Faith's Checkbook - July-Sept

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365 devotionals by C H Spurgeon centering on the promises of Jehovah, the Covenant Keeping God. Search this page by depressing the "**Ctrl**" (Control) key (bottom row, far left of keyboard) and the letter "**F**" to bring up the "**Find**" box. Enter a word or phrase and click "**Find Next**". Remember that with any commentary you would be well advised first spend time studying the passage in context (Click to read Spurgeon's personal testimony)

FAITH'S CHECKBOOK

C H Spurgeon

July 1

God with Us

"God shall be with you" (Genesis 48:21).

Good old Jacob could no more be with Joseph, for his hour had come to die: but he left his son without anxiety, for he said with confidence, "God shall be with you." When our dearest relations or our most helpful friends are called home by death, we must console ourselves with the reflection that the LORD is not departed from us but lives for us and abides with us forever. If God be with us, we are in ennobling company, even though we are poor and despised. If God be with us, we have all-sufficient strength, for nothing can be too hard for the LORD. If God be with us, we are always safe, for none can harm those who walk under His shadow. Oh, what a joy we have here! Not only is God with us, but He will be with us. With us as individuals; with us as families; with us as churches. Is not the very name of Jesus, Immanuel -- God with us? Is not this the best of all, that God is with us? Let us be bravely diligent and joyously hopeful. Our cause must prosper, the truth must win, for the LORD is with those who are with Him. All this day may this sweet word be enjoyed by every believer who turns to "faith's checkbook." No greater happiness is possible.

July 2

Refreshing Sleep

"So He giveth His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2).

Ours is not a life of anxious care but of happy faith. Our heavenly Father will supply the wants of His own children, and He knoweth what we have need of before we ask Him. We may therefore go to our beds at the proper hour and not wear ourselves out by sitting up late to plot, and plan, and contrive. If we have learned to rely upon our God, we shall not lie awake with fear gnawing at our hearts; but we shall leave our care with the LORD, our meditation of Him shall be sweet, and He will give us refreshing sleep. To be the LORD's beloved is the highest possible honor, and he who has it may feel that ambition itself could desire no more, and therefore every selfish wish may go to sleep. What more is there even in heaven than the love of God? Rest, then, O soul, for thou hast all things. Yet we toss to and fro unless the LORD Himself gives us not only the reasons for rest but rest itself. Yea, He doth this. Jesus Himself is our peace, our rest, our all, On His bosom we sleep in perfect security, both in life and in death.

Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,

I lay me down to rest

As in the embraces of my God,

Or on my Savior's breast.

July 3

A Guide All the Way

"He will be my guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:14).

We need a guide. Sometimes we would give all that we have to be told exactly what to do and where to turn. We are willing to do right, but we do not know which one of two roads we are to follow. Oh, for a guide! The LORD our God condescends to serve us as guide. He knows the way and will pilot us along it till we reach our journey's end in peace. Surely we do not desire more infallible direction. Let us place ourselves absolutely under His guidance, and we shall never miss our way. Let us make Him our God, and we shall find Him our guide. If we follow His law we shall not miss the right road of life, provided we first learn to lean upon Him in every step that we take. Our comfort is that as He is our God forever and ever, He will never cease to be with us as our guide. "Even unto death" will He lead us, and then we shall dwell with Him eternally and go no more out forever. This promise of divine guidance involves lifelong security: salvation at once, guidance unto our last hour, and then endless blessedness. Should not each one seek this in youth, rejoice in it in middle life, and repose in it in old age? This day let us look up for guidance before we trust ourselves out-of-doors.

