

Precious Promises for Aged Saints

"Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your *days* — so shall your *strength* be!"
Deuteronomy 33:25

"Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone!" Psalm 71:9

"Since my youth, O God, You have taught me, and to this day I declare Your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God." Psalm 71:17-18

"The righteous will flourish like a *palm tree*, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green!" Psalm 92:12-14

"Hearken unto Me! I have *cared* for you since you were born. Yes, I *carried* you before you were born. I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I *made* you, and I will *care* for you. I will *carry* you along and *save* you!" Isaiah 46:3-4

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day! For our light and momentary afflictions are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all!" 2 Corinthians 4:16-17

THE AGED BELIEVER'S CORDIAL

(James Smith, 1802 — 1862)

"Hearken unto Me! I have *cared* for you since you were born. Yes, I *carried* you before you were born. I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I *made* you, and I will *care* for you. I will *carry* you along and *save* you!" Isaiah 46:3-4

This passage of Scripture is *the aged believer's cordial*. Let us look at the *beautiful images* employed.

God is our heavenly *parent* — a kind and tender-hearted parent. He is peculiarly attached to *His people* — they are *dear* to Him, *precious* in His sight. They are *His portion*. He prizes them above all creation. He is strong to sustain, to defend, and support them. His strong arm, tender heart, and watchful eye — are all employed for them — and especially so in old age.

The aged believer is as a *child*. He is weak. He feels exposed and defenseless. He is timid and fearful. But the Lord, as a tender parent, engages to take him up in the *arms of His power* — and carry him in the *bosom of His love!* Like a tender lamb in the shepherd's bosom, on a cold and frosty night, borne across a bleak and snow-covered wasteland — so the believer, in the *winter of old age*, shall be carried in the bosom of his God, across the *bleak and cheerless desert of time*.

God will carry him *tenderly* — hushing the weak one's fears. He will bear him *carefully* — so that nothing shall harm or hurt him. He will soothe him with gentle words, and encourage him with kind acts — until He safely introduces him at *Home!*

Dear aged Christian, you have nothing to fear! Your God says, "I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age! I am your *Father* — your *Friend* — your *solace* — and your *confidence!* Look unto Me — even to old age, I will carry you. I will bear you up under all that you feel and fear. I will carry you through all that discourages or distresses you. I will deliver you from foes, fears, dangers, and death itself! Nothing shall by any means hurt you! My *arm* is strong enough — trust in it. My *bosom* is your resting-place — lean on it, lean hard! Do not be afraid . . .

eternal *love* dwells there,

divine *pity* rules there,

your name is *engraved* there!

Trust Me, I will never leave you nor forsake you!

"Hearken unto Me!" Believer, your God bids you to "hearken." His words are true and faithful. He speaks to *banish your fears*. He speaks to *strengthen your faith*. He speaks to *comfort your poor drooping heart*. He speaks to clothe your care-worn brow, with the light of hope, with the cheerfulness which confidence imparts.

Hearken to Him — not to unbelief!

Hearken to Him — not to carnal reason!

Hearken to Him — not to Satan!

Hearken to Him — not to erroneous men!

Hearken, it is *your Savior* who speaks;
it is the Guide of your youth who addresses you;
it is your tender Parent who seeks to cheer your heart.

"As a mother comforts her child — so will I comfort you." Isaiah 66:13
He is *near* you — near you every moment;
He will *carry* you — carry you every step;
He will *deliver* you — deliver you from every danger, trouble, and foe!

COMFORT FOR THE AGED

(James Smith, 1802 — 1862)

"Now that I am old and gray — do not abandon me, O God!" Psalm 71:18

Old age and its infirmities will creep in on us; and with old age come weakness, pains, and fears. But an aged Christian should be a *happy* person; for he has proved the Lord to be *faithful* so many years, he has had answers to *prayer* so many times, and the God of his youth stands

pledged never to leave nor forsake him. Will the Lord forsake an old servant? Never! Will the Father of mercies forsake one of His children when compassed with the infirmities of old age! Impossible! No, no! The Lord, who has borne with us so long — will bear with us to the end. The Lord, who has glorified Himself in our life — will get glory to Himself in our death.

As the God of all comfort, He will comfort us on the bed of languishing, and will make all our bed in our sickness; and when heart and flesh are failing — He will be the strength of our heart, and our portion forever!

