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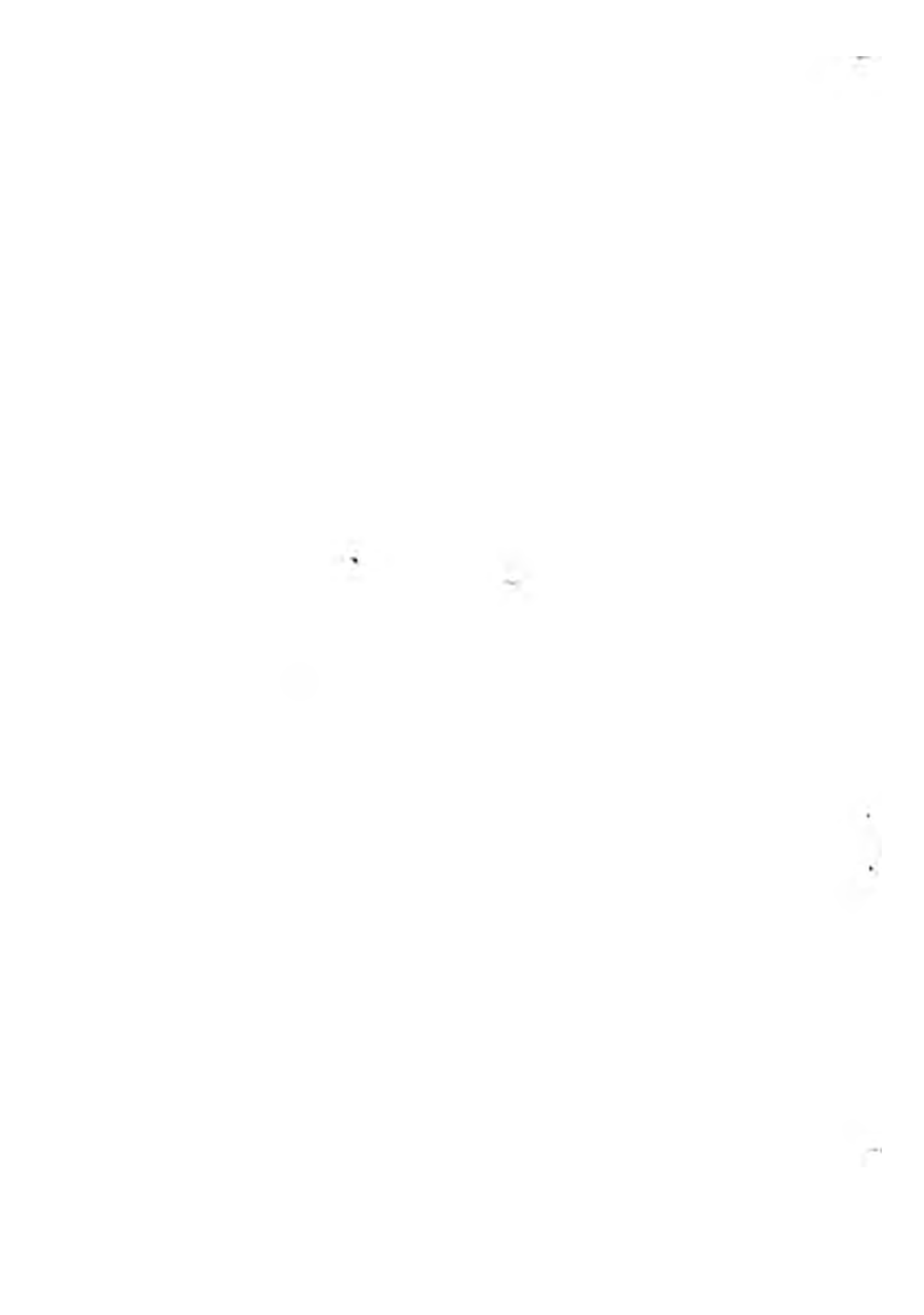
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**THE
EVERLASTING ARMS.**

