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GOD'S NEVER-FAILING PROMISES

By Albert Sims

A Message for God's Tempted and Tried Ones
Fourth Edition, Twelfth Thousand

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This book shows that God's resources and His "exceeding great and precious promises" are simply amazing. That, wonderful as these promises are, they are available for any of His children, irrespective of their position in life or circumstances. That God glories in doing the impossible. That His promises are intended to be used in just the same way as we use checks -- take them to the bank and get them cashed -- and, finally -- that while earthly banks often fail, Heaven's bank never did and never will.

Desperate days are upon us. The shadows of the Great Tribulation are already falling across the world. Never was there a time when the faith of God's people needed to be strengthened more than now. This book has been published on very purpose to bring you a spiritual uplift. Read it, then secure a quantity and send or hand to needy ones.

A. Sims

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01 -- GOD'S NEVER-FAILING PROMISES

All the pledges of Jehovah are the pledges of a Being whose very character is of itself an absolute guarantee of their fulfillment. A dishonest man may make promises which he does not intend to fulfill. An over-sanguine man may make promises which he can not keep, but God has not only the ability but the disposition to keep every promise which He makes us.

"His love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end."

A certain man had the words, "God is love," inscribed on a flag which hung from one of his buildings. A brother in the Lord, who was making him a visit, noticing the text, inquired of his friend what he meant by having that verse there. "Do you mean that God's love is as fickle as the wind that blows?" "Oh, no," said the good man in reply, "I mean that whichever way the wind blows God is love," and he was right.

"Every human tie may perish,
Friend to friend unfaithful prove,
Mothers cease their own to cherish,
Heaven and earth at last remove.
But no changes
Can attend Jehovah's love."

"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. 54:10).

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02 -- WHO ARE THESE PROMISES FOR?

Usually only well-to-do people have bank notes in their possession. But in this case it is different. The poorest, most illiterate and insignificant person, if he is a child of grace, can claim an interest in Heaven's Bank. Distinctions of race, creed or circumstances make no difference. He who can rightly claim God's promises is indeed immensely rich. He may live in a poor hut, but, nevertheless, he is a possessor of unsurpassing wealth. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" (Jas. 2:5). In fact, the poor are, in a certain sense, better off than the rich -- they are free from the responsibility of caring for much material wealth. The question was asked of a very devoted sister in the Lord, "which would you rather have, a guilty conscience and a million dollars, or a clear conscience without the million?" To which she replied that she was a lucky child, for she had a clear conscience, and was the child of a millionaire, That is better than having the million yourself -- you do not have the worry and care of the money, and all you have to do if you want something is to say, "Father, please, I want so and so, and He gives it."

I have a never-failing Bank
Well filled with golden store,
No earthly bank is half so rich,
Why, then, should I be poor?

The promises of God are not only for the deeply pious, the fathers and mothers of Israel, but also for the babes in Christ, the weak and timid ones. In short, they are the common property of all the family of God.

These promises are not meant that they should be read over comfortably, and then have done with them. No, beloved, you are to treat them as realities; in just the same manner as a man treats a check. It is intended that you should endorse them with your own name, by personally receiving them as true. You are to believe that you have the blessing in having the sure promise of it, and therefore to put your name to it to testify to the receipt of the blessing.

Let not the amazing amount of wealth for which these promises stand good stagger you, for they are all yours. "All things are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21). "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). What an amazing thought! "joint heirs" with whom? Archangels, seraphs? Nay, but "Christ." Why, then, ask for coppers, when you can have the dollars? Why talk about crumbs, when you can have a whole loaf? Why content yourself with a little stream, when you can have "rivers of living water? Why content yourself with an occasional shower, when if you will but abandon yourself wholly and forever to God's keeping He will open the windows of Heaven, and give you a "Noah's flood"?

Why not, oh, why not, tap the great ocean before you and let its mighty billows surge through all your being? Why not go and have these promises cashed?

"Why live so niggardly and poor?
Your bank contains a plenty,
And when you bring a one-pound note
Why not a twenty?"

For there's a plenty in Father's bank above."