July 4

The Word, Necessary Food

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

If God so willed it we could live without bread, even as Jesus did for forty days; but we could not live without His Word. By that Word we were created, and by it alone can we be kept in being, for he sustaineth all things by the Word of His power. Bread is a second cause; the LORD Himself is the first source of our sustenance. He can work without the second cause as well as with it; and we must not tie Him down to one mode of operation. Let us not be too eager after the visible, but let us look to the invisible God. We have heard believers say that in deep poverty, when bread ran short, their appetites became short, too; and to others, when common supplies failed, the LORD has sent in unexpected help. But we must have the Word of the LORD. With this alone we can withstand the devil. Take this from us, and our enemy will have us in his power, for we shall soon faint. Our souls need food, and there is none for them outside of the Word of the LORD. All the books and all the preachers in the world cannot furnish us a single meal: it is only the Word from the mouth of God that can fill the mouth of a believer. LORD, evermore give us this bread. We prize it above royal dainties.

July 5

Complete Deliverance

But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD; and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid" (Jeremiah 39:17).

When the LORD's faithful ones are suffering for Him, they shall have sweet messages of love from Himself, and sometimes they shall have glad tidings for those who sympathize with them and help them. Ebed-melech was only a despised Ethiopian, but he was kind to Jeremiah, and so the LORD sent him this special promise by the mouth of His prophet. Let us be ever mindful of God's persecuted servants, and He will reward us. Ebed-melech was to be delivered from the men whose vengeance he feared. He was a humble… man, but Jehovah would take care of him. Thousands were slain by the Chaldeans, but [he] could not be hurt. We, too, may be fearful of some great ones who are bitter against us; but if we have been faithful to the LORD's cause in the hour of persecution, He will be faithful to us. After all, what can a man do without the LORD's permission? He puts a bit into the mouth of rage and a bridle upon the head of power. Let us fear the LORD, and we shall have no one else to fear. No cup of cold water given to a despised prophet of God shall be without its reward; and if we stand up for Jesus, Jesus will stand up for us.

July 6

His Love; His Gift; His Son

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16).

Of all the stars in the sky, the polestar is the most useful to the mariner. This text is a polestar, for it has guided more souls to salvation than any other Scripture. It is among promises what the Great Bear is among constellations. Several words in it shine with peculiar brilliance. Here we have God's love with a "so" to it, which marks its measureless greatness. Then we have God's gift in all its freeness and greatness. This also is God's Son, that unique and priceless gift of a love which could never fully show itself till heaven's Only-begotten had been sent to live and die for men. These three points are full of light. Then there is the simple requirement of believing, which graciously points to a way of salvation suitable for guilty men. This is backed by a wide description

-- "whosoever believeth in him." Many have found room in "whosoever" who would have felt themselves shut out by a narrower word. Then comes the great promise, that believers in Jesus shall not perish but have everlasting life. This is cheering to every man who feels that he is ready to perish and that he cannot save himself. We believe in the LORD Jesus, and we have eternal life.

July 7

A Mountain Choir

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted" (Isaiah 49:13).

So sweet are the comforts of the LORD, that not only the saints themselves may sing of them, but even the heavens and the earth may take up the song. It takes something to make a mountain sing; and yet the prophet summons quite a choir of them. Lebanon, and Sirion, and the high hills of Bashan and Moab, He would set them all singing because of Jehovah's grace to His own Zion. May we not also make mountains of difficulty, and trial, and mystery, and labor become occasions for praise unto our God? "Break forth into singing, O mountains!" This word of promise, that our God will have mercy upon His afflicted, has a whole peal of bells connected with it. Hear their music -- "Sing!" "Be joyful!" "Break forth into singing." The LORD would have His people happy because of His unfailing love. He would not have us sad and doubtful; He claims horn us the worship of believing hearts. He cannot fail us: why should we sigh or sulk as if He would do so? Oh, for a well-tuned harp! Oh, for voices like those of the cherubim before the throne!

July 8

An Angel Encampment

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7).

We cannot see the angels, but it is enough that they can see us. There is one great Angel of the Covenant, whom not having seen we love, and His eye is always upon us both day and night. He has a host of holy ones under Him, and He causes these to be watchers over His saints and to guard them from all ill. If devils do us mischief, shining ones do us service.Note that the LORD of angels does not come and go and pay us transient visits, but He and His armies encamp around us. The headquarters of the army of salvation is where those live whose trust is in the living God. This camp surrounds the faithful so that they cannot be attacked from any quarter unless the adversary can break through the entrenchments of the LORD of angels. We have a fixed protection, a permanent watch. Sentineled by the messengers of God, we shall not be surprised by sudden assaults nor swallowed up by overwhelming forces. Deliverance is promised in this verse -- deliverance by the great Captain of our salvation, and that deliverance we shall obtain again and again until our warfare is accomplished and we exchange the field of conflict for the home of rest.