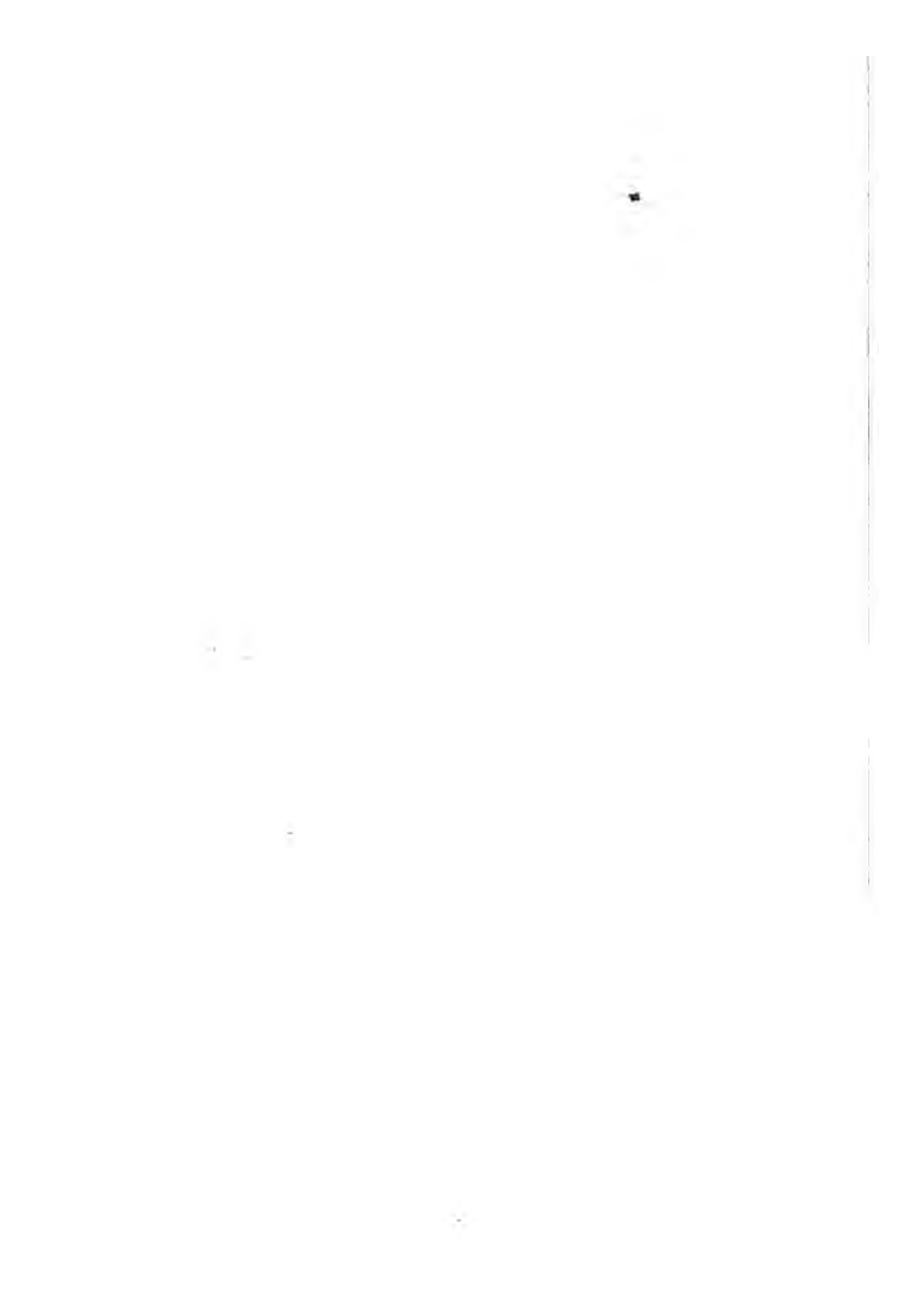
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“ THE EVERLASTING ARMS.”



“ THE EVERLASTING ARMS,”

A REPETITION

S E R M O N

ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

Preached on the 7th of May, 1710.

BY THE LATE

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

LONDON :

E. PALMER AND SON, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1848.



PREFACE.

THIS selection from the exceeding great and precious promises of God, is dedicated to the Church of Christ ; with prayer that by these promises many may be partakers of the divine nature.