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03 -- GOD'S PROMISES ARE MEANT TO BE CASHED

C. H. Spurgeon says: "A promise is like a check. If I have a check, what do I do with it? Suppose I carried it about in my pocket, and said: 'I do not see the use of this bit of paper. I cannot buy anything with it,' a person would say: 'Have you been to the bank with it?' 'No, I did not think of that.' 'But it is payable to your order. Have you written your name on the back of it?' 'No, I have not done that.' And yet you are blaming the person who gave you this check! The whole blame lies with yourself. Put your name on the back of the check; go with it to the bank, and you will get what is promised to you." A prayer should be the presentation of God's promise, endorsed by your personal faith. It is like a person going into the bank with a check and stopping an hour. The clerks would wonder. The common-sense way is to go to the counter and show your check, and take your money and go about your business. There is a style of prayer which is of this fine, practical character. You so believe in God that you present the promise, obtain the blessing, and go about your Master's business.

Many years ago a poverty-stricken Indian found his way into a Western settlement in search of food to keep him from starving. A bright-colored ribbon was seen around his neck, from which hung a small, dirty pouch. On being asked what it was, he said it was a charm given him in his younger days. He opened it, and took out a worn and crumpled paper which he handed the person speaking to him for inspection. It proved, on examination, to be a regular discharge from the Federal army, entitling him to a pension for life, and signed by George Washington himself. Here was a man with a promise duly signed which, if presented in the right place, would have secured to him ample provision for the way; and yet he was wandering about hungry, helpless and forlorn, and begging for bread to keep him from starving. What a picture we have here of many Christians, who, with all the promises of Jesus in their hands, with the charter of their inheritance in full possession, are yet gloomy and sad, and starving in the wilderness.

An old woman in Scotland was living in the most abject poverty. Her neighbors thought it was strange, knowing that she had a son in the United States, reputed to be in comfortable circumstances. One day one of them ventured to ask her about the matter.

"Does your son never send you money?"

"No," reluctantly answered the mother; but, eager to defend him against the implied charge of forgetfulness and ingratitude, she quickly added, "but he writes me nice long letters and sends me a pretty picture in almost every one of them."

"Where are those pictures?" queried the visitor; "may I see them?"

"Why, certainly," was the answer. And the old woman went to a shelf and took down the old Bible, and there between the leaves lay the "pictures" that her son had been sending her from America through all the years.

What were they? Nothing more or less than bank notes, each for a considerable amount. During all this time of need the woman had had under her hand a sum of money sufficient to satisfy her every want and she did not know it. She had looked at the pictures; she had thought them pretty pictures; they had been to her reminders of her far-off son, and evidence that he had not forgotten her, and that was all.

Of what does the little story remind you? Are we not often, like this woman, finding "pictures" in the Book where we should find wealth for the supply of all our needs? God's promises are bank bills; they are checks and drafts upon the bank on high. We look at them, read them, admire them; we think of the love that prompted God to make them and give them to us; we imagine circumstances in which they would be peculiarly precious and helpful. Then we shut the Bible and leave them there, and go out to face the poverty and destitution of life. We do not use them, spend them, buy them, live upon them, as we might and ought.

Dr. N. Deck says: "It has been beautifully said that every true believer walks continually through life upon a pathway literally paved with the promises of God. And these promises are the most far-reaching and particular and comprehensive it is possible to imagine, so that wondrous possibilities are open to each of God's pilgrims. Now, from time immemorial, the foot, the human foot, has been the most ancient and significant standard of measurement, And for us wayfarers who to-day walk the celestial pathway the believer's foot may be just as definite a measure of spiritual things."

It is said of William Penn that his integrity so won the confidence of the Indians that they offered to give him all the land his foot could cover in a day. So he set off one day, and walked nearly thirty miles, encircling and so gaining possession of the whole area that the city of Philadelphia now occupies; and one of the Indians shrewdly said to him, "The paleface has made a very long walk today!"

And God? Why, God has promised to each of us the very same! Shall we not take Him at His word? He says: "Every place (and so every promise) that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto thee" (Josh. 1:3). So a human foot, measuring, taking possession of God's promises by faith, has possibilities which are quite incalculable. Yet, in spite of this spiritual pathway of promises, many true believers continue to be literally "spiritual paupers," to the scorn and the derision of the world. "All things are yours" is so clearly, so tragically, untrue for them.

They pathetically remind one of the original owners of Mount Morgan, in Queensland, who toiled for years on its barren slopes, eking out a miserable living, never knowing that under foot was one of the richest mountains of gold the world has known. Here was wealth, vast, unimagined; yet unrealized, unpossessed. Yet every believer has, in the wealth of God's promises, a spiritual Mount Morgan under his very feet, only waiting to be recognized and claimed and so appropriated.

