

Faith's Checkbook

(Daily Devotional)

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

MONTH OF SEPTEMBER ONLY

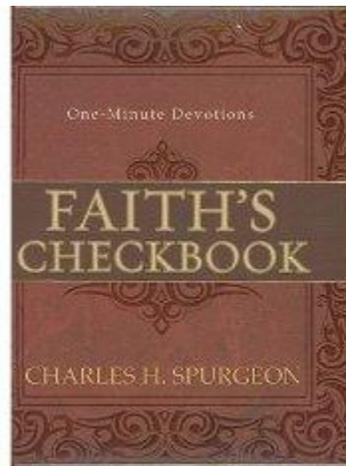
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The Complete Devotional

Faith's Checkbook by Charles Spurgeon



“Doth not all nature around me praise God? If I were silent, I should be an exception to the universe. Doth not the thunder praise Him as it rolls like drums in the march of the God of armies? Do not the mountains praise Him when the woods upon their summits wave in adoration? Doth not the lightning write His name in letters of fire? Hath not the whole earth a voice? And shall I, can I, silent be?”

- Charles Spurgeon

September 1

ABIDING IN OBEDIENCE, IN LOVE

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love” (John 15:10)

These things cannot be parted — abiding in obedience, and abiding in the love of Jesus. A life under the rule of Christ can alone prove that we are the objects of our Lord’s delight. We must keep our Lord’s command if we would bask in His love. If we live in sin we cannot live in the love of Christ. Without the holiness which pleases God, we cannot please Jesus.

He who cares nothing for holiness knows nothing of the love of Jesus. Conscious enjoyment of our Lord’s love is a delicate thing. It is far more sensitive to sin and holiness than mercury is to cold and heat. When we are tender of heart, and careful in thought, lip, and life to honor our Lord Jesus, then we receive tokens of His love without number. If we desire to perpetuate such bliss we must perpetuate holiness. The Lord Jesus will not hide His face from us unless we hide our face from Him. Sin makes the cloud which darkens our Sun: if we will be watchfully obedient and completely consecrated, we may walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have as sure an abiding in the love of Jesus as Jesus has in the love of the Father. Here is a sweet promise with a solemn “if.” Lord, let me have this “if” in my hand; for as a key it opens this casket.

September 2

FOLLOW TO KNOW

“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord” (Hosea 6:3)

Not all at once, but by degrees shall we attain to holy knowledge, and our business is to persevere and learn by little and little. We need not despair, though our progress may be slow, for we shall yet know. The Lord, who has become our Teacher, will not give us up, however slow of understanding we may be; for it is not for His honor that any degree of human folly should baffle His skill. The Lord delights to make the simple wise.

Our duty is to keep to our main topic, and follow on to know, not this peculiar doctrine nor that, but Jehovah Himself. To know Father, Son, and Spirit, the Triune God, this is life eternal: let us keep to this, for in this way we shall gain complete instruction. By following on to know the Lord, we learn healing after being torn, binding up after smiting, and life after death. Experience has its perfect work when the heart follows the trackway of the Almighty Lord.

My soul, keep thou close to Jesus, follow on to know God in Jesus, and so shalt thou come to the knowledge of Christ, which is the most excellent of all the sciences. The Holy Ghost will lead thee into all truth. Is not this His gracious office? Rely upon Him to fulfill it.

September 3

OUT OF SPIRITUAL DEATH

“And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves” (Ezekiel 37:13)

Indeed it must be so: those who receive life from the dead are sure to recognize the hand of the Lord in such a resurrection. This is the greatest and most remarkable of all changes that a man can undergo -to be brought out of the grave of spiritual death, and made to rejoice in the light and liberty of spiritual life. None could work this but the living God, the Lord and giver of life.

Ah me! how well do I remember when I was lying in the valley full of dry bones, as dry as any of them! Blessed was the day when free and sovereign grace sent the man of God to prophesy upon me! Glory be to God for the stirring which that word of faith caused among the dry bones.

