

FACTS AND PROMISES

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"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

I heard a striking commercial the other day on the radio. 'These are not just promises', we were told, 'these are facts'. It doesn't say much for promises, does it? If a man's word was at all trustworthy, we would be able to say that a promise was as good a fact as any other; when a promise was made its fulfilment was certain.

However that is not real to human life is it? We can't trust each other. It's not even enough to make a simple statement of our intentions. In important matters we must bolster them with oaths, witnesses and solemn declarations. But nowadays such things have often become farcical. We have all sorts of reasons why a man's promise need not be binding. Why even the most solemn promises a person makes to another person, namely the marriage vows are these days regarded as negotiable. No wonder we regard words as perfectly useless. We look for fact, not promises.

I need hardly point out how sad this is. Think of the consequences. We human beings were made for relationships; we were created for each other; we were created for love. But relationships are absolutely impossible without trust; if we can't trust each other, we cannot relate properly. If we cannot trust each others' promises, then we cannot ever find personal fulfilment. No wonder there are so many cynical disillusioned people in the world! Hating themselves and hating others because they cannot trust, they live bitter and embattled lives, far from love, joy and happiness.

Well this may be true to human experience, but it's a very narrow experience, for it leaves God out of the picture. God is the God of promises; he is not silent, he speaks. Furthermore, he speaks the truth.

From the earliest recorded relationships between God and his people, promises have been involved. But are these promises any better than human promises?

One thing is clear - the promises of God have already proved themselves. As the Bible points out, all the promises of God find their "Yes" in Jesus Christ. Long ago, and long before Jesus came, God made his promises. When Jesus came, these promises were marvellously and fully realised. He is the fulfilment of God's promises - the greatest fact of all.

Let me explain it like this. Have you ever been remembered in someone's will? That's a promise, isn't it? You are an heir, until the person dies and you receive your inheritance. Well that is the Christian story, too. The promises of God were like those in a will; the promises were made not of money or possessions, but of Jesus Christ the Son of God himself. If you wish to inherit, you must simply accept the truth of these promises, you must trust the God who made the promises.

Alas! how many people have become so cynical and twisted that they won't trust, even the promises of God himself. They are like people who have inherited a fortune under a will, but refuse to believe it. They are the heirs, but the benefit never comes to them. True joy is something they never understand.

Put your trust in God's promises! You can never be disappointed!

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