The heart of the matter may be best explained by the old illustration of walking on two feet. In all our spiritual progress there are two elements in each act of faith -- first, asking, and then, taking, from God. Thus, if a child asks me for a present, and I hold out a shilling, it is no use for the

child to go on asking any more. The shilling is already proffered; it must now take, in order to possess it. Even so, many believers are good at asking, but fail to take, to appropriate. They go on praying and praying and praying for some blessing God is trying to get them to receive. They are, as it were, hopping around on one foot, praying, and praying, and praying. But hopping is a laborious mode of progress, never intended by God, and so is such praying.

For, strange as it may seem, there is a time not to pray, a time when prayer can do no more. And that is when it is time to act. "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face?" was God's command to Joshua when he was praying to him for guidance and help (Josh. 7:10). What! Not pray? No, not where it is time to act. For as God's intended way of progression for man was walking on two feet, first the one foot, then the other, even so it is in the spiritual things. We must ask and then take, ask and then take, and so we shall advance joyfully and continuously in the normal, appointed way. But taking, appropriating, must always be the sequel to asking, just as the left foot follows the right. So, literally, we shall learn to "walk and not faint," and so acquire the blessed habit of "obtaining promises." Are you daily walking on two feet spiritually? Have you learned the happy art of asking and then taking the treasures God is longing to pour out? If so, then you really know how to turn His promises into present facts.

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04 -- GOD'S WORD NEVER FAILS

In condescension to our weakness, the Almighty has actually confirmed His promises with an oath, "Wherein God, willingly more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:17,18).

A devoted family of the Society of Friends was deeply afflicted. They had lost all their property and were left almost penniless. The wife was sad indeed, and almost ready to despair; but the dear old man was cheerful. She was astonished at the coolness with which her husband met his lot; so she asked him one day:

"Husband, how is it that you bear this trouble so well? It almost crushes me to the earth."

"Why, wife, we are not quite so bad as you imagine. We have one bond left which we can live upon."

"Why, husband, what bond do you mean? I thought all was lost?"

"Oh, no! Here is one bond, and I will read it to you. It is in the old family Bible and reads as follows: 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'"

His wife inquired, "Do you call that a bond?"

"Yes," he replied, "it is the Word of God, and cannot fail."

God's bonds are better than ours.

"His oath, His covenant and blood,
Support me 'neath the swelling flood;
When all around, my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay."

Dr. Brown, in his "Horae Subsecive," tells of a Scottish believer, who was questioned by her pastor regarding the ground of her faith as follows: "Janet, what would you say if, after all He has done for you, God should let you drop into hell?" "E'ens (even as) He likes," answered Janet: "if He does, He'll lose mair than I'll do," meaning that He would lose' His Honor for truth and goodness. Therefore God cannot leave His people in the hour of their need.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never, forsake."

Says Dr. Adam Clark: "God's ability is so necessarily connected with His willingness, that the one indisputably implies the other; for, of what consequence, would it be to tell the church of God that He had the power to do so and so, if there were not implied an assurance that He will do what His power can, and what the soul of man needs to have done."

Show me a token for good, cries the humble supplicant at this Bank. But, beloved, what better, surer token do you need than what God has already given you -- His own immutable Word? Did you ever know one jot of His Word to fail?

"Engraved as in eternal brass,
The mighty promise shines;
Nor men nor devils can erase
Those everlasting lines.

His every word of grace is strong,
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along,
Speaks all the promises."

In commenting on the well-known Scripture: "The Lord is my Shepherd," Rev. J. Hudson Taylor says: "Not was, not may be, nor will be, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' is on Sunday, is on Monday, and is through every day of the week; is in January, is in December, and every month of the year; is at home, and is in China; is in peace, and is in war; in abundance, and in penury.

"Exceeding, Abundantly"
HIS MIGHTINESS
And

Your Nothingness

GOD IS

ABLE

What Are Your Needs?

GOD IS

WILLING

What Are Your Desires?

He is able to do

All that we Ask -- All that we think

All that we ask or think

Above all that we ask or think

Abundantly above all that we ask or think

Exceeding abundantly above all

that we ask or think

According to the Power that

worketh in us.

