

GOD THE FATHER LOVE

AND

CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE

BY

EDWARD SAMUEL

GOD the Father being our God and our Father in the everlasting covenant of grace, he is ours with all his attributes; he is ours with all that belong to him. The mercy of God, which is a glorious attribute, is engaged on the behalf of his dear children. Mercy is the tender compassion of a covenant-God toward his children. Not only the fruits of his mercy, but his very heart is towards them. Hence the mercies of God are through Scriptures frequently styled his bowels; “Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, or thy bowels of mercy Psalm 26:6;51:1. And, in the New Testament; “through the bowels of the mercy of our God Luke 1: 78. I am not speaking of the absolute mercy of God, but of covenant mercy, which the Father manifests to his children in and through a precious Christ. Pardon of sin is the fruit and effect of his mercy. God the Father delights in pardoning the sins of his people, to pass by transgressions, to blot out iniquity, and never to remember their sins any more. This attribute is his great glory and delight, and the only life and hope of his dear children. There is a height, depth, length, and breadth in this covenant mercy. It pardons many great and heinous sins. It is everlasting and endures forever. O what comfort, joy, rest, and settling of soul does this afford to the family of heaven! When mercy, through the atoning sacrifice, pardons the sins of God’s people, their consciences are at rest, their bleeding wounds are healed, and their broken bones are bound up. “Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,” says the Lord of mercy. When these words are spoken by the power of God, the Eternal Spirit, to living souls, then confidence of access to God is felt, and an assurance of salvation is produced within. If God is our God, mercy is also ours. (Heb. 8: 10—12; Jer. 33: 8; Mic. 7: 19, 20.) God the Father will forgive the sins of all his children, though the

sins of others are sealed up, and stand in record against their souls. Ezek. 36: 25; Luke 7: 42; Ezek. 18: 22 ; Jer. 31: 20.

The children of God are interested in the holiness of their heavenly Father. Holiness is the glory of his dear children. Hence the spirit of grace is also called the spirit of holiness. They who are styled holy, are also styled “the glory,” Isa. 4: 3—5. Holiness is necessary to glory, to that glory which shall be revealed; it is a preparation for it, for “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” It is essential for our present communion with God; “what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” It is a sure pledge of future glory. It is the distinguishing character of the people of God; they are a holy priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people. The remnant in Jerusalem shall be called holy. They are the holy temple of God. God the Father being a holy God, he will make all his children holy. He has given Christ to them, who is their sanctification; and he gives them his Holy Spirit and grace which is their internal holiness. This holiness he will increase by increasing their graces, and he will preserve them in holiness “to the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” God loves and takes delight in his people because of this holiness, for it is his own image in them, and finally he will crown their holiness with glory.

The children of God are interested in the omniscience of God. They derive great comfort from the fact that their heavenly Father knows them. “The Lord knoweth them that are his;” he knows the integrity of their hearts: he knows all their wants and their distresses, all their desires, prayers, and tears, and all their works and sufferings. This knowledge is a knowledge of approbation. “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,” that is, he approves of their ways. It is a knowledge that is compassionate, “I have surely seen the afflictions of my people, I know their sorrow.” a The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble,” and he “knoweth them that trust in him.” God has a perfect knowledge of all his children’s enemies, he knows the enmity of their hearts, their counsels and devices against his people, and defeats their counsels, frustrates their devices, and ultimately will destroy them. God knows his people and they shall know him, “They shall all know me, saith the Lord.” The children of God are

interested in his wisdom. By his wisdom he rules and overrules all for the good of his children. Sometimes they abound, at other times they are in want, sometimes they are in honor, at other times in dishonor; sometimes they enjoy the good things of time, at other times they suffer loss; sometimes afflictions and crosses, but all these, infinite wisdom will cause to work together for their good. The tempest and the calm, the winter and the summer, all that befalls them, shall advance the good of their souls. He will proportion all their trials, temptations, and afflictions, and will find means and ways to deliver his children out of all their troubles. He will make them wise unto salvation, wise in their walk and conversation, wise stewards, wise virgins, wise to know the day of their visitation, to redeem the time, to remember their latter end, to choose the better part and the best paths; to look forward for a solemn eternity, to prefer spiritual things to temporal, and to make sure of Christ and glory.

