

What Saith the Scripture?

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C. H. Spurgeon's Faith's Checkbook

A Daily Devotional

for the month of

FEBRUARY

February 1

Never Despair

"But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun Of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).

Fulfilled once in the first advent of our glorious LORD, and yet to have a fuller accomplishment in His second advent, this gracious word is also for daily use. Is it dark with the reader? Does the night deepen into a denser blackness? Still let us not despair: the sun will yet rise. When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest.

The sun which will arise is of no common sort. It is the Sun -- the Sun of Righteousness, whose every ray is holiness. He who comes to cheer us, comes in the way of justice as well as of mercy, comes to violate no law even to save us. Jesus as much displays the holiness of God as His love. Our deliverance, when it comes, will be safe because He is righteous.

Our one point of inquiry should be -- "Do we fear the name of the LORD? Do we reverence the living God and walk in His ways?" Then for us the night must be short; and when the morning cometh, all the sickness and sorrow of our soul will be over forever. Light, warmth, joy, and clearness of vision will come, and healing of every disease and distress will follow after.

Has Jesus risen upon us? Let us sit in the sun. Has He hidden His face? Let us wait for His rising. He will shine forth as surely as the sun.

February 2

Grow Up

"And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall"

(Malachi 4:2).

Yes, when the sun shines, the sick quit their chambers and walk abroad to breathe the fresh air. When the sun brings spring and summer, the cattle quit their stalls and seek pasture on the higher Alps. Even thus, when we have conscious fellowship with our LORD, we leave the stall of despondency and walk abroad in the fields of holy confidence. We ascend to the mountains of joy and feed on sweet pasturage which grows nearer heaven than the provender of carnal men.

To "go forth" and to "grow up" is a double promise. O my soul, be thou eager to enjoy both blessings! Why shouldst thou be a prisoner? Arise, and walk at liberty. Jesus saith that His sheep shall go in and out and find pasture; go forth, then, and feed in the rich meadows of boundless love.

Why remain a babe in grace? Grow up. Young calves grow fast, especially if they are stall fed; and thou hast the choice care of thy Redeemer. Grow, then, in grace and in knowledge of thy LORD and Savior, Be neither straitened nor stunted. The Sun of Righteousness has risen upon thee. Answer to His beams as the buds to the natural sun. Open thine heart; expand and grow up into Him in all things.

February 3

He Freely Gives

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

(Romans 8:32).

If this is not a promise in form, it is in fact. Indeed, it is more than one promise, it is a conglomerate of promises. It is a mass of rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds, with a nugget of gold for their setting. It is a question which can never be answered so as to cause us any anxiety of heart. What can the LORD deny us after giving us Jesus? If we need all things in heaven and earth, He will grant them to us: for if there had been a limit anywhere, He would have kept back His own Son.

What do I want today? I have only to ask for it. I may seek earnestly, but not as if I had to use pressure and extort an unwilling gift from the LORD's hand; for He will give freely. Of His own He gave us His own Son. Certainly no one would have proposed such a gift to Him. No one would have ventured to ask for it. It would have been too presumptuous. He freely gave His Only-begotten, and, O my soul, canst thou not trust thy heavenly Father to give thee anything, to give thee everything? Thy poor prayer would have no force with Omnipotence if force were needed; but His love, like a spring, rises of itself and overflows for the supply of all thy needs.

February 4

He Will Return

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"

(John 14:18).

He left us, and yet we are not left orphans. He is our comfort, and He is gone; but we are not comfortless. Our comfort is that He will come to us, and this is consolation enough to sustain us through His prolonged absence. Jesus is already on His way: He says, "I come quickly": He rides posthaste toward us. He says, "I will come": and none can prevent His coming, or put it back for a quarter of an hour. He specially says, "I will come to you"; and so He will. His coming is specially to and for His own people. This is meant to be their present comfort while they mourn that the Bridegroom doth not yet appear.

When we lose the joyful sense of His presence we mourn, but we may not sorrow as if there were no hope. Our LORD in a little wrath has hid Himself from us for a moment, but He will return in full favor. He leaves us in a sense, but only in a sense. When He withdraws, He leaves a pledge behind that He will return. O LORD, come quickly! There is no life in this earthly existence if Thou be gone. We sigh for the return of Thy sweet smile. When wilt Thou come unto us? We are sure Thou wilt appear; but be Thou like a roe, or a young hart. Make no tarrying, O our God!