July 9

Faithful and Useful

"Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me" (Psalm 101:6).

If David spoke thus, we may be sure that the Son of David will be of the same mind. Jesus looks out for faithful men, and He fixes His eyes upon them, to observe them, to bring them forward, to encourage them, and to reward them. Let no true-hearted man think that he is overlooked; the King Himself has His eye upon him. There are two results of this royal notice. First we read, "That they may dwell with me." Jesus brings the faithful into His house, He sets them in His palace, He makes them His companions, He delights in their society. We must be true to our LORD, and He will then manifest Himself to us. When our faithfulness costs us most, it will be best rewarded; the more furiously men reject, the more joyfully will our LORD receive us. Next, he says of the sincere man, "He shall serve me." Jesus will use for His own glory those who scorn the tricks of policy and are faithful to Himself, His Word, and His cross. These shall be in His royal retinue, the honored servants of His Majesty. Communion and usefulness are the wages of faithfulness. LORD make me faithful that I may dwell with Thee and serve Thee.

July 10

Love the Church

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof" (Psalm 102:13-14).

Yes, our prayers for the church will be heard. The set time is come. We love the prayer meetings, and the Sunday school, and all

the services of the LORD's house. We are bound in heart to all the people of God and can truly say,

There's not a lamb in all thy flock

I would disdain to feed

There's not a foe before whose face

I'd fear thy cause to plead.

If this is the general feeling, we shall soon enjoy times of refreshing horn the presence of the LORD. Our assemblies will be filled, saints will be revived, and sinners will be converted. This can only come of the LORD's mercy; but it will come, and we are called upon to expect it. The time, the set time, is come. Let us bestir ourselves. Let us love every stone of our Zion, even though it may be fallen down. Let us treasure up the least truth, the least ordinance, the least believer, even though some may despise them as only so much dust. When we favor Zion, God is about to favor her. When we take pleasure in the LORD's work, the LORD Himself will take pleasure in it.

July 11

Never Separated from God

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" (John 11:26).

Yes, LORD, we believe it; we shall never die. Our soul may be separated from our body, and this is death of a kind; but our soul shall never be separated from God, which is the true death -- the death which was threatened to sin -- the death penalty which is the worst that can happen. We believe this most assuredly, for who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our LORD? We are members of the Body of Christ; will Christ lose parts of His Body? We are married to Jesus; will He be bereaved and widowed? It is not possible. There is a life within us which is not capable of being divided from God: yea, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us, and how then can we die? Jesus, Himself, is our life, and therefore there is no dying for us, for He cannot die again, In Him we died unto sin once, and the capital sentence cannot a second time be executed. Now we live, and live forever. The reward of righteousness is life everlasting, and we have nothingless than the righteousness of God, and therefore can claim the very highest reward. Living and believing, we believe that we shall live and enjoy. Wherefore we press forward with full assurance that our life is secure in our living Head.

July 12

Whom, When, How to Deliver

"The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9).

The godly are tempted and tried. That is not true faith which is never put to the test. But the godly are delivered out of their trials, and that not by chance, nor by secondary agencies, but by the LORD Himself. He personally undertakes the office of delivering those who trust Him. God loves the godly or godlike, and He makes a point of knowing where they are and how they fare. Sometimes their way seems to be a labyrinth, and they cannot imagine how they are to escape from threatening danger. What they do not know, their LORD knows. He knows whom to deliver, and when to deliver, and how to deliver. He delivers in the way which is most beneficial to the godly, most crushing to the tempter, and most glorifying to Himself. We may leave the "how" with the LORD and be content to rejoice in the fact that He will, in some way or other, bring His own people through all the dangers, trials, and temptations for this mortal life to His own right hand in glory. This day it is not for me to pry into my LORD's secrets but patiently to wait His time, knowing this, that though I know nothing, my heavenly Father knows.

