

God

The Helper

John Kershaw

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Compliments of:

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“For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb. 13. 5, 6.)

The apostle Peter, speaking in reference to the Lord and His promises, has this blessed mode of expression, “whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.” Beloved, the exceeding greatness and preciousness of the promises that God has made to His people are inseparably connected with two things. The first is, that they must be brought in their experience into those circumstances that God has promised, for it is impossible that any one of His family can enjoy the exceeding greatness and preciousness of these promises unless they stand in need of what He has promised. The other thing is that though we have the promises in the letter of God's word, in great and rich abundance, and given by the Lord as a revelation of His mind and will, yet you and I cannot enjoy the fulness and preciousness thereof, unless God applies them by the influences of His Spirit to our soul.

Have you never been in peculiar troubles, with deep exercises of mind, and many difficulties surrounding you, which your heavenly Father in His godly wisdom has seen fit to exercise you with; and in your trouble you have gone to the

Bible, which is very proper, and have searched the scriptures for some promise to reach your case, and afford some consolation to your drooping mind, and could not get one? And thus, while you have seen there was an adaptation to your state and circumstances in the letter of the promise, yet, until the Holy Spirit shone upon the word, and applied it with power to your soul, you could not get at an experimental enjoyment of it? So we find we stand in need of God to give us the promises by the bedewings of His blessed Spirit. Now I know some talk as though the Christian could lay hold of the promise and act faith and enjoy the God of the promise, just as he pleases. Such professors of religion know nothing of the grace and preciousness of the promise, in a way of real experience!

Notice that Paul knew the truth of what he said in the text, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You recollect that he had had a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. He was sorely tried and harrassed, and his flesh and blood did not like it. He murmured and repined against it, and prayed earnestly that it might be taken away; but it was not the will of the Lord to remove this trouble; the thorn in the flesh must continue; he must have it, lest he should be exalted above measure, and to keep him down in his proper place.

Our flesh and blood do not like troubles; and when temptations, persecutions, afflictions, and chastisements arise, they are not pleasant, but very grievous to us; yet God's children must have troubles and crosses, for the trial of their faith, and the exercise of their patience, that they may be kept humble and in their proper place. If it were not for these things, we should not call upon the Lord to support us, to help us, to preserve us, and to guide and lead us. Suppose we had no troubles or trials, what would be the result? Why, we should rest upon our lees, and be satisfied with the things of time and sense. But when we are brought into deep waters, and into the furnace of affliction — what is the result then? Why we are made to cry unto the Lord from a feeling of deep necessity, and He encourages us with such a promise as this, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

I can speak on this subject from experience, and say in the presence of the Lord and you tonight, that I have gone hundreds of times into my closet, and fallen on my knees, which I never should have done if it had not been for the

that they received no injury therefrom. Thus they triumphed over the fury of the king, and were not afraid what man could do unto them. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The power of the Lord in raising the mind above the fear of man, may be seen in the case of *Elisha's servant*. When he had arisen early in the morning and got up on the mountain, he returned with great haste full of fears exclaiming, 'Alas! my master, how shall we do!' as though he had said, 'it is all up with us now;' for he perceived the host that encompassed the city around both with horses and chariots, and he concluded it was all over with them. But the Prophet was not alarmed; he was quiet and composed; and said "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." He knew that the Omnipotent God was with him; and that the Lord of hosts was on his side. But the servant of the man of God could not conceive who was with him; and he says, 'Master, they are now surrounding the city like unto grasshoppers to take us!' Then the Prophet prayed the Lord to open the eyes of the young man, that he might see how they were secured, and he beheld the mountain surrounded with horses and chariots of fire for their protection. He saw then, that there were more for them than all the hosts of the Syrians that were assembled against them; and he was satisfied, and no longer feared what man could do unto them.

O that the Lord would raise up our minds more above ourselves and our fellow-creatures and enable us to leave our cares in His hands; to trust in Him, to look more unto Him, and to rest on His faithful promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

May the Lord add His blessing to what has been said, and His name shall have the praise. Amen.

above the fear of man, beyond their agonies, and died sealing the truth in their blood? May we not then boldly say, "we will not fear what man can do unto us?" The religion of Jesus will raise the mind above the fear of man!