February 5

Justice Satisfied

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you"
(Exodus 12:13).

My own sight of the precious blood is for my comfort; but it is the LORD's sight of it which secures my safety. Even when I am unable to behold it, the LORD looks at it and passes over me because of it. If I am not so much at ease as I ought to be, because my faith is dim, yet I am equally safe because the LORD's eye is not dim, and He sees the blood of the great Sacrifice with steady gaze. What a joy is this!

The LORD sees the deep inner meaning, the infinite fullness of all that is meant by the death of His dear Son. He sees it with restful memory of justice satisfied and all His matchless attributes glorified. He beheld creation in its progress and said, "It is very good"; but what does He say of redemption in its completeness? What does He say of the obedience even unto death of His well-beloved Son? None can tell His delight in Jesus, His rest in the sweet savor which Jesus presented when He offered Himself without spot unto God.

Now rest we in calm security. We have God's sacrifice and God's Word to create in us a sense of perfect security. He will, He must, pass over us, because He spared not our glorious Substitute. Justice joins hands with love to provide everlasting salvation for all the blood-besprinkled.

February 6

Blessing in the City

"If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, blessed shalt thou be in the city"

(Deuteronomy 28:2-3).

The city is full of care, and he who has to go there from day to day finds it to be a place of great wear and tear. It is full of noise, and stir, and bustle, and sore travail; many are its temptations, losses, and worries. But to go there with the divine blessing takes off the edge of its difficulty; to remain there with that blessing is to find pleasure in its duties and strength equal to its demands.

A blessing in the city may not make us great, but it will keep us good; it may not make us rich, but it will preserve us honest. Whether we are porters, or clerks, or managers, or merchants, or magistrates, the city will afford us opportunities for usefulness. It is good fishing where there are shoals of fish, and it is hopeful to work for our LORD amid the thronging crowds. We might prefer the quiet of a country life; but if called to town, we may certainly prefer it because there is room for our energies.

Today let us expect good things because of this promise, and let our care be to have an open ear to the voice of the LORD and a ready hand to execute His bidding. Obedience brings the blessing. "In keeping his commandments there is great reward."

February 7

Return from Backsliding

"If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up"
(Job 22:23).

Eliphaz, in this utterance, spoke a great truth, which is the summary of many an inspired Scripture. Reader, has sin pulled you down? Have you become like a ruin? Has the hand of the LORD gone out against you so that in estate you are impoverished and in spirit you are broken down? Was it your own folly which brought upon you all this dilapidation? Then the first thing to be done is to return to the LORD. With deep repentance and sincere faith find your way back from your backsliding. It is your duty, for you have turned away from Him whom you professed to serve. It is your wisdom, for you cannot strive against Him and prosper. It is your immediate necessity, for what He has done is nothing compared to what He may do in the way of chastisement, since He is Almighty to punish.

See what a promise invites you! You shall be "built up." None but the Almighty can set up the fallen pillars and restore the tottering walls of your condition; but He can and He will do it if you return to Him. Do not delay. Your crushed mind may quite fail you if you go on to rebel; but hearty confession will ease you, and humble faith will console you. Do this, and all will be well.

February 8

Joyful Security

"I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness"
(Isaiah 41:10).

Fear of falling is wholesome. To be venturesome is no sign of wisdom. Times come to us when we feel that we must go down unless we have a very special support. Here we have it. God's right hand is a grand thing to lean upon. Mind, it is not only His hand, though it keepeth heaven and earth in their places, but His right hand: His power united with skill, His power where it is most dexterous. Nay, this is not all; it is written, "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." That hand which He uses to maintain His holiness and to execute His royal sentences -- this shall be stretched out to hold up His trusting ones. Fearful is our danger, but joyful is our security. The man whom God upholds, devils cannot throw down.

Weak may be our feet, but almighty is God's right hand. Rough may be the road, but Omnipotence is our upholding. We may boldly go forward. We shall not fall. Let us lean continually where all things lean. God will not withdraw His strength, for His righteousness is there as well. He will be faithful to His promise, and faithful to His Son, and therefore faithful to us. How happy we ought to be! Are we not so?