More blessed still was that heavenly breath from the four winds which made me live! Now know I the quickening Spirit of the ever-living Jehovah. Truly Jehovah is the living God, for He made me live. My new life even in its pinings and sorrowings is clear proof to me that the Lord can kill and make alive. He is the only God. He is all that is great, gracious, and glorious, and my quickened soul adores Him as the great I AM. All glory be unto His sacred name! As long as I live I will praise Him.

September 4

VICTORY WITHOUT BATTLE

“But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen” (Hosea 1:7)

Precious word! Jehovah Himself will deliver His people in the greatness of His mercy, but He will not do it by the ordinary means. Men are slow to render to God the glory due unto His name. If they go to battle with sword and bow, and win the victory, they ought to praise their God; yet they do not, but begin to magnify their own right arm, and glory in their horses and horsemen. For this reason our Jehovah often determines to save His people without second means, that all the honor may be to Himself alone.

Look, then, my heart, to the Lord alone, and not to man. Expect to see God all the more clearly when there is no one else to look to. If I have no friend, no adviser, no one at my back, let me be none the less confident if I can feel that the Lord Himself is on my side; yea, let me be glad if He gives victory without battle, as the text seems to imply. Why do I ask for horses and horsemen if Jehovah Himself has mercy upon me, and lifts up His arm for my defense? Why need I bow or sword if God will save? Let me trust, and not be afraid, from this day forth and for evermore. Amen.

September 5

WITH ME WHEREVER I AM

“The Lord will be with you” (1 Chronicles 20:17)

This was a great mercy for Jehoshaphat, for a great multitude had come out against him; and it will be a great mercy for me, for I have great need, and I have no might or wisdom. If the Lord be with me, it matters little who may desert me. If the Lord be with me, I shall conquer in the battle of life, and the greater my trials the more glorious will be my victory. How can I be sure that the Lord is with me?

For certain He is with me if I am with Him. If I trust in His faithfulness, believe His words, and obey His commands, He is assuredly with me. If I am on Satan's side God is against me, and cannot be otherwise; but if I live to honor God I may be sure that He will honor me. I am quite sure that God is with me if Jesus is my sole and only Saviour. If I have placed my soul in the hands of God's Only-begotten Son, then I may be sure that the Father will put forth all His power to preserve me, that His Son may not be dishonored.

Oh for faith to take hold upon the short but sweet text for today! O Lord, fulfill this word to thy servant! Be with me in the house, in the street, in the field, in the shop, in company, and alone. Be thou also with all thy people.

September 6

A STRONG HEART

“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psalm 27:14)

Wait! Wait! Let your waiting be on the Lord! He is worth waiting for. He never disappoints the waiting soul.

While waiting keep up your spirits. Expect a great deliverance, and be ready to praise God for it. The promise which should cheer you is in the middle of the verse — “He shall strengthen thine heart.” This goes at once to the place where you need help. If the heart be sound, all the rest of the system will work well. The heart wants calming and cheering; and both of these will come if it be strengthened. A forceful heart rests and rejoices, and throbs force into the whole man.

No one else can get at that secret urn of life, the heart, so as to pour strength into it. He alone who made it can make it strong. God is full of strength, and, therefore, He can impart it to those who need it. Oh, be brave; for the Lord will impart His strength to you, and you shall be calm in tempest, and glad in sorrow.

He who penned these lines can write as David did -“Wait, I say, on the Lord.” I do, indeed, say it. I know by long and deep experience that it is good for me to wait upon the Lord.

September 7

THE REACH OF ALMIGHTY GRACE

“It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God” (Hosea 1:10)

Sovereign grace can make strangers into sons, and the Lord here declares His purpose to deal thus with rebels, and make them know what He has done. Beloved reader, the Lord has done this in my case; has He done the like for you? Then let us join hands and hearts in praising His adorable name.

Some of us were so decidedly ungodly that the Lord’s Word most truly said to our conscience and heart, “Ye are not my people.” In the house of God, and in our own homes, when we read the Bible, this was the voice of God’s Spirit in our soul, “Ye are not my people.” Truly a sad condemning voice it was. But now, in the same places, from the same ministry and Scripture, we hear a voice, which saith, “Ye are the sons of the living God.” Can we be grateful enough for this? Is it not wonderful? Does it not give us hope for others? Who is beyond the reach of almighty grace? How can we despair of any, since the Lord has wrought so marvelous a change in us?

