

Faith's Check Book

By
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VOLUME TWO
Preface

Faith's Check Book is a daily devotional full of powerful promises from God's Word.

A PROMISE from God may very instructively be compared to a check payable to order. It is given to the believer with the view of bestowing upon him some good thing. It is not meant that he should read it over comfortably, and then have done with it. No, he is to treat the promise as a reality, as a man treats a check.

He is to take the promise, and endorse it with his own name by personally receiving it as true. He is by faith to accept it as his own. He sets to his seal that God is true, and true as to this particular word of promise. He goes further, and believes that he has the blessing in having the sure promise of it and therefore he puts his name to it to testify to the receipt of the blessing.

This done, he must believingly present the promise to the Lord, as a man presents a check at the counter of the Bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled. If he has come to Heaven's bank at the right date, he will receive the promised amount at once. If the date should happen to be further on, he must patiently wait till

its arrival; but meanwhile he may count the promise as money, for the Bank is sure to pay when the due time arrives.

Some fail to place the endorsement of faith upon the check, and so they get nothing; and others are slack in presenting it, and these also receive nothing. This is not the fault of the promise, but of those who do not act with it in a commonsense, business-like manner.

God has given no pledge which He will not redeem, and encouraged no hope which He will not fulfill. To help my brethren to believe this, I have prepared this little volume. The sight of the promises themselves is good for the eyes of faith: the more we study the words of grace, the more grace shall we derive from the words. To the cheering Scriptures I have added testimonies of my own, the fruit of trial and experience. I believe all the promises of God, but many of them I have personally tried and proved. I have seen that they are true, for they have been fulfilled to me. This, I trust, may be cheering to the young; and not without solace to the older sort. One man's experience may be of the utmost use to another; and this is why the man of God of old wrote, "*I sought the Lord, and he heard me*" (Psalm 34:4); and again, "*This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.*" (Psalm 34:6)"

I commenced these daily portions when I was wading in the surf of controversy. Since then I have been cast into "waters to swim in," which, but for God's upholding hand, would have proved waters to drown in. I have endured tribulation from

many hails. Sharp bodily pain succeeded mental depression, and this was accompanied both by bereavement and affliction in the person of one dear as life. The waters rolled in continually, wave upon wave. I do not mention this to exact sympathy, but simply to let the reader see that I am no dry-land sailor. I have traversed full many a time those oceans which are not Pacific: I know the roll of the billows, and the rush of the winds. Never were the promises of Jehovah so precious to me as at this hour. Some of them I never understood till now; I had not reached the date at which they matured, for I was not myself mature enough to perceive their meaning.

How much more wonderful is the Bible to me now than it was a few months ago! In obeying the Lord, and bearing His reproach outside the camp, I have not received new promises; but the result to me is much the same as if I had done so, for the old ones have opened up to me with richer stores. Specially has the Word of the Lord to His servant Jeremiah sounded exceedingly sweet in mine ears. His lot it was to speak to those who would not hear, or hearing, would not believe. His was the sorrow which comes of disappointed love, and resolute loyalty; he would have turned his people from their errors, but he would not himself quit the way of the Lord. For him there were words of deep sustaining power, which kept his mind from failing where nature unaided must have sunk. These and such like golden sentences of grace I have loved more than my necessary food, and with them I have enriched these pages.

Oh, that I might comfort some of my Master's servants I have written out of my own heart with the view of comforting their hearts. I would say to them in their trials — My brethren, God is good. He will not forsake you: He will bear you through. There is a promise prepared for your present emergencies; and if you will believe and plead it at the mercy-seat through Jesus Christ, you shall see the hand of the Lord stretched out to help you. Everything else will fail, but His word never will. He has been to me so faithful in countless instances that I must encourage you to trust Him. I should be ungrateful to God and unkind to you if I did not do so.

May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, inspire the people of the Lord with fresh faith! I know that, without His divine power, all that I can say will be of no avail; but, under His quickening influence, even the humblest testimony will confirm feeble knees, and strengthen weak hands. God is glorified when His servants trust Him implicitly. We cannot be too much of children with our heavenly Father. Our young ones ask no question about our will or our power, but having once received a promise from father, they rejoice in the prospect of its fulfillment, never doubting that it is sure as the sun. May many readers, whom I may never see, discover the duty and delight of such child-like trust in God while they are reading the little bit which I have prepared for each day in the year.

For long years several thousands of God's people have read my *MORNING BY MORNING* and

EVENING BY EVENING, and many of them have been good enough to write me, and acknowledge the benefit of such a perusal. I hope this little book will not interfere with those volumes. These daily portions are gathered from a more varied range of topics, and are all the more profitable because they deal with doctrine, experience, practice, and everything else. This is a sweetmeat of promise only, and it must not interfere with the fuller meals: nay, rather, I hope it will excite a desire for them.

May our Lord Jesus accept this my service for His sheep and lambs, from

His unworthy Servant,

C. H. SPURGEON

Note: This devotional can be accessed at: www.lifebpc.com/devotions

The King's Highway

*And an highway shall be there, and a way,
and it shall be called The way of holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it;
but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men,
though fools, shall not err therein.*

Isaiah 35:8

THE way of holiness is so straight and plain that the simplest minds cannot go astray if they constantly follow it. The worldly wise have many twists and turns, and yet they make terrible blunders and generally miss their end. Worldly policy is a poor, shortsighted thing, and when men choose it as their road, it leads them over dark mountains. Gracious minds know no better than to do as the LORD bids them; but this keeps them in the King's highway and under royal protection.

Let the reader never for a moment attempt to help himself out of a difficulty by a falsehood or by a questionable act; but let him keep in the middle of the high road of truth and integrity, and he will be following the best possible course. In our lives we must never practice circular sailing nor dream of shuffling. Be just and fear not. Follow Jesus and heed no evil consequences. If the worst of ills could be avoided by wrongdoing, we should, in the very attempt, have fallen into an evil worse than any other ill could be. God's way must be the very best way. Follow it though men think you a fool, and you will be truly wise.

LORD, lead Thy servants in a plain path because of their enemies.

True Heart-Energy

*Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;
that thy profiting may appear to all.*

1 Timothy 4:15

THIS is, practically, a promise that, by diligent meditation and the giving up of our whole mind to our work for the LORD we shall make a progress which all can see. Not by hasty reading but by deep meditation we profit by the Word of God. Not by doing a great deal of work in a slovenly manner, but by giving our best thought to what we attempt, we shall get real profit. *“In all labour there is profit”* (Proverbs 14:23) but not in fuss and hurry without true heart-energy.

If we divide ourselves between God and mammon, or Christ and self, we shall make no progress. We must give ourselves wholly to holy things, or else we shall be poor traders in heavenly business, and at our stocktaking no profit will be shown.

Am I a minister? Let me be a minister wholly and not spend my energies upon secondary concerns. What have I to do with party politics or vain amusements? Am I a Christian? Let me make my service of Jesus my occupation, my lifework, my one pursuit. We must be in-and-in with Jesus, and then out-and-out for Jesus, or else we shall make neither progress nor profit, and neither the church nor the world will feel the forceful influence which the LORD would have us exercise.

Sensitive To Warning

*Because thine heart was tender,
and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD,
when thou heardest what I spake against this place,
and against the inhabitants thereof,
that they should become a desolation and a curse,
and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me;
I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.*

2 Kings 22:19

MANY despise warning and perish. Happy is he who trembles at the Word of God. Josiah did so, and he was spared the sight of the evil which the LORD determined to send upon Judah because of her great sins. Have you this tenderness? Do you practice this self-humiliation? Then you also shall be spared in the evil day. God sets a mark upon the men that sigh and cry because of the sin of the times. The destroying angel is commanded to keep his sword in its sheath till the elect of God are sheltered: these are best known by their godly fear and their trembling at the Word of the LORD. Are the times threatening? Does infidelity advance with great strides, and do you dread national chastisement upon this polluted nation? Well you may. Yet rest in this promise: *“Thou thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.”* (2 Kings 22:20) Better still, the LORD Himself may come, and then the days of our mourning shall be ended.

God's Hornets

*And I will send hornets before thee,
which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite,
and the Hittite, from before thee.*

Exodus 23:28

WHAT the hornets were we need not consider. They were God's own army which He sent before His people to sting their enemies and render Israel's conquest easy. Our God by His own chosen means will fight for His people and gall their foes before they come into the actual battle. Often He confounds the adversaries of truth by methods in which reformers themselves have no hand. The air is full of mysterious influences which harass Israel's foes. We read in the Apocalypse that "*the earth helped the woman.*" (Revelation 12:16)

Let us never fear. The stars in their courses fight against the enemies of our souls. Oftentimes when we march to the conflict we find no host to contend with. "*The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*" (Exodus 14:14) God's hornets can do more than our weapons. We could never dream of the victory being won by such means as Jehovah will use. We must obey our marching orders and go forth to the conquest of the nations for Jesus, and we shall find that the LORD has gone before us and prepared the way; so that in the end we will joyfully confess, "*His right hand and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.*" (Psalm 98:1)

Not Forgotten

*Remember these, O Jacob and Israel;
for thou art my servant: I have formed thee;
thou art my servant: O Israel,
thou shalt not be forgotten of me.
Isaiah 44:21*

OUR Jehovah cannot so forget His servants as to cease to love them. He chose them not for a time but forever. He knew what they would be when He called them into the divine family. He blots out their sins like a cloud; and we may be sure that He will not turn them out of doors for iniquities which He has blotted out. It would be blasphemy to imagine such a thing.

He will not forget them so as to cease to think of them. One forgetful moment on the part of our God would be our ruin. Therefore He says, "*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me,*" Men forget us; those whom we have benefited turn against us. We have no abiding place in the fickle hearts of men; but God will never forget one of His true servants. He binds Himself to us not by what we do for Him but by what He has done for us. We have been loved too long and bought at too great a price to be now forgotten. Jesus sees in us His soul's travail, and that He never can forget. The Father sees in us the spouse of His Son, and the Spirit sees in us His own effectual work. The LORD thinketh upon us. This day we shall be succored and sustained. Oh, that the LORD may never be forgotten of us!

One King, One LORD

*And the LORD shall be king over all the earth:
in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.*

Zechariah 14:9

BLESSED prospect! This is no dream of an enthusiast but the declaration of the infallible Word. Jehovah shall be known among all people, and His gracious sway shall be acknowledged by every tribe of man. Today, it is far from being so. Where do any bow before the great King? How much there is of rebellion! What lords many, and gods many, there are on the earth! Even among professed Christians what diversities of ideas there are about Him and His gospel! One day there shall be one King, one Jehovah, and one name for the living God. O LORD, hasten it! We daily cry, “*Thy kingdom come.*”

We will not discuss the question as to *when* this shall be lest we lose the comfort of the certainty that it shall be. So surely as the Holy Ghost spake by His prophets, so surely shall the whole earth be filled with the glory of the LORD. Jesus did not die in vain. The Spirit of God worketh not in vain. The Father’s eternal purposes shall not be frustrated, Here, where Satan triumphed, Jesus shall be crowned, and the LORD God Omnipotent shall reign. Let us go our way to our daily work and warfare made strong in faith.

Without Fear Of Man

And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

Deuteronomy 28:10

THEN we can have no reason to be afraid of *them*. This would show a mean spirit and be a token of unbelief rather than of faith. God can make us so like Himself that men shall be forced to see that we rightly bear His name and truly belong to the holy Jehovah. Oh, that we may obtain this grace which the LORD waits to bestow!

Be assured that ungodly men have a fear of true saints. They hate them, but they also fear them. Haman trembled because of Mordecai, even when he sought the good man's destruction. In fact, their hate often arises out of a dread which they are too proud to confess. Let us pursue the path of truth and uprightness without the slightest tremor. Fear is not for us but for those who do ill and fight against the LORD of hosts. If indeed the name of the eternal God is named upon us, we are secure; for, as of old, a Roman had but to say *Romanus sum*, I am a Roman, and he could claim the protection of all the legions of the vast empire; so every one who is a man of God has omnipotence as his guardian, and God will sooner empty heaven of angels than leave a saint without defense. Be braver than lions for the right, for God is with you.

Preserved To Work's End

And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Acts 23:11

ARE you a witness for the LORD, and are you just now in danger? Then remember that you are immortal till your work is done. If the LORD has more witness for you to bear, you will live to bear it. Who is he that can break the vessel which the LORD intends again to use?

If there is no more work for you to do for your Master, it cannot distress you that He is about to take you home and put you where you will be beyond the reach of adversaries. Your witness-bearing for Jesus is your chief concern, and you cannot be stopped in it till it is finished: therefore, be at peace. Cruel slander, wicked misrepresentation, desertion of friends, betrayal by the most trusted one, and whatever else may come cannot hinder the LORD's purpose concerning you. The LORD stands by you in the night of your sorrow, and He says, "Thou must yet bear witness for me." Be calm; be filled with joy in the LORD.