February 9

The Dross Purged

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God" (Zechariah 13:9).

Grace transmutes us into precious metal, and then the fire and the furnace follows as a necessary consequence. Do we start at this? Would we sooner be accounted worthless, that we might enjoy repose, like the stones of the field! This would be to choose the viler part -- like Esau, to take the pottage and give up the covenant portion. No, LORD; we will gladly be cast into the furnace rather than be cast out from Thy presence!

The fire only refines; it does not destroy. We are to be brought through the fire, not left in it. The LORD values His people as silver, and therefore He is at pains to purge away their dross. If we are wise, we shall rather welcome the refining process than decline it. Our prayer will be that our alloy may be taken from us rather than that we should be withdrawn from the crucible.

O LORD, Thou triest us indeed! We are ready to melt under the fierceness of the flame. Still, this is Thy way, and Thy way is the best. Sustain us under the trial and complete the process of our purifying, and we will be Thine forever and ever.

February 10

A Constant Witness

"For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15).

Paul was chosen to see and hear the LORD speaking to him out of heaven. This divine election was a high privilege for himself; but it was not intended to end with him; it was meant to have an influence upon others, yea, upon all men. It is to Paul that Europe owes the gospel at this hour.

It is ours in our measure to be witnesses of that which the LORD has revealed to us, and it is at our peril that we hide the precious revelation. First, we must see and hear, or we shall have nothing to tell; but when we have done so, we must be eager to bear our testimony. It must be personal: "Thou shalt be." It must be for Christ: "Thou shalt be his witness." It must be constant and all absorbing; we are to be this above all other things and to the exclusion of many other matters. Our witness must not be to a select few who will cheerfully receive us but to "all men" -- to all whom we can reach, young or old, rich or poor, good or bad. We must never be silent like those who are possessed by a dumb spirit; for the text before us is a command, and a promise, and we must not miss it -- "Thou shalt be his witness." "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD."

February 11

Are the Children In?

"I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring"
(Isaiah 44:3).

Our dear children have not the Spirit of God by nature, as we plainly see. We see much in them which makes us fear as to their future, and this drives us to agonizing prayer. When a son becomes specially perverse, we cry with Abraham, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" We would sooner see our daughters Hannahs than empresses. This verse should greatly encourage us. It follows upon the words, "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant," and it may well banish our fears.

The LORD will give His Spirit; will give it plentifully, pouring it out; will give it effectually, so that it shall be a real and eternal blessing. Under this divine outpouring our children shall come forward, and "one shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob."

This is one of those promises concerning which the LORD will be inquired of. Should we not, at set times, in a distinct manner, pray for our offspring? We cannot give them new hearts, but the Holy Spirit can; and He is easily to be entreated of. The great Father takes pleasure in the prayers of fathers and mothers. Have we any dear ones outside of the ark? Let us not rest till they are shut in with us by the LORD's own hand.

February 12

God Delights to Give

"And the LORD said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever"

(Genesis 13:14-15).

A special blessing for a memorable occasion. Abram had settled a family dispute. He had said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, for we be brethren"; and hence he received the blessing which belongs to peacemakers. The LORD and giver of peace delights to manifest His grace to those who seek peace and pursue it. If we desire closer communion with God, we must keep closer to the ways of peace.

Abram had behaved very generously to his kinsman, giving him his choice of the land. If we deny ourselves for peace's sake, the LORD will more than make it up to us. As far as the patriarch can see, he can claim, and we may do the like by faith. Abram had to wait for the actual possession, but the LORD entailed the land upon him and his posterity. Boundless blessings belong to us by covenant gift. All things are ours. When we please the LORD, He makes us to look everywhere and see all things our own, whether things present or things to come, all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

February 13

Blessed in the Field

"Blessed shalt thou be in the field"
(Deuteronomy 28:3).

So was Isaac blessed when he walked therein at eventide to meditate. How often has the LORD met us when we have been alone! The hedges and the trees can bear witness to our joy. We look for such blessedness again.