Look at the case of the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and see how they were carried above the fear of man. The idolatrous king, Nebuchadnezzar, had erected a golden image, and issued a proclamation that at certain times all men should bow down to it: but these servants of the living God were determined not to worship the idol which the king had caused to be made, nor did they make a secret of their intention not to obey His command. They are watched, and speedily brought before the king, and accused of disobedience to his will. The anger of the monarch rises like the fury of a lion; and he says to them, 'Is it true, what I hear of thee, that you refuse to fall down and worship the image which I have made; and have I not decreed that such shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace?' They answered the king, and said, 'It is true, O king; and we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; for be it known unto thee, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast made!' Then the king, full of fury, with his countenance distorted with rage, commanded the furnace to be heated seven times more than usual, and these servants of the most high God to be thrown into the midst of it, saying 'And where is that God that can deliver out of my hands? O what impiety and blasphemy! They replied, 'Why, that God, whom we fear and love, and in whom we put our trust, He is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thy hands. O king! we have put our case into His hands, and know that He will never leave us nor forsake us!' And now, behold them in the fire. Has the Lord forsaken them? No, He is with them still! He is walking with them in the midst of the fire. Then the king, expecting to have seen them consumed in a moment, turned to his counsellors in great astonishment, and said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire and behold, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God." Yes; the Captain of the Lord's host had come down, and was present with His saints, and by His mighty power had changed the nature of the fiery flames, so

troubles, trials, and difficulties that laid in my way. What a mercy it is that the God of heaven and earth is our heavenly Father! and that we are privileged to go and tell Him all our troubles and sorrows; that He is a Father that loves us at all times; and One to whom we may tell all our secrets, who never has nor ever will betray us at any time, but who encourages us to draw near to the throne of His grace with a true heart in the confidence of faith, to commit our way to Him, and to repose upon His faithfulness and love. However thorny may be your path and whatever difficulties you may have to contend with, if through them the Lord indulges you with nearness to Himself, your troubles and sorrows will then become real blessings to you. How my soul longs for more of this sweet familiarity and blessed access to the Lord! to have more implicit trust and confidence in Him! and to enjoy more of the smiles and approbation of the Lord! When He brings us to His feet in this way, who then can give us trouble? When He is graciously pleased to pour in a little of His oil and wine, then the child of God can say in the words of the text, and bless Him for an experience of it, "the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me." Yes at such a time as this he can boldly say, 'Lord, thou art my helper!'

There are three things contained in the text, which I shall enlarge upon as the Lord may be graciously pleased to assist.

First, — That the Lord has said, He will never leave nor forsake His people.

Secondly. — That the enjoyment of the promise emboldens the christian to say, that the Lord is his helper.

Thirdly. — That when realizing these things, the christian can boldly say that he will not fear what man can do unto him.

Now I know that I may speak to you of the promises, and of the things connected with them, in a consistent and systematic way, and all be God's truth; and you may sit and hear, and approve of it in your judgment, and be satisfied from the bottom of your hearts that it is according to the truth; but yet,

after all, unless it is accompanied by the sweet dew and influences of the Holy Spirit, it will be dry and barren both for me to speak, and also for you to hear. This is not because there is any dryness or barrenness in God's truth; it arises from you and me and shews we stand in need of His bedewing influences in our hearts, to enable us so to receive the truth as to comfort, revive, and animate our souls. O then, Thou great Head of Thy church! grant that we may have a little heavenly dew, and some sweet refreshings of Thy grace tonight! And, my friends, may you be helped to look through the feeble instrument to the Lord of life and power, that our meeting together may be for His glory, and for the comfort and consolation of our spirits.