If you do not need this promise just now, you may very soon. Treasure it up. Remember also to pray for missionaries and all persecuted ones, that the LORD would preserve them even to the completion of their lifework.

The Bible's Supreme Place

*Great peace have they which love thy law:
and nothing shall offend them.*

Psalm 119:165

YES, a true love for the great Book will bring us great peace from the great God and be a great protection to us. Let us live constantly in the society of the law of the LORD, and it will breed in our hearts a restfulness such as nothing else can. The Holy Spirit acts as a Comforter through the Word and sheds abroad those benign influences which calm the tempests of the soul.

Nothing is a stumbling block to the man who has the Word of God dwelling in him richly. He takes up his daily cross, and it becomes a delight. For the fiery trial he is prepared and counts it not strange, so as to be utterly cast down by it. He is neither stumbled by prosperity — as so many are — nor crushed by adversity — as others have been — for he lives beyond the changing circumstances of external life. When his LORD puts before him some great mystery of the faith which makes others cry, *“This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”* (John 6:60) the believer accepts it without question; for his intellectual difficulties are overcome by his reverent awe of the law of the LORD, which is to him the supreme authority to which he joyfully bows. LORD, work in us this love, this peace, this rest, this day.

Look And Live

*And the LORD said unto Moses,
Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole:
and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten,
when he looketh upon it, shall live.
Numbers 21:8*

THIS is a glorious gospel type. Jesus, numbered with the transgressors, hangs before us on the cross. A look to Him will heal us of the serpent-bite of sin; will heal us at once — “*When he looketh upon it, shall live.*” Let the reader who is mourning his sinfulness note the words — “Everyone that looketh upon it shall live.” Every looker will find this true. I have found it so. I looked to Jesus and lived at once, I know I did. Reader, if you look to Jesus you will live, too. True, you are swelling with the venom, and you see no hope, True, also, *there is no hope but this one.* But this is no doubtful cure — “*Everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.*”

The brazen serpent was not lifted up as a curiosity to be gazed upon by the healthy; but its special purpose was for those who were “bitten.” Jesus died as a real Savior for real sinners. Whether the bite has made you a drunkard, or a thief, or an unchaste or a profane person, a look at the great Savior will heal you of these diseases and make you live in holiness and communion with God. Look and live.

Close Fellowship

*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour,
and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD:
for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the
greatest of them, saith the LORD:
for I will forgive their iniquity,
and I will remember their sin no more.*

Jeremiah 31:34

TRULY, whatever else we do not know, we know the LORD. This day is this promise true in our experience, and it is not a little one. The least believer among us knows God in Christ Jesus. Not as fully as we desire; but yet truly and really we know the LORD. We not only know doctrines about Him, but we know Him. He is our Father and our Friend. We are acquainted with Him personally. We can say, "My LORD, and my God." We are on terms of close fellowship with God, and many a happy season do we spend in His holy company. We are no more strangers to our God, but the secret of the LORD is with us.

This is more than nature could have taught us. Flesh and blood has not revealed God to us. Christ Jesus had made known the Father to our hearts. If, then, the LORD has made us know Himself, is not this the fountain of all saving knowledge? To know God is eternal life. So soon as we come to acquaintance with God we have the evidence of being quickened into newness of life. O my soul, rejoice in this knowledge, and bless thy God all this day!

He Remembers No More

*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour,
and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD:
for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the
greatest of them, saith the LORD:
for I will forgive their iniquity,
and I will remember their sin no more.*

Jeremiah 31:34

WHEN we know the LORD, we receive the forgiveness of sins. We know Him as the God of grace, passing by our transgressions. What a joyful discovery is this!

But how divinely is this promise worded: the LORD promises no more to remember our sins! Can God forget? He says He will, and He means what He says. He will regard us as though we had never sinned. The great atonement so effectually removed all sin that it is to the mind of God no more in existence. The believer is now in Christ Jesus, as accepted as Adam in his innocence; yea, more so, for he wears a divine righteousness, and that of Adam was but human.

The great LORD will not remember our sins so as to punish them, or so as to love us one atom the less because of them. As a debt when paid ceases to be a debt, even so doth the LORD make a complete obliteration of the iniquity of His people.

When we are mourning over our transgressions and shortcomings, and this is our duty as long as we live, let us at the same time rejoice that they will never be mentioned against us. This makes us hate sin. God's free pardon makes us anxious never again to grieve Him by disobedience.

This Body Fashioned Anew

*Who shall change our vile body,
that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,
according to the working whereby
he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
Philippians 3:21*

OFTEN when we are racked with pain and unable to think or worship, we feel that this indeed is “the body of our humiliation,” and when we are tempted by the passions which rise from the flesh we do not think the word “vile” at all too vigorous a translation. Our bodies humble us; and that is about the best thing they do for us. Oh, that we were duly lowly, because our bodies ally us with animals and even link us with the dust!

But our Savior, the LORD Jesus, shall change all this. We shall be fashioned like His own body of glory. This will take place in all who believe in Jesus. By faith their souls have been transformed, and their bodies will undergo such a renewal as shall fit them for their regenerated spirits. How soon this grand transformation will happen we cannot tell; but the thought of it should help us to bear the trials of today, and all the woes of the flesh. In a little while we shall be as Jesus now is. No more aching brows, no more swollen limbs, no more dim eyes, no more fainting hearts. The old man shall be no more a bundle of infirmities, nor the sick man a mass of agony. “*Like unto his glorious body.*” What an expression! Even our flesh shall rest in hope of such a resurrection!

My Choice Is His Choice

*He shall choose our inheritance for us,
the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.*

Psalm 47:4

OUR enemies would allot us a very dreary portion, but we are not left in their hands. The LORD will cause us to stand in our lot, and our place is appointed by His infinite wisdom. A wiser mind than our own arranges our destiny, The ordaining of all things is with God, and we are glad to have it so; we choose that God should choose for us. If we might have our own way we would wish to let all things go in God's way.

Being conscious of our own folly, we would not desire to rule our own destinies. We feel safer and more at ease when the LORD steers our vessel than we could possibly be if we could direct it according to our own judgment. Joyfully we leave the painful present and the unknown future with our Father, our Savior, our Comforter.

O my soul, this day lay down thy wishes at Jesus' feet! If thou hast of late been somewhat wayward and wilful, eager to be and to do after thine own mind, now dismiss thy foolish self, and place the reins in the LORD's hands. Say, "*He shall choose.*" If others dispute the sovereignty of the LORD and glory in the free will of man, do thou answer them, "He shall choose for me." It is my freest choice to let Him choose. As a free agent, I elect that He should have absolute sway.

Desires Of Righteous Granted

*The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him:
but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.*

Proverbs 10:24

BECAUSE it is a righteous desire it is safe for God to grant it. It would be neither good for the man himself, nor for society at large, that such a promise should be made to the unrighteous. Let us keep the LORD's commands, and He will rightfully have respect to our desires.

When righteous men are left to desire unrighteous desires, they will not be granted to them. But then these are not their real desires; they are their wanderings or blunders, and it is well that they should be refused. Their gracious desires shall come before the LORD, and He will not say them nay.

Does the LORD deny us our requests for a time? Let the promise for today encourage us to ask again. Has He denied us altogether? We will thank Him still, for it always was our desire that He should deny us if He judged a denial to be best.

As to some things, we ask very boldly. Our chief desires are for holiness, usefulness, likeness to Christ, preparedness for heaven. These are the desires of grace rather than of nature — the desires of the righteous man rather than of the mere man. God will not stint us in these things but will do for us exceeding abundantly. *“Delight thyself also in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”* (Psalm 37:4) This day, my soul, ask largely!

All Turned To Holiness

*In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses,
HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD;
and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be
like the bowls before the altar.
Zechariah 14:20*

HAPPY day when all things shall be consecrated, and the horses' bells shall ring out holiness to the LORD! That day has come to me. Do I not make all things holy to God? These garments, when I put them on or take them off, shall they not remind me of the righteousness of Christ Jesus my LORD? Shall not my work be done as unto the LORD? Oh, that today my clothes may be vestments, my meals sacraments, my house a temple, my table an altar, my speech incense, and myself a priest! LORD, fulfill Thy promise, and let nothing be to me common or unclean.

Let me in faith expect this. Believing it to be so, I shall be helped to make it so. As I myself am the property of Jesus, my LORD may take an inventory of all I have, for it is altogether His own; and I resolve to prove it to be so by the use to which I put it this day. From morning till evening I would order all things by a happy and holy rule. My bells shall ring — why should they not? Even my horses shall have bells — who has such a right to music as the saints have? But all my bells, my music, my mirth, shall be turned to holiness and shall ring out the name of “The Happy God.”

Enemies At Peace

*When a man's ways please the LORD,
he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

Proverbs 16:7

I MUST see that my ways please the LORD. Even then I shall have enemies; and, perhaps, all the more certainly because I endeavor to do that which is right. But what a promise this is! The LORD will make the wrath of man to praise Him and abate it so that it shall not distress me.

He can constrain an enemy to desist from harming me, even though he has a mind to do so. This He did with Laban, who pursued Jacob but did not dare to touch him. Or He can subdue the wrath of the enemy and make him friendly, as He did with Esau, who met Jacob in a brotherly manner, though Jacob had dreaded that he would smite him and his family with the sword. The LORD can also convert a furious adversary into a brother in Christ and a fellow worker, as He did with Saul of Tarsus. Oh, that He would do this in every case where a persecuting spirit appears!

Happy is the man whose enemies are made to be to him what the lions were to Daniel in the den, quiet and companionable! When I meet death, who is called the last enemy, I pray that I may be at peace. Only let my great care be to please the LORD in all things. Oh, for faith and holiness; for these are a pleasure unto the Most High!

He Never Fails

*There shall not any man be able to
stand before thee all the days of thy life:
as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee:
I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
Joshua 1:5*

THIS word to Joshua is often quoted; it is the basis of that New Testament word “*He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*” (Hebrews 13:5)

Beloved, a life of warfare is before us, but the LORD of Hosts is with us. Are we called to lead a great but fickle people? This promise guarantees us all the wisdom and prudence that we shall need. Have we to contend with cunning and powerful enemies? Here is strength and valor, prowess and victory. Have we a vast heritage to win? By this sign we shall achieve our purpose; the LORD Himself is with us.

It would be woe to us indeed if Jehovah could fail us; but, as this can never be, the winds of disquietude are laid to sleep in the caverns of divine faithfulness. On no one occasion will the LORD desert us. Happen what may, He will be at our side. Friends drop from us, their help is but an April shower; but God is faithful, Jesus is the same forever, and the Holy Spirit abideth in us.

Come, my heart, be calm and hopeful today. Clouds may gather, but the LORD can blow them away. Since God will not fail me, my faith shall not fail; and as He will not forsake me, neither will I forsake Him. Oh, for a restful faith!

An Expert Searcher

*For thus saith the Lord GOD;
Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep,
and seek them out.
Ezekiel 34:11*

THIS He does at the first when His elect are like wandering sheep that know not the Shepherd or the fold. How wonderfully doth the LORD find out His chosen! Jesus is great as a seeking Shepherd as well as a saving Shepherd. Though many of those His Father gave Him have gone as near to hell-gate as they well can, yet the LORD by searching and seeking discovers them and draws nigh to them in grace. He has sought out us: let us have good hope for those who are laid upon our hearts in prayer, for He will find them out also.

The LORD repeats this process when any of His flock stray from the pastures of truth and holiness. They may fall into gross error, sad sin, and grievous hardness; but yet the LORD, who has become a surety for them to His Father, will not suffer one of them to go so far as to perish. He will by providence and grace pursue them into foreign lands, into abodes of poverty, into dens of obscurity, into depths of despair; He will not lose one of all that the Father has given Him. It is a point of honor with Jesus to seek and to save all the flock, without a single exception. What a promise to plead, if at this hour I am compelled to cry, *“I have gone astray like a lost sheep!”* (Psalm 119:176)

By Faith Not Feeling

*For therein is the righteousness of God
revealed from faith to faith:
as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
Romans 1:17*

I SHALL not die, I can, I do, believe in the LORD my God, and this faith will keep me alive. I would be numbered among those who in their lives are just; but even if I were perfect I would not try to live by my righteousness; I would cling to the work of the LORD Jesus and still live by faith in Him and by nothing else. If I were able to give my body to be burned for my LORD Jesus, yet I would not trust in my own courage and constancy, but still would live by faith.

