The third verse says that God Himself will dwell among men; and surely at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore, and tears can no longer flow.

What will our state be when there will be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain? This will be more glorious than we can as yet imagine. O eyes that are red with weeping, cease your scalding flow, for in a little while ye shall know no more tears! None can wipe tears away like the God of love, but He is coming to do it. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Come, Lord, and tarry not; for now both men and women must weep!

Observe and hear all these words, which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God. (Deuteronomy 12:28)

Though salvation is not by the works of the law, yet the blessings which are promised to obedience are not denied to the faithful servants of God. The curses our Lord took away when He was made a curse for us, but no clause of blessing has been abrogated.

We are to note and listen to the revealed will of the Lord, giving our attention not to portions of it but to "all these words." There must be no picking and choosing but an impartial respect to all that God has commanded. This is the road of blessedness for the Father and for His children. The Lord's blessing is upon His chosen to the third and fourth generation. If they walk uprightly before Him, He will make all men know that they are a seed which the Lord has blessed.

No blessing can come to us or ours through dishonesty or double dealing. The ways of worldly conformity and unholiness cannot bring good to us or ours. It will go well with us when we go well before God. If integrity does not make us prosper, knavery will not. That which gives pleasure to God will bring pleasure to us.

And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest. (Genesis 28:15)

Do we need journeying mercies? Here are choice ones—God's presence and preservation. In all places we need both of these, and in all places we shall have them if we go at the call of duty, and not merely according to our own fancy. Why should we look upon removal to another country as a sorrowful necessity when it is laid upon us by the divine will? In all lands the believer is equally a pilgrim and a stranger; and yet in every region the Lord is His dwelling place, even as He has been to His saints in all generations. We may miss the protection of an earthly monarch, but when God says, "I will keep thee," we are in no real danger. This is a blessed passport for a traveler and a heavenly escort for an emigrant.

Jacob had never left his father's room before; he had been a mother's boy and not an adventurer like his brother. Yet he went abroad, and God went with him. He had little luggage and no attendants; yet no prince ever journeyed with a nobler bodyguard. Even while he slept in the open field, angels watched over him, and the Lord God spoke to him. If the Lord bids us go, let us say with our Lord Jesus, "Arise, let us go hence."

Jan. 31

God Always Hears

My God will hear me. (Micah 7:7)

Friends may be unfaithful, but the Lord will not turn away from the gracious soul; on the contrary, He will hear all its desires. The prophet says, "Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. A man's enemies are the men of his own house." This is a wretched state of affairs; but even in such a case the Best Friend remains true, and we may tell Him all our grief.

Our wisdom is to look unto the Lord and not to quarrel with men or women. If our loving appeals are disregarded by our relatives, let us wait upon the God of our salvation, for He will hear us. He will hear us all the more because of the unkindness and oppression of others, and we shall soon have reason to cry, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy!"

Because God is the living God, He can hear; because He is a loving God, He will hear; because He is our covenant God, He has bound Himself to hear us. If we can each one speak of Him as "My God," we may with absolute certainty say, "My God will hear me." Come, then, O bleeding heart, and let thy sorrows tell themselves out to the Lord thy God! I will bow the knee in secret and inwardly whisper, "My God will hear me."

Feb. 1

Never Despair

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. (Malachi 4:2)

Fulfilled once in the first advent of our glorious Lord, and yet to have a fuller accomplishment in His second advent, this gracious word is also for daily use. Is it dark with the reader? Does the night deepen into a denser blackness? Still let us not despair: the sun will yet rise. When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest.

The sun which will arise is of no common sort. It is *the* Sun—the Sun of Righteousness, whose every ray is holiness. He who comes to cheer us, comes in the way of justice as well as of mercy, comes to violate no law even to save us. Jesus as much displays the holiness of God as His love. Our deliverance, when it comes, will be safe because righteous.

Our one point of inquiry should be—"Do we fear the name of the Lord? Do we reverence the living God and walk in His ways?" Then for us the night must be short; and when the morning cometh, all the sickness and sorrow of our soul will be over forever. Light, warmth, joy, and clearness of vision will come, and healing of every disease and distress will follow after.

Has Jesus risen upon us? Let us sit in the sun. Has He hidden His face? Let us wait for His rising. He will shine forth as surely as the sun.