July 13

Implicit Trust

"For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in Me, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 39:18).

Behold the protecting power of trust in God. The great men of Jerusalem fell by the sword, but poor Ebed-melech was secure, for his confidence was in Jehovah. Where else should a man trust but in his Maker? We are foolish when we prefer the creature to the Creator. Oh, that we could in all things live by faith, then should we be delivered in all time of danger! No one ever did trust in the LORD in vain, and no one ever shall. The LORD saith, "I will surely deliver thee," Mark the divine "surely." Whatever else may be uncertain, God's care of believers is sure. God Himself is the guardian of the gracious, Under His sacred wing there is safety even

when every danger is abroad. Can we accept this promise as sure? Then in our present emergency we shall find that it stands fast. We hope to be delivered because we have friends, or because we are prudent, or because we can see hopeful signs; but none of these things are one-half so good as God's simple "because thou hast put thy trust in me." Dear reader, try this way, and, trying it, you will keep to it all your life. It is as sweet as it is sure.

July 14

Burdens Cast on Him

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22).

It is a heavy burden; roll it on Omnipotence. It is thy burden now, and it crushes thee; but when the LORD takes it, He will make nothing of it. If thou art called still to bear, "he will sustain thee." It will be on Him and not on thee. Thou wilt be so upheld under it that the burden will be a blessing. Bring the LORD into the matter, and thou wilt stand upright under that which in itself would bow thee down. Our worst fear is lest our trial should drive us from the path of duty; but this the LORD will never suffer. If we are righteous before Him, He will not endure that our affliction should move us from our standing. In Jesus He accepts us as righteous, and in Jesus He will keep us so. What about the present moment? Art thou going forth to this day's trial alone? Are thy poor shoulders again to be galled with the oppressive load? Be not so foolish. Tell the LORD all about thy grief and leave it with Him. Don't cast your burden down and then take it up again; but roll it on the LORD and leave it there. Then shalt thou walk at large, a joyful and unburdened believer, singing the praises of thy great Burden-bearer.

July 15

The Mourner Comforted

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

By the valley of weeping we come to Zion. One would have thought mourning and being blessed were in opposition, but the infinitely wise Savior puts them together in this Beatitude. What He has joined together let no man put asunder. Mourning for sin -- our own sins, and the sins of others -- is the LORD's seal set upon His faithful ones. When the Spirit of grace is poured upon the house of David, or any other house, they shall mourn. By holy mourning we receive the best of our blessings, even as the rarest commodities come to us by water. Not only shall the mourner be blessed at some future day, but Christ pronounces him blessed even now. The Holy Spirit will surely comfort those hearts which mourn for sin. They shall be comforted by the application of the blood of Jesus and by the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost. They shall be comforted as to the abounding sin of their city and of their age by the assurance that God will glorify Himself, however much men may rebel against Him. They shall be comforted with the expectation that they shall be wholly freed from sin before long and shall soon be taken up to dwell forever in the glorious presence of their LORD.

July 16

Word to Him Who Halts

"I will save her that halteth" (Zephaniah 3:19).

There are plenty of these lame ones, both male and female. You may meet "her that halteth" twenty times in an hour. They are in the right road and exceedingly anxious to run in it with diligence, but they are lame and make a sorry walk of it. On the heavenly road there are many cripples. It may be that they say in their hearts -- What will become of us? Sin will overtake us; Satan will throw us down. Ready-to-halt is our name and our nature; the LORD can never make good soldiers of us, nor even nimble messengers to go on His errands. Well, well! He will save us, and that is no small thing. He says, "I will save her that halteth." In saving us He will greatly glorify Himself. Everybody will ask -- How came this lame woman to run the race and win the crown? And then the praise will all be given to almighty grace. LORD, though I halt in faith, in prayer, in praise, in service, and in patience, save me, I beseech Thee! Only Thou canst save such a cripple as I am. LORD, let me not perish because I am among the hindmost, but gather up by Thy grace the slowest of Thy pilgrims -- even me. Behold He hath said it shall be so, and therefore, like Jacob, prevailing in prayer, I go forward though my sinew be shrunk.

