

What Saith the Scripture?
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C. H. Spurgeon's
Faith's Checkbook

A Daily Devotional

for the month of

NOVEMBER

November 1

Perfection and Preservation

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it"
(1 Thessalonians 5:24).

What will He do? He will sanctify us wholly. See the previous verse. He will carry on the work of purification till we are perfect in every part. He will preserve our "whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ." He will not allow us to fall from grace, nor come under the dominion of sin. What great favors are these! Well may we adore the giver of such unspeakable gifts.

Who will do this? The LORD who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, out of death in sin into eternal life in Christ Jesus. Only He can do this: such perfection and preservation can only come from the God of all grace.

Why will He do it? Because He is "faithful"--faithful to His own promise which is pledged to save the believer; faithful to His Son, whose reward it is that His people shall be presented to Him faultless, faithful to the work which He has commenced in us by our effectual calling. It is not their own faithfulness but the LORD's own faithfulness on which the saints rely.

Come, my soul, here is a grand feast to begin a dull month with. There may be fogs without, but there should be sunshine within.

November 2

Heavenly Wealth

"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly"

(Psalm 84:11).

Many pleasing things the LORD may withhold but "no good thing." He is the best judge of what is good for us. Some things are assuredly good, and these we may have for the asking through Jesus Christ our LORD.

Holiness is a good thing, and this He will work in us freely. Victory over evil tendencies, strong tempers, and evil habits He will gladly grant, and we ought not to remain without it.

Full assurance He will bestow, and near communion with Himself, and access into all truth, and boldness with prevalence at the mercy seat. If we have not these, it is from want of faith to receive and not from any unwillingness of God to give. A calm, a heavenly frame, great patience, and fervent love--all these will He give to holy diligence.

But note well that we must "walk uprightly." There must be no cross purposes and crooked dealings; no hypocrisy nor deceit. If we walk foully God cannot give us favors, for that would be a premium upon sin. The way of uprightness is the way of heavenly wealth--wealth so large as to include every good thing.

What a promise to plead in prayer! Let us get to our knees.

November 3

In God's Time

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry"
(Habakkuk 2:3).

Mercy may seem slow, but it is sure. The LORD in unfailing wisdom has appointed a time for the outgoings of His gracious power, and God's time is the best time. We are in a hurry; the vision of the blessings excites our desire and hastens our longings; but the LORD will keep His appointments. He never is before His time; He never is behind.

God's word is here spoken of as a living thing which will speak and will come. It is never a dead letter, as we are tempted to fear when we have long watched for its fulfillment. The living word is on the way from the living God, and though it may seem to linger, it is not in reality doing so. God's train is not behind time. It is only a matter of patience, and we shall soon see for ourselves the faithfulness of the LORD. No promise of His shall fail; "it will not lie." No promise of His will be lost in silence; "it shall speak." What comfort it will speak to the believing ear! No promise of His shall need to be renewed like a bill which could not be paid on the day in which it fell due--"it will not tarry."

Come, my soul, canst thou not wait for thy God? Rest in Him and be still in unutterable peacefulness.

November 4

You Make the Trenches

"And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts"
(2 Kings 3:16-17).

Three armies were perishing of thirst, and the LORD interposed. Although He sent neither cloud nor rain, yet He supplied an abundance of water. He is not dependent upon ordinary methods but can surprise His people with novelties of wisdom and power. Thus are we made to see more of God than ordinary processes could have revealed. Although the LORD may not appear for us in the way we expect, or desire, or suppose, yet He will in some way or other provide for us. It is a great blessing for us to be raised above looking to secondary causes so that we may gaze into the face of the great First Cause.

Have we this day grace enough to make trenches into which the divine blessing may flow? Alas! We too often fail in the exhibition of true and practical faith. Let us this day be on the outlook for answers to prayer. As the child who went to a meeting to pray for rain took an umbrella with her, so let us truly and practically expect the LORD to bless us. Let us make the valley full of ditches and expect to see them all filled.

November 5

What Is Painful Will End

"I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls; which I have made"
(Isaiah 57:16).

Our heavenly Father seeks our instruction, not our destruction. His contention with us has a kind intention toward us. He will not be always in arms against us. We think the LORD is long in His chastisements, but that is because we are short in our patience. His compassion endureth forever, but not His contention. The night may drag its weary length along, but it must in the end give place to cheerful day. As contention is only for a season, so the wrath which leads to it is only for a small moment. The LORD loves His chosen too well to be always angry with them.