The dear children of God are interested in the Omnipotence of their heavenly Father. The omnipotence of Jehovah is manifested in the creation of the world out of nothing, in the sustentation of the whole world, the guidance of every creature in every motion, in the wonderful works wrought by him in the world, exceeding all created power, and especially in the production of the human nature of Christ. This is a glorious fountain of comfort and consolation. They may cast all their care upon him for soul and body. Though their wants may be many, great, and frequent, omnipotence is able to supply them all. The Apostle says, "He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think." The children of God ask many things, think of, and need many things, and their heavenly Father is able to supply all, yea, exceed even all their thoughts; his power exceeds all their wants. In some things we may be supplied by our friends, but spiritual wants exceed all the powers of creatures, but not the power of God. Do the children of God need knowledge, wisdom, mercy, grace, comfort, strength, deliverance, faith, patience, love, meekness, joy, peace, friends, and houses, food and raiment &c.? Their heavenly Father is able to supply them with all these. All things that are possible, yea, and that are impossible for the creature, God can supply. The children of Israel being in bondage, they wanted liberty, and God gave it them. At the Red Sea they wanted salvation, and he gave

it them. In the wilderness they wanted water, the rock is smitten and water is given. They wanted bread, and God rained down manna; and they wanted flesh, and God sent them quails, &c. Such a friend is God to his children, who can perform all things for them, who has power to help them against all temptations, against all corruptions, help them in all afflictions, and in all necessities, yea, and all extremities. His help alone is sufficient for them, they need none but their God to do them good. No creature can do them good without God, but God can dispense with all creatures, and do them good himself. When God is determined to do his children good, none can hinder him. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance." "All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity." Beloved, your omnipotent God is more than a match for all your enemies, let them be men or devils. "Behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing, he weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance!" "If God is for us, who can be against us? "

There are three things in God which assures all his dear children of the enjoyment of covenant promises, viz., his will, his faithfulness and his power. The will and goodness of God are the foundation of all his promises, and his resolution to perform them is also the result of his will. "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our father," Mic. 7: 20. The faithfulness and the unchangeableness of God secure the enjoyment of these promises: "I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail," Psalm 89:33, 34 : " He is faithful that promised." His omnipotence likewise: God has not promised anything above his ability to perform. He can raise and advance the work which he has begun; he can bring forth judgment unto victory, he lays the foundation and completes the building, Zee. 4: 9. He begins and makes an end, 1 Sam. 3:12. He lays the foundation of glory in the soul, and will raise the soul to eternal glory. Grace is the foundation of glory, and glory is the superstructure upon grace.

FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

THERE are four things in the faithfulness of God calculated to bring comfort to the soul, viz., 1st. Sincerity of intention. Whatever he promised he intends to perform: his heart goes with his word; whatever he does for his children, his promise is the bottom of it. 2nd. Fixedness of resolution. He is always in the same mind; he never alters his word. God abideth faithful. He cannot deny himself. 3rd. Certainty of execution. God is faithful, that is, he will certainly perform all he has promised to his dear children, Gen. 28: 15, Jer. 31: 20, Hab. 2: 3. 4th. Completeness of performance. God will not fail his people in any one promise; “Ye know in all your hearts that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof,” 1 Kings 8: 5, 6, Jer. 32: 42. This is a glorious display of God’s faithfulness indeed. He remembers his covenant forever, and his word to a thousand generations. The faithfulness of God affords sweet comfort to his children, it is a sure foundation for their faith to rest upon, a foundation that cannot be shaken, and which shall never be removed. The children of God are as sure to enjoy all he has promised as God is a God. “In hope of eternal life, which God, s that cannot lie, hath promised.” He has promised to forgive them their sins, and he will do so, 1 John 1: 9. He has promised to sanctify his people throughout; and faithful is he who hath called us who will also do it, 1 Thess. 5: 23, 24.