July 17

Valiant for Truth

"The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32).

The LORD is a man of war, Jehovah is his name." Those who enlist under His banner shall have a Commander who will train them for the conflict and give them both vigor and valor. The times of which Daniel wrote were of the very worst kind, and then it was

promised that the people of God would come out in their best colors: they would be strong and stout to confront the powerful adversary.Oh, that we may know our God: His power, His faithfulness, His immutable love, and so may be ready to risk everything in His behalf. He is One whose character excites our enthusiasm and makes us willing to live and to die for Him. Oh, that we may know our God by familiar fellowship with Him; for then we shall become like Him and shall be prepared to stand up for truth and righteousness. He who comes forth fresh from beholding the face of God will never fear the face of man. If we dwell with Him, we shall catch the heroic spirit, and to us a world of enemies will be but as the drop of a bucket. A countless array of men, or even of devils, will seem as little to us as the nations are to God, and He counts them only as grasshoppers. Oh, to be valiant for truth in this day of falsehood.

July 18

Wilderness Communion

"I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" (Hosea 2:14).

The goodness of God sees us allured by sin, and it resolves to try upon us the more powerful allurements of love. Do we not remember when the Lover of our souls first cast a spell upon us and charmed us away from the fascinations of the world! He will do this again and again whenever He sees us likely to be ensnared by evil. He promises to draw us apart, for there He can best deal with us, and this separated place is not to be a paradise, but a wilderness, since in such a place there will be nothing to take of our attention from our God. In the deserts of affliction the presence of the LORD becomes everything to us, and we prize His company beyond any value which we set upon it when we sat under our own vine and fig tree in the society of our fellows. Solitude and affliction bring more to themselves and to their heavenly Father than any other means. When thus allured and secluded the LORD has choice things to say to us for our comfort. He "speaks to our heart," as the original has it. Oh, that at this we may have this promise explained in our experience! Allured by love, separated by trial, and comforted by the Spirit of truth, may we know the LORD and sing for joy!

July 19

Heavy-Duty Shoes

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25).

Here are two things provided for the pilgrim: shoes and strength. As for the shoes: they are very needful for traveling along rough ways and for trampling upon deadly foes. We shall not go barefoot -- this would not be suitable for princes of the blood royal. Our shoes shall not be at all of the common sort, for they shall have soles of durable metal, which will not wear out even if the journey be long and difficult. We shall have protection proportionate to the necessities of the road and the battle. Wherefore let us march boldly on, fearing no harm even though we tread on serpents or set our foot upon the dragon himself. As for the strength: it shall be continued as long as our days shall continue, and it shall be proportioned to the stress and burden of those days. The words are few, "as thy days thy strength," but the meaning is full. This day we may look for trial, and for work which will require energy, but we may just as confidently look for equal strength. This word given to Asher is given to us also who have faith wherewith to appropriate it. Let us rise to the holy boldness which it is calculated to create within the believing heart.

July 20

Looking for Him

"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

This is our hope. He to whom we have already looked as coming once to bear the sins of many will have another manifestation to the sons of men; this is a happy prospect in itself. But that second appearing has certain peculiar marks which glorify it exceedingly. Our LORD will have ended the business of sin. He has so taken it away from His people and so effectually borne its penalty that He will have nothing to do with it at His second coming. He will present no sin offering, for He will have utterly put sin away. Our LORD will then complete the salvation of His people. They will be finally and perfectly saved and will in every respect enjoy the fullness of that salvation. He comes not to bear the result of our transgressions but to bring the result of His obedience; not to remove our condemnation but to perfect our salvation. Our LORD thus appears only to those who look for Him. He will not be seen in this character by men whose eyes are blinded with self and sin. To them He will be a terrible Judge and nothing more. We must first look to Him and then look for Him; and in both cases our look shall be life.