If He were to deal with us always as He does sometimes, we should faint outright and go down hopelessly to the gates of death. Courage, dear heart! The LORD will soon end His chiding. Bear up, for the LORD will bear you up and bear you through. He who made you knows how frail you are and how little you can bear. He will handle tenderly that which He has fashioned so delicately. Therefore, be not afraid because of the painful present, for it hastens to a happy future. He that smote you will heal you; His little wrath shall be followed by great mercies.

November 6

Delight and Desires

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"
(Psalm 37:4).

Delight in God has a transforming power and lifts a man above the gross desire of our [formerly] fallen nature. Delight in Jehovah is not only sweet in itself, but it sweetens the whole soul, till the longings of the heart become such that the LORD can safely promise to fulfill them. Is not that a grand delight which molds our desires till they are like the desires of God?

Our foolish way is to desire and then set to work to compass what we desire. We do not go to work in God's way, which is to seek Him first and then expect all things to be added unto us. If we will let our heart be filled with God till it runs over with delight, then the LORD Himself will take care that we shall not want any good thing. Instead of going abroad for joys let us stay at home with God and drink waters out of our own fountain. He can do for us far more than all our friends. It is better to be content with God alone than to go about fretting and pining for the paltry trifles of time and sense. For a while we may have disappointments; but if these bring us nearer to the LORD, they are things to be prized exceedingly, for they will in the end secure to us the fulfillment of all our right desires.

November 7

True Humility Rewarded

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"
(Luke 18:14).

It ought not to be difficult for us to humble ourselves, for what have we to be proud of? We ought to take the lowest place without being told to do so. If we are sensible and honest, we shall be little in our own eyes. Especially before the LORD in prayer we shall shrink to nothing. There we cannot speak of merit, for we have none; our one and only appeal must be to mercy: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Here is a cheering word from the throne. We shall be exalted by the LORD if we humble ourselves. For us the way upward is downhill. When we are stripped of self we are clothed with humility, and this is the best of wear. The LORD will exalt us in peace and happiness of mind; He will exalt us into knowledge of His Word and fellowship with Himself; He will exalt us in the enjoyment of sure pardon and justification. The LORD puts His honors upon those who can wear them to the honor of the Giver. He gives usefulness, acceptance, and influence to those who will not be puffed up by them but will be abased by a sense of greater responsibility. Neither God nor man will care to lift up a man who lifts up himself; but both God and good men unite to honor modest worth.

O LORD, sink me in self that I may rise in Thee.

November 8

The Magnitude of Grace

"My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness"
(2 Corinthians 12:9).

Our weakness should be prized as making room for divine strength. We might never have known the power of grace if we had not felt the weakness of nature. Blessed be the LORD for the thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan, when they drive us to the strength of God.

This is a precious word from our LORD's own lip. It has made the writer laugh for joy. God's grace enough for me! I should think it is. Is not the sky enough for the bird and the ocean enough for the fish? The All-Sufficient is sufficient for my largest want. He who is sufficient for earth and heaven is certainly able to meet the case of one poor worm like me.

Let us, then, fall back upon our God and His grace. If He does not remove our grief, He will enable us to bear it. His strength shall be poured into us till the worm shall thresh the mountains, and a nothing shall be victor over all the high and mighty ones. It is better for us to have God's strength than our own; for if we were a thousand times as strong as we are, it would amount to nothing in the face of the enemy; and if we could be weaker than we are, which is scarcely possible, yet we could do all things through Christ.

November 9

Necessary Knowledge

"Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are My people, saith the LORD God"
(Ezekiel 34:30).

To be the LORD's own people is a choice blessing, but to know that we are such is a comfortable blessing. It is one thing to hope that God is with us and another thing to know that He is so. Faith saves us, but assurance satisfies us. We take God to be our God when we believe in Him; but we get the joy of Him when we know that He is ours and that we are His. No believer should be content with hoping and trusting; he should ask the LORD to lead him on to full assurance, so that matters of hope may become matters of certainty.