So was Boaz blessed when he reaped his harvest, and his workmen met him with benedictions. May the LORD prosper all who drive the plow! Every farmer may urge this promise with God, if indeed he obeys the voice of the LORD God.

We go to the field to labor as father Adam did; and since the curse fell on the soil through the sin of Adam the first, it is a great comfort to find a blessing through Adam the second.

We go to the field for exercise, and we are happy in the belief that the LORD will bless that exercise and give us health, which we will use to His glory.

We go to the field to study nature, and there is nothing in a knowledge of the visible creation which may not be sanctified to the highest uses by the divine benediction.

We have at last to go to the field to bury our dead; yea, others will in their turn take us to God's acre in the field. But we are blessed, whether weeping at the tomb or sleeping in it.

February 14

Mercy to the Undeserving

"He that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about"
(Psalm 32:10).

O fair reward of trust! My LORD, grant it me to the full! The truster above all men feels himself to be a sinner; and lo, mercy is prepared for him: he knows himself to have no deservings, but mercy comes in and keeps house for him on a liberal scale. O LORD, give me this mercy, even as I trust in Thee!

Observe, my soul, what a bodyguard thou hast! As a prince is compassed about with soldiery, so art thou compassed about with mercy. Before and behind, and on all sides, ride these mounted guards of grace. We dwell in the center of the system of mercy, for we dwell in Christ Jesus.

O my soul, what an atmosphere dost thou breathe! As the air surrounds thee, even so does the mercy of thy LORD. To the wicked there are many sorrows, but to thee there are so many mercies that thy sorrows are not worth mentioning. David says, "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." In obedience to this precept my heart shall triumph in God, and I will tell out my gladness. As Thou hast compassed me with mercy, I will also compass Thine altars, O my God, with songs of thanksgiving!

February 15

Ever Mindful

"The LORD hath been mindful of us: He will bless us"
(Psalm 115:12).

I can set my seal to that first sentence. Cannot you? Yes, Jehovah has thought of us, provided for us, comforted us, delivered us, and guided us. In all the movements of His providence He has been mindful of us, never overlooking our mean affairs. His mind has been full of us -- that is the other form of the word mindfull. This has been the case all along and without a single break. At special times, however, we have more distinctly seen this mindfulness, and we would recall them at this hour with overflowing gratitude. Yes, yes, "the LORD hath been mindful of us."

The next sentence is a logical inference from the former one. Since God is unchangeable, He will continue to be mindful of us in the future as He has been in the past; and His mindfulness is tantamount to blessing us. But we have here not only the conclusion of reason but the declaration of inspiration; we have it on the Holy Ghost's authority -- "He will bless us." This means great things and unsearchable. The very indistinctness of the promise indicates its infinite reach. He will bless us after His own divine manner, and that forever and ever, Therefore, let us each say, "Bless the LORD, O my soul!"

February 16

You Deal with God

"I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man"
(Hosea 11:9).

The LORD thus makes known His sparing mercies. It may be that the reader is now under heavy displeasure, and everything threatens his speedy doom. Let the text hold him up from despair. The LORD now invites you to consider your ways and confess your sins. If He had been man, He would long ago have cut you off. If He were now to act after the manner of men, it would be a word and a blow and then there would be an end of you: but it is not so, for "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are his ways above your ways."

You rightly judge that He is angry, but He keepeth not His anger forever: if you turn from sin to Jesus, God will turn from wrath. Because God is God, and not man, there is still forgiveness for you, even though you may be steeped up to your throat in iniquity. You have a God to deal with and not a hard man, or even a merely just man. No human being could have patience with you. You would have wearied out an angel, as you have wearied your sorrowing Father; but God is longsuffering. Come and try Him at once. Confess, believe, and turn from your evil way, and you shall be saved.

February 17

God Can Make You Strong

"Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded"
(2 Chronicles 15:7).

God had done great things for King Asa and Judah, but yet they were a feeble folk. Their feet were very tottering in the ways of the LORD, and their hearts very hesitating, so that they had to be warned that the LORD would be with them while they were with Him, but that if they forsook Him He would leave them. They were also reminded of the sister kingdom, how ill it fared in its rebellion and how the LORD was gracious to it when repentance was shown. The LORD's design was to confirm them in His way and make them strong in righteousness. So ought it to be with us. God deserves to be served with all the energy of which we are capable.