C. MARSHALL.

*St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street,
Sept. 12th, 1848.*

vered in manuscript, (and was never before printed,) it is hoped will be found a valuable acquisition to the admirers of that learned divine, whose writings will remain a standing memorial of his attachment to the cause of God and truth. He had been three years and a half on the Promises of God, preaching them over on Sacrament-days, that is, once a month, (which took up three years and a half) being forty-two in all. He began on the first Sunday in November, 1706, and ended with this Repetition Sermon on May 7th 1710. The Author left Chester the following year, for his new engagement at Hack-

ney. In May, 1714, he visited his friends in Cheshire, and on his return, was taken ill at Nantwich, where he ended his important services for the salvation of immortal souls. The evening before his departure he left these memorable words : “ A life spent in the service of God, and communion with him, is the most comfortable and pleasant life that any one can live in this world.”

2. We have them as fruits of Christ's purchase. The Lord having purchased us with his own blood, we have these promises produced by that inestimable grace.

3. They are plain and ample declarations of the good-will of God towards men, and therefore we have them as God's part of the covenant of grace.

4. They are a foundation of our faith, and we have them as such ; and also of our hope ; on these we are to build all our expectations from God ; and in all temptations and trials we have them to rest our souls upon.

5. We have them as the directions and encouragements of our desires in prayer. " Seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Wherefore they are the guide

of our desires, and the ground of our hope in prayer.

6. We have them as the means by which the grace of God works for our holiness and comfort, for by these we are made partakers of a divine nature, and faith, applying these promises, is said to work by love.

7. We have the promises as the earnest and assurance of future blessedness.

By these eternal life and glory is secured to all true believers. And now having observed these things, let us review the blessed promises of God, and,

I. He hath promised that we shall be his people : “ Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a pecu-

the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11.

IX. He will direct us in the way of our duty : " Good and upright is the Lord : therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment : and the meek will he teach his way." Psalm xxv. 8, 9.

X. He will protect us from every thing that is really evil : " The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil ; he shall preserve thy soul : the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore," Psalm cxxi. 7, 8.

XI. He will supply us with all good : " The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger ; but they that seek the

to love him : “ The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live,” Deut. xxx. 6.

VI. He will give us the knowledge of his truth, and the comfort, and the benefit of it : “ Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” John viii. 32.

VII. He will unite our hearts to himself, and to each other : “ I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them,” Jer. xxxii. 39.

VIII. He will be tender of those that are weak : “ He shall feed his flock like a shepherd : he shall gather

ship and communion with himself :
 “ Blessed is the man whom thou choos-
 est, and causest to approach unto thee
 that he may dwell in thy courts ; we
 shall be satisfied with the goodness of
 thy house, even of thy holy temple,”
 Psalm lxxv. 4.

XVII. He will give us the comfort-
 able enjoyment of ourselves : “ His
 soul shall dwell at ease ; and his seed
 shall inherit the earth,” Psa. xxv. 13.

XVIII. He will deliver us in and
 under our troubles : “ Because he hath
 set his love upon me, therefore will I
 deliver him ; I will set him on high,
 because he hath known my name. He
 shall call upon me, and I will answer
 him : I will be with him in trouble ; I
 will deliver him and honour him,” Ps.
 xci. 14, 15.

XIX. He will afflict us in measure and in mercy, when we have need of it : “ I will be his Father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee,” 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

XX. He will spare us with the tenderness of a fatherly compassion : “ They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,” Mal. iii. 17.

XXI. He will not persist in his controversy with us : “ I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always

not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40.

XXIX. He will make all events conduce to our real welfare : " We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28.

XXX. He will perfect the work of grace in us : " Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6.

XXXI. He will be with us when we are old, to bear us up under our infirmities : " 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," Isaiah xlvi. 4.

XXXII. He will never desert us in any exigence whatsoever : " For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

XXXIII. He will give us victory over our spiritual enemies ; " The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20.

XXXIV. He will recompence our charity to the poor : " He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he pay him again," Prov. xix. 17.

XXXV. He will make up all our losses for his name's sake : " Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife,

or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life," Matt. xix. 29.

XXXVI. He will let us live long enough in this world, and give us a comfortable prospect of a better : " With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation," Psalm xci. 16.

XXXVII. He will be with us when we come to die : " Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me," Psalm xxiii. 4.

XXXVIII. He will receive our souls into the arms of his love : " But God will redeem my soul from the

power of the grave ; for he shall receive me. Selah !” Psalm xlix. 15.

XXXIX. He will take care of our posterity when we are gone : “ The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee,” Psalm cii. 28.

XL. He will raise our bodies to life again : “ This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day,” John vi. 40.