The Lord has said that *He will never leave nor forsake His people.*

First, let us enquire who is intended by the pronoun "He" in the text, who, it is said, "will never leave nor forsake His people. It is no less a person than the Lord of hosts Himself. It is the Creator of heaven and earth. It is our covenant God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ who has solemnly declared that He made a covenant with His chosen, and sworn unto David His servant, that his seed shall be established for ever, and his throne to all generations; and that "one generation shall praise his works to another, and shall declare his mighty acts." All the purposes and decrees of a covenant God stand as firm as Jehovah's throne. "Hath he said it; and will he not do it? Hath he spoken it; and shall it not come to pass?" Yea, it shall stand fast for ever! "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." "He is faithful that hath promised;" and He never can nor ever will deny Himself. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." God's faithfulness stands firm and sure. What an unspeakable blessing it is that we have a faithful covenant-keeping God to rely upon! His people have had to say of Him in all ages of the world, that not one thing has failed of all that He has spoken; for He has always been faithful to His word of promise. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." What He says, He does.

In the next place, let us notice *the persons to whom the Lord has spoken this promise*, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." These words have reference to what the Lord said to Jacob from the top of the ladder. Jacob was in sore trouble; he had left his native home, and was fleeing into a distant land

people to the end. How often is the soul enabled to erect an Ebenezer of praise and gratitude to Him and say, "Lord, hitherto hast thou helped me!"

Now we have abundant proof from the word of truth that God will never leave His people. Did He forsake the Prophet in the wilderness? Did He not send ravens night and morning, with bread, to sustain him? Did He forsake the poor widow woman of Sarepta? Did not the barrel of meal last, and the cruse of oil continue to flow, until the time came that there was plenty in the land? Did He forsake Daniel in the den of lions? Or, can it be proved that He has ever forsaken one of His saints? No; "there is not one good thing failed of all that the Lord hath spoken."

Then again, the help of the Lord appears in *raising up the soul from bondage* and misery, and bringing it into an experimental enjoyment of gospel liberty. During the time the preciousness of the truth is being opened up to the mind, there will be a sweet peace felt in the Lord, and a reposing upon Him; for "thou wilt keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."

III. We come to the third and last part of the text. *The experience of these things in the soul enables the believer to say, that he will "not fear what man can do unto him."* No man can do anything against one of God's saints, but what He is pleased to permit him to do. The Master Himself said to Pilate, "thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." And so it is, that neither men nor devils nor any other power, unless God gives permission, can touch one of His anointed. The Lord says to the angry passions of man, and the rage of devils, as He does to the winds and the waves, "hitherto shalt thou go, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." We need not fear what man shall do unto us; for he shall not do anything but what the Lord has appointed, and which He will overrule for His own glory, and for the good of His dear people. He encourages us not to be afraid of the fury of man, saying, "Fear not them which can kill the body, and after that have no more which they can do."

Were not the minds of the martyrs raised up above the sufferings of their bodies? Did not our fore-fathers that suffered at the stake in Smithfield and on Tower Hill, die triumphantly, resigning their souls into the Lord's hands, in the full confidence of faith? Were not these martyrs raised up

experimental knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; so that the Lord is not known, nor His precious discriminating truth loved? Where this is the case, such hearers cannot endure sound doctrine nor genuine Christian experience; but they must have teachers, who will amuse their fancies, and play upon their passions, to the neglecting of the pure truth of God. But nevertheless, the Lord is the helper of His true spiritual Zion; for He promised never to leave His Zion, but He will be with her, and bless her. The Lord is the best helper of His people!

But I observe again, we need the Lord's help *to enable us to stand fast* in an open profession of attachment to Christ's person, His word, and His people. There are many sufferings we are called to endure. I have had so many things to contend with that my flesh has been ready to give it all up many times, and if I could have run away from the work I should have done it, though I speak it to my shame and disgrace. I have often said, "Would to God I had never entered into the work of the ministry at all." But the Lord does enable His people to stand; We need the Lord, then, to be our helper and sustainer, that we may continue faithful to Him and His work, and to be "instant in season and out of season."

