

***"Thy word is true from the beginning:
and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."***

Psalm 119:160

The *loving-kindness and the truth of God*" were two heavenly notes, on which "the sweet Psalmist of Israel" loved to dwell¹--his *"loving-kindness"* in giving, and his *"truth"* in fulfilling--his gracious promises. Indeed the displays of his truth--whether to his Church collectively, or to his people individually--have always been every way worthy of himself. Often has his word seemed on the eve of being falsified, clearly with the design of a brighter and more striking display of its faithfulness. The very night previous to the close of the four hundred and thirty years, Israel was, to all human appearances, as far from deliverance as at any former period. But "the vision was for an appointed time" (Hab. ii. 3): nothing could hasten, nothing could delay it; for *"it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt."* (Exod. xii. 41.) At a subsequent period, the family of David appeared upon the point of extinction; and it seemed as if the promise of God would fall to the ground. But to exhibit *the word of God* (Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 16), *as true from the beginning*, a providential, and almost a miraculous, interference was manifested. When Athaliah destroyed all the seed-royal of the house of Judah, Joash was stolen away, put under a nurse, hid in the house of the Lord six years, and in God's appointed time brought forth to the people *as the fulfilment of the express promise of God--"Behold! the king's son shall reign, as the Lord had said of the sons of David."* (2 Chron. xxii. 10-12; xxiii. 3.) "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." (Ps. cvii. 43.)

And thus have many of his own people been tempted in seasons of despondency to "charge God foolishly." (Job, i. 22.) But who of them has not afterwards, in some unexpected deliverance, "set to his seal"--*Thy word is true from the beginning?* (Gen. xlii. 36, with xlvi. 15, 16.) "The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, *when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.*" (Deut. xxxii. 36. Comp. 2 Kings, xiv. 26, 27.) And how do these recollections put to shame the suggestions of unbelief, and strengthen our confidence in the prospect, or even in the present endurance, of "manifold temptations!"

The full acknowledgment of the truths of God's word is the ground of all our peace and comfort. The believing reception of the testimony opens to us a free access to God. (Eph. iii. 12.) We stand before him self-condemned, and yet we believe that "there is no condemnation." (Rom. iii. 19; viii. 1.) "The Spirit beareth witness" to and "with our spirits," that "this God is our God for ever and ever"--"unto death" (Rom. viii. 16. Ps. xlvi. 14), in death (Ps. lxxiii. 26), and through eternity. (Rev. xxi. 3.) In this simplicity of rest upon the testimony, we go to our God, like Abraham, in sensible helplessness, but in assured confidence, "strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Rom. iv. 19, 20.)

1 See his character described--"Good and upright is the Lord," Ps. xxv. 8--and mark these perfections pleaded in their combined connexion with his purposes of grace--"Thou wilt perform *the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham*"--"mercy" in the original grant--"truth" in the subsequent ratification and performance. Mic. vii. 20. Comp. Luke, i. 72, 73.

Many, however, have been so used to indulge the pride of their own reasonings, that they scarcely know how to read the book of God without cavilling. If they believe while it is in their hands, they are not prepared to give a reason of their faith. They have ventured into conflict with the enemy with unproved armour, and so have been shaken and troubled. *Or perhaps their faith does not reach the whole testimony:* and therefore, being partial only it is not genuine. For if we do not give full credence to all, we do not give true credence to any. We do not receive it on the authority of God, but only so far as our reasoning can explain it, or our will may approve it. What need then have we to pray for a teachable simplicity of faith--not asking--'What thinkest thou?' but--"*How readest thou?*" In this spirit we shall hold our anchor on solid ground; and should we again be "tossed with the tempest," we shall look to him, who stilleth the storm, and there shall be "*a great calm.*" (Mark, iv. 39.) Confidence simply built upon the word of God, will endure the storms of earth and hell.

Yet we may loosely believe all, while we practically believe none. The generalities of truth have no influence without an individual application. The summary look of acquiescence will miss all the solid blessings of a reverential and experimental faith. But to find--as the woman of Samaria found--that 'it is all true,'--because it answers to our convictions, our wants, and our feelings (John, iv. 29) to know that the promises are true, because they have been fulfilled in us--this is tasting, feeling, handling--this is indeed blessedness--this makes the word unspeakably precious to us--"a treasure to be desired." (Prov. xxi. 20.) To have the witness in ourselves that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables," but that it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15)--this is indeed "life from the dead." Oh! how should we seek thus to receive the word "with much assurance!" (1 Thess. i. 5.) The Israelites were not satisfied with inquiring respecting the manna--"What is this?" (Exod. xvi. 15, margin), or with discovering that it had descended from heaven; but they gathered it each for himself, and fed upon it as their daily bread. Nor will it be of any avail to us to prove beyond contradiction, and to acknowledge with the fullest assurance, the truth of God's word, unless we thus embrace it, and live upon it as our heavenly portion. Faith alone can give this spiritual apprehension--"*He that believeth, hath the witness in himself.*" (1 John, v. 10.) But if the word be the truth of God *from the beginning*, it must be eternal truth in its character and its results; like its Great Author in every particular--*enduring for ever.* "*For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven; thy faithfulness is unto all generations.*" (Verses 89,90.) Here is the rock of my confidence. How could I rest my hope on any salvation, that did not proceed from the primary, unchangeable, eternal mind? What assurance could I have elsewhere, that the grand plan might not be defeated by some unexpected combination? Whereas every act of reliance in his faithfulness establishes more firmly his title to my confidence, and strengthens the soul into a habit of intelligent, vigorous faith.

Lord! give unto us that "precious faith," which makes the acknowledgment of the *truth of thy word from the beginning*, and its *endurance for ever*, the spring of continual life and consolation to our souls.