If the service of God is worth anything, it is worth everything. We shall find our best reward in the LORD's work if we do it with determined diligence. Our labor is not in vain in the LORD, and we know it. Halfhearted work will bring no reward; but when we throw our whole soul into the cause, we shall see prosperity. This text was sent to the author of these notes in a day of terrible storm, and it suggested to him to put on all steam, with the assurance of reaching port in safety with a glorious freight.

February 18

God Will Answer

"He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Psalm 145:19).

His own Spirit has wrought this desire in us, and therefore He will answer it. It is His own life within which prompts the cry, and therefore He will hear it. Those who fear Him are men under the holiest influence, and, therefore, their desire is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Like Daniel, they are men of desires, and the LORD will cause them to realize their aspirations.

Holy desires are grace in the blade, and the heavenly Husbandman will cultivate them till they come to the full corn in the ear. Godfearing men desire to be holy, to be useful, to be a blessing to others, and so to honor their LORD. They desire supplies for their need, help under burdens, guidance in perplexity, deliverance in distress; and sometimes this desire is so strong and their case so pressing that they cry out in agony like little children in pain, and then the LORD works most comprehensively and does all that is needful according to this Word -- "and will save them."

Yes, if we fear God, we have nothing else to fear; if we cry to the LORD, our salvation is certain.

Let the reader lay this text on his tongue and keep it in his mouth all the day, and it will be to him as "a wafer made with honey."

February 19

Better Farther On

"Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more" (Nahum 1:12).

There is a limit to affliction. God sends it, and God removes it. Do you sigh and say, "When will the end be?" Remember that our griefs will surely and finally end when this poor earthly life is over. Let us quietly wait and patiently endure the will of the LORD till He cometh.

Meanwhile, our Father in heaven takes away the rod when His design in using it is fully served. When He has whipped away our folly, there will be no more strokes. Or, if the affliction is sent for testing us, that our graces may glorify God, it will end when the LORD has made us bear witness to His praise. We would not wish the affliction to depart till God has gotten out of us all the honor which we can possibly yield Him.

There may today be "a great calm." Who knows how soon those raging billows will give place to a sea of glass, and the sea birds sit on the gentle waves? After long tribulation the flail is hung up, and the wheat rests in the garner. We may, before many hours are past, be just as happy as now we are sorrowful. It is not hard for the LORD to turn night into day. He that sends the clouds can as easily clear the skies. Let us be of good cheer. It is better on before. Let us sing hallelujah by anticipation.

February 20

Continual Guidance

"The LORD shall guide thee continually"
(Isaiah 58:11).

What aileth thee? Hast thou lost thy way? Art thou entangled in a dark wood and canst thou not find thy paths? Stand still, and see the salvation of God. He knows the way, and He will direct thee in it if thou cry unto Him.

Every day brings its own perplexity. How sweet to feel that the guidance of the LORD is continual! If we choose our own way or consult with flesh and blood we cast away the LORD's guidance; but if we abstain from self-will, then He will direct every step of our road, every hour of the day, and every day of the year, and every year of our life. If we will but be guided, we shall be guided. If we will commit our way unto the LORD, He will direct our course so that we shall not lose ourselves.

But note to whom this promise is made. Read the previous verse: "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry." We must feel for others and give them, not a few dry crusts, but such things as we ourselves would wish to receive. If we show a tender care for our fellow-creatures in the hour of their need, then will the LORD attend to our necessities and make Himself our continual Guide. Jesus is the Leader, not of misers, nor of those who oppress the poor, but of the kind and tenderhearted. Such persons are pilgrims who shall never miss their way.

February 21

Blessing on Littleness

"He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great"
(Psalm 115:13).

This is a word of cheer to those who are of humble station and mean estate. Our God has a very gracious consideration for those of small property, small talent, small influence, small weight. God careth for the small things in creation and even regards sparrows in their lighting upon the ground. Nothing is small to God, for He makes use of insignificant agents for the accomplishment of His purposes. Let the least among men seek of God a blessing upon his littleness, and he shall find his contracted sphere to be a happy one.