He who has kept this one great promise will keep every other; wherefore, let us go forward with songs of adoration and confidence.

September 8

BROKEN AND SMOKING

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench” (Isaiah 42:3)

Then I may reckon upon tender treatment from my Lord. Indeed, I feel myself to be at best as weak, as pliant, as worthless as a reed. Someone said, “I don’t care a rush for you”; and the speech, though unkind, was not untrue. Alas! I am worse than a reed when it grows by the river, for that at least can hold up its head. I am bruised, sorely, sadly bruised. There is no music in me now; there is a rift which lets out all the melody. Ah, me! Yet Jesus will not break me; and if he will not, then I mind little what others try to do. O sweet and compassionate Lord, I nestle down beneath thy protection, and forget my bruises!

Truly I am also fit to be likened to “the smoking flax,” whose light is gone, and only its smoke remains. I fear I am rather a nuisance than a benefit. My fears tell me that the devil has blown out my light, and left me an obnoxious smoke, and that my Lord will soon put an extinguisher upon me. Yet I perceive that though there were snuffers under the law, there were no extinguishers; and Jesus will not quench me; therefore, I am hopeful. Lord, kindle me anew, and cause me to shine forth to thy glory, and to the extolling of thy tenderness.

September 9

FEAR HAS ITS PLACE

“Happy is the man that feareth alway” (Proverbs 28:14)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning and the foundation of all true religion. Without a solemn awe and reverence of God there is no foothold for the more brilliant virtues. He whose soul does not worship will never live in holiness.

He is happy who feels a jealous fear of doing wrong. Holy fear looks not only before it leaps, but even before it moves. It is afraid of error, afraid of neglecting duty, afraid of committing sin. It fears ill company, loose talk, and questionable policy. This does not make a man wretched, but it brings him happiness. The watchful sentinel is happier than the soldier who sleeps at his post. He who foreseeeth evil and escapes it is happier than he who walks carelessly on and is destroyed.

Fear of God is a quiet grace which leads a man along a choice road, of which it is written, “No lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon.” Fear of the very appearance of evil is a purifying principle, which enables a man, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to keep his garments unspotted from the world. In both senses he that “feareth alway” is made happy. Solomon had tried both worldliness and holy fear: in the one he found vanity, in the other happiness. Let us not repeat his trial, but abide by his verdict.

September 10

COMING IN; GOING OUT

“Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out” (Deuteronomy 28:6)

The blessings of the law are not cancelled. Jesus confirmed the promise when He bore the penalty. If I keep the commands of my Lord, I may appropriate this promise without question.

This day I will come in to my house without fear of evil tidings, and I will come into my closet expecting to hear good news from my Lord. I will not be afraid to come in unto myself by self-examination, nor to come in to my affairs by a diligent inspection of my business. I have a good deal of work to do indoors, within my own soul; oh, for a blessing upon it all, the blessing of the Lord Jesus, who has promised to abide with me.

I must also go out. Timidity makes me wish that I could stay within doors, and never go into the sinful world again. But I must go out in my calling, and I must go out that I may be helpful to my brethren, and useful to the ungodly. I must be a defender of the faith and an assailant of evil. Oh, for a blessing upon my going out this day! Lord, let me go where Thou leadest, on Thy errands, under Thy command, and in the power of Thy Spirit.

Lord Jesus, turn in with me and be my guest; and then walk out with me, and cause my heart to burn while You speak with me by the way.

September 11

SUFFERERS MAKE STRONG BELIEVERS

“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth” (Lamentations 3:27)

This is as good as a promise. It has been good, it is good, and it will be good for me to bear the yoke.

Early in life I had to feel the weight of conviction, and ever since it has proved a soul-enriching burden. Should I have loved the gospel so well had I not learned by deep experience the need of salvation by grace? Jabez was more honorable than his brethren because his mother bare him with sorrow, and those who suffer much in being born unto God make strong believers in sovereign grace.