July 21

Shine as Many Stars

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever

and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Here is something to wake me up. This is worth living for. To be wise is a noble thing in itself: in this place it refers to a divine wisdom which only the LORD Himself can bestow. Oh, to know myself, my God, my Savior! May I be so divinely taught that I may carry into practice heavenly truth and live in the light of it! Is my life a wise one? Am I seeking that which I ought to seek? Am I living as I shall wish I had lived when I come to die? Only such wisdom can secure for me eternal brightness as of yonder sunlit skies. To be a winner of souls is a glorious attainment. I had need to be wise if I am to turn even one to righteousness; much more if I am to turn many, Oh, for the knowledge of God, of men, of the Word, and of Christ, which will enable me to convert my fellowmen and to convert large numbers of them! I would give myself to this, and never rest till I accomplish it. This will be better than winning stars at court. This will make me a star, a shining star, a star shining forever and ever; yea, more, it will make roe shine as many stars. My soul, arouse thyself. LORD, quicken me!

July 22

An Eternal Pledge

"And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the LORD" (Hosea 2:19-20).

Betrothment unto the LORD! What an honor and a joy! My soul, is Jesus indeed thine by His own condescending betrothal? Then, mark it is forever. He will never break His engagement, much less sue out a divorce against a soul joined to Himself in marriage bonds. Three times the LORD says, "I will betroth thee." What words He heaps together to set forth the betrothal! Righteousness comes in to make the covenant legal; none can forbid these lawful bans. Judgment sanctions the alliance with its decree: none can see folly or error in the match. Lovingkindness warrants that this is a love union, for without love betrothal is bondage and not blessedness. Meanwhile, mercy smiles and even sings; yea, she multiplies herself into "mercies" because of the abounding grace of this holy union. Faithfulness is the registrar and records the marriage, and the Holy Spirit says "Amen" to it as He promises to teach the betrothal heart all the sacred knowledge needful for its high destiny, What a promise!

July 23

Absolutely No Remembrance

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17).

According to this gracious covenant the LORD treats His people as if they had never sinned. Practically, He forgets all their trespasses. Sins of all kinds He treats as if they had never been, as if they were quite erased from His memory. O miracle of grace! God here doth that which in certain aspects is impossible to Him. His mercy worketh miracles which far transcend all other miracles. Our God ignores our sin now that the sacrifice of Jesus has ratified the covenant. We may rejoice in Him without fear that He will be provoked to anger against us because of our iniquities. See! He puts us among the children; He accepts us as righteous; He takes delight in us as if we were perfectly holy. He even puts us into places of trust; makes us guardians of His honor, trustees of the crown jewels, stewards of the gospel. He counts us worthy and gives us a ministry; this is the highest and most special proof that He does not remember our sins. Even when we forgive an enemy, we are very slow to trust him; we judge it to be imprudent so to do. But the LORD forgets our sins and treats us as if we had never erred. O my soul, what a promise is this! Believe it and be happy.

July 24

Perfect Purity "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment" (Revelation 3:5).

Warrior of the cross, fight on! Never rest till thy victory is complete, for thine eternal reward will prove worthy of a life of warfare. See, here is perfect purity for thee! A few in Sardis kept their garments undefiled, and their recompense is to be spotless. Perfect holiness is the prize of our high calling; let us not miss it. See, here is joy! Thou shalt wear holiday robes, such as men put on at wedding feasts; thou shalt be clothed with gladness and be made bright with rejoicing. Painful struggles shall end in peace of conscience and joy in the LORD. See, here is victory! Thou shalt have thy triumph. Palm, and crown, and white robe shall be thy guerdon; thou shalt be treated as a conqueror and owned as such by the LORD Himself. See, here is priestly array! Thou shalt stand before the LORD in such raiment as the sons of Aaron wore; thou shalt offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving and draw near unto the LORD with the incense of praise. Who would not fight for a LORD who gives such large honors to the very least of His faithful servants? Who would not be clothed in a fool's coat for Christ's sake, seeing He will robe us with glory?

July 25

Nothing to Alarm Us

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13).