It is when we enjoy covenant blessings and see our LORD Jesus raised up for us as a plant of renown that we come to a clear knowledge of the favor of God toward us. Not by law, but by grace do we learn that we are the LORD's people. Let us always turn our eyes in the direction of free grace. Assurance of faith can never come by the works of the law. It is an evangelical virtue and can only reach us in a gospel way. Let us not look within. Let us look to the LORD alone. As we see Jesus we shall see our salvation.

LORD, send us such a flood-tide of Thy love that we shall be washed beyond the mire of doubt and

fear.

November 10

Walk Without Stumbling

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved"
(Psalm 121:3).

If the LORD will not suffer it, neither men nor devils can do it. How greatly would they rejoice if they could give us a disgraceful fall, drive us from our position, and bury us out of memory! They could do this to their heart's content were it not for one hindrance, and only one: the LORD will not suffer it; and if He does not suffer it, we shall not suffer it.

The way of life is like traveling among the Alps. Along the mountain path one is constantly exposed to the slipping of the foot. Where the way is high the head is apt to swim, and then the feet soon slide; there are spots which are smooth as glass and others that are rough with loose stones, and in either of these a fall is hard to avoid. He who throughout life is enabled to keep himself upright and to walk without stumbling has the best of reasons for gratitude. What with pitfalls and snares, weak knees, weary feet, and subtle enemies, no child of God would stand fast for an hour were it not for the faithful love which will not suffer his foot to be moved.

Amidst a thousand snares I stand
Upheld and guarded by Thy hand;
That hand unseen shall hold me still,
And lead me to Thy holy hill.

November 11

The LORD's Free Men

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace"
(Romans 6:14).

Sin will reign if it can: it cannot be satisfied with any place below the throne of the heart. We sometimes fear that it will conquer us, and then we cry unto the LORD, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." This is His comforting answer: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." It may assail you and even wound you, but it shall never establish sovereignty over you.

If we were under the law, our sin would gather strength and hold us under its power; for it is the punishment of sin that a man comes under the power of sin. As we are under the covenant of grace, we are secured against departing from the living God by the sure declaration of the covenant. Grace is promised to us by which we are restored from our wanderings, cleansed from our impurities, and set free from the chains of habit.

We must lie down in despair and be "content to serve the Egyptians" if we were still as slaves working

for eternal life; but since we are the LORD's free men, we take courage to fight with [our] temptations, being assured that sin shall never bring us under its sway again. God Himself giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

November 12

Sanctified Souls Are Satisfied

"My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the LORD"
(Jeremiah 31:14).

Note the "My" which comes twice: "My people shall be satisfied with My goodness."

The kind of people who are satisfied with God are marked out as God's own. He is pleased with them, for they are pleased with Him. They call Him their God, and He calls them His people; He is satisfied to take them for a portion, and they are satisfied with Him for their portion. There is a mutual communion of delight between God's Israel and Israel's God.

These people are satisfied. This is a grand thing. Very few of the sons of men are ever satisfied, let their lot be what it may; they have swallowed the horse-leech, and it continually cries, "Give! give!" Only sanctified souls are satisfied souls. God Himself must both convert us and content us.

It is no wonder that the LORD's people should be satisfied with the goodness of their LORD. Here is goodness without mixture, bounty without stint, mercy without chiding, love without change, favor without reserve. If God's goodness does not satisfy us, what will? What! are we still groaning? Surely there is a wrong desire within if it be one which God's goodness does not satisfy. LORD, I am satisfied. Blessed be Thy name.

November 13

The Unfailing Watch

"Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"
(Psalm 121:4).

Jehovah is "the Keeper of Israel." No form of unconsciousness ever steals over Him, neither the deeper slumber nor the slighter sleep. He never fails to watch the house and the heart of His people. This is a sufficient reason for our resting in perfect peace. Alexander said that he slept because his friend Parmenio watched; much more may we sleep because our God is our guard.

"Behold" is here set up to call our attention to the cheering truth. Israel, when he had a stone for his pillow, fell asleep; but His God was awake and came in vision to His servant. When we lie defenseless, Jehovah Himself will cover our head.

The LORD keeps His people as a rich man keeps his treasure, as a captain keeps a city with a

garrison, as a sentry keeps watch over his sovereign. None can harm those who are in such keeping. Let me put my soul into His dear hands. He never forgets us, never ceases actively to care for us, never finds Himself unable to preserve us.