The yoke of censure is an irksome one, but it prepares a man for future honor. He is not fit to be a leader who has not run the gauntlet of contempt. Praise intoxicates if it be not preceded by abuse. Men who rise to eminence without a struggle usually fall into dishonor.

The yoke of affliction, disappointment, and excessive labor is by no means to be sought for; but when the Lord lays it on us in our youth it frequently develops a character which glorifies God and blesses the Church.

Come, my soul, bow thy neck; take up thy cross. It was good for thee when young, it will not harm thee now. For Jesus' sake, shoulder it cheerfully.

September 12

WHAT OF MY HOUSE?

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31)

This gospel for a man with a sword at his throat is the gospel for me. This would suit me if I were dying, and it is all that I need while I am living. I look away from self, and sin, and all idea of personal merit, and I trust the Lord Jesus as the Saviour whom God has given. I believe in Him, I rest on Him, I accept Him to be my all in all. Lord, I am saved, and I shall be saved to all eternity, for I believe in Jesus. Blessed be thy name for this.

May I daily prove by my life that I am saved from selfishness, and worldliness, and every form of evil. But those last words about my “house”: Lord, I would not run away with half a promise when thou dost give a whole one. I beseech thee, save all my family. Save the nearest and dearest. Convert the children, and the grandchildren, if I have any. Be gracious to my servants, and all who dwell under my roof, or work for me. Thou makest this promise to me personally if I believe in the Lord Jesus; I beseech thee to do as thou hast said.

I would go over in my prayer every day the names of all my brothers and sisters, parents, children, friends, relatives, servants, and give thee no rest till that word is fulfilled, “and thy house.”

September 13

THE DEW OF HEAVEN

“His heavens shall drop down dew” (Deuteronomy 33:28)

What the dew in the East is to the world of nature, that is the influence of the Spirit in the realm of grace. How greatly do I need it! Without the Spirit of God I am a dry and withered thing. I droop, I fade, I die. How sweetly does this dew refresh me! When once favored with it I feel happy, lively, vigorous, elevated. I want nothing more. The Holy Spirit brings me life, and all that life requires. All else without the dew of the Spirit is less than nothing to me: I hear, I read, I pray, I sing, I go to the table of communion, and I find no blessing there until the Holy Ghost visits me.

But when He bedews me, every means of grace is sweet and profitable. What a promise is this for me! “His heavens shall drop down dew.” I shall be visited with grace. I shall not be left to my natural drought, or to the world’s burning heat, or to the sirocco of Satanic temptation. Oh, that I may at this very hour feel the gentle, silent, saturating dew of the Lord!

Why should I not? He who has made me to live as the grass lives in the meadow, will treat me as He treats the grass; He will refresh me from above. Grass cannot call for dew as I do. Surely, the Lord who visits the unpraying plant will answer to His pleading child.

September 14

MARK OF DIVINE APPROVAL

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12)

Yes, he is blessed while he is enduring the trial. No eye can see this till it has been anointed with heavenly eye-salve. But he must endure it, and neither rebel against God, nor turn aside from his integrity. He is blessed who has gone through the fire, and has not been consumed as a counterfeit.

When the test is over, then comes the hallmark of divine approval — “the crown of life.” As if the Lord said, “Let him live; he has been weighed in the balances, and he is not found wanting.” Life is the reward: not mere being; but holy, happy, true existence, the realization of the divine purpose concerning us. Already a higher form of spiritual life and enjoyment crowns those who have safely passed through fiercest trials of faith and love.

The Lord hath promised the crown of life to those who love Him. Only lovers of the Lord will hold out in the hour of trial; the rest will either sink or sulk, or slink back to the world. Come, my heart, dost thou love thy Lord? Truly? Deeply? Wholly? Then that love will be tried; but many waters will not quench it, neither will the floods drown it. Lord, let thy love nourish mine to the end.

September 15

THE SAFEST SHELTER

*“And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest.”
(Isaiah 32:2)*

Who this MAN is we all know! Who could He be but the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven, the Man of sorrows, the Son of Man? What a hiding-place He has been to His people! He bears the full force of the wind Himself, and so He shelters those who hide themselves in Him. We have thus escaped the wrath of God, and we shall thus escape the anger of men, the cares of this life, and the dread of death. Why do we stand in the wind when we may so readily and so surely get out of it by hiding behind our Lord? Let us this day run to Him, and be at peace.