-- Ephesians 3:20

The Power is the Holy Spirit. Has He the Right of Way?

And then the assets of this Bank over all liabilities are "able to do exceeding abundantly" (or "super-abundantly above the greatest abundance"), "above all we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). In commenting on the words, "all that we ask or think," Dr. Adam Clark says: "We can ask every good of which we have heard; every good which God has promised in His Word; and we can think of, or imagine, goods and blessings beyond all that we have either read of or seen; yea, we can imagine good things to which it is impossible for us to give a name; we can go beyond the limits of all human descriptions; we can imagine more than even God has specified in His Word; and can feel no bounds to our imagination of good, but impossibility and eternity; and after all, God is able to do more for us than we ask or think."

Surely this is an able Bank. All the infinite resources of Deity -- and these are simply inexhaustible -- are at the back of it. Says the poet, Faber:

"Angelic spirits, countless souls,
Of Thee have drunk their fill;
And to eternity will drink,
Thy joy and glory still."

A certain writer says: "So deep are the exceeding riches of Christ that none can find them out, and so large, that when they are found out, men and angels shall not find their bottom. Oh, what foldings, and turnings, and inextricable windings of glory, are lapped up in Christ! Yea, treasures, all treasures are in Him (Col. 2:3), so it is called, baros doxes, a weight of glory. A weight eternal, a weight aged, and full of ages of glory. An exceeding great weight, and not that only; but a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

God has such an abundance of grace that it will require the ages to come to show unto us the "exceeding riches" thereof.

"The word 'exceeding' might be rendered 'beyond throwing distance.'"

"Fling your thoughts forward as far as you can, and there will always be an immense beyond; throw them as high as you may, till they out-soar the stars, and there will always be an above; let them sink forever, and there will always be a beneath; in the exceeding riches of God's grace.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork'; but the glory of the position and character of the saints, contrasted with the degradation from which they were raised, will be accounted in coming ages a more extraordinary exemplification of the riches of Divine grace than the splendor of the heavens is of the wealth of His skill."

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05 -- HEAVEN'S BANK NEVER CLOSES ITS DOORS

Rev. G. B. Kulp says: "All the providences of God are ours through Jesus Christ: all the mills of God are grinding for us; all the wheels of God are turning for us; the only business of sun, and moon, and stars is to shine for our benefit, for all things in the great universe of our God's creation are working together for good to us. All the promises of God are ours, and by faith we can transmute them into gold, and silver, and houses, and lands, and meat, and potatoes, and raiment. Read just one of them, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Get out your check book and read, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." No good thing. Now, just for a few hours, sit down and think of the good things you need, and shout over them, for God's check (promise) is good at the Bank of Heaven, any hour of any day, or night, and He delights to honor His promises whenever they are presented. What does the man with a large bank account care for the high cost of living, that grim, gaunt enemy of the poor! He knows his resources. What need you to care for panics, strikes, Bolsheviks, anarchists! Get your Father's ear; pour out your soul before Him; and get your answer -- your bins filled, and your feet shod, and your soul filled with the peace that passeth all understanding. When Napoleon's army was marching through the country, a good Christian woman, a widow, with her bairns, was somewhat fearful lest the soldiers should molest the home; and that night, around the family altar, she breathed out her prayer, "Oh, God, build a wall around our home and protect us from the enemy. When the children retired, they were heard asking one of another, "What did mother mean asking God to build a wall around our home?" In the morning they knew, for a heavy wind and snowstorm had come, and snowdrifts were all around that little home; and the soldiers went by, not knowing the house was there. That mother used her check book; so may you, and then you will thank God for the promises."

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06 -- GOD IS ABLE

"Is anything too hard for the Lord? (Gen. 18:14). That is one of God's unanswered questions. It has lain there for six thousand years, perused by myriads, answered by none; unless, indeed, those words of Jeremiah are the only answer which mortal man can give: "Ah, Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jer. 32:17).

"Oft there comes a wondrous message,
When my hopes are growing dim;
I can hear it thro' the darkness,
Like some sweet and far-off hymn:
Nothing is too hard for Jesus;
No man can work like Him.

"When my frame is worn with sickness,
And with tears my eyelids swim,
I can hear the promise ringing,
Like some sweet and heavenly hymn:
Nothing is too hard for Jesus;
No man can work like Him.