The faithfulness of God is an effectual and prevailing plea with him at a throne of grace. Thus, Jacob pleaded the faithfulness of God: “O Lord thou saidst unto me, return unto thy country, and I will deal well with thee. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.” His faithfulness is enough to answer all the doubts and fears of his people: he has promised, and he will perform; God is faithful, and he will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able to bear. His faithfulness is a glorious support to his dear children when he delays their deliverance, and is silent with regard to their prayers, but he being faithful will answer their petitions and deliver them in all their troubles. Some of God’s dear children have waited many years at heaven’s gate for an assurance of their eternal interest in a covenant God and have obtained it at last. The faithfulness of God will break down all opposition, heaven and earth shall sooner perish than

one jot or tittle of his promise fail. His word of promise shall take effect, though all the devils in hell oppose it, and though all men on earth oppose it, and though all the powers of unbelief oppose it. Sarah was old, but she judged him faithful who had promised. God being a God of grace, he will be gracious to all his children. There are many blessings which God bestows upon his people by virtue of his being gracious. His love to his children flows from this channel, Hos. 14: 4. Election is another unspeakable blessing, Rom. 9: 5; adoption by Christ another, Eph. 1: 7; effectual calling a fourth, 2 Tim. 1: 9; and salvation a fifth, all flowing from grace, Eph. 2: 5, 6. It is an unspeakable blessing to the children of God that their heavenly Father is gracious, for there are many things that are apt to discourage them. 1st. The greatness of their sins. 2nd. The greatness of their necessities. 3rd. The greatness of their unworthiness; and 4th, the greatness of their liabilities in way of judgment. But the grace of God is a sufficient answer to all these discouragements, Eph. 1: 7, Luke 7: 42. “It is grace and that the promise might be sure,” Rom. 4: 16. God deals with all his children in a way of grace, he receives all their petitions upon a throne of grace and answers all their prayers from a throne of grace.

As he is unchangeable himself, so he is to his dear family. “I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” He is unchangeable in his eternal decrees; (2 Tim. 2: 19, “The Lord of hosts hath purposed and who shall disannul it,” Isa. 14: 24—27); unchangeable in his promises (2 Cor. 1: 20); in his love (Hos. 2: 19, Jer. 31: 3); in his gifts (Rom. 11: 29). O what an infinite mercy it is for the dear family of heaven that their God is unchangeable; it affords a solid foundation for all their joys, comforts, and consolations! He will correct his children, but never cast them away (Rom. 11: 3) and will be their God and Father for ever and ever! In all vicissitudes of life, they may look up to their unchangeable God. He has comforted, he does and will continue so to do. He has delivered, and does deliver, and will deliver; for he is the same yesterday in eternity, today in time, and tomorrow to all eternity.

But God is an omnipresent God also. “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth?” 1 Kings 8: 27, Isa. 66., Prov. 15: 3, Psa. 139: 7. God himself delivers this assurance of his

omnipresence as a comfort and support to his people. "I will be with you in all your dangers and troubles." To Isaac, he says, "I will be with thee and will bless thee;" to Jacob, "Behold I am with thee," &c. ; to Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee;" to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee;" and to all his people, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God," Isa. 41: 10. He was "with David in his exile, with Joseph in prison, with Jeremiah in his dungeon, with the worthies in the furnace, with Daniel in the lion's den, and with Stephen in his martyrdom. God being present with his people, they have all they need, for he is present with them in all his relations, attributes, and perfections, and Christ in all his characters and offices, and God, the Eternal Spirit, in all his offices to do them all the good they stand in need.

God is a sovereign God. The sovereignty of God is mentioned no less than a thousand times in the Scriptures. Dominion is ascribed to him; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; all things in heaven and in earth are his; he has a right to dispose of all creatures and all things, and he has a right to command and forbid what he pleases. The God of Israel is Lord above all lords. The Sovereignty of God is a great encouragement to his people; every minute circumstance is under his control and immediate inspection. Neither men nor devils can do with his children as they like. He reigns in the kingdoms of men; "Be still and know that I am God." All the power, all the policy, and all the rage and malice of all the wicked on earth, are under the dominion of God. He permits and restrains; he confounds and destroys them. Thus far shall they go, and no further. The children of God, then, can never be brought into any strait, but their God is able to help them, for he is Lord of all, Lord of life, of safety, of deliverance, and of comforts. All creatures are at his command; he can open the hearts of the greatest enemies of his children, to pity them and do them good. If he says to one go and comfort such a child of mine, go and counsel him, be a friend to him, and deliver him, he must go and perform all these offices, for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Seeing sovereignty and dominion belong to God, then all the ordinances of grace and life are at his command; they shall yield their strength, and drop their fatness, at his will and pleasure. He can

open them, and let out all their joys, reviving, and consolations ; they shall prove effectual means of all saving good to his dear children, and that according to his command.