*Were I a martyr at the stake
I'd plead my Saviour's name;
Intreat a pardon for His sake,
And urge no other claim.*

To live by faith is a far surer and happier thing than to live by feelings or by works, The branch, by living in the vine, lives a better life than it would live by itself, even if it were possible for it to live at all apart from the stem. To live by clinging to Jesus, by deriving all from Him, is a sweet and sacred thing. If even the most just must live in this fashion, how much more must I who am a poor sinner! LORD, I believe. I must trust Thee wholly. What else can I do? Trusting Thee is my life. I feel it to be so. I will abide by this even to the end.

God Repays

*He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD;
and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

Proverbs 19:17

WE are to give to the poor out of pity. Not to be seen and applauded, much less to get influence over them; but out of pure sympathy and compassion we must give them help.

We must not expect to get anything back from the poor, not even gratitude; but we should regard what we have done as a loan to the LORD. He undertakes the obligation, and, if we look to Him in the matter, we must not look to the second party. What an honor the LORD bestows upon us when He condescends to borrow of us! That merchant is greatly favored who has the LORD on his books. It would seem a pity to have such a name down for a paltry pittance; let us make it a heavy amount. The next needy man that comes this way, let us help him.

As for repayment, we can hardly think of it, and yet here is the LORD's note of hand. Blessed be His name, His promise to pay is better than gold and silver. Are we running a little short through the depression of the times? We may venture humbly to present this bill at the Bank of Faith, Has any one of our readers [oppressed] the poor? Poor soul. May the LORD forgive him.

Power To Raise

*The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind:
the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down:
the LORD loveth the righteous:
Psalm 146:8*

AM I bowed down? Then let me urge this word of grace before the LORD. It is His way, His custom, His promise, His delight, to raise up them that are bowed down. Is it a sense of sin, and a consequent depression of spirit, which now distresses me? Then the work of Jesus is, in this case, made and provided to raise me up into rest. O LORD, raise me, for Thy mercy's sake!

Is it a sad bereavement or a great fall in circumstances? Here again the Comforter has undertaken to console. What a mercy for us that one Person of the sacred Trinity should become the Comforter! This work will be well done since such a glorious One has made it His peculiar care.

Some are so bowed down that only Jesus can loose them from their infirmity, but He can, and He will, do it. He can raise us up to health, to hope, to happiness. He has often done so under former trials, and He is the same Savior and will repeat His deeds of lovingkindness. We who are today bowed down and sorrowful shalt yet be set on high, and those who now mock at us shall be greatly ashamed. What an honor to be raised up by the LORD! It is worthwhile to be bowed down that we may experience His upraising power.

No Fear Of Death

*He that hath an ear, let him hear
what the Spirit saith unto the churches;*

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 2:11

THE first death we must endure unless the LORD should suddenly come to His temple. For this let us abide in readiness, awaiting it without fear, since Jesus has transformed death from a dreary cavern into a passage leading to glory.

The thing to be feared is not the first but the second death, not the parting of the soul from the body but the final separation of the entire man from God. This is death indeed. This death kills all peace, joy, happiness, hope. When God is gone, all is gone. Such a death is far worse than ceasing to be: it is existence without the life which makes existence worth the having.

Now, if by God's grace we fight on to the end and conquer in the glorious war, no second death can lay its chill finger upon us, We shall have no fear of death and hell, for we shall receive a crown of life which fadeth not away. How this nerves us for the fight! Eternal life is worth a life's battle. To escape the hurt of the second death is a thing worth struggling for throughout a lifetime.

LORD, give us faith so that we may overcome, and then grant us grace to remain unharmed though sin and Satan dog our heels!

Condition Of Blessing

*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,
that there may be meat in mine house,
and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts,
if I will not open you the windows of heaven,
and pour you out a blessing,
that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

Malachi 3:10

MANY read and plead this promise without noticing the condition upon which the blessing is promised. We cannot expect heaven to be opened or blessing poured out unless we pay our dues unto the LORD our God and to His cause. There would be no lack of funds for holy purposes if all professing Christians paid their fair share.

Many are poor because they rob God. Many churches, also, miss the visitation of the Spirit because they starve their ministries. If there is no temporal meat for God's servants, we need not wonder if their ministry has but little food in it for our souls. When missions pine for means and the work of the LORD is hindered by an empty treasury, how can we look for a large amount of soul-prosperity?

Come, come! What have I given of late? Have I been mean to my God? Have I stinted my Savior? This will never do. Let me give my LORD Jesus His tithe by helping the poor and aiding His work, and then I shall prove His power to bless me on a large scale.

What To Leave Children

*The just man walketh in his integrity:
his children are blessed after him.*

Proverbs 20:7

ANXIETY about our family is natural, but we shall be wise if we turn it into care about our own character. If we walk before the LORD in integrity, we shall do more to bless our descendants than if we bequeathed them large estates. A father's holy life is a rich legacy for his sons.

The upright man leaves his heirs his example, and this in itself will be a mine of true wealth. How many men may trace their success in life to the example of their parents!

He leaves them also his repute. Men think better of us as the sons of a man who could be trusted, the successors of a tradesman of excellent repute. Oh, that all young men were anxious to keep up the family name!

Above all, he leaves his children his prayers and the blessing of a prayer-hearing God, and these make our offspring to be favored among the sons of men. God will save them even after we are dead. Oh, that they might be saved at once!

Our integrity may be God's means of saving our sons and daughters. If they see the truth of our religion proved by our lives, it may be that they will believe in Jesus for themselves. LORD, fulfill this word to my household!

Gracious Dealing

*It shall not seem hard unto thee,
when thou sendest him away free from thee;
for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee,
in serving thee six years:
and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.
Deuteronomy 15:18*

AN Israelitish master was to give his bondservant liberty in due time, and when he left his service he was to start him in life with a liberal portion. This was to be done heartily and cheerfully, and then the LORD promised to bless the generous act. The spirit of this precept, and, indeed, the whole law of Christ, binds us to treat people well. We ought to remember how the LORD has dealt with us, and that this renders it absolutely needful that we should deal graciously with others. It becomes those to be generous who are the children of a gracious God. How can we expect our great Master to bless us in our business if we oppress those who serve us?

What a benediction is here set before the liberal mind! To be blessed in all that we do is to be blessed indeed. The LORD will send us this partly in prosperity, partly in content of mind, and partly in a sense of His favor, which is the best of all blessings. He can make us feel that we are under His special care and are surrounded by His peculiar love. This makes this earthly life a joyous prelude to the life to come. God's blessing is more than a fortune. It maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith.

God Finished His Work

*The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me:
thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever:
forsake not the works of thine own hands.*

Psalm 138:8

HE who has begun will carry on the work which is being wrought within my soul. The LORD is concerned about everything that concerns me. All that is now good, but not perfect, the LORD will watch over, preserve, and carry out to completion. This is a great comfort. I could not perfect the work of grace myself. Of that I am quite sure, for I fail every day and have only held on so long as I have because the LORD has helped me. If the LORD were to leave me, all my past experience would go for nothing, and I should perish from the way. But the LORD will continue to bless me. He will perfect my faith, my love, my character, my lifework. He will do this because He has begun a work in me. He gave me the concern I feel, and, in a measure, He has fulfilled my gracious aspirations. He never leaves a work unfinished; this would not be for His glory, nor would it be like Him. He knows how to accomplish His gracious design, and though my own evil nature and the world and the devil all conspire to hinder Him, I do not doubt His promise. He will perfect that which concerneth me, and I will praise Him forever. LORD, let Thy gracious work make some advance this day!

It Becomes Mutual

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?
for ye are the temple of the living God;
as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them;
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
2 Corinthians 6:16*

HERE is a *mutual interest*. Each belongs to each. God is the portion of His people, and the chosen people are the portion of their God. The saints find in God their chief possession, and He reckons them to be His peculiar treasure. What a mine of comfort lies in this fact for each believer!

This happy condition of mutual interest leads to *mutual consideration*. God will always think of His own people, and they will always think of Him. This day my God will perform all things for me; what can I do for Him? My thoughts ought to run toward Him, for He thinketh upon me. Let me make sure that it is so and not be content with merely admitting that so it ought to be.

This, again, leads to *mutual fellowship*. God dwells in us, and we dwell in Him; He walks with us, and we walk with God. Happy communion this!

Oh, for grace to treat the LORD as my God: to trust Him and to serve Him, as His Godhead deserves! Oh, that I could love, worship, adore, and obey Jehovah in spirit and in truth! This is my heart's desire. When I shall attain to it, I shall have found my heaven. LORD, help me! Be my God in helping me to know Thee as my God, for Jesus' sake.

Forget And Forgive

*Say not thou, I will recompense evil;
but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

Proverbs 20:22

BE not in haste. Let anger cool down. Say nothing and do nothing to avenge yourself. You will be sure to act unwisely if you take up the cudgels and fight your own battles; and, certainly, you will not show the spirit of the LORD Jesus. It is nobler to forgive and let the offence pass. To let an injury rankle in your bosom and to meditate revenge is to keep old wounds open and to make new ones. Better forget and forgive.

Peradventure, you say that you must do something or be a great loser; then do what this morning's promise advises: "*Wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*" This advice will not cost you money but is worth far more. Be calm and quiet. Wait upon the LORD; tell Him your grievance; spread Rabshakeh's letter before the LORD, and this of itself will be an ease to your burdened mind. Besides, there is the promise "*He shall save thee.*" God will find a way of deliverance for you. How He will do it neither you nor I can guess, but do it He will. If the LORD saves you, this will be a deal better than getting into petty quarrels and covering yourself with filth by wrestling with the unclean. Be no more angry. Leave your suit with the Judge of all.

The Overcomer's Reward

*He that hath an ear,
let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;
To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna,
and will give him a white stone,
and in the stone a new name written,
which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.
Revelation 2:17*

MY heart, be thou stirred up to persevere in the holy war, for the reward of victory is great. Today we eat of heavenly food which falls about our camps; the food of the wilderness, the food which comes from heaven, the food which never fails the pilgrims to Canaan. But there is reserved for us in Christ Jesus a still higher degree of spiritual life and a food for it which, as yet, is hidden from our experience. In the golden pot which was laid up in the ark there was a portion of manna hidden away, which though kept for ages never grew stale. No one ever saw it; it was hid with the Ark of the Covenant, in the Holy of Holies. Even so, the highest life of the believer is hid with Christ, in God. We shall come to it soon, Being made victorious through the grace of our LORD Jesus, we shall eat of the King's meat and feed upon royal dainties. We shall feed upon Jesus. He is our "*hidden manna*," as well as the manna of the wilderness. He is all in all to us in our highest, as well as in our lowest estate. He helps us to fight, gives us the victory, and then is Himself our reward. LORD, help me to overcome.

Full Of Song

*For ye shall go out with joy,
and be led forth with peace:
the mountains and the hills shall break forth
before you into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Isaiah 55:12*

WHEN sin is pardoned, our greatest sorrow is ended, and our truest pleasure begins. Such is the joy which the LORD bestows upon His reconciled ones, that it overflows and fills all nature with delight. The material world has latent music in it, and a renewed heart knows how to bring it out and make it vocal. Creation is the organ, and a gracious man finds out its keys, lays his hand thereon, and wakes the whole system of the universe to the harmony of praise. Mountains and hills, and other great objects, are, as it were, the bass of the chorus; while the trees of the wood, and all things that have life, take up the air of the melodious song.

When God's Word is made to prosper among us and souls are saved, then everything seems full of song. When we hear the confessions of young believers and the testimonies of well-instructed saints, we are made so happy that we must praise the LORD, and then it seems as if rocks and hills and woods and fields echo our joy-notes and turn the world into an orchestra. LORD, on this happy May Day, lead me out into thy tuneful world as rich in praise as a lark in full song.

Spiritual Sowing

*For he that soweth to his flesh
shall of the flesh reap corruption;
but he that soweth to the Spirit
shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
Galatians 6:8*

SOWING looks like a losing business, for we put good corn into the ground never to see it anymore. Sowing to the Spirit seems a very fanciful, dreamy business; for we deny ourselves and apparently get nothing for it. Yet if we sow to the Spirit by studying to live unto God, seeking to obey the will of God, and laying ourselves out to promote His honor, we shall not sow in vain. Life shall be our reward, even everlasting life. This we enjoy here as we enter into the knowledge of God, communion with God, and enjoyment of God. This life flows on like an ever-deepening, ever-widening river till it bears us to the ocean of infinite felicity, where the life of God is ours forever and ever.

Let us not this day sow to our flesh, for the harvest will be corruption, since flesh always tends that way; but with holy self-conquest let us live for the highest, purest, and most spiritual ends, seeking to honor our most holy LORD by obeying His most gracious Spirit. What a harvest will that be when we reap life everlasting! What sheaves of endless bliss will be reaped! What a festival will that harvest be! LORD, make us such reapers, for thy Son's sake.