We need the Lord to direct and guide us in every step we take. I am jealous over my heart, and my carnal reasonings; they bring me many times upon my knees before the Lord, to pray Him to keep me in my right mind, that He would be a strength to me, and guide me in the way in which He would have me to go. He has promised to hold His people up; and I am a living witness to the faithfulness of that God who has held me up now for many years. Therefore I can say with beloved Paul, "having obtained help of God I continue unto this day"! I love this solemn saying of his in my very heart and soul: for if God had not held Paul up through his multiplied troubles, he must have fainted; but the Lord supported him, and brought him through all his difficulties. He had to suffer many things from false brethren; some left him, and went into crooked paths; others departed into the world, and turned their backs on him; while at one important time, he says, "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; nevertheless the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." Many failed him, but his God never forsook him; He stood by and supported him, and made him triumphant over all his enemies. The Lord will help His

for his life; his brother Esau was determined to be revenged upon him because he had obtained the blessing: and Jacob, being wearied with his journey, had laid himself down on the ground; a stone was his pillow, and the canopy of heaven was his covering; and he was looking to the Lord for protection. Now here was Jacob in this forlorn condition; and he had fallen asleep, when the Lord, who was watching over him, appeared to him in a vision of the night, at the top of the ladder; and which was a type of Christ, in whom every promise that God has made is deposited, "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." From the top of this ladder the Lord said to Jacob, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee; and I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." This promise was spoken home to his heart; it was attended with the gracious bedewings and sacred influences of the Lord, who declared Himself to be his covenant God and Father, as He had also been the God of Abraham, and the God of his father Isaac. Jacob was so overpowered with the revelation, and felt the blessedness of it in such a way, that he said, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Here then, God made a glorious promise to Jacob. The prophet Isaiah has a peculiar reference to it, where he says, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel! I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Jacob was typical of the whole spiritual Israel; and therefore the promise was not made to him merely, but to every one of the people of God in him.

Let us enquire, then, a little more into the character to whom the promise was made. We say it was made to Jacob. But what was Jacob? He was a poor, weak, and helpless worm; and God knew that he felt himself to be sinful and wretched; and therefore He says, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." If you do not see and feel yourselves to be poor, weak, lost, and helpless worms; and are not brought to know it as Jacob did, the promise is not made to you. To every one that knows himself to be in such a condition, and can feelingly say, 'I am a worm; and no man; I am a poor, weak, and worthless worm!' God says, "I will never leave thee." Bless the Lord, then, that He notices such wretched and such creeping worms as we discover ourselves to be in our feelings.

But again, to whom does the Lord speak this promise? It is to *those who have many fears*, and are sorely troubled and distressed in heart on account of what they have to pass through. This was the case with Jacob. He had sore trials and discouragements; and he feared that he should fall, and not be able to stand his ground, so that his mind was greatly cast down. This will always be the case in the time of trouble and great affliction; and therefore the Lord encourages him, and speaks comfortably to his heart, and says, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Are you ever dismayed and cast down, and tossed to and fro in your feelings; and made to wonder at times where the scene will end? If so, you are the characters intended, and it is to such as you to whom the promise is made; for the Lord's people are the subjects of many fears. There are a great many "fear-nots" in the scriptures but not one too many, or else the Lord would not have scattered them up and down in the word of His grace as He has done. He has not spoken them that the children of God may be nursed up in doubts and fears, but that their hearts may be encouraged to trust in the Lord, and their minds established in the faithfulness of His truth.

But again, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." To whom then has He said it? It is to *those who feel that they are not worthy of being the recipients of such a glorious truth*. If a man or woman present here tonight should think they are worthy of this blessing, it is evident that they are not interested in the promise. I cannot but admire the riches of God's grace to such poor worthless characters, as the people of God see and feel themselves to be. John the Baptist felt himself to be so insignificant, that he said, "the latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose"! The Centurion said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter into my house". The believing family know that they are not worthy of such rich promises, and of such wonderful dealings of loving-kindness and faithfulness. How do we feel when we approach the Maker of heaven and earth? Can we tell Him that we are worthy of His notice, of His help, of His comfort, and of His consolations? Oh no! The heaven-born soul, made acquainted with himself, has no patience with anything of the kind. He says, "I am worthless! I am astonished that the Lord exercises so much patience and

he might do a great deal if he would; but, my friends, we know by experience that we had no power to help ourselves. We were dead in sin, and lay at the very dark door of hell; and had it not been for the interposition of the Lord Jesus Christ, the immortal Word, taking our cause into His hands by becoming incarnate, standing in our law-place and stead, and overwhelmed in sorrows and sufferings to raise us up from our miserable state in the ruins of the fall, not a soul of us could ever have been saved! I cannot but admire that sweet passage of David, and it has done my soul good many times, both in private and public, where he says, that "help is laid on one mighty to save!" Here we might say many things on the ability of the Lord Jesus Christ, and shew that "he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him."