God is a God of goodness. This is another source of comfort to his dear children. “The Lord is good;” “Truly, God is good to Israel “O how great is thy goodness; thou, Lord, art good.” God’s intention is to do his children good. “I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end.” He will bring upon his children all the good which he has promised them; Jer. 32: 42. He delights in doing them good. “I will rejoice over them to do them good.” He looks upon doing good to his people, as his honor and praise; “And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.” He considers nothing too good for them; he gives them grace and glory, and no good withholds from them. He will never cease to do them good; “Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” He manifests his goodness to his dear children every day. “His mercy is new every morning:” “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.” He is always ready to do them good; yea, sometimes he prevents, that is, goes before them with his goodness, and waits to do them good; Isa. 65: 24; 30: 18. And, finally, he reserves the best of blessings to the last, for there is an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

God is a God of kindness. This is another source of comfort to his children. “Thou art a God of great kindness,” said Nehemiah; “He hath shewed me his loving kindness; his merciful kindness is great towards us,” said David. All the communications of his kindness to his people flow as easily as waters from a full fountain. He hastens to meet them on their journey, embraces them and kisses them, encourages all his children to look upon him as their Father, and to call him “Our Father, which art in heaven.” Though the distance betwixt him and them is infinite, he represents himself to them as a kind God, and a loving Father. For example, “Thy Maker is thy husband,” says God to them. His chief delights are in them; they are his Hephzibahs and his Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in them. He is very tender over them; he suffers no man to do them

wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes, saying, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." He remembers them that they are but dust. If he sees but a tear in their eyes, he is gracious to them; "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more; he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry." (Jer. 31: 20.) He sympathizes with them in all their distress. His bowels yearn for them. He flies upon, the wings of the wind, leaps over the mountains, and runs to show himself reconciled to them. He looks well after them and gives special charge to his ministers to speak comfortably to them, that they should approach him without slavish fear, and go from him without sadness. He is neither a hard master, nor of a harsh nature, nor rough in his words, looks, or deeds, towards them. He will not take any advantage of them; they need not fear his intention or dealings with them. Never did a father or mother deal more gently with their tender infants, never did a loving husband deal more kindly with his beloved wife, than God with his children; therefore, his children may expect free access to him, the door is always open; will the child fear to go to his tender father? His children may expect to be used well by their heavenly Father, for he has encouraged them to say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

God is a God of all-sufficiency; and hence another source of comfort to his children. "I am God Almighty," (All-sufficient,) said God to Abraham; and he is the same to all his dear children. God is an infinite perfect holiness in and of himself; he wants nothing; and as he is thus in and of himself, so he is to all his dear children. He is a fullness to them, and they need no other fullness to supply all their needs, and to secure them from any evil they fear. He looks well to all his children; all they have comes from him, and all their wants are supplied by him.

Lastly, God is a God of eternity. This is a well of joy to his dear children. Their God is from everlasting to everlasting: the eternal God is their refuge, and underneath them are his everlasting arms, to strengthen and uphold them. God inhabits eternity. Eternity is an unlimited duration, before time, and beyond all time; it is a fixed duration without beginning or ending. The eternity of God is beyond all possible conception, of measure or time; God ever was, ever is, and

ever shall be. Though the manifestations of himself to his creatures are in time, yet his essence, or being, never was, nor ever shall, be bound up by time.

Look backward or forwards, God is from eternity to eternity, is a most self-sufficient, infinite, perfect, blessed Being, the first cause of all beings, and without any cause of his own being; an eternal infinite fullness and possession, to himself and of himself. What God is, he was from eternity, and will remain the same to eternity. This blessed attribute drops myrrh, oil, and honey into a gracious soul. The eternity of God sweetens all his love, mercy, and goodness. He, being eternal, all his other attributes must be the same; therefore, neither his mercy, love, nor goodness shall cease towards his people. There is an end to all creatures and things, but God remains the same; consequently, his power and love are the same. The eternal God has time enough to make all the promises good: his children need not fear that he will not fulfil them for want of time. Though the lives of the children of God are short, yet their eternal God has promised to give them eternal life. True happiness consists in its duration, and the happiness of the family of heaven is eternal. Eternal happiness is a complete possession, a present possession, an invincible and endless possession; God is their portion and possession, and this God will be their God for ever and ever. This is a great comfort in all losses and bereavements. "I die," said Joseph, "but God will surely visit you as if he had said, I cannot live to do you good, but God lives forever. Although all friends and comforts die, yet the God of all comfort never dies.