Listen For The Signal

*And let it be, when thou hearest the sound
of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,
that then thou shalt bestir thyself:
for then shall the LORD go out before thee,
to smite the host of the Philistines.*

2 Samuel 5:24

THERE are signs of the LORD's moving which should move us. The Spirit of God blows where He listeth, and we hear the sound thereof. Then is the time for us to be more than ever astir. We must seize the golden opportunity and make the most we can of it. It is ours to fight the Philistines at all times; but when the LORD Himself goes out before us, then we should be specially valiant in the war.

The breeze stirred the tops of the trees, and David and his men took this for the signal for an onslaught, and at their advance the LORD Himself smote the Philistines. Oh, that this day the LORD may give us an opening to speak for Him with many of our friends! Let us be on the watch to avail ourselves of the hopeful opening when it comes. Who knows but this may be a day of good tidings; a season of soul-winning. Let us keep our ear open to hear the rustle of the wind and our minds ready to obey the signal. Is not this promise, "*Then shall the LORD go out before thee,*" a sufficient encouragement to play the man? Since the LORD goes before us, we dare not hold back.

Victory In Reverses

*Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy:
when I fall, I shall arise;*

when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.

Micah 7:8

THIS may express the feelings of a man or woman downtrodden and oppressed. Our enemy may put out our light for a season. There is sure hope for us in the LORD; and if we are trusting in Him and holding fast our integrity, our season of downcasting and darkness will soon be over. The insults of the foe are only for a moment. The LORD will soon turn their laughter into lamentation and our sighing into singing.

What if the great enemy of souls should for a while triumph over us, as he has triumphed over better men than we are; yet let us take heart, for we shall overcome him before long. We shall rise from our fall, for our God has not fallen, and He will lift us up. We shall not abide in darkness, although for the moment we sit in it; for our LORD is the fountain of light, and He will soon bring us a joyful day. Let us not despair or even doubt. One turn of the wheel, and the lowest will be at the top. Woe unto those who laugh now, for they shall mourn and weep when their boasting is turned into everlasting contempt. But blessed are all holy mourners, for they shall be divinely comforted.

Why Remain Captive

*That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity,
and have compassion upon thee,
and will return and gather thee from all the nations,
whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.
Deuteronomy 30:3*

GOD'S own people may sell themselves into captivity by sin. A very bitter fruit is this, of an exceeding bitter root. What a bondage it is when the child of God is sold under sin, held in chains by Satan, deprived of his liberty, robbed of his power in prayer and his delight in the LORD! Let us watch that we come not into such bondage; but if this has already happened to us, let us by no means despair.

But we cannot be held in slavery forever. The LORD Jesus has paid too high a price for our redemption to leave us in the enemy's hand. The way to freedom is, "*Return unto the LORD thy God.*" (Deuteronomy 30:2) Where we first found salvation we shall find it again. At the foot of Christ's cross, confessing sin, we shall find pardon and deliverance. Moreover, the LORD will have us obey His voice according to all that He has commanded us, and we must do this with all our heart and all our soul, and then our captivity shall end.

Often depression of spirit and great misery of soul are removed as soon as we quit our idols and bow ourselves in obedience before the living God. We need not be captives. We may return to Zion's citizenship, and that speedily. LORD, turn our captivity!

Cure For Envy

*Let not thine heart envy sinners:
but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.
For surely there is an end;
and thine expectation shall not be cut off.
Proverbs 23:17,18*

WHEN we see the wicked prosper we are apt to envy them. When we hear the noise of their mirth and our own spirit is heavy, we half think that they have the best of it. This is foolish and sinful. If we knew them better, and specially if we remembered their end, we should pity them.

The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshipping God and communing with Him all the day long, however long the day may seem. True religion lifts the soul into a higher region, where the judgment becomes more clear and the desires are more elevated. The more of heaven there is in our lives, the less of earth we shall covet. The fear of God casts out envy of men.

The deathblow of envy is a calm consideration of the future. The wealth and glory of the ungodly are a vain show. This pompous appearance flashes out for an hour and then is extinguished. What is the prosperous sinner the better for his prosperity when judgment overtakes him? As for the godly man, his end is peace and blessedness, and none can rob him of his joy; wherefore, let him forgo envy and be filled with sweet content.

Let No Evil Remain

*And there shall cleave nought
of the cursed thing to thine hand:
that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger;
and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee,
and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers;
Deuteronomy 13:17*

ISRAEL must conquer idolatrous cities and destroy all the spoil, regarding all that had been polluted by idolatry as an accursed thing to be burned with fire. Now, sin of all sorts must be treated by Christians in the same manner. We must not allow a single evil habit to remain. It is now war to the knife with sins of all sorts and sizes, whether of the body, the mind, or the spirit. We do not look upon this giving up of evil as deserving mercy, but we regard it as a fruit of the grace of God, which we would on no account miss.

When God causes us to have no mercy on our sins, then He has great mercy on us. When we are angry with evil, God is no more angry with us. When we multiply our efforts against iniquity, the LORD multiplies our blessings. The way of peace, of growth, of safety, of joy in Christ Jesus will be found by following out these words: *“There shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand.”* LORD, purify me this day. Compassion, prosperity, increase, and joy will surely be given to those who put away sin with solemn resolution.

Help Wanted

*They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us.
He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard;
and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*

Matthew 20:7

YES, there is work in Christ's vineyard for old bodies. It is the eleventh hour, and yet He will let us work. What grace is this! Surely every old man ought to jump at this invitation! After men are advanced in years nobody wants them as servants; they go from shop to shop, and employers look at their gray hairs and shake their heads. But Jesus will engage old people and give them good wages, too! This is mercy indeed. LORD, help the aged to enlist in Thy service without an hour's delay.

But will the LORD pay wages to worn-out old men? Do not doubt it. He says He will give you what is right if you will work in His field. He will surely give you grace here and glory hereafter. He will grant present comfort and future rest; strength equal to your day and a vision of glory when the night of death comes on. All these the LORD Jesus will as freely give to the aged convert as to one who enters His service in his youth.

Let me tell this to some unsaved old man or old woman and pray the LORD to bless it for Jesus' sake, Where can I find such persons? I will be on the lookout for them and kindly tell them the news.

Trust Means Joy

*For our heart shall rejoice in him,
because we have trusted in his holy name*

Psalm 33:21

THE root of faith produces the flower of heart-joy. We may not at the first rejoice, but it comes in due time. We trust the LORD when we are sad, and in due season He so answers our confidence that our faith turns to fruition, and we rejoice in the LORD. Doubt breeds distress, but trust means joy in the long run.

The assurance expressed by the psalmist in this verse is really a promise held out in the hands of holy confidence. Oh, for grace to appropriate it. If we do not rejoice at this moment, yet we shall do so, as surely as David's God is our God.

Let us meditate upon the LORD's holy name that we may trust Him the better and rejoice the more readily. He is in character holy, just, true, gracious, faithful, and unchanging. Is not such a God to be trusted? He is all wise, almighty, and everywhere present; can we not cheerfully rely upon Him? Yes, we will do so at once and do so without reserve. Jehovah-Jireh will provide; Jehovah-Shalom will send peace; Jehovah-Tsidkenu will justify; Jehovah-Shammah will be forever near; and in Jehovah-Nissi we will conquer every foe. They that know Thy name will trust Thee; and they that trust Thee will rejoice in Thee, O LORD.

Fear Only God

*So that we may boldly say,
The Lord is my helper,
and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
Hebrews 13:6*

BECAUSE God will never leave nor forsake us, we may well be content with such things as we have. Since the LORD is ours, we cannot be left without a friend, a treasure, and a dwelling place. This assurance may make us feel quite independent of men. Under such high patronage we do not feel tempted to cringe before our fellowmen and ask of them permission to call our lives our own; but what we say we boldly say and defy contradiction.

He who fears God has nothing else to fear. We should stand in such awe of the living LORD that all the threats that can be used by the proudest persecutor should have no more effect upon us than the whistling of the wind. Man in these days cannot do so much against us as he could when the apostle wrote the verse at the head of this page. Racks and stakes are out of fashion. Giant Pope cannot burn the pilgrims now. If the followers of false teachers try cruel mockery and scorn, we do not wonder at it, for the men of this world cannot love the heavenly seed. What then? We must bear the world's scorn. It breaks no bones. God helping us, let us be bold; and when the world rages, let it rage, but let us not fear it.

Wait For The Finals

*Gad, a troop shall overcome him:
but he shall overcome at the last.*

Genesis 49:19

SOME of us have been like the tribe of Gad. Our adversaries for a while were too many for us; they came upon us like a troop. Yes, and for the moment they overcame us; and they exulted greatly because of their temporary victory. Thus they only proved the first part of the family heritage to be really ours, for Christ's people, like Dan, shall have a troop overcoming them. This being overcome is very painful, and we should have despaired if we had not by faith believed the second line of our father's benediction, "*He shall overcome at the last.*" "All's well that ends well," said the world's poet; and he spoke the truth. A war is to be judged, not by first success or defeats, but by that which happens "*at the last.*" The LORD will give to truth and righteousness victory "*at the last*"; and, as Mr. Bunyan says, that means forever, for nothing can come after the last.

What we need is patient perseverance in well-doing, calm confidence in our glorious Captain. Christ, our LORD Jesus, would teach us His holy art of setting the face like a flint to go through with work or suffering till we can say, "It is finished." Hallelujah. Victory! Victory! We believe the promise. "*He shall overcome at the last.*"

Servants Honored

*Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof:
so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.*

Proverbs 27:18

HE who tends the fig tree has figs for his pains, and he who waits on a good master has honor as his reward. Truly the LORD Jesus is the very best of masters, and it is an honor to be allowed to do the least act for His sake. To serve some lords is to watch over a crab tree and eat the crabs as one's wages; but to serve my LORD Jesus is to keep a fig tree of the sweetest figs. His service is in itself delight, continuance in it is promotion, success in it is blessedness below, and the reward for it is glory above.

Our greatest honors will be gathered in that season when the figs will be ripe, even in the next world. Angels who are now our servitors will bear us home when our day's work is done. Heaven, where Jesus is, will be our honorable mansion, eternal bliss our honorable portion, and the LORD Himself our honorable companion. Who can imagine the full meaning of this promise: "*He that waiteth on his master shall be honored*"?

LORD, help me to wait upon my Master. Let me leave all idea of honor to the hour when Thou Thyself shalt honor me. May the Holy Spirit make me a lowly, patient worker and waiter!

Day Is At Hand

*And I will give him the morning star.
Revelation 2:28*

UNTIL the day break and the shadows flee away, what a blessing it is to see in Jesus "*the morning star*"! I remember when we read in the newspapers the idle tale that the star of Bethlehem had again appeared. On inquiry we found that it was only "the morning star"; but no great mistake had been made after all.

It is best to see Jesus as the sun; but when we cannot do so, the next best thing is to see Him as that star which prophesies the day and shows that the eternal light is near at hand. If I am not today all that I hope to be, yet I see Jesus, and that assures me that I shall one day be like Him. A sight of Jesus by faith is the pledge of beholding Him in His glory and being transformed into His image. If I have not at this hour all the light and joy I could desire, yet I shall have it; for as surely as I see the morning star I shall see the day. The morning star is never far from the sun.

Come, my soul, has the LORD given thee the morning star? Dost thou hold fast that truth, grace, hope, and love which the LORD has given thee? Then in this thou hast the dawn of coming glory. He that makes thee overcome evil, and persevere in righteousness, has therein given thee the morning star.

Surgery For Healing

*Come, and let us return unto the LORD:
for he hath torn, and he will heal us;
he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.*

Hosea 6:1

IT is the LORD's way to tear before He heals. This is the honest love of His heart and the sure surgery of His hand. He also bruises before He binds up, or else it would be uncertain work. The law comes before the gospel, the sense of need before the supply of it. Is the reader now under the convincing, crushing hand of the Spirit? Has he received the spirit of bondage again to fear? This is a salutary preliminary to real gospel healing and binding up.

Do not despair, dear heart, but come to the LORD with all thy jagged wounds, black bruises, and running sores. He alone can heal, and He delights to do it. It is our LORD's office to bind up the brokenhearted, and He is gloriously at home at it. Let us not linger but at once return unto the LORD from whom we have gone astray. Let us show Him our gaping wounds and beseech him to know His own work and complete it. Will a surgeon make an incision and then leave his patient to bleed to death? Will the LORD pull down our old house and then refuse to build us a better one? Dost Thou ever wantonly increase the misery of poor anxious souls? That be far from Thee, O LORD.

God's High Places

*Because he hath set his love upon me,
therefore will I deliver him:*

I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

Psalm 91:14

DOES the LORD say this to me? Yes, if I have known His name. Blessed be the LORD, I am no stranger to Him. I have tried Him, proved Him, and known Him, and therefore do I trust Him. I know His name as a sin-hating God, for by His Spirit's convincing power I have been taught that He will never wink at evil. But I also know Him as the sin-pardoning God in Christ Jesus, for He has forgiven me all trespasses. His name is faithfulness, and I know it, for He has never forsaken me though my troubles have multiplied upon me.