Often the common wind of trouble rises in its force and becomes a tempest, sweeping everything before it. Things which looked firm and stable rock in the blast, and many and great are the falls among our carnal confidences. Our Lord Jesus, the glorious Man, is a covert which is never blown down. In Him we mark the tempest sweeping by, but we ourselves rest in delightful serenity.

This day let us just stow ourselves away in our hiding-place, and sit and sing under the protection of our Covert. Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! How we love thee! Well we may, for thou art to us a shelter in the time of storm.

September 16

REWARD IS CERTAIN

*“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward”
(Matthew 10:42)*

Well, I can do as much as that. I can do a kind act toward the Lord’s servant. The Lord knows I love them all, and would count it an honor to wash their feet. For the sake of their Master I love the disciples.

How gracious of the Lord to mention so insignificant an action — “to give to drink a Cup of cold water only”! This I can do, however poor: this I may do, however lowly: this I will do right cheerfully. This, which seems so little, the Lord notices — notices when done to the least of His followers. Evidently it is not the cost, nor the skill, nor the quantity, that He looks at, but the motive: that which we do to a disciple, because he is a disciple, his Lord observes, and recompenses. He does not reward us for the merit of what we do, but according to the riches of His grace. I give a cup of cold water, and He makes me to drink of living water. I give to one of His little ones, and He treats me as one of them. Jesus finds an apology for His liberality in that which His grace has led me to do, and He says, “He shall in no wise lose his reward.”

September 17

LIKE PALM AND CEDAR

*“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon”
(Psalm 92:12)*

These trees are not trained and pruned by man: palms and cedars are “trees of the Lord,” and it is by His care that they flourish; even so it is with the saints of the Lord, they are His own care. These trees are evergreen and are beautiful objects at all seasons of the year. Believers are not sometimes holy and sometimes ungodly: they stand in the beauty of the Lord under all weathers. Everywhere these trees are noteworthy: no one can gaze upon a landscape in which there are either palms or cedars without his attention being fixed upon these royal growths. The followers of Jesus are the observed of all observers: like a city set on a hill they cannot be hid.

The child of God flourishes like a palm tree, which pushes all its strength upward in one erect column without a single branch. It is a pillar with a glorious capital. It has no growth to the right or to the left, but sends all its force heavenward, and bears its fruit as near the sky as possible. Lord, fulfill this type in me. The cedar braves all storms, and grows near the eternal snows, the Lord Himself filling it with a sap which keeps its heart warm and its boughs strong. Lord, so let it be with me, I pray thee. Amen.

September 18

COMPLETE SAFETY

*“And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders”
(Deuteronomy 33:12)*

Yes, there is no safety like that which comes of dwelling near to God. For His best beloved the Lord can find no surer or safer place. O Lord, let me always abide under thy shadow, close to thy wounded side. Nearer and nearer would I come to thee, my Lord; and when once specially near thee, I would abide there for ever.

What a covering is that which the Lord gives to His chosen! Not a fair roof shall cover him, nor a bombproof casement, nor even an angel's wing, but Jehovah Himself. Nothing can come at us when we are thus covered. This covering the Lord will grant us all the day long, however long the day. Lord, let me abide this day consciously beneath this canopy of love, this pavilion of sovereign power.

Does the third clause mean that the Lord in His temple would dwell among the mountains of Benjamin, or that the Lord would be where Benjamin's burden should be placed, or does it mean that we are borne upon the shoulders of the Eternal? In any case, the Lord is the support and strength of His saints. Lord, let me ever enjoy thy help and then my arms will be sufficient for me.

September 19

THE REASON FOR SINGING

“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17)

What a word is this! Jehovah God in the center of His people in all the majesty of His power! This presence alone suffices to inspire us with peace and hope. Treasures of boundless might are stored in our Jehovah, and He dwells in His church, therefore may His people shout for joy.