XLI. He will own us in the judgment of the great day : “ Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven,” Matt. x. 32.

XLII. He will put us in possession of everlasting bliss : “ And this is the

promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life," 1 John ii. 25.

REPETITION TEXT.

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

And now what shall we say to these things ?

I. 1. Let us be thankful to God for all these great and precious promises that God should not only do us good, but engage himself by promises to do so.

2. Let us be ashamed of ourselves that we have not lived more upon these promises.

3. Let us encourage ourselves with these promises to go on cheerfully and resolutely in the way of our duty.

4. Let us acknowledge the truth of God, and his faithfulness to his promises. "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise," &c. 1 Kings viii. 56.

5. We are concerned to treasure up these promises, that we may have them ready to use when we have occasion for them, to silence our fears, and to strengthen our faith.

6. Behold what need we have to live by faith, through which, and by which we make use of these promises. God gives by promise that we may take by faith ; therefore set about that work, and be much in the exercise of it.

II. Here is our duty inferred from

this privilege, “ Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit :” by which is understood,

1. We must abhor that which is evil, and abandon all sin with an holy detestation.

2. We must cleave to that which is good : we must “ perfect holiness in the fear of God.” Observe, the consideration of God’s promises to us should strongly engage us against all sin, and to all duty. To shew you what strength there is in this argument taken from the promises, to abhor that which is evil. Observe, 1. We are bound in gratitude to please him who has given us so many so great and precious promises. “ What shall I render,” &c. Psalm cxvi. 12. Oh how great is his goodness which he

hath laid up for them that fear him !
 “ God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice,” &c. Psalm cviii. 7. Observe, 2. We forfeit the benefit of God’s promises if we do not make conscience of, and endeavour to keep his commands : “ Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it,” Heb. iv. 1.

III. We are taught the blessed fruits of these promises.

1. These promises furnish us with strength and grace sufficient, against sin and for duty : “ Turn you at my reproof ; behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.”

2. These promises speak the language of Caleb and Joshua, who said,

We are well able to overcome the people; when they were about to enter into Canaan ; while the other spies discouraged the tribes. Thus we may say, through the strength of divine grace, we shall be enabled to overcome all our spiritual enemies, namely, the world, flesh and devil. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Observe it.

3. God is faithful to these promises which he has made us ; therefore we must not be false to those promises which we have made to him. “ Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised,” Heb. x. 23.

4. In having these promises we have great honour put upon us, and we ought to carry it as becomes us. God has promised to be to us a faithful

God, a loving, a tender Father. Let us not wander out of the way of our duty. If we have received the promise, as Abraham did, we ought to do some great act, in our obedience to his commands, as he did.

5. The promises secure to us an abundant reward for our obedience, therefore let us be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

And now having observed these things concerning the promises, let us explain fully the duty which is inferred : it contains two parts,

First, To be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

(2.) That by faith we apply the blood of Christ to our consciences, and sprinkle them with it, and that we wash in that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. We read that the Ammonites made themselves odious in the nostrils of David, and so they hardened themselves against him ; let us not act so against God, but let us lie low before the Lord, and make the Lord Jesus Christ our friend to reconcile us to God.

(3.) Let us mortify the habits of sin, and purge out the old leaven, both in the head and in the heart : get clear of our bad principles, that we may not make so light of sin as we have done : cleanse ourselves from corrupt fancy : cleanse ourselves from all filthiness that is in the imagination. Great

pains must be taken with the heart to get it clear of all corrupt inclinations. Wash ye, make ye clean, indulge no evil thoughts in your hearts.

(4.) Let us watch against all occasions of sin, that is, all those things by which you have contracted pollutions. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Keep at a distance from every thing which has the appearance of evil.

(5.) Let us resolve for the future to have no more to do with sin. Refrain from all acts of sin. Let him that has stole steal no more. Eph. iv. 28. Let him that has been drunk, or unclean, be so no more. Isa. iv. 4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall

have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, that is, by the saving knowledge of, and a sincere love to God and his commandments ; submit to the Spirit's influences or you will never get the mastery over your sins and corruptions. Therefore you must put on a holy resolution, and take the kingdom of heaven by violence, for the violent take it by force.