"When my way is closed in darkness,
And my foes are fierce and grim,
Still it sings above the conflict,
Like some glad, victorious hymn:
Nothing is too hard for Jesus;
No man can work like Him.

"Let us claim the mighty promise;
Let us light the torches dim;
Let us shout the mighty chorus;
Let us swell the glorious hymn:
Nothing is too hard for Jesus;
No man can work like Him.

-- A. B. Simpson

Why, then, not set out to walk with God? Is He not sufficient? Listen to His Word. "He measures the waters in the hollow of His hands; He weighs the mountains in His scales and the hills in a balance; He looketh upon the nations as a drop of the bucket, yea, as nothing, and less than nothing." And how much is "less than nothing"? Do you not see that He eclipses everything and every one with Himself. If He can "hoist the isles as an atom upon a pole " -- Rotherham, is He not sufficient for you to walk with, to work with? -- F. P.

C. H. Spurgeon says: "The other evening I was riding home after a heavy day's work. I felt weary and sorely depressed, when, swiftly, suddenly, as a lightning flash, came, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' I reached home and looked it up in the original, and it came to me in this way:

'My grace is sufficient for thee,' and I said, 'I should think it is, Lord,' and burst out laughing. I never fully understood what the holy laughter of Abraham was until then. It seemed to make unbelief so absurd. It was as if some little fish, being very thirsty, was troubled about drinking the river dry, and Father Thames said, 'Drink away, little fish; my stream is sufficient for thee.' Or it seemed like a little mouse in the granaries of Egypt after seven years of plenty, fearing it might die of famine. Joseph might say, 'Cheer up, little mouse; my granaries are sufficient for thee.' Again I imagined a man away up on yonder mountain saying to himself, 'I fear I shall exhaust all the oxygen in the atmosphere.' But the earth might say, 'Breathe away, O man, and fill thy lungs ever; my atmosphere is sufficient for thee.'" Oh, brethren, be great believers! Little faith will bring your souls to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your souls."

"According to your faith be it unto you." -- Matt. 9:29. Our faith in God is the measure of His power to save us. One man comes before Him with a quart cup in his hand, and prays God to fill him "with all his Divine fulness." A quart cup is his conception of "Divine fulness." The Master fills his little cup, but explains to men and angels that it was according to the man's faith -- not according to His own will. Another comes with his gill-cup. The King of Glory is a gill-cup God, according to his conception. He presents his cup, and it is filled; but the Lord forces him to tell the world that this was his way of asking -- not God's way of giving. Another borrows his wife's thimble, and holds it up to the Lord for his inheritance. Of course, the little thimble is filled, but the explanation must go with it: "According to your" thimble! Oh, if men would only know the Lord in the "exceeding riches of His grace"! "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

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07 -- ARE THESE PROMISES ALWAYS CASHED WITHOUT ANY TESTINGS?

Most assuredly not. The Bank of Heaven has an inveterate enemy. The Notes drawn upon it stand for too much wealth for Satan to let you alone. Just as surely as you begin to present your Notes at this Bank, you may expect in some way or other to be tested.

The prophet Daniel was a man greatly beloved of the Lord. Heaven interposed in his behalf again and again. Yet at times his faith was most sorely tried. In his case, deliverance did not always come at once. An archangel, who was sent to his assistance, said that "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days. But lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me" (Dan. 10:12,13). "If Satan could thus withstand Daniel and cause delay in the answer to his prayers, he can do it with us. He will interpose obstacles and hinder where he cannot defeat; he will wear out your patience if possible. He succeeded thus with Job's wife."

Do not be surprised, then, if dark clouds of some kind come over you. None ever trod this path without them. But, then, what would we do for rain if we had no clouds? Beloved, are your trials hard to bear? Is your path rough, thorny and dark? Do you suffer for well doing? Then,

"Courage, brother; do not stumble,
Though thy path be dark as night.

There's a star to guide the humble;
Trust in God, and do the right.
Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight
Cease from man and look above thee;
Trust in God and do the right."

Remember, "the just shall live by faith." You will not always be able to see your way before you, nor is it necessary to be able to do this, but nevertheless, in spite of clouds and storms, the promises of God are good, and will surely be cashed. You need not be concerned as to how you are going to come out, or how certain circumstances will develop. Shortly before his tragic death on the Ashtabula bridge, P. P. Bliss wrote:

"I know not what awaits me,
God kindly veils mine eyes,
And o'er each step of my onward way
He makes new scenes to rise;
And every joy He sends me, comes
A sweet and glad surprise.