Aged believer — doubt not, fear not! God has given you His Word — trust it. He has confirmed His Word by the death of His Son — therefore exercise confidence in Him. He has been a Friend and a Father to you for many years; and He will be your Friend and Father to the very last!

Be much with Him in prayer. With all the simplicity of a little child — let your requests be made known unto Him. He has grace for *old age* — as He had for youth; and He has grace for a *dying bed* — as He had grace for all the conflicts of life. Believe His word, rest in His love, expect His blessing to the end — and you shall be more than a conqueror through Him who loved you. God never loved you *more* than He does now in your weakness, pains, and old age; and — sweet thought! — He will never love you less! His love is infinite, everlasting. Having loved you — He loves you to the end!

Father in Heaven, I thank You for the mercies of my life. Help me to trust You through to the end of my life — in spite of my weakness and human frailty.

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

AN ARM THAT CAN NEVER BE BROKEN!

(J.R. Miller, 1840 — 1912)

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!" Deuteronomy 33:27

The picture suggested is that of a little child, lying in the strong arms of a father who is able to withstand all storms and dangers.

At the two extremes of life, childhood and old age — this promise comes with special assurance.

"He shall gather the *lambs* in His arms, and carry them in His bosom" (Isaiah 40:11), is a word for the *children*.

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" (Isaiah 46:4), brings its blessed comfort to the *aged*.

The thought of *God's embracing arms* is very suggestive. What does an *arm* represent? What is the thought suggested by the arm of God enfolded around His child?

One suggestion, is **protection**. As a father puts his arm around his child when it is in danger — so God protects His children. Life is full of *peril*. There are *temptations* on every hand! *Enemies* lurk in every shadow — enemies strong and swift! Yet we are assured that nothing can separate us from the love of God. "Underneath are the everlasting arms!"

Another thought, is **affection**. The father's arm drawn around a child — is a token of *love*. The child is held in the father's bosom, near his heart. The shepherd carries the lambs in his bosom. John lay on Jesus' bosom. The mother holds the child in her bosom, because she loves it. This picture of God embracing His children in His arms, tells of His love for them — His love is tender, close, intimate.

Another thought suggested by an arm, is **strength**. The arm is a symbol of strength. His arm is omnipotence. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength!" (Isaiah 26:4). *His is an arm that can never be broken!* Out of this clasp — we can never be taken. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish — ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!" (John 10:28)

Another suggestion is **endurance**. The arms of God are "everlasting." *Human* arms grow weary, even in love's embrace; they cannot forever press the child to the bosom. Soon they lie folded in death.

A husband stood by the coffin of his beloved wife after only one short year of wedded happiness. The clasp of that love was very sweet — but how *brief* a time it lasted, and how desolate was the life that had lost the precious companionship!

A little baby two weeks old — was left motherless. The mother clasped the child to her bosom and drew her feeble arms about it in one loving embrace; the little one will never more have a mother's arm around it.

So pathetic is human life with — its broken affections, its little moments of love, its embraces that are torn away in one hour. But these arms of God, are *everlasting* arms! They shall never unclasp!

There is another important suggestion in the word "underneath." Not only do the arms of God embrace His child — but they are **underneath** — always underneath! That means that we can never sink — for these arms will ever be beneath us!

Sometimes we say the *waters of trouble* are very deep; like great floods they roll over us. But still and forever, *underneath* the deepest floods, are these everlasting arms! We cannot sink below them — or out of their clasp!

And when *death* comes, and every earthly thing is gone from beneath us, and we sink away into what seems darkness — out of all human love, out of warmth and gladness and life — into the gloom and strange mystery of death — still it will only be — into the everlasting arms!

This view of *God's divine care* is full of inspiration and comfort. We are not saving ourselves. A strong One, the mighty God — holds us in *His omnipotent clasp!* We are not tossed like a leaf on *life's wild sea* — driven at the mercy of wind and wave. We are in divine keeping. Our security does not depend upon *our own* feeble, wavering faith — but upon the omnipotence, the love, and the faithfulness of the unchanging, the eternal God!