(6.) Our care herein must be universal, we must cleanse ourselves, 1. from all filthiness of the flesh, from slothfulness, and the love of ease ; from sensuality and the love of pleasure ; from gratifying the desires of the body with forbidden fruit, or indulging them too much to the damage of the soul :

for even lawful pleasures may turn into sin, without due care and watchfulness over ourselves, such as gluttony, drunkenness, or seventh commandment sins. 2. We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the spirit, from pride, covetousness, and the love of the world, from fraud, deceit and injustice, (Job xxxi. 7,) from all sinful anger, malice, hatred, and desire of revenge : for these are spiritual filthiness, from all which we must be cleansed.

* Secondly, We must perfect holiness in the fear of God.

1. We must be holy.

That is taken for granted, for we cannot perfect holiness unless we begin it. We must be holy. What is that? 1. We must be devoted to

God, as all holy persons and things under the law were. We must be holiness to the Lord. 2. We must be conformed to God's likeness, and to his will. God's holiness is his agreement with himself, our holiness is our agreeableness to him. We must act in every thing as becomes our relation to God. Col. i. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, &c. and the image of God must be renewed upon us : "Be ye holy," saith the Lord, "for I am holy." 3. We must be employed in the services and worship of God ; we must engage our hearts in all approaches to him, we must employ our minds and all the powers of our souls in all the inward acts of inward worship ; and in all outward worship, also, we must not

only bow the knee, but also the heart before the Lord ; for heartless worship is vain worship, God will not accept it, and we ourselves shall be no gainers by it, so it must be in vain. 4. We must be engaged in the interest of God's kingdom amongst men. To be holy, is to be on the Lord's side, and to espouse his cause, to be his witnesses ; to be courageous and valiant for the truth, to contend earnestly for it ; for great is the truth, and it shall prevail : God will own and honour those that do own and honour him.

2. We must be sincere in our holiness, or perfecting holiness : for sincerity is our gospel perfection, as a good man said, I know no religion but sincerity, this is uprightness. " Walk before me and be thou upright." By

this is understood, 1. We must be sanctified throughout : the whole man must be sanctified : the understanding must be enlightened, the will bowed and brought into obedience to the will of God, both to the will of his precepts to do them, and to the will of his providences to submit to them : and thus we stand complete in the whole will of God, that we may be sanctified in body, soul, and spirit, and so be perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2. The whole law of God must be regarded, and respect had to it, "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Ps. cxix. 6. "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed," verse 80. "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right,

and I hate every false way," verse 128. Oh let us labour to be sincere to the day of Christ, like good and faithful servants waiting for the coming of the Lord.

3. We must be growing and making progress in holiness ; though we cannot perfect it in this world, yet we must be perfecting it, that is, adding a greater degree to a lesser, pressing forwards towards perfection.

(1.) The habits of grace must grow more confirmed and rooted : our resolutions against sin more settled, and our resolutions for God and duty more steady. This is to perfect what is lacking in our faith. 1 Thess. iii. 10.

(2.) The acting of grace must grow more and more vigorous and lively. We must be more ready for every good

work. We must have more spiritual success in a lively exercise to resist sin and all temptations that would ensnare us.

(3.) We must be more and more watchful, and upon our guard : “ Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” “ Therefore be not high-minded, but fear,” Rom. xi. 20. We must never think ourselves good enough, but must still be growing wiser and better.

(4.) We must be actuated and animated therein by the fear of God : that is, 1. We must keep up a constant worship of God in our families, and in our closets : we must be frequent in holy adorings and admirings of God. This will be a good means of perfecting holiness, to be in the fear of

the Lord every day and all the day long. 2. We must maintain a reverend regard to his majesty and authority, and this will keep us from sin : when others make bold with sin, we must stand in awe of God, as Nehemiah did, (chap. v. 15,) “ But so did not I, because of the fear of God.” 3. We must have a continual dread of his wrath and vindictive justice. A fear of God’s wrath and displeasure will be a means of keeping ourselves in the love of God.

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

To conclude. The apostle directs his exhortation to his dearly beloved, so do I to you, my dearly beloved.

1. Apply the promises to yourselves, live upon them, take them to be your

heritage for ever. Both you that are young, and you that are old, treasure up the promises.

2. Apply the precepts to yourselves, and live up to them, and be holy in all manner of conversation. Keep a conscience always void of offence, both towards God and towards man.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance, among all them which are sanctified. Acts xx. 32. And may you be always looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, till you come to be for ever with him. Amen.

THE END.

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