Among those who fear the LORD there are little and great. Some are babes, and others are giants. But these are all blessed. Little faith is blessed faith. Trembling hope is blessed hope. Every grace of the Holy Spirit, even though it be only in the bud, bears a blessing within it. Moreover, the LORD Jesus bought both the small and the great with the same precious blood, and He has engaged to preserve the lambs as well as the full-grown sheep. No mother overlooks her child because it is little; nay, the smaller it is, the more tenderly does she nurse it. If there be any preference with the LORD, He does not arrange them as "great and small" but as "small and great."

February 22

Past Deliverance Begets Faith

"David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine"
(1 Samuel 17:37).

This is not a promise if we consider only the words, but it is truly so as to its sense; for David spoke a word which the LORD endorsed by making it true. He argued from past deliverance's that he should receive help in a new danger. In Jesus all the promises are "Yea" and "Amen" to the glory of God by us, and so the LORD's former dealings with His believing people will be repeated.

Come, then, let us recall the LORD's former lovingkindness. We could not have hoped to be delivered aforetime by our own strength; yet the LORD delivered us. Will He not again save us? We are sure He will. As David ran to meet his foe, so will we. The LORD has been with us, He is with us, and He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Why do we tremble? Was the past a dream? Think of the dead bear and lion. Who is this Philistine? True, he is not quite the same, and is neither bear nor lion; but then God is the same, and His honor is as much concerned in the one case as in the other. He did not save us from the beasts of the forest to let a giant kill us. Let us be of good courage.

February 23

Unbroken Fellowship Essential

"If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"
(John 15:7).

Of necessity we must be in Christ to live unto Him, and we must abide in Him to be able to claim the largesse of this promise from Him. To abide in Jesus is never to quit Him for another love or another object, but to remain in living, loving, conscious, willing union with Him. The branch is not only ever near the stem but ever receiving life and fruitfulness from it. All true believers abide in Christ in a sense; but there is a higher meaning, and this we must know before we can gain unlimited power at the throne. "Ask what ye will" is for Enochs who walk with God, for Johns who lie in the LORD's bosom, for those whose union with Christ leads to constant communion.

The heart must remain in love, the mind must be rooted in faith, the hope must be cemented to the Word, the whole man must be joined unto the LORD, or else it would be dangerous to trust us with power in prayer. The carte blanche can only be given to one whose very life is, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." O you who break your fellowship, what power you lose! If you would be mighty in your pleadings, the LORD Himself must abide in you, and you in Him.

February 24

Hear So as to Be Heard

"If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"
(John 15:7).

Note well that we must hear Jesus speak if we expect Him to hear us speak. If we have no ear for Christ, He will have no ear for us. In proportion as we hear we shall be heard.

Moreover, what is heard must remain, must live in us, and must abide in our character as a force and a power. We must receive the truths which Jesus taught, the precepts which He issued, and the movements of His Spirit within us; or we shall have no power at the Mercy Seat.

Suppose our LORD's words to be received and to abide in us, what a boundless field of privilege is opened up to us! We are to have our will in prayer, because we have already surrendered our will to the LORD's command. Thus are Elijahs trained to handle the keys of heaven and lock or loose the clouds. One such man is worth a thousand common Christians. Do we humbly desire to be intercessors for the church and the world, and like Luther to be able to have what we will of the LORD? Then we must bow our ear to the voice of the Well-beloved, treasure up His words, and carefully obey them. He has need to "hearken diligently" who would pray effectually.

February 25

Set Apart

"Ye shall be named the priests of the LORD"
(Isaiah 61:6).

This literal promise to Israel belongs spiritually to the seed after the Spirit, namely, to all believers. If we live up to our privileges, we shall live unto God so clearly and distinctly that men shall see that we are set apart for holy service and shall name us the priests of the LORD. We may work or trade as others do, and yet we may be solely and wholly the ministering servants of God. Our one occupation shall be to present the perpetual sacrifice of prayer, and praise, and testimony, and self-consecration to the living God by Jesus Christ.

This being our one aim, we may leave distracting concerns to those who have no higher calling. "Let the dead bury their dead." It is written, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers." They may manage politics, puzzle out financial problems, discuss science, and settle the last new quibbles of criticism; but we will give ourselves unto such service as becomes those who, like the LORD Jesus, are ordained to a perpetual priesthood.