We not only have His presence, but He is engaged upon His choice work of salvation. “He will save.” He is always saving: He takes His name of Jesus from it. Let us not fear any danger, for He is mighty to save. Nor is this all. He abides evermore the same; He loves, He finds rest in loving, He will not cease to love. His love gives Him joy. He even finds a theme for song in His beloved. This is exceedingly wonderful. When God wrought creation He did not sing, but simply said, “It is very good”; but when He came to redemption, then the sacred Trinity felt a joy to be expressed in song. Think of it, and be astonished! Jehovah Jesus sings a marriage song over His chosen bride. She is to Him His love, His joy, His rest, His song. O Lord Jesus, by thine immeasurable love to us teach us to love thee, to rejoice in thee, and to sing unto thee our life-psalm.

September 20

PERFECT WILLINGNESS

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” Psalm 110:3

Blessed be the God of grace that it is so! He has a people whom He has chosen from of old to be His peculiar portion. These by nature have wills as stubborn as the rest of the froward sons of Adam; but when the day of His power comes, and grace displays its omnipotence, they become willing to repent, and to believe in Jesus. None are saved unwillingly, but the will is made sweetly to yield itself. What a wondrous power is this, which never violates the will, and yet rules it! God does not break the lock, but He opens it by a master-key which He alone can handle.

Now are we willing to be, to do, or to suffer as the Lord wills. If at any time we grow rebellious He has but to come to us with power, and straightway we run in the way of His commands with all our hearts. May this be a day of power with me as to some noble effort for the glory of God and the good of my fellow-men! Lord, I am willing; may I not hope that this is a day of thy power? I am wholly at thy disposal; willing, yea, eager, to be used of thee for thy holy purposes. O Lord, let me not have to cry, “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which I would, I find not”; but give me power as thou givest me will.

September 21

LET TRIALS BLESS

“Knowing that tribulation worketh patience” (Romans 5:3)

This is a promise in essence if not in form. We have need of patience, and here we see the way of getting it. It is only by enduring that we learn to endure, even as by swimming men learn to swim. You could not learn that art on dry land, nor learn patience without trouble. Is it not worthwhile to suffer tribulation for the sake of gaining that beautiful equanimity of mind which quietly acquiesces in all the will of God?

Yet our text sets forth a singular fact, which is not according to nature, but is supernatural. Tribulation in and of itself worketh petulance, unbelief, and rebellion. It is only by the sacred alchemy of grace that it is made to work in us patience. We do not thresh the wheat to lay the dust: yet the flail of tribulation does this upon God’s floor. We do not toss a man about in order to give him rest, and yet so the Lord dealeth with His children. Truly this is not the manner of man, but greatly redounds to the glory of our all-wise God.

Oh, for grace to let my trials bless me! Why should I wish to stay their gracious operation? Lord, I ask thee to remove my affliction, but I beseech thee ten times more to remove my impatience. Precious Lord Jesus, with thy cross engrave the image of thy patience on my heart.

September 22

BROAD RIVERS WITHOUT GALLEYS

“But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby” (Isaiah 33:21)

The Lord will be to us the greatest good without any of the drawbacks which seem necessarily to attend the best earthly things. If a city is favored with broad rivers, it is liable to be attacked by galleys with oars, and other ships of war. But when the Lord represents the abundance of His bounty under this figure, He takes care expressly to shut out the fear which the metaphor might suggest. Blessed be His perfect love!

Lord, if thou send me wealth like broad rivers, do not let the galley with oars come up in the shape of worldliness or pride. If thou grant me abundant health and happy spirits, do not let “the gallant ship” of carnal ease come sailing up the flowing flood. If I have success in holy service, broad as the German Rhine, yet let me never find the galley of self-conceit and self-confidence floating on the waves of my usefulness. Should I be so supremely happy as to enjoy the light of thy countenance year after year, yet let me never despise thy feeble saints, nor allow the vain notion of my own perfection to sail up the broad rivers of my full assurance. Lord, give me that blessing which maketh rich, and neither addeth sorrow, nor addeth sin.

