lake of fire?” *Certainly not!* To be liable to a thing,  
and to experience it, are very different.  
 But he would steady His people against *the fear of  
man* by a more *tremendous fear*—even that *of God*.  
 When the last trial comes, and the persecutor says to  
the believer, “Abjure your faith, or die!” there is great  
glory to God and profit to His churches, when the confessor accepts death, rather than abandon the faith. But  
what if he succumb before the enemy? Great is the  
shame and mischief to God’s cause, to himself, and  
others.  
 Can a believer, under such trying circumstances, fall?  
 Alas! English ecclesiastical history has furnished sad  
instances of it.  
 “Promise to read this paper in public, without  
omitting or adding a single word” (said Barnes’ judges  
to him). It was then read to him. “I would die  
first,” was his reply. “Will you abjure, or be burnt  
alive?” said his judges: “take your choice.” The  
alternative was dreadful. Poor Barnes, a prey to the  
deepest agony, shrank at the thoughts of the stake:  
then suddenly his courage revived, and he exclaimed,  
“I had rather be burnt than abjure.” Gardiner and  
Fox did all they could to persuade him. “They entreated him; they put forward the most plausible  
motives: from time to time they uttered the terrible  
words, *burnt alive!* His blood froze in his veins: he  
knew not what he said or did…they placed a paper  
before him—they put a pen in his hand—his head was  
bewildered, he signed his name with a deep sigh. This  
unhappy man was destined, at a later period, to be a  
faithful martyr of Jesus Christ; but he had not yet  
learned to ‘resist even unto blood.’ Barnes had fallen.”  
*D’ Aubigné*, vol. v. p. 250.  
 While then there are joyful promises, positive and  
negative, to him who, at the cost of life, maintains the