Accepting this honorable promise as involving a sacred duty, let us put on the vestments of holiness and minister before the LORD all day long.

February 26

Truth Established

"The lip of Truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment" (Proverbs 12:19).

Truth wears well. Time tests it, but it right well endures the trial. If then, I have spoken the truth and have for the present to suffer for it, I must be content to wait. If also I believe the truth of God and endeavor to declare it, I may meet with much opposition, but I need not fear, for ultimately the truth must prevail.

What a poor thing is the temporary triumph of falsehood! "A lying lip is but for a moment!" It is a mere gourd which comes up in a night and perishes in a night; and the greater its development the more manifest its decay. On the other hand, how worthy of an immortal being is the avowal and defense of that truth which can never change; the everlasting gospel, which is established in the immutable truth of an unchanging God! An old proverb saith, "He that speaks truth shames the devil." Assuredly he that speaks the truth of God will put to shame all the devils in hell and confound all the seed of the serpent which now hiss out their falsehoods.

O my heart, take care that thou be in all things on the side of truth, both in small things and great; but specially, on the side of Him by whom grace and truth have come among men!

February 27

Unstaggering Trustfulness

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD" (Psalm 112:7).

Suspense is dreadful. When we have no news from home, we are apt to grow anxious, and we cannot be persuaded that "no news is good news." Faith is the cure for this condition of sadness; the LORD by His Spirit settles the mind in holy serenity, and all fear is gone as to the future as well as the present.

The fixedness of heart spoken of by the psalmist is to be diligently sought after. It is not believing this or that promise of the LORD, but the general condition of unstaggering trustfulness in our God, the confidence which we have in Him that He will neither do us ill Himself nor suffer anyone else to harm us. This constant confidence meets the unknown as well as the known of life. Let the morrow be what it may, our God is the God of tomorrow. Whatever events may have happened, which to us are unknown, our Jehovah is God of the unknown as well as of the known. We are determined to trust the LORD, come what may. If the very worst should happen, our God is still the greatest and best. Therefore will we not fear though the postman's knock should startle us or a telegram wake us at midnight. The LORD liveth, and what can His children fear?

February 28

Real Estate in Heaven

"Knowing in yourselves that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance"
(Hebrews 10:34).

This is well. Our substance here is very unsubstantial; there is no substance in it. But God has given us a promise of real estate in the gloryland, and that promise comes to our hearts with such full assurance of its certainty that we know in ourselves that we have an enduring substance there. Yes, "we have" it even now. They say, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," but we have our bird in the bush and in the hand, too. Heaven is even now our own. We have the title deed of it, we have the earnest of it, we have the firstfruits of it. We have heaven in price, in promise, and in principle; this we know not only by the hearing of the ear but "in ourselves."

Should not the thought of the better substance on the other side of Jordan reconcile us to present losses? Our spending money we may lose, but our treasure is safe. We have lost the shadows, but the substance remains, for our Savior lives, and the place which He has prepared for us abides. There is a better land, a better substance, a better promise; and all this comes to us by a better covenant; wherefore, let us be in better spirits, and say unto the LORD, "Every day will I bless thee; and praise thy name for ever and ever."

February 29

What Follows Us

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"
(Psalm 23:6).

A devout poet sings:

LORD, when Thou
Puttest in my time a day,
as Thou dost now,
Unknown in other years, grant, I entreat,
Such grace illumine it, that whate'er its phase
It add to holiness, and lengthen praise!

This day comes but once in four years.... Up till now goodness and mercy, like two guards, have followed us from day to day, bringing up the rear even as grace leads the van; and as this out-of-the-way day is one of the days of our life, the two guardian angels will be with us today also. Goodness to supply our needs and mercy to blot out our sins -- these twain shall attend our every step this day and every day till days shall be no more. Wherefore, let us serve the LORD on this peculiar day with special consecration of heart and sing His praises with more zest and sweetness than ever. Could we not today make an unusual offering to the cause of God or to the poor? By inventiveness of love let us make this twenty-ninth of February a day to be remembered forever.