September 23

DELIVERANCE FROM DUST AND CHAFF

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth” (Amos 9:9)

The sifting process is going on still. Wherever we go, we are still being winnowed and sifted. In all countries God’s people are being tried “like as corn is sifted in a sieve.” Sometimes the devil holds the sieve, and tosses us up and down at a great rate, with the earnest desire to get rid of us for ever. Unbelief is not slow to agitate our heart and mind with its restless fears. The world lends a willing hand at the same process, and shakes us to the right and to the left with great vigor. Worst of all, the church, so largely apostate as it is, comes in to give a more furious force to the sifting process.

Well, well! let it go on. Thus is the chaff severed from the wheat. Thus is the wheat delivered from dust and chaff. And how great is the mercy which comes to us in the text, “yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth”! All shall be preserved that is good, true, gracious. Not one of the least of believers shall be lost, neither shall any believer lose anything worth calling a loss. We shall be so kept in the sifting that it shall be a real gain to us through Christ Jesus.

September 24

THE LIFE-GIVING STREAM

“And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live” (Ezekiel 47:9)

The living waters, in the prophet’s vision, flowed into the Dead Sea, and carried life with them, even into that stagnant lake. Where grace goes, spiritual life is the immediate and the everlasting consequence. Grace proceeds sovereignly according to the will of God, even as a river in all its windings follows its own sweet will; and wherever it comes it does not wait for life to come to it, but it creates life by its own quickening flow.

Oh, that it would pour along our streets, and flood our slums! Oh, that it would now come into my house, and rise till every chamber were made to swim with it! Lord, let the living water flow to my family and my friends, and let it not pass me by. I hope I have drunk of it already; but I desire to bathe in it, yea, to swim in it. O my Saviour, I need life more abundantly.

Come to me, I pray thee, till every part of my nature is vividly energetic and intensely active. Living God, I pray thee, fill me with thine own life. I am a poor, dry stick; come and make me so to live that, like Aaron’s rod, I may bud and blossom and bring forth fruit unto thy glory. Quicken me, for the sake of my Lord Jesus. Amen.

September 25

THE SACRIFICE HAS BEEN ACCEPTED

“If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things” (Judges 13:23)

This is a sort of promise deduced by logic. It is an inference fairly drawn from ascertained facts. It was not likely that the Lord had revealed to Manoah and his wife that a son would be born to them, and yet had it in His heart to destroy them. The wife reasoned well, and we shall do well if we follow her line of argument.

The Father has accepted the great sacrifice of Calvary, and has declared Himself well pleased therewith; how can He now be pleased to kill us? Why a substitute if the sinner must still perish? The accepted sacrifice of Jesus puts an end to fear.

The Lord has shown us our election, our adoption, our union to Christ, our marriage to the Well-beloved: how can He now destroy us? The promises are loaded with blessings, which necessitate our being preserved unto eternal life. It is not possible for the Lord to cast us away, and yet fulfill His covenant. The past assures us, and the future reassures us. We shall not die, but live; for we have seen Jesus, and in Him we have seen the Father by the illumination of the Holy Ghost. Because of this life-giving sight we must live for ever.

September 26

AMONG THE REDEEMED

*“Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations”
(Numbers 23:9)*

Who would wish to dwell among the nations, and to be numbered with? Why, even the professing church is such that to follow the Lord fully within its bounds is very difficult. There is such a mingling and mixing that one often sighs for “a lodge in some vast wilderness.”

Certain it is that the Lord would have His people follow a separated path as to the world, and come out decidedly and distinctly from it. We are set apart by the divine decree, purchase, and calling, and our inward experience has made us greatly to differ from men of the world; and therefore our place is not in their Vanity Fair, nor in their City of Destruction, but in the narrow way where all true pilgrims must follow their Lord.

This may not only reconcile us to the world’s cold shoulder and sneers, but even cause us to accept them with pleasure as being a part of our covenant portion. Our names are not in the same book, we are not of the same seed, we are not bound for the same place, neither are we trusting to the same guide, therefore it is well that we are not of their number. Only let us be found in the number of the redeemed, and we are content to be odd and solitary to the end of the chapter.

September 27

THE DIVINE LIGHT IN DARKNESS

“For thou wilt light my candle” (Psalm 18:28)

It may be that my soul sits in darkness; and if this be of a spiritual kind, no human power can bring me light. Blessed be God! He can enlighten my darkness, and at once light my candle. Even though I may be surrounded by a “darkness which might be felt,” yet He can break the gloom, and immediately make it bright around me.