O my LORD, keep me, lest I wander and fall and perish. Keep me, that I may keep Thy commandments. By Thine unslumbering care prevent my sleeping like the sluggard and perishing like those who sleep the sleep of death.

November 14

The Name to Use

"If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it"
(John 14:14).

What a wide promise! Anything! Whether large or small, all my needs are covered by that word "anything". Come, my soul, be free at the mercy seat, and hear thy LORD saying to thee, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

What a wise promise! We are always to ask in the name of Jesus. While this encourages us, it also honors Him. This is a constant plea. Occasionally every other plea is darkened, especially such as we could draw from our own relation to God or our experience of His grace; but at such times the name of Jesus is as mighty at the throne as ever, and we may plead it with full assurance. What an instructive prayer! I may not ask for anything to which I cannot put Christ's hand and seal. I dare not use my LORD's name to a selfish or willful petition. I may only use my LORD's name to prayers which He would Himself pray if He were in my case. It is a high privilege to be authorized to ask in the name of Jesus as if Jesus Himself asked; but our love to Him will never allow us to set that name where He would not have set it.

Am I asking for that which Jesus approves? Dare I put His seal to my prayer? Then I have that which I seek of the Father.

November 15

Limitless Riches

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"
(Philippians 4:19).

Paul's God is our God and will supply all our need. Paul felt sure of this in reference to the Philippians, and we feel sure of it as to ourselves. God will do it, for it is like Him: He loves us, He delights to bless us, and it will glorify Him to do so. His pity, His power, His love, His faithfulness, all work together that we be not famished.

What a measure doth the LORD go by: "According to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The riches

of His grace are large, but what shall we say of the riches of His glory? His "riches of glory by Christ Jesus"-who shall form an estimate of this? According to this immeasurable measure will God fill up the immense abyss of our necessities. He makes the LORD Jesus the receptacle and the channel of His fullness, and then He imparts to us His wealth of love in its highest form. Hallelujah!

The writer knows what it is to be tried in the work of the LORD. Fidelity has been recompensed with anger, and liberal givers have stopped their subscriptions; but he whom they sought to oppress has not been one penny the poorer, nay, rather he has been the richer; for this promise has been true, "My God shall supply all your need." God's supplies are surer than any bank.

November 16

Weapons Doomed to Fail

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn"
(Isaiah 54:17).

There is great clatter in the forges and smithies of the enemy. They are making weapons wherewith to smite the saints. They could not even do as much as this if the LORD of saints did not allow them; for He has created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire. But see how busily they labor! How many swords and spears they fashion! It matters nothing, for on the blade of every weapon you may read this inscription: It shall not Prosper.

But now listen to another noise: it is the strife of tongues. Tongues are more terrible instruments than can be made with hammers and anvils, and the evil which they inflict cuts deeper and spreads wider. What will become of us now? Slander, falsehood, insinuation, ridicule-these are poisoned arrows; how can we meet them? The LORD God promises us that, if we cannot silence them, we shall, at least, escape from being ruined by them. They condemn us for the moment, but we shall condemn them at last and forever. The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped, and their falsehoods shall be turned to the honor of those good men who suffered by them.

November 17

God Never Forsakes

"For the LORD will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance"
(Psalm 94:14).

No, nor will He cast even so much as one of them. Man has his castoffs, but God has none; for His choice is unchangeable, and His love is everlasting. None can find out a single person whom God has forsaken after having revealed Himself savingly to him.

This grand truth is mentioned in the psalm to cheer the heart of the afflicted. The LORD chastens His own; but He never forsakes them. The result of the double work of the law and the rod is our

instruction, and the fruit of that instruction is a quieting of spirit, a sobriety of mind, out of which comes rest. The ungodly are let alone till the pit is digged into which they will fall and be taken; but the godly are sent to school to be prepared for their glorious destiny hereafter. Judgment will return and finish its work upon the rebels, but it will equally return to vindicate the sincere and godly. Hence we may bear the rod of chastisement with calm submission; it means not anger, but love.

God may chasten and correct,
But He never can neglect;
May in faithfulness reprove,
But He ne'er can cease to love.

November 18

Clearly Supernatural

"In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them"

(Zechariah 12:8).