As the Father is possessed of all the attributes and perfections of Deity, so is the Son possessed with the same, and so is the Holy Ghost. The Father is perfect God, the Son is perfect God, and the Eternal Spirit is perfect God.

IN CLOSING

IN closing this dissertation upon the triumph of God the Eternal Spirit, I will adopt the language of Peter, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, which in time past were not a people,

but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” “Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” All the children of God are strangers and pilgrims here on earth; they, as well as the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, confess that this world is not their rest, and that they are seeking and desiring a better country, that is, an heavenly. “Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city;” Heb. 11: 16. The apostle Paul begins the eleventh chapter with a definition of faith, which he describes as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen and illustrates this definition by instances and examples in the patriarchs, both before and after the flood. He first instances it in Abel, the immediate offspring of the first man; he then proceeds to Enoch, who, by faith, was translated; he next goes on to Noah, the heir and preacher of the righteousness of faith; Abraham and his posterity are next taken notice of, upon which instance the apostle enlarges, and observes that God called this good man from his native country to go to another which he was afterwards to possess; and that he, by faith, obeyed, and went forth, not knowing whither he went; and that he, with Isaac and Jacob, dwelt in tabernacles in it, and confessed themselves pilgrims and strangers; and though they had an opportunity of returning to the country from whence they came, were unmindful of it. Now this is the case with all the spiritual seed of Abraham, when called by Divine grace. They are brought out from their native country, viz., the world, and from the men of it, and have received from God strict injunctions to be separate from them, and have no fellowship with them; they are exhorted and encouraged to forsake their own people, and their father’s house, and under the influence of Divine grace, leave all, and follow Christ, as the apostles did. And as the patriarchs dwelt in tabernacles on earth, so the children of God are dwelling in bodies, called houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust; earthly houses of this tabernacle, ‘which are easily unpinned, and soon taken down and dissolved. And as the patriarchs confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, so do those who are effectually called by the grace of God. But in what sense are we to understand the children of God to be strangers and sojourners here ? Why thus, viz., they

live on earth as others, but they are not at home; their hearts are above ; they do not take up their rest here; they are strangers, and account themselves as such, though they may be in possession of all their hearts can wish. They are strangers on earth, but not in heaven. And how are they strangers on earth? Thus, only with regard to their spiritual happiness. This world can afford no real, substantial happiness to their souls; but they are not strangers with regard to work and service. The children of God have a great work to do for him on earth, as well as for themselves. They have to fight the Lord's battles, to contend earnestly for that faith once delivered to the saints, and also to fight their own battles with sin, Satan, and the world, with flesh and blood, and doubts and fears. To be strangers in this world, may be considered in a literal and in a moral sense. Literally, the patriarchs were strangers and pilgrims: morally, all men may be said to be such. All men are travelling to another world and are every day nearer a solemn eternity. All men hasten towards death. In this sense, the wicked may be considered as strangers and pilgrims, strangers in condition, but not in affection. They must yield to death, yet they say it is good for us to be here, although death is stamped upon everything they do or see. But the children of God are strangers in their affection as well as condition. Their soul-affections are fixed on the things above, and both their souls and bodies travel towards their eternal home. The children of God are strangers in their affections in a three-fold way.

1st. They are sensible of their frailty; it is a common lesson to them, therefore they pray, "So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom "Teach me to know how frail I am."

2nd. They are dissatisfied with their present state; they would not always be here, even if they had permission. They are looking, panting, and thirsting after their home in heaven.

