



The Guest of The Soul

Chapter 8 – TEXTS THAT HAVE BLESSED ME

When I was a Cadet in The Salvation Army's International Training College, forty-seven years ago, we had on the staff a young officer who had been a wild, reckless sinner. He had been saved but a short while when war broke out in Egypt, and, being a military reservist, he was sent to the front. He had no Bible, and he could remember but one promise – "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9).

In every temptation that assailed, every danger, every hour of spiritual loneliness, it was through this text that he looked up to God and claimed heavenly resources for his earthly needs. And he was not disappointed. His needs were met. God failed him never.

What a happy man to have such a promise! And yet how poor he was! He was like a beleaguered army with only one line of communication open; like a city with only one aqueduct for water, or one dynamo for light; like a room with but one window, or a house with but one door; like a car with but one cylinder; like a man with only one lung. There was but one star in his sky.

I remember how poor I felt him to be. He was not a juicy soul. He was not radiant. His face did not shine. It lacked solar light. I rejoiced that he was spiritually alive, but it was such an impoverished life! He was like a diver in the deep sea whose supply of oxygen came down through a pipe line, instead of being like a man on top of the world with all the winds blowing upon him, all the stars twinkling and dancing above him, all the glory of the cloudless days irradiating him.

Now, when I am asked for my favorite promise, I smile. It is not one text more than another, but A WHOLE BIBLE that blesses me, assures me, warns and corrects and comforts me. A hundred promises whisper to me. I never know when one of the promises - perhaps one that I have not met for days or even months – may suddenly stand before me, beckon me, speak to me tenderly,



comfortingly, authoritatively, austere; speak to me as though God were speaking to me face to face.

The ancient heroes of the Cross "obtained promises by faith." You can buy a Bible for a few cents or pence, and if you have not the money to buy, a Bible Society will give you one. And the Bible teems with promises. They are on almost every page. But your eyes will not see them, your mind will not grasp them, your heart will receive no strength and consolation from them – if you have not faith. The man who goes through the Bible without faith is like the Boers and natives who walked over the diamond fields of Africa all unconscious of the immeasurable wealth beneath their feet.

When I say that I smile at being asked for my favorite promise, and I reply that it is the whole Bible which blesses me, I do not mean that there is no one promise that looms large to me, but rather that there are so many which bless me and meet my daily needs that I am like a man with a home full of sweet children, every one of whom is so dear to him that he cannot tell which he loves most and which is most needful for his happiness.

My spiritual needs are manifold, and there seems to be a promise just suited to my every need, that matches my need as a Yale key matches a Yale lock, as a glove fits the hand, as light answers to my eye and music to my ear, as the flavour of delicious food matches my sense of taste, and as the attar of roses answers my sense of smell; as the love of one's beloved and the faithfulness of one's friend answer the hunger of the heart.

For three or four years I had known that someday I would have to come to close grips with myself and get the Blessing of a Clean Heart if I was ever to see God in peace and have the power of the Holy Ghost in my life. At last I began to seek in earnest, and for three or four weeks I had become more and more hungry for the blessing. There were two things confronting me which I felt I could not do, but self had to be crucified. The way of faith was hidden from me because I hesitated to approach it by the way of whole-hearted obedience.



But God was faithful. He did not leave me, but deepened conviction until I was in an agony. At last, at about nine o'clock on Friday morning, January 9th, 1885, I could hold out no longer. My heart broke within me, and I yielded. Then instantly was whispered in my heart this text: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). The last part of the text was a revelation to me: "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" – "ALL unrighteousness."

I dropped my head in my hands and said, "Father, I believe that," and instantly peace passing all understanding flooded my soul, and I knew that I was clean. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" had "made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). Hallelujah!

Two days later I preached on the Blessing and testified to it. But I trembled lest I might lose it. Then the Lord spoke to me in the words of Jesus to Martha, mourning over her dead brother, Lazarus: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John xi. 25,26).

Again I believed, and in that moment Christ was revealed in me as surely as He was revealed to Paul on the road to Damascus. I melted into tears, and loved my Lord as I never dreamed one could love. Since then I have again and again cried out with Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). And again and again I have said with Paul: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. iii. 7, 8).

When again I feared lest I might fall, these two texts reassured me: "Fear thou not; 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" (Isa. xli. 10); and "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).



Then I was tempted with the thought that, when I got old, the light would fade and the fire in my soul would go out. But these texts came with comforting assurance and power to my heart: "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. xlii. 4); and, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (Ps. xcii. 13, 14).

I saw that I must not fear, nor be dismayed, in the presence of any trouble or difficulty, but must quietly trust in the Lord. And I must not drift about as so many do, but remain "planted in the house of the Lord."

When I have gone to distant battlefields in far-off lands, among strangers, this promise has put comfort and strength into me: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exod. xxxiii. 14). And when I have felt any insufficiency I have been reassured with this promise: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. iv. 11, 12).

These are only a few of a multitude of precious promises and words of the Lord which came to me years ago, and which are ever whispering in my mind and heart, challenging my faith, my love, my utter devotion. They are the joy and rejoicing of my heart; a heritage from the Lord, a lamp to my feet, a light to my path, a sword with which to thrust through the accusations and doubts and fears with which Satan is ever ready to assail me. Hallelujah!