One of the best methods of the LORD's defending His people is to make them strong in inward might. Men are better than walls, and faith is stronger than castles.

The LORD can take the feeblest among us and make him like David, the champion of Israel. LORD, do this with me! Infuse Thy power into me, and fill me with sacred courage that I may face the giant with sling and stone, confident in God.

The LORD can make His greatest champions far mightier than they are: David can be as God, as the angel of Jehovah. This would be a marvelous development, but it is possible, or it would not be spoken of. O LORD, work with the best of our leaders! Show us what Thou art able to do--namely, to raise Thy faithful servants to a height of grace and holiness which shall be clearly supernatural!

LORD, dwell in Thy saints, and they shall be as God; put Thy might into them, and they shall be as the living creatures who dwell in the presence of Jehovah. Fulfill this promise to Thine entire church in this our day, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

November 19

From Obedience to Blessing

"From this day will I bless you"

(Haggai 2:19).

Future things are hidden from us. Yet here is a glass in which we may see the unborn years. The LORD says, "From this day will I bless you."

It is worthwhile to note the day which is referred to in this promise. There had been failure of crops, blasting, and mildew, and all because of the people's sin. Now, the LORD saw these chastened ones commencing to obey His word and build His temple, and therefore He says, "From the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider. From this day will I bless you." If we have lived in any sin, and the Spirit leads us to purge ourselves of it, we may reckon upon the blessing of the LORD. His smile, His Spirit, His grace, His fuller revelation of His truth will all prove to us an enlarged blessing. We may fall into greater opposition from man because of our faithfulness, but we shall rise to closer dealings with the LORD our God and a clearer sight of our acceptance in Him.

LORD, I am resolved to be more true to Thee and more exact in my following of Thy doctrine and Thy precept; and I pray Thee, therefore, by Christ Jesus, to increase the blessedness of my daily life henceforth and forever.

November 20

Hunger Satisfied

"For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"
(Psalm 107:9).

It is well to have longings, and the more intense they are the better. The LORD will satisfy soul-longings, however great and all-absorbing they may be. Let us greatly long, for God will greatly give. We are never in a right state of mind when we are contented with ourselves and are free from longings. Desires for more grace and groanings which cannot be uttered are growing pains, and we should wish to feel them more and more. Blessed Spirit, make us sigh and cry after better things and for more of the best things!

Hunger is by no means a pleasant sensation. Yet blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Such persons shall not only have their hunger relieved with a little food, but they shall be filled. They shall not be filled with any sort of rough stuff, but their diet shall be worthy of their good LORD, for they shall be filled with goodness by Jehovah Himself.

Come, let us not fret because we long and hunger, but let us hear the voice of the psalmist as he also longs and hungers to see God magnified. "Oh, that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

November 21

The Outward, Upward Look

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else"
(Isaiah 45:22).

This is a promise of promises. It lies at the foundation of our spiritual life. Salvation comes through a look at Him who is "a just God and a Saviour." How simple is the direction! "Look unto me." How

reasonable is the requirement! Surely the creature should look to the Creator. We have looked elsewhere long enough; it is time that we look alone to Him who invites our expectation and promises to give us His salvation.

Only a look! Will we not look at once? We are to bring nothing in ourselves but to look outward and upward to our LORD on His throne, whither He has gone up from the cross. A look requires no preparation, no violent effort: it needs neither wit nor wisdom, wealth nor strength. All that we need is in the LORD our God, and if we look to Him for everything, that everything shall be ours, and we shall be saved.

Come, far-off ones, look hither! Ye ends of the earth, turn your eyes this way! As from the furthest regions men may see the sun and enjoy his light, so you who lie in death's borders at the very gates of hell may by a look receive the light of God, the life of heaven, the salvation of the LORD Jesus Christ, who is God and therefore able to save.

November 22

No Condemnation

"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve"
(Jeremiah 50:20).

A glorious word indeed! What a perfect pardon is here promised to the sinful nations of Israel and Judah! Sin is to be so removed that it shall not be found, so blotted out that there shall be none. Glory be unto the God of pardons!

Satan seeks out sins wherewith to accuse us, our enemies seek them that they may lay them to our charge, and our own conscience seeks them even with a morbid eagerness. But when the LORD applies the precious blood of Jesus, we fear no form of search, for "there shall be none"; "they shall not be found." The LORD hath caused the sins of His people to cease to be: He hath finished transgression and made an end of sin. The sacrifice of Jesus has cast our sins into the depths of the sea. This makes us dance for joy.