We cannot understand all the prophecies, but yet we regard them with pleasure and not with dismay. There can be nothing in the Father's decree which should justly alarm His child. Though the abomination of desolation be set up, yet the true believer shall not be defiled; rather shall he be purified, and made white, and tried. Though the earth be burned up, no smell of fire shall come upon the chosen. Amid the crash of matter and the wreck of worlds, the LORD Jehovah will preserve His own. Calmly resolute in duty, brave in conflict, patient in suffering, let us go our way, keeping to our road, and neither swerving from it nor loitering in it. The end will come; let us go our way till it does. Rest will be ours, All other things swing to and fro, but our foundation standeth sure. God rests in His love, and, therefore, we rest in it. Our peace is, and ever shall be, like a river. A lot in the heavenly Canaan is ours, and we shall stand in it, come what may. The God of Daniel will give a worthy portion to all who dare to be decided for truth and holiness as Daniel was. No den of lions shall deprive us of our sure inheritance.

July 26

A Change of Name

"And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call Me Ishi; and shalt call Me no more Baali; for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name" (Hosea 2:16-17).

That day has come. We view our God no more as Baal, our tyrant LORD and mighty master, for we are not under law but under grace. We now think of Jehovah, our God, as our Ishi, our beloved husband, our LORD in love, our next-of-kin in bonds of sacred relationship. We do not serve Him less obediently, but we serve Him for a higher and more endearing reason. We no longer tremble under His lash but rejoice in His love. The slave is changed into a child and the task into a pleasure. Is it so with thee, dear reader? Has grace cast out slavish fear and implanted filial love? How happy are we in such an experience! Now we call the LORD's day a delight, and worship is never a weariness. Prayer is now a privilege, and praise is a holiday. To obey is heaven; to give to the cause of God is a banquet. Thus have all things become new. Our mouth is filled with singing and our heart with music. Blessed be our heavenly Ishi forever and ever.

July 27

More than Mere Words

"I wilt give you the sure mercies of David" (Acts 13:34).

Nothing of man is sure; but everything of God is so. Especially are covenant mercies sure mercies, even as David said "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." We are sure that the Lord meant His mercy. He did not speak mere words: there is substance and truth in every one of His promises. His mercies are mercies indeed. Even if a promise seems as if it must drop through by reason of death, yet it never shall, for the good LORD will make good His word. We are sure that the LORD will bestow promised mercies on all His covenanted ones. They shall come in due course to all the chosen of the LORD. They are sure to all the seed, from the least of them unto the greatest of them. We are sure that the LORD will continue His mercies to His own people. He does not give and take. What He has granted us is the token of much more. That which we have not yet received is as sure as that which has already come; therefore, let us wait before the LORD and be still. There is no justifiable reason for the least doubt. God's love, and word, and faithfulness are sure. Many things are questionable, but of the LORD we sing --

For his mercies shall endure

Ever faithful, ever sure.

July 28

Bow Down; Be Lifted Up

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Peter 5:6).

This is tantamount to a promise: if we will bow down, the LORD will lift us up. Humility leads to honor; submission is the way to exaltation. That same hand of God which presses us down is waiting to raise us up when we are prepared to bear the blessing. We stoop to conquer. Many cringe before men and yet miss the patronage they crave; but he that humbles himself under the hand of God shall not fail to be enriched, uplifted, sustained, and comforted by the ever-gracious One. It is a habit of Jehovah to cast down the proud and lift up the lowly. Yet there is a time for the LORD's working. We ought now to humble ourselves, even at this present moment; and we are bound to keep on doing so whether the LORD lays His afflicting hand upon us or not. When the LORD smites, it is our special duty to accept the chastisement with profound submission. But as for the LORD's exaltation of us, that can only come "**in due time**" and God is the best judge of that day and hour. Do we cry out impatiently for the blessing? Would we wish for

untimely honor? What are we at? Surely we are not truly humbled, or we should wait with quiet submission. So let us do.

July 29

He Routs Our Enemy

"He hath cast out thine enemy" (Zephaniah 3:15).