We need the help of the Lord *all through the wilderness*. We need His help to enable us to keep constant and faithful to the profession of His truth, therefore the apostle says "stand fast, quit you like men." This is a day of awful departure from the truth of God; and it is lamentable to see how some ministers are swerving and sliding back from that which they once professed, turning aside into error, and causing the Philistines to rejoice. May the Lord help us to stand fast, and never to give up that truth which debases the sinner in the dust and puts the crown on the head of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord help you to plead with His blessed Majesty not to allow you either to court the smiles, nor fear the frowns of any man; but to be kept faithful and honest in the conscience; to be girt about with the whole armour of truth; and to be able to wield the sword of the Spirit, in dependence upon His promised aid; and to leave all consequences in the hands of the Lord and Master. The Lord helps not only His people, but His ministers also, that they be made valiant for the truth; and when at any time they may appear to slacken, may you be enabled to pray for them, and to encourage them in their work. Thus, Lord, grant that the purity of Thy truth may continue among us!

The apostle Paul prophesied that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they hearken to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." The time is come now. For do we not now see great numbers admitted into the churches who have never been brought out of the world, and who are destitute of any

are made able to leave all to His management, then it is that we prove Him to be a faithful covenant-keeping God, who will fulfil His promises to His saints, and surely do them good, because it has pleased Him to make them His people. He knows all their wants and necessities, and He will satisfy them all out of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. If we could leave our cares more in the hands of our God, and cast our burdens more upon Him who cares for us, we should have more repose and quietness in our souls. But you and I are unable to do this; for we can no more cast our cares upon Him in our own strength, than we can make a world! It is only as the Lord enables us to roll our troubles on Him, and leave them in His blessed hands, that we can do it at all. When we are thus privileged, we feel the sweetness of it, and learn experimentally the faithfulness of His promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

II. We move on now, to the second branch of the subject — that *the enjoyment of the promise emboldens the believer to say, "the Lord is my helper."* Having proved the Lord to be faithful to His word, and of His raising up faithful living witnesses to testify to the faithfulness of God to His promise, we take encouragement therefrom and boldly say, that He who has helped us thus far, will never leave us now, but He will be with us through all the way, and guide us by His counsel, and afterward receive us to His glory. "So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me."

In reference to the help of the Lord, then, there are a few things which it is necessary for us to notice. How many of us are there, who feelingly know that we need the Lord to help us, through a discovery of our utter helplessness and misery? Until we are brought into an acquaintance with this solemn truth, we shall never feel our want of divine help.

In the first place, we need *the saving help* of the Lord. "O Israel," He says, "thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found." We have no help in us, for "vain is the help of man." We are lost and ruined by nature — sunk in sin, guilt, and misery — condemned, and under the curse of the law; and not the angels in heaven, nor all the ministers on earth, can help a sinner out of the rubbish of the fall, nor help him to the salvation which is in Christ. There is a good deal said by some persons about man's power and ability to help himself, and that

long-suffering in bearing with me; for I am sure, if He were to mark my iniquities, and to deal with me according to my deserts, He would cut me down as a cumberer of the ground!" Such an one is satisfied, not on account of any worthiness in him, but because God will bless His people, and stand by the faithfulness of His promise. He hath said, who cannot lie, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Let us glance at two or three other promises. Depend upon it, there shall be a fulfilment of them in our experience, let our circumstances be whatever they may. When speaking to His fearing and cast-down people, the Lord says, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: 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." So we must go through the waters and the fires; and the Lord will make good His promise to us in them: He will be with us in trouble; He will never leave us in the waters or the flames. Bless Him, then, for His promise!