The mercy is, that if He lights the candle none can blow it out, neither will it go out for lack of substance, nor burn out of itself through the lapse of hours. The lights which the Lord kindled in the beginning are shining still. The Lord’s lamps may need trimming, but He does not put them out. Let me, then, like the nightingale, sing in the dark. Expectation shall furnish me with music, and hope shall pitch the tune. Soon I shall rejoice in a candle of God’s lighting. I am dull and dreary just now. Perhaps it is the weather, or bodily weakness, or the surprise of a sudden trouble; but whatever has made the darkness, it is God alone who will bring the light.

My eyes are unto Him alone. I shall soon have the candles of the Lord shining about me; and, further on in His own good time, I shall be where they need no candle, neither light of the sun. Hallelujah!

September 28

WORK IS DONE; REST IN HIM

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9)

God has provided a Sabbath, and some must enter into it. Those to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief; therefore, that Sabbath remains for the people of God. David sang of it; but he had to touch the minor key, for Israel refused the rest of God. Joshua Could not give it, nor Canaan yield it: it remains for believers.

Come, then, let us labor to enter into this rest. Let us quit the weary toil of sin and self. Let us cease from all confidence, even in those works of which it might be said, “They are very good.” Have we any such? Still, let us cease from our own works, as God did from His. Now let us find solace in the finished work of our Lord Jesus. Everything is fully done: justice demands no more. Great peace is our portion in Christ Jesus. As to providential matters, the work of grace in the soul, and the work of the Lord in the souls of others, let us cast these burdens upon the Lord, and rest in Him. When the Lord gives us a yoke to bear, He does so that by taking it up we may find rest. By faith we labor to enter into the rest of God, and we renounce all rest in self-satisfaction or indolence. Jesus Himself is perfect rest and we are filled to the brim in Him.

September 29

TO GLORIFY CHRIST JESUS

*“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”
(John 16:14)*

The Holy Ghost Himself cannot better glorify the Lord Jesus than by showing to us Christ's own things. Jesus is His own best commendation. There is no adorning Him except with His own gold.

The Comforter shows us that which He has received of our Lord Jesus. We never see anything aright till He reveals it. He has a way of opening our minds, and of opening the Scriptures, and by this double process He sets forth our Lord to us. There is much art in setting forth a matter, and that art belongs in the highest degree to the Spirit of truth. He shows us the things themselves. This is a great privilege, as those know who have enjoyed the hallowed vision.

Let us seek the illumination of the Spirit; not to gratify our curiosity, nor even to bring us personal comfort, so much as to glorify the Lord Jesus. Oh, to have worthy ideas of Him! Groveling notions dishonor our precious Lord. Oh, to have such vivid impressions of His person, and work, and glory, that we may with heart and soul cry out to His praise!

Where there is a heart enriched by the Holy Ghost's teaching there will be a Saviour glorified beyond expression. Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly light, and show us Jesus our Lord!

September 30

NEEDS TO OPEN OUR MOUTHS

“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it” (Psalm 81:10)

What an encouragement to pray! Our human notions would lead us to ask small things because our deservings are so small; but the Lord would have us request great blessings. Prayer should be as simple a matter as the opening of the mouth; it should be a natural, unconstrained utterance. When a man is earnest he opens his mouth wide, and our text urges us to be fervent in our supplications.

Yet it also means that we may make bold with God, and ask many and large blessings at His hands. Read the whole verse, and see the argument: “I am Jehovah, thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Because the Lord has given us so much He invites us to ask for more, yea, to expect more.

See how the little birds in their nests seem to be all mouth when the mother comes to feed them. Let it be the same with us. Let us take in grace at every door. Let us drink it in as a sponge sucks up the water in which it lies. God is ready to fill us if we are Only ready to be filled. Let our needs make us open our mouths; let our faintness cause us to open our mouths and pant; yea, let our alarm make us open our mouths with a child’s cry. The opened mouth shall be filled by the Lord Himself. So be it unto us, O Lord, this day.

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