This knowledge is a gift of grace, and the LORD makes it to be the reason why He grants another grace-gift, namely, setting on high. This is grace upon grace. Observe that if we climb on high, the position may be dangerous; but if the LORD sets us there it is safe. He may raise us to great usefulness, to eminent experience, to success in service, to leadership among workers, to a father's place among the little ones. If He does not do this, He may set us on high by near fellowship, clear insight, holy triumph, and gracious anticipation of eternal glory. When God sets us on high, Satan himself cannot pull us down. Oh, that this may be our case all through this day!

We Receive As We Give

*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Matthew 5:7*

IT is not meet that the man who will not forgive should be forgiven, nor shall he who will not give to the poor have his own wants relieved. God will measure to us with our own bushels, and those who have been hard masters and hard creditors will find that the LORD will deal hardly with them. *“He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.”* (James 2:13)

This day let us try to give and to forgive. Let us mind the two bears — bear and forbear. Let us be kind, gentle, and tender. Let us not put harsh constructions upon men’s conduct, nor drive hard bargains, nor pick foolish quarrels, nor be difficult to please. Surely we wish to be blessed, and we also want to obtain mercy: let us be merciful, that we may have mercy. Let us fulfill the condition, that we may earn the beatitude. Is it not a pleasant duty to be kind? Is there not much more sweetness in it than in being angry and ungenerous? Why, there is a blessedness in the thing itself! Moreover, the obtaining of mercy is a rich reward. What but sovereign grace could suggest such a promise as this? We are merciful to our fellow mortal in pence, and the LORD forgives us “all the debt.”

No Need To Stint

*Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way,
he shall fall himself into his own pit:*

but the upright shall have good things in possession.

Proverbs 28:10

THE book of Proverbs is also a book of promises. Promises ought to be proverbs among the people of God. This is a very remarkable one. We are accustomed to think of our good things as in reversion, but here we are told that we shall have them in possession. Not all the malice and cunning of our enemies can work our destruction: they shall fall into the pit which they have digged. Our inheritance is so entailed upon us that we shall not be kept out of it, nor so turned out of the way as to miss it. But what have we now? We have a quiet conscience through the precious blood of Jesus. We have the love of God set upon us beyond all change. We have power with God in prayer in all time of need. We have the providence of God to watch over us, the angels of God to minister to us, and, above all, the Spirit of God to dwell in us. In fact, all things are ours. *“Whether ... things present, or things to come: all are yours.”* (1 Corinthians 3:22) Jesus is ours. Yea, the divine Trinity in unity is ours. Hallelujah. Let us not pine and whine and stint and slave, since we have good things in possession. Let us live on our God and rejoice in Him all the day. Help us, O Holy Ghost!

Losses Overcome

*And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,
the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm,
my great army which I sent among you.*

Joel 2:25

YES, those wasted years over which we sigh shall be restored to us. God can give us such plentiful grace that we shall crowd into the remainder of our days as much of service as will be some recompense for those years of unregeneracy over which we mourn in humble penitence. The locusts of backsliding, worldliness, lukewarmness, are now viewed by us as a terrible plague. Oh, that they had never come near us! The LORD in mercy has now taken them away, and we are full of zeal to serve Him. Blessed be His name, we can raise such harvests of spiritual graces as shall make our former barrenness to disappear. Through rich grace we can turn to account our bitter experience and use it to warn others. We can become the more rooted in humility, childlike dependence, and penitent spirituality by reason of our former shortcomings. If we are the more watchful, zealous, and tender, we shall gain by our lamentable losses. The wasted years, by a miracle of love, can be restored. Does it seem too great a boon? Let us believe for it and live for it, and we may yet realize it, even as Peter became all the more useful a man after his presumption was cured by his discovered weakness. LORD, aid us by Thy grace.

We May Speak For God

*Therefore thus saith the LORD,
If thou return, then will I bring thee again,
and thou shalt stand before me:
and if thou take forth the precious from the vile,
thou shalt be as my mouth:
let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.
Jeremiah 15:19*

POOOR Jeremiah! Yet why do we say so? The weeping prophet was one of the choicest servants of God and honored by Him above many. He was hated for speaking the truth. The word which was so sweet to him was bitter to his hearers, yet he was accepted of his LORD. He was commanded to abide in his faithfulness, and then the LORD would continue to speak through him. He was to deal boldly and truthfully with men and perform the LORD's winnowing work upon the professors of his day, and then the LORD gave him this word: "*Thou shalt be as my mouth.*"

What an honor! Should not every preacher, yea, every believer, covet it? For God to speak by us, what a marvel! We shall speak sure, pure truth; and we shall speak it with power. Our word shall not return void; it shall be a blessing to those who receive it, and those who refuse it shall do so at their peril. Our lips shall feed many. We shall arouse the sleeping and call the dead to life.

O dear reader, pray that it may be so with all the sent servants of our LORD.

We Dare Not Doubt

*I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight:
I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
and cut in sunder the bars of iron:*

Isaiah 45:2

THIS was for Cyrus; but it is evermore the heritage of all the LORD's own spiritual servants. Only let us go forward by faith, and our way will be cleared for us. Crooks and turns of human craft and satanic subtlety shall be straightened for us; we shall not need to track their devious windings. The gates of brass shall be broken, and the iron bars which fastened them shall be cut asunder. We shall not need the battering ram nor the crowbar: the LORD Himself will do the impossible for us, and the unexpected shall be a fact.

Let us not sit down in coward fear. Let us press onward in the path of duty, for the LORD hath said it: "*I will go before thee.*" Ours not to reason why; ours but to dare and dash forward. It is the LORD's work, and He will enable us to do it: all impediments must yield before Him. Hath He not said, "*I will break in pieces the gates of brass*"! What can hinder His purpose or balk His decrees? Those who serve God have infinite resources. The way is clear to faith though barred to human strength. When Jehovah says, "*I will,*" as He does twice in this promise, we dare not doubt.

Rain Without Clouds? Never!

*If the clouds be full of rain,
they empty themselves upon the earth:
and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north,
in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.
Ecclesiastes 11:3*

WHY, then, do we dread the clouds which now darken our sky? True, for a while they hide the sun, but the sun is not quenched; He will shine out again before long. Meanwhile those black clouds are filled with rain; and the blacker they are, the more likely they are to yield plentiful showers. How can we have rain without clouds?

Our troubles have always brought us blessings, and they always will. They are the black chariots of bright grace. These clouds will empty themselves before long, and every tender herb will be the gladder for the shower. Our God may drench us with grief, but He will not drown us with wrath; nay, He will refresh us with mercy. Our LORD's love letters often come to us in black-edged envelopes. His wagons rumble, but they are loaded with benefits. His rod blossoms with sweet flowers and nourishing fruits. Let us not worry about the clouds but sing because May flowers are brought to us through the April clouds and showers.

O LORD, the clouds are the dust of Thy feet! How near Thou art in the cloudy and dark day! Love beholds Thee and is glad. Faith sees the clouds emptying themselves and making the little hills rejoice on every side.

Song Of Confidence

*Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
thou wilt revive me:
thou shalt stretch forth thine hand
against the wrath of mine enemies,
and thy right hand shall save me.
Psalm 138:7*

WRETCHED walking in the midst of trouble. Nay, blessed walking, since there is a special promise for it. Give me a promise, and what is the trouble? What doth my LORD teach me here to say? Why this — “*Thou wilt revive me.*” I shall have more life, more energy, more faith. Is it not often so, that trouble revives us, like a breath of cold air when one is ready to faint?

How angry are my enemies and especially the archenemy! Shall I stretch forth my hand and fight my foes! No, my hand is better employed in doing service for my LORD. Besides, there is no need, for my God will use His far-reaching arm, and He will deal with them far better than I could if I were to try. “*Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the LORD.*” (Romans 12:19) He will with His own right hand of power and wisdom save me, and what more can I desire?

Come, my heart, talk this promise over to thyself till thou canst use it as the song of thy confidence, the solace of thy holiness. Pray to be revived thyself and leave the rest with the LORD, who performeth all things for thee.

Full Reliance On God

*For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth;
the poor also, and him that hath no helper.*

Psalm 72:12

THE needy cries; what else can he do? His cry is heard of God; what else need he do? Let the needy reader take to crying at once, for this will be his wisdom. Do not cry in the ears of friends, for even if they can help you it is only because the LORD enables them. The nearest way is to go straight to God and let your cry come up before Him. Straightforward makes the best runner: run to the LORD and not to secondary causes.

“Alas!” you cry, “I have no friend or helper.” So much the better; you can rely upon God in both capacities — as without supplies and without helpers. Make your double need your double plea. Even for temporal mercies you may wait upon God, for He careth for His children in these temporary concerns. As for spiritual necessities, which are the heaviest of all, the LORD will hear your cry and will deliver you and supply you.

O poor friend, try your rich God. O helpless one, lean on His help. He has never failed me, and I am sure He will never fail you. Come as a beggar, and God will not refuse you help. Come with no plea but His grace. Jesus is King; will He let you perish of wants? What! Did you forget this!

One A Majority!

*One man of you shall chase a thousand:
for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you,
as he hath promised you.*

Joshua 23:10

WHY count heads? One man with God is a majority though there be a thousand on the other side. Sometimes our helpers may be too many for God to work with them, as was the case with Gideon, who could do nothing till he had increased his forces by thinning out their numbers. But the LORD's hosts are never too few. When God would found a nation, He called Abram alone and blessed him. When He would vanquish proud Pharaoh, He used no armies, but only Moses and Aaron. The "one-man ministry," as certain wise men call it, has been far more used of the LORD than trained bands with their officers. Did all the Israelites together slay so many as Samson alone? Saul and his hosts slew their thousands but David his ten thousands.

The LORD can give the enemy long odds and yet vanquish him. If we have faith, we have God with us, and what are multitudes of men? One shepherd's dog can drive before him a flock of sheep. If the LORD sent thee, O my brother, His strength will accomplish His divine purpose. Wherefore, rely on the promise, and be very courageous.

God's Treasury

*The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure,
the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season,
and to bless all the work of thine hand:
and thou shalt lend unto many nations,
and thou shalt not borrow.*

Deuteronomy 28:12

THIS refers first to the rain. The LORD will give this in its season. Rain is the emblem of all those celestial refreshings which the LORD is ready to bestow upon His people. Oh, for a copious shower to refresh the LORD's heritage!

We seem to think that God's treasury can only be opened by a great prophet like Elijah, but it is not so, for this promise is to all the faithful in Israel, and, indeed, to each one of them. O believing friend, "*the LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure.*" Thou, too, mayest see heaven opened and thrust in thy hand and take out thy portion, yea, and a portion for all thy brethren round about thee. Ask what thou wilt, and thou shalt not be denied if thou abidest in Christ and His words abide in thee.

As yet thou has not known all thy LORD's treasures, but He shall open them up to thine understanding. Certainly thou hast not yet enjoyed the fullness of His covenant riches, but He will direct thine heart into His love and reveal Jesus in thee. Only the LORD Himself can do this for thee; but here is His promise, and if thou wilt hearken diligently unto His voice and obey His will, His riches in glory by Christ Jesus shall be thine.

Commonest Things Blessed

*And ye shall serve the LORD your God,
and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water;
and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.*

Exodus 23:25

WHAT a promise is this! To serve God is in itself a high delight. But what an added privilege to have the blessing of the LORD resting upon us in all things! Our commonest things become blessed when we ourselves are consecrated to the LORD. Our LORD Jesus took bread and blessed it; behold, we also eat of blessed bread. Jesus blessed water and made it wine: the water which we drink is far better to us than any of the wine with which men make merry; every drop has a benediction in it. The divine blessing is on the man of God in everything, and it shall abide with him at every time.

What if we have only bread and water! Yet it is blessed bread and water. Bread and water we shall have. That is implied, for it must be there for God to bless it. “... *bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*” (Isaiah 33:16) With God at our table, we not only ask a blessing, but we have one. It is not only at the altar but at the table that He blesses us. He serves those well who serve Him well. This table blessing is not of debt but of grace. Indeed, there is a trebled grace; He grants us grace to serve Him, by His grace feeds us with bread, and then in His grace blesses it.

As The Life — So The Fruit

*For if these things be in you, and abound,
they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful
in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 1:8

IF we desire to glorify our LORD by fruitfulness, we must have certain things within us; for nothing can come out of us which is not first of all within us. We must begin with faith, which is the groundwork of all the virtues; and then diligently add to it virtue, knowledge, temperance, and patience. With these we must have godliness and brotherly love. All these put together will most assuredly cause us to produce, as our life fruit, the clusters of usefulness, and we shall not be mere idle knowers but real doers of the Word. These holy things must not only be in us, but abound, or we shall be barren. Fruit is the overflow of life, and we must be full before we can flow over.