Look now at the children of Israel, when they were in captivity in Egypt, did the Lord forget them there? No; for when the time was accomplished to deliver them, He brought them out with an high hand and an out-stretched arm; and they passed through the sea as on dry land, for God was with them. When the three Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace, the Lord of hosts was with them. He always fulfils this promise in their experience, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will be with them in all their sorrows, troubles, and afflictions. Whatever floods and flames we may have to go through, the Lord will be with us; He will never leave us. It is all right then, He is on our side; and greater is He that is for us, than all that can be opposed to us.

Let us look at another promise. The Lord says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." I see somewhat in these sweet words, which I hope will meet your case and comfort your souls. "I will lead the blind by a way that they knew not." This does not mean those that are blind literally, but those of the Lord's own covenant people, who are hedged up in their way, and cannot understand His dealings with them in a way of

providence and grace. Have I here tonight one of these characters, who is thus wound up in his feelings and circumstances, and knows not what to do? Let me tell you, the Lord will surely take you by the hand, and lead aright, for He says, He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. I read of one of the family, who said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." It is He who "will lead the blind by a way that they knew not."

We very frequently cannot understand our path, or know the way in which we are being led; but the Lord has given us His faithful promise, and says, "I will make darkness light before thee, and crooked things straight." Have you any darkness in your soul; do you feel oppositions arising to every inch of the way, and do many doubts and fears spring up in consequence? This is the way that all the saints of God have had to travel through the wilderness. The Psalmist says of those who are unacquainted with these things, "because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." The wicked are without changes, there is no fear of God before their eyes, so that "they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." But the people of God have their times of darkness and desertion with many misgivings and fears; and if it were not so, the promise would not be suitable to them. Should there be anyone present in these circumstances, the language of the text belongs to you, "he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God;" for He is a faithful God. What a mercy it is, that we have such a covenant keeping God to stay upon. What a foundation is this for the fulfilment of the promise!

Again, "He will make crooked things straight." Have you not some crooked things? Is all straight at home, and just as you would have it to be? Is there no husband got a crooked wife — or wife troubled with a bad husband? Are there no difficulties in the business, or disorders in the family, or crookedness in the circumstances? Is all right and straight? If so, the promise does not belong to you, it is only intended for those who are walking in these crooked places. "Well then," says some poor soul, "that just suits me, for I have nothing but cares,

sorrows, and crosses, and though I try to make things straight, I cannot do it, for the more I strive, the more crooked they appear. Such will cry out in earnest supplication, 'O that the Lord would look upon me, and make the crooked things in my path straight, and the rough places plain!' May the Lord enable you to leave your case with Him; for He is faithful, and He will fulfil His promise. After you have tried to alter the crooks in your lot and mend matters, you have discovered that you have made them much worse than they were before: and when you have been thoroughly taught your own helplessness, then the Lord will come and make good His own promise; "He will make crooked things straight, and rough places plain; and all these things will he do, and not forsake them."

We used to have a very valuable old man in Lancashire, who for more than half a century had exhibited a most exemplary character; and there was a young man with whom he was very familiar who had left that part of the country and had gone into the ministry. Many months rolled away since they had seen each other, but having occasion to travel to a place some distance from their homes, they met most unexpectedly together at the end of their journey, when, after a good hearty shake of the hand, and saying how glad they were to meet again, the young man said, 'Well, Richard, how are you getting my on?' The old man made answer, 'Do you mean respecting my farm, or my family?' 'No,' he replied, 'I want to know how you are getting on in your conscience?' 'Why,' he says, 'the Lord and me have not been friends for some time; for I had been pleading and wrestling with Him to deliver me from a particular trouble that pressed heavily upon me; and though I had told Him all about it, yet He appeared to take no notice of me; and the burden that I wanted to be removed got heavier and heavier, until at last it was almost insupportable. Then I became peevish, fretful, and rebellious as Jonah was, so that things got worse and worse in my soul.' The young man said, 'But you are something better now?' 'O yes,' he replied, 'because I have been able since then to give it all up into His hands; for I said, 'Lord, I give it all up to Thee; do with me as Thou wilt; and make me to be resigned to Thy will:' and blessings on His name, I have found Him to be my covenant God and Father, and faithful to His word of promise, so that all is right and straight again.'

Just so it is, when we are brought to submit to His will, and