

“I will surely do you good”

“I will surely do you good”– Genesis 32:12

This is a blessed assurance with which to enter a new year, not knowing what a day may bring forth. But what has this promise to do with us? It was given to Jacob, but it belongs equally to every Israelite; for the offspring of Jacob do not seek God in vain (Isaiah 45:19).

Promises made on specific occasions are meant to serve a wider purpose and benefit.

- Paul, referencing God's encouragement to Joshua, applies these words to faithful Hebrews: *“Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:5-6).
- Also, Hosea, recalling God's interaction with Jacob at Bethel, states that God not only talked to Jacob, but *“there he talked with us”* (Hosea 12:4).

It is good that the promise is **brief**. We complain that our memories are bad, but surely, we can remember these six golden words, *“I will surely do thee good.”*

It is also good that the promise is **indefinite**. Some promises ensure an individual blessing, but we have so many wants, and this assurance is a comforter that meets every fear, every anxiety, every wish. It sets the mind completely at rest regarding any possible contingencies. It tells us to be *“careful for nothing”* (Philippians 4:6). It encourages us to *“cast all our care upon him, for He careth for us”* (1 Peter 5:7).

Although the promise does not specify anything in particular, it allows our hope to roam freely—yet it remains within the bounds

of our true welfare. It is for God's people, for "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34:10).

Understanding the Promise

It is essential to understand the significance of this assurance; otherwise, it will not align with experience. The world frequently reproaches those claiming to be blessed by the Lord, pointing to their poverty and suffering, and asking, 'Where is your God now?' At times, even Christians have felt confused and bewildered.

- Gideon asked, "If God is with us, why does all this evil happen to us?" (Judges 6:13)
- Jacob said, "All these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36).

When someone is in a comfortable situation, enjoying life's comforts, they might not perceive the weight of God's words. However, think of Joseph in prison, Job sitting in ashes, or someone who laments, "All day long I am plagued and chastened every morning" (Psalm 73:10). What significance does the promise – "I will surely do thee good" – hold for these saints?

Distinguishing between what is *pleasing* and what is *profitable*.

When we suffer misfortune, we should rely on God's judgment rather than our own. We are short-sighted and easily deceived by appearances. We often don't know what is truly good for us in this fleeting life, which is like a shadow. God, however, cannot be mistaken, much like a wise father who chooses what is better for his child than the child could choose for himself. It's important to distinguish between what is *pleasing* and what is *profitable*.

Correction is not pleasant for the child; it is very beneficial; indeed, he who spares the rod hates his son (Proverbs 13:24). Medicine may taste unpleasant, but it benefits the patient, and regained health will surpass any dislike for it. Just as a vine-dresser improves the tree not by letting shoots grow wildly and drain its sap, but by pruning it to encourage more fruitfulness, similar care applies.

What did David say? "It is good that I have been afflicted" (Psalm 119:71). Did he mean that it is good for him because he prospered, rose from obscurity, defeated Goliath, or won in the Valley of Salt? No, he meant that it is good for him because Doeg

accused him, Saul hunted him through the mountains, Absalom expelled him from his palace, Shimei cursed him on the hill, and sickness brought down my life to the ground “It is good that I have been afflicted.”

We should also consider the outcome of events. Things that are good in themselves can lead to harm, and things that are evil can produce good results. Abraham mentioned this to the rich man, saying, “Son, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus his evil things.” The “good things” did not benefit the rich man, while the “evil things” caused Lazarus to seek the Lord. All is ill that ends ill. All is well that ends well.

But let us accept the truth of this declaration. There are four steps by which we may reach the conclusion.

First, consider God’s sufficiency. He has the power to bless us. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord. In Jehovah, there is everlasting strength. No enemy can stand against Him; no crisis is beyond His power to resolve. He can do far more than we can ask or imagine.

Second, God’s desire to do good for us is evident. He is inclined to bless us, and His love is not only genuine but surpasses understanding. He regards us as His jewels, friends, children, and bride. He takes comfort in His love and rejoices over us with singing.

Third, God’s commitment to doing us good. He is obligated to act benevolently towards us. We possess not only His word but also His oath—an oath sworn by Himself, since He could swear by no one greater—and sealed with the blood of an infinite sacrifice.

Fourth, God’s actions in doing us good. He has indeed done us good. While we’ve had plenty of complaints about others, we must admit, “Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord.” His goodness and mercy have accompanied us throughout our lives. So many times, He has turned the darkness of death into the brightness of morning!

But when I look at the cross, I see not only proof but also demonstration. He has already done far more than remains to be done. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises*, (January 2, morning), first published in 1854.