We have noticed men of considerable parts and opportunities who have never succeeded in doing real good in the conversion of souls; and after close observation we have concluded that they lacked certain graces which are absolutely essential to fruit bearing. For real usefulness, graces are better than gifts. As the man is, so is his work. If we would *do* better, we must *be* better. Let the text be a gentle hint to unfruitful professors *and to myself also*.

Remind God Of His Promise

*And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good,
and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,
which cannot be numbered for multitude.*

Genesis 32:12

THIS is the sure way of prevailing with the LORD in prayer. We may humbly remind Him of what He has said. Our faithful God will never run back from His word, nor will He leave it unfulfilled; yet He loves to be enquired of by His people and put in mind of His promise. This is refreshing to their memories, reviving to their faith, and renewing to their hope. God's Word is given, not for His sake, but for ours. His purposes are settled, and He needs nothing to bind Him to His design of doing His people good; but He gives the promise for our strengthening and comfort. Hence He wishes us to plead it and say to Him, "*Thou saidst.*"

"*I will surely do thee good*" is just the essence of all the LORD's gracious sayings. Lay a special stress on the word "surely." He will do us good, real good, tasting good, only good, every good. He will make us good, and this is to do us good in the very highest degree. He will treat us as He does his saints while we are here, and that is good. He will soon take us to be with Jesus and all His chosen, and that is supremely good. With this promise in our hearts we need not fear angry Esau or anyone else. If the LORD will do us good, who can do us hurt?

Fishers Follow Him

*And Jesus said unto them,
Come ye after me,
and I will make you to become fishers of men.
Mark 1:17*

ONLY by coming after Jesus can we obtain our heart's desire and be really useful to our fellow men. Oh, how we long to be successful fishers for Jesus! We would sacrifice our lives to win souls. But we are tempted to try methods which Jesus would never have tried. Shall we yield to this suggestion of the enemy? If so, we may splash the water, but we shall never take the fish. We must follow after Jesus if we would succeed. Sensational methods, entertainment, and so forth — are these coming after Jesus? Can we imagine the LORD Jesus drawing a congregation by such means as are now commonly used? What is the result of such expedients? The result is nothing which Jesus will count up at the last great day.

We must keep to our preaching as our Master did, for by this means souls are saved. We must preach our LORD's doctrine and proclaim a full and free gospel, for this is the net in which souls are taken, We must preach with His gentleness, boldness, and love, for this is the secret of success with human hearts. We must work under divine anointing, depending upon the sacred Spirit. Thus, coming after Jesus, and not running before Him, not aside from Him, we shall be fishers of men.

Holy Foresight

*Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said:
nevertheless I say unto you,
Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man
sitting on the right hand of power,
and coming in the clouds of heaven.
Matthew 26:64*

AH, LORD, Thou wast in Thy lowest state when before Thy persecutors Thou wast made to stand like a criminal! Yet the eyes of Thy faith could see beyond Thy present humiliation into Thy future glory. What words are these, "*Nevertheless — hereafter!*" I would imitate Thy holy foresight, and in the midst of poverty, or sickness, or slander, I also would say, "*Nevertheless — hereafter.*" Instead of weakness, Thou hast all power; instead of shame, all glory; instead of derision, all worship. Thy cross has not dimmed the splendor of Thy crown, neither has the spittle marred the beauty of Thy face. Say, rather, Thou are the more exalted and honored because of Thy sufferings.

So, LORD, I also would take courage from the "*hereafter.*" I would forget the present tribulation in the future triumph. Help thou me by directing me into Thy Father's love and into Thine own patience, so that when I am derided for Thy name I may not be staggered but think more and more of the hereafter, and, therefore, all the less of today. I shall be with Thee soon and behold Thy glory. Wherefore, I am not ashamed but say in my inmost soul, "*Nevertheless — hereafter.*"

Be Of Good Cheer

*These things I have spoken unto you,
that in me ye might have peace.*

*In the world ye shall have tribulation:
but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

John 16:33

MY LORD's words are true as to the tribulation. I have my share of it beyond all doubt. The flail is not hung up out of the way, nor can I hope that it will be laid aside so long as I lie upon the threshing floor. How can I look to be at home in the enemy's country, joyful while in exile, or comfortable in a wilderness? This is not my rest. This is the place of the furnace, and the forge, and the hammer. My experience tallies with my LORD's words.

I note how He bids me "*be of good cheer.*" Alas! I am far too apt to be downcast. My spirit soon sinks when I am sorely tried. But I must not give way to this feeling. When my LORD bids me cheer up I must not dare to be cast down.

What is the argument which He uses to encourage me? Why, it is His own victory. He says, "*I have overcome the world.*" His battle was much more severe than mine. I have not yet resisted unto blood. Why do I despair of overcoming? See, my soul, the enemy has been once overcome. I fight with a beaten foe. O world, Jesus has already vanquished thee; and in me, by His grace, He will overcome thee again. Therefore am I of good cheer and sing unto my conquering LORD.

God's Promise Keeps

*Cast thy bread upon the waters:
for thou shalt find it after many days.*

Ecclesiastes 11:1

WE must not expect to see an immediate reward for all the good we do; nor must we always confine our efforts to places and persons which seem likely to yield us a recompense for our labors. The Egyptian casts his seed upon the waters of the Nile, where it might seem a sheer waste of corn. But in due time the flood subsides, the rice or other grain sinks into the fertile mud, and rapidly a harvest is produced. Let us today do good to the unthankful and the evil. Let us teach the careless and the obstinate. Unlikely waters may cover hopeful soil. Nowhere shall our labor be in vain in the LORD.

It is ours to cast our bread upon the waters; it remains with God to fulfill the promise "*Thou shalt find it.*" He will not let His promise fail. His good word which we have spoken shall live, shall be found, shall be found by us. Perhaps not just yet, but some day we shall reap what we have sown. We must exercise our patience, or perhaps the LORD may exercise it. "*After many days,*" says the Scripture, and in many instances those days run into months and years, and yet the Word stands true. God's promise will keep; let us mind that we keep the precept and keep it this day.

Immediate Freedom

*For now will I break his yoke from off thee,
and will burst thy bonds in sunder.*

Nahum 1:13

THE Assyrian was allowed for a season to oppress the LORD's people, but there came a time for his power to be broken. So, many a heart is held in bondage by Satan and frets sorely under the yoke. Oh, that to such prisoners of hope the word of the LORD may come at once, according to the text, "*Now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder!*"

See! The LORD promises a present deliverance. "*Now will I break his yoke from off thee.*" Believe for immediate freedom, and according to thy faith so shall it be unto thee at this very hour. When God saith "now," let no man say "tomorrow."

See how complete the rescue is to be; for the yoke is not to be removed but broken; and the bonds are not to be untied but burst asunder. Here is a display of divine force which guarantees that the oppressor shall not return. His yoke is broken, we cannot again be bowed down by its weight. His bonds, are burst asunder, they can no longer hold us. Oh, to believe in Jesus for complete and everlasting emancipation! "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" (John 8:36) Come, LORD, and set free Thy captives, according to Thy Word.

Surefootedness

*The LORD God is my strength,
and he will make my feet like hinds' feet,
and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.
To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.
Habakkuk 3:19*

THIS confidence of the man of God is tantamount to a promise, for that which faith is persuaded of is the purpose of God. The prophet had to traverse the deep places of poverty and famine, but he went down hill without slipping, for the LORD gave him *standing*. By and by he was called to the high places of the hills of conflict; and he was no more afraid to go up than to go down.

See! The LORD lent him *strength*. Nay, Jehovah Himself was his strength. Think of that: the almighty God Himself becomes our strength!

Note that the LORD also gave him *surefootedness*. The hinds leap over rock and crag, never missing their footholds. Our LORD will give us grace to follow the most difficult paths of duty without a stumble. He can fit our foot for the crags so that we shall be at home where apart from God we should perish.

One of these days we shall be called to higher places still. Up yonder we shall climb, even to the mount of God, the high places where the shining ones are gathered. Oh, what feet are the feet of faith, by which, following the hind of the morning, we shall ascend into the hill of the LORD!

Exceedingly Precious

*And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts,
in that day when I make up my jewels;
and I will spare them,
as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.
Malachi 3:17*

A DAY is coming in which the crown jewels of our great King shall be counted, that it may be seen whether they answer to the inventory which His Father gave Him. My soul, wilt thou be among the precious things of Jesus? Thou art precious to Him if He is precious to thee, and thou shalt be His “*in that day,*” if He is thine in this day.

In the days of Malachi, the chosen of the LORD were accustomed so to converse with each other that their God Himself listened to their talk. He liked it so well that He took notes of it; yes, and made a book of it, which He lodged in His record office. Pleased with their conversation, He was also pleased with them. Pause, my soul, and ask thyself: If Jesus were to listen to thy talk would He be pleased with it? Is it to His glory and to the edification of the brotherhood? Say, my soul, and be sure thou sayest the truth.

But what will the honor be for us poor creatures to be reckoned by the LORD to be His crown jewels! This honor have all the saints. Jesus not only says, “They are mine,” but, “*They shall be mine.*” He bought us, sought us, brought us in, and has so far wrought us to His image that we shall be fought for by Him with all His might.

Is There A Difference?

*But against any of the children of Israel
shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast:
that ye may know how that the LORD doth
put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.
Exodus 11:7*

WHAT! Has God power over the tongues of dogs! Can he keep ours from barking? Yes, it is even so. He can prevent an Egyptian dog from worrying one of the lambs of Israel's flock. Doth God silence dogs, and doggish ones among men, and the great dog at hell's gate? Then let us move on our way without fear.

If He lets dogs move their tongues, yet He can stop their teeth. They may make a dreadful noise and still do us no real harm. Yet, how sweet is quiet! How delightful to move about among enemies and perceive that God maketh them to be at peace with us! Like Daniel in the den of lions we are unhurt amid destroyers.

Oh, that today this word of the LORD to Israel might be true to me! Does the dog worry me? I will tell my LORD about him. LORD, he does not care for my pleadings; do Thou speak the word of power, and he must lie down. Give me peace, O my God, and let me see Thy hand so distinctly in it that I may most clearly perceive the difference which Thy grace has made between me and the ungodly!

He Always Listens

*The LORD hath heard my supplication;
the LORD will receive my prayer.*

Psalm 6:9

THE experience here recorded is mine. I can set to my seal that God is true. In very wonderful ways He has answered the prayers of His servant many and many a time. Yes, and He is hearing my present supplication, and He is not turning away His ear from me. Blessed be His holy name!

What then? Why, for certain the promise which lies sleeping in the psalmist's believing confidence is also mine. Let me grasp it by the hand of faith: "*The LORD will receive my prayer.*" He will accept it, think of it, and grant it in the way and time which His loving wisdom judges to be best. I bring my poor prayer in my hand to the great King, and He gives me audience and graciously receives my petition. My enemies will not listen to me, but my LORD will. They ridicule my tearful prayers, but my LORD does not; He receives my prayer into His ear and His heart.

What a reception this is for a poor sinner! We receive Jesus, and then the LORD receives us and our prayers for His Son's sake. Blessed be that dear name which franks our prayers so that they freely pass even within the golden gates. LORD, teach me to pray, since Thou hearest my prayers.

The Safest Place

*And I give unto them eternal life;
and they shall never perish,
neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
John 10:28*

WE believe in the eternal security of the saints. First, because they are Christ's, and He will never lose the sheep which He has bought with His blood and received of His Father.

Next, because He gives them eternal life, and if it be eternal, well then, it is eternal, and there can be no end to hell, and heaven, and God. If spiritual life can die out, it is manifestly not eternal life, and that effectually shuts out the possibility of an end.

Observe, further, that the LORD expressly says, "*They shall never perish.*" As long as words have a meaning, this secures believers from perishing. The most obstinate unbelief cannot force this meaning out of this sentence.

Then, to make the matter complete, He declares that His people are in His hand, and He defies all their enemies to pluck them out of it. Surely it is a thing impossible even for the fiend of hell. We must be safe in the grasp of an almighty Savior. Be it ours to dismiss carnal fear as well as carnal confidence and rest peacefully in the hollow of the Redeemer's hand.

Wisdom For The Asking

*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,
that giveth to all men liberally,
and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

James 1:5

“IF *any of you lack wisdom.*” here is no “if” in the matter, for I am sure I lack it. What do I know? How can I guide my own way? How can I direct others? LORD, I am a mass of folly, and wisdom I have none.

Thou sayest, “*Let him ask of God.*” LORD, I now ask. Here at Thy footstool I ask to be furnished with heavenly wisdom for this day’s perplexities, ay, and for this day’s simplicities; for I know I may do very stupid things, even in plain matters, unless Thou dost keep me out of mischief.