No power in the universe can snatch us out of His hands! Neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come — can separate us from *His everlasting arms!*

THE PALM TREE

(Author unknown)

"The righteous will flourish like a *palm tree*, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green!" Psalm 92:12-14

The palm tree, to which God's people are in this psalm compared, is remarkable for its *lengthened and increasing fruitfulness*. The best *fruit* are said to be gathered when it has reached a hundred years. How beautiful an emblem of the *aged believer*, growing in grace and maturing in holiness to the close of his earthly existence! Each day, each year, added to his life — adds to the loveliness and perfection of his Christian virtues. His character has a mellowness and sweetness, which it lacked in earlier seasons. He is *ripening for Heaven*. In knowledge, in wisdom, in love, in humility, in gentleness, in patience, in peace, in usefulness, in happiness — he is steadily and constantly advancing. He is filled with the Spirit, and therefore brings forth the *fruits* of the Spirit.

Is this portraiture of an aged Christian *yours*, reader? Alas, it does not belong to all who profess and call themselves by the Savior's name. Nay, it may be feared that there are some, really and manifestly His, to whom it bears but little resemblance. They have long been "planted" in the house of the Lord — but they do not appear to "flourish" in the courts of our God; and as years augment, they seem to imagine that the infirmities of old age are excuses for their little fruitfulness. But they certainly never gathered such an idea from God's Word, nor rightly studied and pleaded His promises to themselves.

Do not follow their example. Do not rest satisfied with past attainments. Strive to glorify God more than you have ever yet done. Let your *last* days be your *best* days; and your last fruit the *richest*.

Pains, infirmities, loss of sleep, the failure of sight and hearing

(Letters of John Newton)

"Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone." Psalm 71:9

I am drawing nearer and nearer to the season which the Psalmist either expected or felt. Many reasons teach *the aged believer* the need of this prayer. As his *graces* are still imperfect, so his physical and mental powers are feelingly upon the decline. It was but little he could do at his best — and now less and less.

He feels other *props* and *comforts* dropping off apace. When he was young he had warm spirits and pleasing prospects; but now what a change of the *friends* in which he once delighted! In some he has found inconstancy — they have forsaken and forgotten him; and others have been successively taken away by death. They have fallen like the leaves in autumn — and now he stands almost a naked trunk. If any yet remain, he is expecting to lose them likewise — unless he is first taken from them.

Old age abates, and gradually destroys, the relish of such earthly comforts as might be otherwise enjoyed. *Pains, infirmities, loss of sleep, the failure of sight and hearing, and all the senses* — are harbingers, like *Job's messengers*, arriving in close succession to tell him that *death* is upon his progress, and not far distant!

If *youth* has no security against death — then *old age* has no possibility of escaping the *grim monster*. But though . . .
friends fail,
cisterns burst,
gourds wither,
strength declines, and
death advances —
if *God* does not forsake me — then all is well.

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

THE PROMISE

(James Smith, 1802 — 1862)

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

The friends of your youth are gone — death or distance has stripped you of them. But your God says, "I am He who *formed* you at first, as a creature; I am He who *called* you by my grace, into fellowship with my Son; I am He who gave you My Word, that I would never leave you nor forsake you; and I am in the same mind still. I am *immutable* — there is no change in Me. You have changed — I have not. You will change — but I shall not."

Your God will not only carry your *burdens* — *but* He will carry YOU. He laid you like a lamb in His bosom, when He called you by His grace; and He will carry you now that you are old; He will never turn away from doing you good — but will rejoice over you to do you good with His whole heart, and with His whole soul. He will *bear* with you — though you may sometimes feel fretful, peevish, and ungrateful. He will be *with* you amidst all your infirmities. He will *carry* you, not only to the Jordan — but *over* it! He has delivered you in six troubles — and in seven He will not forsake you!

You should look back to *past deliverances*, and then face your *present difficulty*, saying with David, "The Lord, who *has* delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, and out of the mouth of the bear — will *yet* deliver me also from this uncircumcised Philistine!" Or with Paul, "He *has* delivered us from such a deadly peril — and He *will* deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us!" *God's promise* — is *your property*. Take it, trust it, plead it, and expect it to be made good. Faithful is He who promised, who also will *do* it. Even though you believe not — yet He abides faithful; for He cannot deny himself. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak — and then not act? Does He promise — and not fulfill?" Numbers 23:19

THOSE EVERLASTING ARMS!