3rd. They are interested in a better inheritance. Though David was king, blessed with abundance of earthly grandeur and glory, and much communion and fellowship with his God, yet he could say, "I am a stranger here on earth." God bequeathed the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed, yet he tells us that he was a stranger in the very land of promise. Yea, Christ himself, who is Lord of

all, when here on earth, said, "I am not of this world!" The children of God are strangers here for the following reasons. 1st. This is not their native soil; they are born from above. Everything tends to the place of its origin. As things bred in water return thither, as inanimate things tend to their center (a stone cast upward will fall to the ground). As certain gaseous fluids, imprisoned in the earth, are- said to be the cause of earthquakes, so grace, which came from heaven, will ascend thither, carrying the soul with it. Jerusalem from above is the mother of us all, heaven is the native country of God's children, and therefore thither is the tendency and aim of gracious souls. All that comes from God leads to him. In the new nature there is a strong inclination which disposes souls to look after another world as soon as men are born of God their hearts are fixed upon him. The inheritance of the children of God lies in heaven. "Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." God has blessed his children with spiritual blessings in earthly places; yet it is said in heavenly places; the reason is, heaven was their beginning, and there will be their consummation. When the children of God are brought out from the power of darkness, and are translated into- the kingdom of God's dear Son, Christ's intention is to exalt them high enough; he will not give them an earthly portion but a heavenly, not an earthly paradise but a heavenly, not a corruptible crown, but an incorruptible one, not the enjoyment of creatures, but of God. This world is not a fit place in which God may unfold his beauties to his children: it is a common inn where all classes of people mix together; it is Satan's walk, a place filled with sin, and sometimes a slaughter-house for the saints (" they are slain upon earth," Rev. 18: 24), therefore God has provided for his people a " better country."

But again, the spiritual kindred of the children of God are in heaven; their Father, their elder Brother, and all relations are above, and where their Father is there is their country. Here they are strangers, where they are absent from God, from Christ, and glorified saints. Heaven is their place of continual abode; that place we count our home where we always abide; an inn cannot be called our home, where we only stay for a night or two, but in heaven we shall be forever with the Lord. Here we are travelling, there we shall be at rest. This world we must surely

leave behind. Should we even have a fixed term here for twenty thousand years twice told, then it would be but a night, yea, a moment compared with eternity! Arise and depart, my soul, for this is not thy rest because it is polluted! “Here have we no abiding city,” says the Apostle, “we look for one to come.” So we here but dwell in tabernacles, and look for a city that hath foundations. “What is your life?” said the Apostle, “it is but as a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away;” a little warm breath turned in and out by the nostrils! “Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth ?” His days are as the days of an hireling. A hired servant does not always abide in the house when hired for a day or two, when his work is done, he receives his wages and is gone, so the children of God serve their day and generation, as David did, fall asleep in Jesus, and then go to heaven their home. Faith, love, and hope, tell the children of God that this is not their home. Faith shows them the value, glory, and excellency of things to come; it brings those distant things near and enables them to see him who is invisible. Oh, were we but persuaded of the glorious things to come, we would hasten thither as upon the wings of doves, and cry “Home, sweet home!” Now we look upon the stars which are of such a vast magnitude as but so many specks, and when we get home, we shall look down upon, earth and all its grandeur as so many molehills, yea, as nothing. The love of Christ, which is in the saints, makes them account themselves as strangers, they cannot be satisfied with the things here below. When souls are awakened by divine grace, they desire to have perfect enjoyment of God and of Christ. The saints hear and read much of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; they have tasted and felt much of the power of God upon their souls, and would fain see him and be with him, and behold Christ and his glory. It is true Christ is present with his dear people spiritually, while they are here; yet his presence is but a kind of absence, or distance, when compared with what is to come; and therefore, this very presence of his does not quench their desires but kindles them. The sight of Christ which they enjoy now is but through the glass of the ordinances and is frequently interrupted; his face is often hidden and is not full; but in heaven we shall see him as he is, and God will be all in all.

Hope was made for things to come, especially for our complete and final happiness. God gives us grace to expect future things. Hope would be of no use if it did not lift up our head to look out for a better inheritance than this world affords. Hope looks to God in the covenant, and the covenant reads thus, “I am thy. God” and it would not be in accordance with his great honor and glory to bestow upon his children nothing better than he does upon the wicked. But heaven, with all its glory, God gives to his children—a gift suitable to his dignity and character; a gift suitable to his honor and glory, and a gift suitable to the relation in which he stands to his children.

Oh, may we be enabled continually to think upon and praise such a God as this! A God that not only has prepared for his people all this happiness, heaped up for them all these riches, accumulated all this glory, but has covenanted with the Holy Spirit to draw them with the bonds of love, and to triumph in their hearts ere they go hence, and thus to prepare them for this prepared place.

MOUNT ZION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

717 N COURT STREET

CROWN POINT IND. 46307

<http://mountzionpbc.org>