The reason for the obliteration of sin lies in the fact that Jehovah Himself pardons His chosen ones. His word of grace is not only royal but divine. He speaks absolution, and we are absolved. He applies the atonement, and from that hour His people are beyond all fear of condemnation. Blessed be the name of the sin-annihilating God!

November 23

Acquiring Perseverance

"The LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little"

(Deuteronomy 7:22).

We are not to expect to win victories for the LORD Jesus by a single blow. Evil principles and practices die hard. In some places it takes years of labor to drive out even one of the many vices which defile the inhabitants. We must carry on the war with all our might, even when favored with little manifest success.

Our business in this world is to conquer it for Jesus. We are not to make compromises but to exterminate evils. We are not to seek popularity but to wage unceasing war with iniquity. Infidelity, popery, drink, impurity, oppression, worldliness, error; these are all to be "put out."

The LORD our God can alone accomplish this. He works by His faithful servants, and blessed be His name. He promises that He will so work. "Jehovah thy God will put out those nations before thee." This He will do by degrees that we may learn perseverance, may increase in faith, may earnestly watch, and may avoid carnal security. Let us thank God for a little success and pray for more. Let us never sheathe the sword till the whole land is won for Jesus.

Courage, my heart! Go on little by little, for many littles will make a great whole.

November 24

Pardon and Forgiveness

"He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever"
(Psalm 103:9).

He will chide sometimes, or He would not be a wise Father for such poor, erring children as we are. His chiding is very painful to those who are true, because they feel how sadly they deserve it and how wrong it is on their part to grieve Him. We know what this chiding means, and we bow before the LORD, mourning that we should cause Him to be angry with us.

But what a comfort we find in these lines! "Not always" will He chide. If we repent and turn to Him with hearts broken for sin and broken from sin, He will smile upon us at once. It is no pleasure to Him to turn a frowning face toward those whom He loves with all His heart: it is His joy that our joy should be full.

Come, let us seek His face. There is no reason for despair, nor even for despondency. Let us love a chiding God, and before long we shall sing, "Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Be gone, ye dark forebodings, ye ravens of the soul! Come in, ye humble hopes and grateful memories, ye doves of the heart! He who pardoned us long ago as a judge will again forgive us as a father, and we shall rejoice in His sweet, unchanging love.

November 25

Mountains Turned to Plains

"Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zechariah 4:7).

At this hour a mountain of difficulty, distress, or necessity may be in our way, and natural reason sees no path over it, or through it, or round it. Let faith come in, and straightway the mountain disappears and becomes a plain. But faith must first hear the word of the LORD--"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." This grand truth is a prime necessity for meeting the insurmountable trials of life.

I see that I can do nothing and that all reliance on man is vanity. "Not by might." I see that no visible means can be relied on, but the force is in the invisible Spirit. God alone must work, and men and means must be nothing accounted of. If it be so that the Almighty God takes up the concerns of His people, then great mountains are nothing. He can remove worlds as boys toss balls about or drive them with their foot. This power He can lend to me. If the LORD bids me move an Alp I can do it through His name. It may be a great mountain, but even before my feebleness it shall become a plain; for the LORD hath said it. What can I be afraid of with God on my side?

November 26

Heavenly Alchemy

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20).

Their particular sorrow was the death and absence of their LORD, and it was turned into joy when He rose from the dead and showed Himself in their midst. All the sorrows of saints shall be thus transmuted, even the worst of them, which look as if they must forever remain fountains of bitterness.

Then the more sorrow, the more joy. If we have loads of sorrow, then the LORD's power will turn them into tons of joy. Then the bitterer the trouble the sweeter the pleasure: the swinging of the pendulum far to the left will cause it to go all the farther to the right. The remembrance of the grief shall heighten the flavor of the delight: we shall set the one in contrast with the other, and the brilliance of the diamond shall be the more clearly seen because of the black foil behind it.

Come, my heart, cheer up! In a little while I shall be as glad as I am now gloomy. Jesus tells me that by a heavenly alchemy my sorrow shall be turned into joy. I do not see how it is to be, but I believe it, and I begin to sing by way of anticipation. This depression of spirit is not for long; I shall soon be up among the happy ones who praise the LORD day and night, and there I shall sing of the mercy which delivered me out of great afflictions.