"One step I see before me;
'Tis all I need to see.
The light of heaven more brightly shines,
When earth's illusions flee;
And sweetly through the silence comes
His loving 'Follow Me.'

"O blissful lack of wisdom!
'Tis blessed not to know;
He holds me with His own right hand,
And will not let me go,
And lulls my troubled soul to rest
In Him who loves me so.

"So on I go, not knowing;
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight.
'He knows, He knows, He knows.'"

Chorus:

"Where He may lead, I'll follow,
My trust in Him repose;

And every hour in perfect peace
I'll sing, He knows, He knows;
And every hour in perfect peace,
I'll sing, He knows, He knows.

As Toplady says: "It is the peculiar business of Faith's eye to see in the dark." To test your faith and perseverance, the Lord may occasionally see fit to delay cashing your Note. One of the most eminent men of faith this world has ever seen declared that for some things he had prayed thirty years before the answer came. Do not be surprised, then, nor become discouraged if you should meet with a similar experience, but persevere on." "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). An eminent writer says: "It takes a great while to answer some prayers. One day an acorn looked up and saw an oak tree over it, and did not know that this tree was its father, and pleaded with Nature, saying, 'Make me such a one as that.' So the squirrel took it and raced off with it towards his nest, and on the way he dropped it on a ledge where there was a little soil, and lost it. There it germinated, and its roots struck down. And after a year the little whip cried: "I did not pray to be a little whip; I prayed to be like that oak tree." The next year it grew and branched a little, but it was not satisfied; and in its discontent it said: 'Oh, Nature, I prayed that I might be like that voluminous oak, and now see what a contemptible little forked stick I am." Another year came and the winter froze it, and the summer storms beat on it, and it tugged away for its life, and its roots ran out and twined themselves around rocks and whatever else it could get hold of, and fed on the hillside. So it grew and grew till a hundred years had passed over it. Then behold how on the hillside it stands firm, and defies the winter storms and tempests! Then behold how it spreads itself abroad, and stands an oak indeed, fit to be the foundation of a prince's palace, or the keel of a ship that bears a nation's thunder around the globe!"

It should be borne in mind that God makes no promise as to the time when our prayers shall in every case be answered. Not a word is said about the time and circumstances under which the door shall be opened, but we are again and again enjoined quietly to continue to pray.

"Unanswered yet? the prayer your lips have pleaded
In agony of heart these many years?
Does faith begin to fail? is hope departing?
And think you all in vain those falling tears?
Say not the Father hath not heard your prayer.
You shall have your desire -- sometime -- somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? though when you first presented
This one petition at the Father's throne
It seemed you could not wait the time of asking,
So urgent was your heart to make it known.
Tho' years have passed since then, do not despair;
The Lord will answer you -- sometime -- somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say ungranted.
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done,
The work begun when first your prayer was uttered,

And God will finish what He has begun.
If you will keep the incense burning there,
His glory you shall see -- sometime -- somewhere.

Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered,
Her feet were firmly planted on the Rock,
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
Nor quails before the loudest thundershock.
She knows the Omnipotence has heard her prayer
And cries, 'It shall be done -- sometime -- somewhere.'

Anselm says: "God does not delay to hear our prayers, because He has no mind to give; but that, by enlarging our desires, He may give us more largely."

See how the Syrophenician woman was tested (Matt. 15:22-28). When she first presented her petition to the Lord, He answered her not a word. Then His own disciples prayed that He might send her away. Though she fell at His feet and worshipped Him, yet He seemingly rebuked her by saying: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." Many would have interpreted this remark as an insult, but she pressed her suit a little closer and said, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table." As much as to say if I am not permitted to sit down at the table with the children and take a part of the loaf, I am perfectly willing to get down on the floor and pick up the crumbs. These were severe testings, but she stood them all, and her faith was most gloriously rewarded.