I thank Thee that all I have to do is to ask. What grace is this on Thy part, that I have only to pray in faith and Thou wilt give me wisdom’. Thou dost here promise me a liberal education, and that, too, without an angry tutor or a scolding usher. This, too, Thou wilt bestow without a fee — bestow it on a fool who lacks wisdom. O LORD, I thank Thee for that positive and expressive word “*It shall be given him.*” I believe it. Thou wilt this day make Thy babe to know the hidden wisdom which the carnally prudent never learn. Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory.

A Trustworthy Name

*I will also leave in the midst of thee
an afflicted and poor people,
and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.
Zephaniah 3:12*

WHEN true religion is ready to die out among the wealthy it finds a home among the poor of this world, rich in faith. The LORD has even now His faithful remnant. Am I one of them?

Perhaps it is because men are afflicted and poor that they learn to trust in the name of the LORD. He that hath no money must try what he can do on trust. He whose own name is good for nothing in his own esteem, acts wisely to rest in another name, even that best of names, the name of Jehovah. God wilt always have a trusting people, and these will be an afflicted and poor people. Little as the world thinks of them, their being left in the midst of a nation is the channel of untold blessings to it. Here we have the conserving salt which keeps in check the corruption which is in the world through lust.

Again the question comes home to each one of us. Am I one of them? Am I afflicted by the sin within me and around me? Am I poor in spirit, poor spiritually in my own judgment? Do I trust in the LORD? This is the main business. Jesus reveals the name, the character, the person of God; am I trusting in Him? If so, I am left in this world for a purpose. LORD, help me to fulfill it.

A Shepherd Secures Them

*The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies;
neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for
they shall feed and lie down,
and none shall make them afraid.*

Zephaniah 3:13

YESTERDAY we thought of the afflicted and poor people whom the LORD left to be a living seed in a dead world. The prophet says of such that they shall not work iniquity nor speak lies. So that while they had neither rank nor riches to guard them, they were also quite unable to use those weapons in which the wicked place so much reliance: they could neither defend themselves by sin nor by subtlety.

What then? Would they be destroyed? By no means! They should both feed and rest and be not merely free from danger but even quiet from fear of evil. Sheep are very feeble creatures, and wolves are terrible enemies; yet at this hour sheep are more numerous than wolves, and the cause of the sheep is always winning, while the cause of the wolves is always declining. One day flocks of sheep will cover the plains, and not a wolf will be left. The fact is that sheep have a Shepherd, and this gives them provender, protection, and peace. “None” — which means not one, whether in human or diabolical form — “*shall make them afraid.*” Who shall terrify the LORD’s Rock when He is near? We lie down in green pastures, for Jesus Himself is food and rest to our souls.

No Cause To Blush

*Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed:
neither be thou confounded;
for thou shalt not be put to shame:
for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
and shalt not remember the reproach
of thy widowhood any more.*

Isaiah 54:4

WE shall not be ashamed of our *faith*. Carping critics may assail the Scriptures upon which we ground our belief, but every year the LORD will make it more and more clear that in His Book there is no error, no excess, and no omission. It is no discredit to be a simple believer; the faith which looks alone to Jesus is a crown of honor on any man's head and better than a star on his breast.

We shall not be ashamed of our *hope*. It shall be even as the LORD has said. We shall be fed, led, blest, and rested. Our LORD will come, and then the days of our mourning shall be ended. How we shall glory in the LORD who first gave us lively hope and then gave us that which we hoped for!

We shall not be ashamed of our *love*. Jesus is to us the altogether lovely, and never, never, shall we have to blush because we have yielded our hearts to Him. The sight of our glorious Well-beloved will justify the most enthusiastic attachment to Him. None will blame the martyrs for dying for Him. When the enemies of Christ are clothed with everlasting contempt, the lovers of Jesus shall find themselves honored by all holy beings, because they chose the reproach of Christ rather than the treasures of Egypt.

Dwelling Safely Apart

*Israel then shall dwell in safety alone:
the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine;
also his heavens shall drop down dew.*

Deuteronomy 33:28

THE more we dwell alone, the more safe shall we be. God would have His people separate from sinners. His call to them is, “*Come out from among them.*” (2 Corinthians 6:17) A worldly Christian is spiritually diseased. Those who compromise with Christ’s enemies may be reckoned with them.

Our safety lies, not in making terms with the enemy, but in dwelling alone with our Best Friend. If we do this, we shall dwell in safety despite the sarcasms, the slanders, and the sneers of the world. We shall be safe from the baleful influence of its unbelief, its pride, its vanity, its filthiness.

God also will make us dwell in safety alone in that day when sin shall be visited on the nations by wars and famines. The LORD brought Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, but Abram stopped halfway. He had no blessing till, having set out to go to the land of Canaan, to the land of Canaan he came. He was safe alone even in the midst of foes. Lot was not safe in Sodom though in a circle of friends. Our safety is in dwelling apart with God.

Divine Cultivation

*I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment:
lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

Isaiah 27:3

WHEN the LORD Himself speaks in His own proper person rather than through a prophet, the word has a peculiar weight to believing minds. It is Jehovah Himself who is the keeper of His own vineyard; He does not trust it to any other, but He makes it His own personal care. Are they not well kept whom God Himself keeps?

We are to receive gracious watering, not only every day and every hour but “*every moment.*” How we ought to grow! How fresh and fruitful every plant should be! What rich clusters the vines should bear!

But disturbers come; little foxes and the boar. Therefore, the LORD Himself is our Guardian, and that at all hours, both “*night and day.*” What, then, can harm us? Why are we afraid! He tends, He waters, He guards; what more do we need?

Twice in this verse the LORD says, “*I will.*” What truth, what power, what love, what immutability we find in the great “*I will*” of Jehovah! Who can resist His will? If He says “*I will,*” what room is there for doubt? With an “*I will*” of God we can face all the hosts of sin, death, and hell. O LORD, since Thou sayest, “*I will keep thee,*” I reply, “I will praise Thee!”

He Constantly Abides

*For the LORD will not forsake his people
for his great name's sake:*

because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

1 Samuel 12:22

GOD'S choice of His people is the reason for His abiding by them and not forsaking them. He chose them for His love, and He loves them for His choice. His own good pleasure is the source of their election, and His election is the reason for the continuance of His pleasure in them. It would dishonor His great name for Him to forsake them, since it would either show that He made an error in His choice or that He was fickle in His love. God's love has this glory, that it never changes, and this glory He will never tarnish.

By all the memories of the LORD's former lovingkindnesses let us rest assured that He will not forsake us. He who has gone so far as to make us His people will not undo the creation of His grace. He has not wrought such wonders for us that He might leave us after all. His Son Jesus has died for us, and we may be sure that He has not died in vain. Can He forsake those for whom He shed His blood? Because He has hitherto taken pleasure in choosing and in saving us, it will be His pleasure still to bless us. Our LORD Jesus is no changeable lover. Having loved His own, He loves them to the end.

Home Blessings Extended

*The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion:
and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem
all the days of thy life.*

Psalm 128:5

THIS is a promise to the God-fearing man who walks in the ways of holiness with earnest heed. He shall have domestic blessedness; his wife and children shall be a source of great home happiness. But then as a member of the church he desires to see the cause prosper, for he is as much concerned for the LORD's house as for his own. When the LORD builds our house, it is but fitting that we should desire to see the LORD's house builded. Our goods are not truly good unless we promote by them the good of the LORD's chosen church.

Yes, you shall get a blessing when you go up to the assemblies of Zion; you shall be instructed, enlivened, and comforted, where prayer and praise ascend and testimony is borne to the great Sacrifice. *"The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion."*

Nor shall you alone be profited; the church itself shall prosper; believers shall be multiplied, and their holy work shall be crowned with success. Certain gracious men have this promise fulfilled to them as long as they live. Alas! when they die the cause often flags. Let us be among those who bring good things to Jerusalem all their days. LORD, of Thy mercy make us such! Amen.

Possess, Not Only Profess

*For whosoever hath, to him shall be given,
and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not,
from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*

Matthew 13:12

WHEN the LORD has given to a man much grace, He will give him more. A little faith is a nest egg; more faith will come to it. But then it must not be seeming faith, but real and true. What a necessity is laid upon us to make sure work in religion and not to profess much, and possess nothing! For one of these days the very profession will be taken from us, if that be all we have. The threatening is as true as the promise.

Blessed be the LORD, it is His way when He has once made a beginning to go on bestowing the graces of His Spirit, till He who had but little, and yet truly had that little, is made to have abundance. Oh, for that abundance! Abundance of grace is a thing to be coveted. It would be well to know much but better to love much. It would be delightful to have abundance of skill to serve God but better still to have abundance of faith to trust in the LORD for skill and everything.

LORD, since Thou hast given me a sense of sin, deepen my hatred of evil. Since Thou hast caused me to trust Jesus, raise my faith to full assurance. Since Thou hast made me to love Thee, cause me to be carried away with vehement affection for Thee!

Our Field Of Battle

*For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you,
to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.*

Deuteronomy 20:4

WE have no enemies but the enemies of God. Our fights are not against men but against spiritual wickednesses. We war with the devil and the blasphemy and error and despair which he brings into the field of battle. We fight with all the armies of sin — impurity, drunkenness, oppression, infidelity, and ungodliness. With these we contend earnestly, but not with sword or spear; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Jehovah, our God, abhors everything which is evil, and, therefore, He goeth with us to fight for us in this crusade. He will save us, and He will give us grace to war a good warfare and win the victory. We may depend upon it that if we are on God's side God is on our side. With such an august ally the conflict is never in the least degree doubtful. It is not that truth is mighty and must prevail but that might lies with the Father who is almighty, with Jesus who has all power in heaven and in earth, and with the Holy Spirit who worketh His will among men.

Soldiers of Christ, gird on your armor. Strike home in the name of the God of holiness, and by faith grasp His salvation. Let not this day pass without striking a blow for Jesus and holiness.

God Himself Shall Work

*Now will I rise, saith the LORD;
now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.
Isaiah 33:10*

WHEN the spoilers had made the land as waste as if devoured by locusts, and the warriors who had defended the country sat down and wept like women, then the LORD came to the rescue. When travellers ceased from the roads to Zion, and Bashan and Carmel were as vineyards from which the fruit has failed, then the LORD arose. God is exalted in the midst of an afflicted people, for they seek His face and trust Him. He is still more exalted when in answer to their cries He lifts up Himself to deliver them and overthrow their enemies.

Is it a day of sorrow with us? Let us expect to see the LORD glorified in our deliverance. Are we drawn out in fervent prayer? Do we cry day and night unto Him? Then the set time for His grace is near. God will lift up Himself at the right season. He will arise when it will be most for the display of His glory. We wish for His glory more than we long for our own deliverance. Let the LORD be exalted, and our chief desire is obtained.

LORD, help us in such a way that we may see that Thou Thyself art working. May we magnify Thee in our inmost souls. Make all around us to see how good and great a God Thou art.

A Sound Heart

*Let my heart be sound in thy statutes;
that I be not ashamed.*

Psalm 119:80

WE may regard this inspired prayer as containing within itself the assurance that those who keep close to the Word of God shall never have cause to be ashamed of doing so.

See, the prayer is for soundness of heart. A sound creed is good, a sound judgment concerning it is better, but a sound heart toward the truth is best of all. We must love the truth, feel the truth, and obey the truth, otherwise we are not truly sound in God's statutes. Are there many in these evil days who are sound? Oh, that the writer and the reader may be two of this sort!

Many will be ashamed in the last great day, when all disputes will be decided. Then they will see the folly of their inventions and be filled with remorse because of their proud infidelity and willful defiance of the LORD; but he who believed what the LORD taught and did what the LORD commanded will stand forth justified in what he did. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun. Men much slandered and abused shall find their shame turned into glory in that day.

Let us pray the prayer of our text, and we may be sure that its promise will be fulfilled to us. If the LORD makes us sound, He will keep us safe.

The LORD Our Companion

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

SWEET are these words in describing a deathbed assurance. How many have repeated them in their last hours with intense delight!

But the verse is equally applicable to agonies of spirit in the midst of life. Some of us, like Paul, die daily through a tendency to gloom of soul. Bunyan puts the Valley of the Shadow of Death far earlier in the pilgrimage than the river which rolls at the foot of the celestial hills. We have some of us traversed the dark and dreadful defile of “*the shadow of death*” several times, and we can bear witness that the LORD alone enabled us to bear up amid its wild thought, its mysterious horrors, its terrible depressions. The LORD has sustained us and kept us above all real fear of evil, even when our spirit has been overwhelmed. We have been pressed and oppressed, but yet we have lived, for we have felt the presence of the Great Shepherd and have been confident that His crook would prevent the foe from giving us any deadly wound.