November 27

Rest in All Thy Goings

"And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest"
(Exodus 33:14).

Precious promise! LORD, enable me to appropriate it as all my own.

We must go at certain times from our abode, for here we have no continuing city. It often happens that when we feel most at home in a place, we are suddenly called away from it. Here is the antidote for this ill. The LORD Himself will keep us company. His presence, which includes His favor, His fellowship, His care, and His power, shall be ever with us in every one of our marchings. This means far more than it says; for, in fact, it means all things. If we have God present with us, we have possession of heaven and earth. Go with me, LORD, and then command me where Thou wilt!

But we hope to find a place of rest. The text promises it. We are to have rest of God's own giving, making, and preserving. His presence will cause us to rest even when we are on the march, yea, even in the midst of battle. Rest! Thrice blessed word. Can it ever be enjoyed by mortals? Yes, there is the promise, and by faith we plead it. Rest comes from the Comforter, from the Prince of Peace, and from the glorious Father who rested on the seventh day from all His works. To be with God is to rest in the most emphatic sense.

November 28

Doing What God Can Bless

"The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto"
(Deuteronomy 28:8).

If we obey the LORD our God He will bless that which He gives us. Riches are no curse when blessed of the LORD. When men have more than they require for their immediate need and begin to lay up in storehouses, the dry rot of covetousness or the blight of hard-heartedness is apt to follow the accumulation; but with God's blessing it is not so. Prudence arranges the saving, liberality directs the spending, gratitude maintains consecration, and praise sweetens enjoyment. It is a great mercy to have God's blessing in one's iron safe and on one's banking account.

What a favor is made ours by the last clause! "The LORD shall bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto." We would not put our hand to anything upon which we dare not ask God's blessing, neither would we go about it without prayer and faith. But what a privilege to be able to look for the LORD's help in every enterprise! Some talk of a lucky man: the blessing of the LORD is better than luck. The patronage of the great is nothing to the favor of God. Self-reliance is all very well; but the LORD's blessing is infinitely more than all the fruit of talent, genius, or tact.

November 29

Know How to Wait

"He that believeth shall not make haste"
(Isaiah 28:16).

He shall make haste to keep the LORD's commandments; but he shall not make haste in any impatient or improper sense.

He shall not haste to run away, for he shall not be overcome with the fear which causes panic. When others are flying hither and thither as if their wits had failed them, the believer shall be quiet, calm, and deliberate, and so shall be able to act wisely in the hour of trial.

He shall not haste in his expectations, craving his good things at once and on the spot, but he will wait God's time. Some are in a desperate hurry to have the bird in the hand, for they regard the LORD's promise as a bird in the bush, not likely to be theirs. Believers know how to wait.

He shall not haste by plunging into wrong or questionable action. Unbelief must be doing something, and thus it works its own undoing; but faith makes no more haste than good speed, and thus it is not forced to go back sorrowfully by the way which it followed heedlessly.

How is it with me? Am I believing, and am I therefore keeping to the believer's pace, which is walking with God? Peace, fluttering spirit! Oh, rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him! Heart, see that thou do this at once!

November 30

God Is in the Front Line

"The LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed"
(Deuteronomy 31:8).

In the presence of a great work or a great warfare, here is a text which should help us to buckle on our harness. If Jehovah Himself goes before us, it must be safe to follow. Who can obstruct our progress if the LORD Himself is in the van? Come, brother soldiers, let us make a prompt advance! Why do we hesitate to pass on to victory?

Nor is the LORD before us only; He is with us. Above, beneath, around, within is the omnipotent, omnipresent One. In all time, even to eternity, He will be with us even as He has been. How this should nerve our arm! Dash at it boldly, ye soldiers of the cross, for the LORD of hosts is with us!

Being before us and with us, He will never withdraw His help. He cannot fail in Himself, and He will not fail toward us. He will continue to help us according to our need, even to the end. As He cannot fail us, so He will not forsake us. He will always be both able and willing to grant us strength and succor till fighting days are gone.

Let us not fear nor be dismayed; for the LORD of hosts will go down to the battle with us, will bear the brunt of the fight, and give us the victory.