See how Abraham was tested. Unbelief would suggest to him: "You and your wife are well stricken in years; according to the course of nature you cannot possibly have any more children, and if you should take the life of your only son, how then can the promise of God that your seed should be as numerous as the sand of the sea ever be fulfilled? By taking this step you will simply be frustrating the purposes of God." But, against his own parental feelings; against seemingly his own interests; against human policy; and against public opinion, he resolutely set his face to obey the divine command, "believing that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

"Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs
And works His Sovereign will.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take!
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense;
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain:
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

In commenting on the following words: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psa. 66:12)

Seth C. Rees says: "The margin says a moist place, which means a fertile place. The subject treated in this text is the use of difficulty. Opposition and oppression have always been favorable to national success. It was this that drove the fathers of the revolution to independence. Men come to the front in times of great struggle who would otherwise have spent their days in obscurity. The civil war brought out Grant and Lee and Sherman and Lincoln. The Spanish war has made Dewey and Hobson and Schley household words. Many a man stands out today as a flaming torch in consequence of trials and opposition. These bring out the strongest qualities of the soul; they prove our real value."

Israel gained more by the bondage under Pharaoh than she lost. Difficulty awakened courage and self-reliance in the breast of the Hebrew. The Lord never tests a worthless soul, and the devil never tempts a soul which is already his. If a man has trials, it is because God sees there is something in him; He sees something worth putting in a crucible. If you see others living in prosperity and luxury and ease, it is because they are not worth testing. Brother, if you and I are severely tested, we ought to be comforted in the thought that God has conferred upon us the honor. He knows we are able to stand, and He lets just the things come to us that we can endure to the glory of His name.

Satan has sense enough to know where the valuables are, and he goes for them. A pirate goes for a loaded ship. When a man is promoted through grace, the devil holds a caucus and sends a committee to wait on him.

When God sees there is hard wood which can be polished, He lets the testing come. Our trials, whether they be at the campmeeting, in the kitchen, in the counting-room or in the field, are to wake up the latent power in the soul. You can never wear the same clothes after you have been through a lions' den or an Egyptian prison. You are never the same after passing through the furnace. You outstrip everything you ever had. There was Joseph; his pathway to the throne lay

through the prison cell. Daniel was never promoted till he slept with lions. The Apostle Paul preached in Caesar's household with irons on his wrists. John Bunyan did his best work in Bedford jail. Thousands have come to their best through overwhelming difficulties. We have a God who is able to take these very things and glorify His name through us.

I would rather associate with people who will rub up against me and cuff and kick me and jostle me, for that will bring out the dormant strength which God has built into the soul. It was the weights on my old grandfather's clock that made it go. It is the adverse wind that propels the tacking ship. And God puts us in straight jackets and in stocks in inner cells, in order that we may shout and sing and hold meetings at midnight. We go from this camp to meet the stern realities of life, each heart knowing its own bitterness, its own trials; each to go through God only knows what, to develop us, to make us giants instead of pigmies, men instead of babies. Just as the wind carries the ship to its destination in the face of the tempest, God will waft us to our haven. "All things work together for good to those who love God."

Isaiah prophesies that Israel will return to Palestine on the shoulders of the Philistines. God's people need to learn that through difficulties we climb to higher heights and sublimer altitudes. Two men are traveling together and they come to a mountain. One man says, "I cannot go farther"; the other says, "This is here that I may climb nearer to the skies."

Trial makes us appreciate our resources as nothing else will. You have been handing in drafts for five dollars and ten dollars, and getting along with small amounts, till a great trial or bereavement or sorrow comes in to the life, and you walk up to the paying teller's window and present a check for a million dollars, and it is honored as quickly as if it was fifty cents. Many a man wouldn't know God had much if he was not put to the test. The greater the difficulty, the greater the triumph. The greater the trial, the greater the opportunity to show God's power. Heaven is exhaustless. Don't complain if severe things come into your life; only thank God and take courage. Beloved, I want to say you can choose between being a delicate, weak, ordinary Christian, and taking God to make you extraordinary. There are ordinary preachers enough; there are ordinary churches enough. It is the extraordinary that comes from the upper skies I'm looking for.

Opposition and difficulties are my servants to serve me, my helpers to help me. It is God's will and purpose that sanctified people should ride over all difficulties. It is God's will that we should understand that our enemies are our helpers. When the mother eagle wants her young to fly, she takes out of the nest the feathers and the cotton and leaves the thorns. Is she unkind? No; she knows they will be dwarfs if they stay there. God treats us in some such way if we are bound to be true. He stirs up the nest in order that we may learn to mount into the azure of the sky. It was persecution that scattered the disciples and sent them everywhere, preaching the Word.