(James Smith, 1802 — 1862)

"Underneath are the everlasting arms!" Deuteronomy 33:27

That is, *underneath every believer*.

Those everlasting arms are there . . .
to bear him up,
to bear him on, and
to preserve from all *real* danger.

The arms of God are . . .
invisible — no one sees them;
spiritual — no one feels them;
careful — no one falls out of them;
omnipotent — no one overcomes them.

If the everlasting arms of my God are underneath me, then . . .
I may quietly yield myself unto Him;
I may confidently expect divine protection;
I may be certain that He will lift me above my foes;
I may feel assured that He will safely convey me home.

Aged saints may rejoice in this; for to them the Lord says, "I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

And *weak believers* may rejoice in this, for "He will carry the *lambs* in His arms, holding them close to His heart!" Isaiah 40:11

O to realize this sweet and encouraging truth: underneath *me* are the everlasting arms!

THE PALM TREE

James Hamilton

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green!" Psalm 92:12-14

The Palm tree brings forth its best fruit in old age. The best *dates* are said to be gathered when it has reached a hundred years. So it is with eminent Christians: the older — the *better*; the older — the more *beautiful*; nay, the older — the more *useful*; and, different from worldlings, the older — the *happier*. The best Christians are those who improve to the end, who grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ to the very close of life.

They loved Him at first — but now they love Him more. At first they were selfish, and only sought to escape from *wrath*. Now they are jealous of the Savior's honor, and long to be saved from *sin*. At first they only thought of Jesus as the Priest to save them; now they perceive the Priest upon a throne, and love not only the Savior's cross — but the Savior's *yoke* and the Savior's *laws*.

And they grow in *knowledge of themselves*. The truth to which they once assented becomes a deep-wrought experience. "*In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.*" And the discovery of this *depravity*, the knowledge how debased and worthless their nature has become, instead of making them morose and bitter towards their fellow-sharers in the fall — makes them lenient and considerate. They know themselves too well, to expect *perfection* in their friends, and love the brethren in the face of their obvious failings. They have something of the old Reformer's feeling when he saw the *malefactor* led to prison: "*There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford!*"

And they grow in *wisdom*. Long experience, and still more *the secret of the Lord*, dispassionate observation and Heavenly-mindedness — have given them sagacity; and sometimes in pithy adages, sometimes in direct and sober counsel, they deal forth that mellow wisdom.

And they grow in *spirituality*. We have seen those aged pilgrims to whom *earthly things* at last grew insipid; they had no curiosity for the news of the day, and little taste for fresh and entertaining books. They stuck to God's testimonies, and you never went in to see them but their

Bible lay open on the table or the counter; and they could tell the portion which had been that morning's food, or the meditation of the previous night. The Word of God dwelt in them so richly, that you could see they were becoming fit to dwell with God; for when a mind has become thoroughly *scriptural* — it needs but another step to make it *celestial*. And the last *harvest* came, and the last gleanings of their precious words, and when we next went that way — their place knew them no longer. They were flourishing in the courts of God's house on high, and we would sit under their shadow and be regaled by their goodness no more.

But when we recollected how lovely their Christian profession was, how beneficent and serviceable they had ever been, and remembered that their *last* days were their brightest, and their last fruits their fairest, we said over to ourselves, "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green!"

Dear Christian reader, when your own *ear* cannot hear it, may this be your eulogy — when your own *eye* cannot read it, may this be your epitaph. In the meanwhile, for the sake of that Savior who is dishonored by *proud* and *selfish* and *unlovely* disciples — *strive* and pray for consistency in holy living. And for your own soul's sake, which is dulled by defective views, and depressed by each besetting sin — *seek* a serene and lofty faith — *covet* earnestly a blameless life. Let . . . your triumphs over *self*, and your high-hearted *zeal* for the Savior, the largeness of your Christian spirit, your Heavenly elevation, the exuberance of your goodness, the multitude of your acts of kindness, the fullness of your affections, the abundance of your beneficence — make Jesus manifest and unmistakable in your life. Let your *happy piety* be the far-eyed signal announcing an *oasis* in the desert, and pray that your church may become another *Elim* to weary pilgrims "where they found twelve springs and *seventy palm trees*. They camped there beside the water." Exodus 15:27