Should the present time be one darkened by the raven wings of a great sorrow, let us glorify God by a peaceful trust in Him.

A Woman's War

*And she said, I will surely go with thee:
notwithstanding the journey that thou takest
shall not be for thine honour;
for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.
And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.
Judges 4:9*

RATHER an unusual text, but there may be souls in the world that may have faith enough to grasp it. Barak, the man, though called to the war, had little stomach for the fight unless Deborah would go with him, and so the LORD determined to make it a woman's war. By this means He rebuked the slackness of the man, gained for Himself the more renown, and cast the more shame upon the enemies of His people.

The LORD can still use feeble instrumentalities. Why not me? He may use persons who are not commonly called to great public engagements. Why not you? The woman who slew the enemy of Israel was no Amazon but a wife who tarried in her tent. She was no orator but a woman who milked the cows and made butter. May not the LORD use any one of us to accomplish His purpose? Somebody may come to the house today, even as Sisera came to Jael's tent. Be it ours not to slay him, but to save him. Let us receive him with great kindness and then bring forth the blessed truth of salvation by the LORD Jesus, our great Substitute, and press home the command "Believe and live." Who knoweth but some stout-hearted sinner may be slain by the gospel today!

He With Us; We With Him

*The fear of the LORD prolongeth days:
but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*

Proverbs 10:27

THERE is no doubt about it. The fear of the LORD leads to virtuous habits, and these prevent that waste of life which comes of sin and vice. The holy rest which springs out of faith in the LORD Jesus also greatly helps a man when he is ill. Every physician rejoices to have a patient whose mind is fully at ease. Worry kills, but confidence in God is like healing medicine.

We have therefore all the arrangements for long life, and if it be really for our good, we shall see a good old age and come to our graves as shocks of corn in their season. Let us not be overcome with sudden expectation of death the moment we have a finger-ache, but let us rather expect that we may have to work on through a considerable length of days.

And what if we should soon be called to the higher sphere? Certainly there would be nothing to deplore in such a summons but everything to rejoice in. Living or dying we are the LORD's. If we live, Jesus will be with us; if we die, we shall be with Jesus.

The truest lengthening of life is to live while we live, wasting no time but using every hour for the highest ends. So be it this day.

The Enemy Frustrated

*Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria,
He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there,
nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.*

2 Kings 19:32

NEITHER did Sennacherib molest the city. He had boasted loudly, but he could not carry out his threats. The LORD is able to stop the enemies of His people in the very act. When the lion has the lamb between his jaws, the great Shepherd of the sheep can rob him of his prey. Our extremity only provides an opportunity for a grander display of divine power and wisdom.

In the case before us, the terrible foe did not put in an appearance before the city which he thirsted to destroy. No annoying arrow could he shoot over the walls, and no besieging engines could he put to work to batter down the castles, and no banks could he cast up to shut in the inhabitants. Perhaps in our case also the LORD will prevent our adversaries from doing us the least harm. Certainly He can alter their intentions or render their designs so abortive that they will gladly forego them. Let us trust in the LORD and keep His way, and He will take care of us. Yea, He will fill us with wondering praise as we see the perfection of His deliverance.

Let us not fear the enemy till he actually comes, and then let us trust in the LORD.

The LORD's "Much More"

*And Amaziah said to the man of God,
But what shall we do for the hundred talents
which I have given to the army of Israel?*

*And the man of God answered,
The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.*

2 Chronicles 25:9

IF you have made a mistake, bear the loss of it; but do not act contrary to the will of the LORD. The LORD can give you much more than you are likely to lose; and if He does not, will you begin bargaining and chaffering with God. The king of Judah had hired an army from idolatrous Israel, and he was commanded to send home the fighting men because the LORD was not with them. He was willing to send away the host, only he grudged paying the hundred talents for nothing. Oh, for shame! If the LORD will give the victory without the hirelings, surely it was a good bargain to pay their wages and to be rid of them.

Be willing to lose money for conscience' sake, for peace's sake, for Christ's sake. Rest assured that losses for the LORD are not losses. Even in this life they are more than recompensed: in some cases the LORD prevents any loss from happening. As to our immortal life, what we lose for Jesus is invested in heaven. Fret not at apparent disaster but listen to the whisper, "*The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.*"

A Staircase To Heaven

*And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God
ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

John 1:51

YES, to our faith this sight is plain even at this day. We do see heaven opened. Jesus Himself has opened that kingdom to all believers. We gaze into the place of mystery and glory, for He has revealed it to us. We shall enter it soon, for He is the way.

Now we see the explanation of Jacob's ladder. Between earth and heaven there is a holy commerce; prayer ascends, and answers come down by the way of Jesus, the Mediator. We see this ladder when we see our LORD. In Him a stairway of light now furnishes a clear passage to the throne of the Most High. Let us use it and send up by it the messengers of our prayers. We shall live the angelic life ourselves if we run up to heaven in intercession, lay hold upon the blessings of the covenant, and then descend again to scatter those gifts among the sons of men.

This choice sight which Jacob only saw in a dream will turn into a bright reality. This very day we will be up and down the ladder each hour: climbing in communion and coming down in labor to save our fellowmen. This is Thy promise, O LORD Jesus, let us joyfully see it fulfilled.

It Will Not Be Long

*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts:
for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

James 5:8

THE last word in the Canticle of love is, “*Make haste, my beloved,*” (Song 8:14) and among the last words of the Apocalypse we read, “*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come*”; (Revelation 22:17) to which the heavenly Bridegroom answers, “*Surely I come quickly.*” (Revelation 22:20) Love longs for the glorious appearing of the LORD and enjoys this sweet promise — “*The coming of the LORD draweth nigh.*” This stays our minds as to the future. We look out with hope through this window.

This sacred “window of agate” lets in a flood of light upon the present and puts us into fine condition for immediate work or suffering. Are we tired? Then the nearness of our joy whispers patience. Are we growing weary because we do not see the harvest of our seed-sowing? Again this glorious truth cries to us, “Be patient.” Do our multiplied temptations cause us in the least to waver? Then the assurance that before long the LORD will be here preaches to us from this text, “*Stablish your hearts.*” Be firm, be stable, be constant, “*stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD.*” (1 Corinthians 15:58) Soon will you hear the silver trumpet which announces the coming of your King. Be not in the least afraid. Hold the fort, for He is coming; yea, He may appear this very day.

Thank Him; Dwell Acceptably

*Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name:
the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

Psalm 140:13

OH, that my heart may be upright, that I may always be able to bless the name of the LORD! He is so good to those that be good, that I would fain be among them and feel myself full of thankfulness every day. Perhaps, for a moment, the righteous are staggered when their integrity results in severe trial; but assuredly the day shall come when they shall bless their God that they did not yield to evil suggestions and adopt a shifty policy. In the long run true men will thank the God of the right for leading them by a right way. Oh, that I may be among them!

What a promise is implied in this second clause, "*The upright shall dwell in thy presence!*" They shall stand accepted where others appear only to be condemned. They shall be the courtiers of the great King, indulged with audience whensoever they desire it. They shall be favored ones upon whom Jehovah smiles and with whom He graciously communes. LORD, I covet this high honor, this precious privilege. It will be heaven on earth to me to enjoy it. Make me in all things upright, that I may today and tomorrow and every day stand in Thy heavenly presence. Then will I give thanks unto Thy name evermore. Amen.

One Look From The LORD!

*And the LORD looked upon him, and said,
Go in this thy might,
and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites:
have not I sent thee?
Judges 6:14*

WHAT a look was that which the LORD gave to Gideon! He looked him out of his discouragement into a holy bravery. If our look to the LORD saves us, what will not His look at us do? LORD, look on me this day and nerve me for its duties and conflicts.

What a word was this which Jehovah spoke to Gideon! “Go.” He must not hesitate. He might have answered, “What, go in all this weakness?” But the LORD put that word out of court by saying, “*Go in this thy might.*” The LORD had looked might into him, and he had now nothing to do but to use it and save Israel by smiting the Midianites. It may be that the LORD has more to do by me than I ever dreamed of. If He has looked upon me, He has made me strong. Let me by faith exercise the power with which He has entrusted me. He never bids me “idle away my time in this my might.” Far from it. I must “go” because He strengthens me. What a question is that which the LORD puts to me even as He put it to Gideon! “*Have not I sent thee!*” Yes, LORD, Thou hast sent me, and I will go in Thy strength. At Thy command I go, and, going, I am assured that Thou wilt conquer by me.

Invitation To Pray

*BCall unto me, and I will answer thee,
and shew thee great and mighty things,
which thou knowest not.*

Jeremiah 33:3

GOD encourages us to pray. They tell us that prayer is a pious exercise which has no influence except upon the mind engaged in it. We know better. Our experience gives the lie a thousand times over to this infidel assertion. Here Jehovah, the living God, distinctly promises to answer the prayer of His servant. Let us call upon Him again and admit no doubt upon the question of His hearing us and answering us. He that made the ear, shall He not hear? He that gave parents a love to their children, will He not listen to the cries of His own sons and daughters!

God will answer His pleading people in their anguish. He has wonders in store for them. What they have never seen, heard of, or dreamed of, He will do for them. He will invent new blessings if needful. He will ransack sea and land to feed them: He will send every angel out of heaven to succor them if their distress requires it. He will astound us with His grace and make us feel that it was never before done in this fashion. All He asks of us is that we will call upon Him. He cannot ask less of us. Let us cheerfully render Him our prayers at once.

Back, Then Forward

*Nevertheless I will remember my covenant
with thee in the days of thy youth,
and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.
Ezekiel 16:60*

NOTWITHSTANDING our sins, the LORD is still faithful in His love to us.

He looks back. See how He remembers those early days of ours when He took us into covenant with Himself, and we gave ourselves over to Him. Happy days those! The LORD does not twit us with them and charge us with being insincere. No, He looks rather to His covenant with us than to our covenant with Him. There was no hypocrisy in that sacred compact, on His part, at any rate. How gracious is the LORD thus to look back in love!

He looks forward also. He is resolved that the covenant shall not fail. If *we* do not stand to it, *He* does. He solemnly declares, “*I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.*” He has no mind to draw back from His promises. Blessed be His name, He sees the sacred seal, “*the blood of the everlasting covenant,*” (Hebrews 13:20) and He remembers our Surety, in whom He ratified that covenant, even His own dear Son; and therefore He rests in His covenant engagements. “*He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.*” (2 Timothy 2:13)

O LORD, lay this precious word upon my heart and help me to feed upon it all this day!

Scripture Memory Programme 2012

Equipped for Every Good Work

Every Christian should be equipped with the right verses of Scripture to use for the Lord's work. The 14 verses for the first half of the year are designed to equip you to share the Gospel with others. They will help you to convince people of their problem of sin and of their need for repentance and faith in Christ's atonement in order to be saved.

The 15 verses for the second half of the year will equip you to help Christians who are in need of comfort and assurance to face life's trials. They will enable you to direct suffering brethren to trust in God's all-sufficient grace and provision for every need.

May you be well-equipped to minister to others with the Word of Life!

January 1 & 8 – Living wisely

Psalm 90:12 - So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

January 15 & 22 – Sin

Romans 5:12 - Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

January 29 – Sin

Genesis 6:5 - And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

February 5 & 12 – Sin

Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

February 19 & 26 – Sin

Romans 3:10,11 - As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

March 4 & 11 – Sin

Proverbs 14:12 - There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

March 18 & 25 – Repentance

Luke 5:31,32 - And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

April 1 & 8 – Repentance

Acts 3:19 - Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

April 15 & 22 – Salvation

Isaiah 53:5 - But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

April 29 – Salvation

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

May 6 & 13 – Salvation

John 20:31 - But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

May 20 & 27 – Salvation

Matthew 7:13 - Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

June 3 & 10 – Assurance

Philippians 1:6 - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

June 17 & 24 – Self-examination

2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

July 1 & 8 – Peace

Isaiah 26:3 - Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

July 15 & 22 – Trust

Psalms 91:2 - I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

July 29 – Patience

Psalms 27:14 - Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

August 5 & 12 – Courage

Joshua 1:9 - Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

August 19 & 26 – God’s Sovereignty

Isaiah 55:9 - For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

September 2 & 9 – God’s Help

Romans 8:31 - What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

September 16 & 23 – God’s Mercy

Psalms 103:17,18 - But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

September 30 – Provision

Philippians 4:19 - But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

October 7 & 14 – Protection

Psalms 33:18,19 - Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

October 21 & 28 – Answered Prayer

John 15:7 - If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

November 4 & 11 – Journeying Mercies

Psalms 121:8 - The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

November 18 & 25 – Security

John 10:27,28 - My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

December 2 & 9 – Security

Isaiah 46:4 - And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

December 16 & 23 – Grace for Living

2 Corinthians 12:9 - And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

December 30 – Assurance

Psalms 23:6 - Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

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