It is God's thought for us that we shall triumph with a great reservoir back of us. It is one thing to go through the furnace, and another to go through triumphantly. If you have what God wants you to have, trials may come, friends may leave you, the very thing may come that you said never could occur, but you will walk right through in victory.

Fire and water are the two most destructive elements in the world. If God can keep a man in fire and in water, where can't He keep him! God can make us fireproof and watertight. It matters not how difficult the situation, God can keep us safely and securely. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Glory to God for a salvation that protects against fire -- that fixes us up so we can stand fire anywhere. Beloved, when you get this experience, you won't grumble or complain, but you'll take everything as from God. If God is putting you through a hard place, you ought to feel honored that He can trust you in a hard place. I'd rather do heavy work in the trenches, and be a real soldier with marks on me, showing I've seen real service, than to have all the ease and luxury this world can give.

It is time we began to loosen our grasp on temporal things, as Moses did, and tighten them on things eternal. We can afford to wait. We are the only people who can. A soldier who fought in the Battle above the Clouds was wounded and carried to the rear. "Where were you wounded, my dear sir?" said the surgeon. "I was almost at the top." "But where were you wounded?" "Almost at the top." He had forgotten his wounds, and was thinking of how near he had come to reaching the summit of the mountain. Oh, may the Lord help us as Christian workers to forget our grievances and trials and injuries, and think of the success of Christ's war. We may press on to the heights -- we may walk over everything in victory. God lets us do it.

Let me call your attention to the place spoken of in our text. It is a wealthy place, a moist place, a place of high clover, a place of plenty, a place where drought never strikes, a place where there are springs whose waters fail not, a place of entire sanctification, a place of second blessing. A man who is sanctified wholly always lives in a moist place. Glory to God!

"Thou hast brought us through fire and water, but into a wealthy place." Are you rich today, beloved? Have you reached the fertile place? Are you rejoicing evermore? Are you where you can go out to battle, conquering and to conquer? God help us to secure the riches that will never fade. Oh, this blessing will do wonders for you. It will make you peculiar, I know, but it will put joy in your soul and will be a propelling power to make you go through difficulties. Beloved, shall we go through?

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08 -- FAITH FOR DESPERATE DAYS

The Bible is full of such days. Its record is made up of them, its songs are inspired by them, its prophecy is concerned with them, and its revelation has come through them. The desperate days are the stepping-stones in the path of light. They seem to have been God's opportunity and man's school of wisdom. There is a story of an Old Testament Love-feast in Psalm 107, and in every story of deliverance the point of desperation gave God His chance. The "wits' end" of desperation was the beginning of God's power. Recall the promise of seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the sea, to a couple as good as dead. Read again the story of the Red Sea and its deliverance, and of Jordan with its ark standing mid-stream. Study once more the prayers of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, when they were sore pressed and knew not what to do. Go over the history of Nehemiah, Daniel, Hosea, and Habakkuk, Stand with awe in the darkness of

Gethsemane, and linger by the grave in Joseph's garden through those terrible days. Call the witnesses of the Early Church, and ask the Apostles the story of their desperate days.

The Bible is one long record of desperate days, and its pages are written for desperate days of all ages. The grief-free cannot appreciate it. Dry eyes cannot find its treasures.

Faith did not make our desperate days. Its work is to sustain and solve them. The only alternative to a desperate faith is despair, and faith holds on and prevails. Its strength is in its power to wait. Unbelief judges by the immediate; faith stakes everything on the ultimate. Despair looks hopelessly at the problem; desperate faith trusts God against all odds. Hear what Job says from the ruined heap of his life: "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for Him."

There is no more heroic example of desperate faith than that of the three Hebrew children. The situation was desperate enough, but they answered bravely: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." I like that "but if not."

I have only space to mention Gethsemane. Ponder deeply its Nevertheless. "If it be possible . . . nevertheless." Deep darkness had settled upon the soul of our Lord. The "why" of the cup pierced His heart. Trust meant anguish unto blood and darkness to the descent of hell -- Nevertheless! Nevertheless!

When Paul was storm-tossed, they were caught in a tempestuous wind they could not face, so they gave way to it and let her drive. That is all very well in daylight with plenty of sea-room, but at midnight, with a starless sky and a rocky coast, it was dangerous to move, so they let go four anchors from the stern and prayed for the day. -- S. Chadwick.

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THE END