What a casting out was that! Satan has lost his throne in our nature even as he lost his seat in heaven. Our LORD Jesus has destroyed the enemy's reigning power over us. He may worry us, but he cannot claim us as his own. His bonds are no longer upon our spirits: the Son has made us free, and we are free indeed. Still is the archenemy the accuser of the brethren; but even from this position our LORD has driven him. Our Advocate silences our accuser. The LORD rebukes our enemies and pleads the causes of our soul, so that no harm comes of all the devil's revilings. As a tempter, the evil spirit still assails us and insinuates himself into our minds; but thence also is he cast out as to his former preeminence. He wriggles about like a serpent, but he cannot rule like a sovereign. He hurls in blasphemous thoughts when he has opportunity; but what a relief it is when he is told to be quiet and is made to slink off like a whipped cur! LORD, do this for any who are at this time worried and wearied by his barkings. Cast out their enemy, and be Thou glorious in their eyes. Thou hast cast him down; LORD, cast him out. Oh, that Thou wouldst banish him from the world!

July 30

Promise of Future Meeting

"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice" (John 16:22).

Surely He will come a second time, and then, when He sees us and we see Him, there will be rejoicings indeed. Oh, for that joyous return! But this promise is being dainty fulfilled in another sense. Our gracious LORD has many "agains" in His dealings with us. He gave us pardon, and He sees us again and repeats the absolving word as fresh sins cause us grief. He has revealed to us our acceptance before God, and when our faith in that blessing grows a little dim, He comes to us again and again and says, "Peace be unto you," and our hearts are glad. Beloved, all our past mercies are tokens of future mercies. If Jesus has been with us, He will see us again. Look upon no former favor as a dead and buried thing, to be mourned over; but regard it as a seed sown, which will grow, and push its head up from the dust, and cry, "I will see you again." Are the times dark because Jesus is not with us as He used to be? Let us pluck up courage; for He will not be long away. His feet are as those of a roe or young hart, and they will soon bring Him to us. Wherefore let us begin to be joyous, since He saith to us even now, "I will see you again."

July 31

An Appeal; Deliverance

"And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15).

This is a promise indeed! Here is an urgent occasion -- "the day of trouble." It is dark at noon on such a day, and every hour seems blacker than the one which came before it. Then is this promise in season: it is written for the cloudy day. Here is condescending advice, "Call upon me." We ought not to need the exhortation: it should be our constant habit all the day and every day. What a mercy to have liberty to call upon God! What wisdom to make good use of it! How foolish to go running about to men! The LORD invites us to lay our case before Him, and surely we will not hesitate to do so. Here is reassuring encouragement: "I will deliver thee." Whatever the trouble may be, the LORD makes no exceptions but promises full, sure, happy deliverance. He will Himself work out our deliverance by His own hand. We believe it, and the LORD honors faith. Here is an ultimate result: "Thou shalt glorify me." Ah, that we will do most abundantly. When He has delivered us we will loudly praise Him; and as He is sure to do it, let us begin to glorify Him at once.

Aug 1

Covenant Reaches Children

"And I will establish My Covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an Everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Genesis 17:7).

O LORD, Thou hast made a covenant with me, Thy servant, in Christ Jesus my LORD; and now, I beseech Thee, let my children be included in its gracious provisions. Permit me to believe this promise as made to me as well as to Abraham. I know that my children are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, even as those of other men; therefore, I ask nothing on the ground of their birth, for well I know that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" and nothing more. LORD, make them to be born under Thy covenant of grace by Thy Holy Spirit! I pray for my descendants throughout all generations. Be Thou their God as Thou art mine. My highest honor is that

Thou hast permitted me to serve Thee; may my offspring serve Thee in all years to come. O God of Abraham, be the God of his Isaac! O God of Hannah, accept her Samuel! If, LORD, Thou hast favored me in my family, I pray Thee remember other households of Thy people which remain unblest. Be the God of all the families of Israel. Let not one of those who fear Thy name be tried with a godless and wicked household, for Thy Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Aug 2

Speak What He Teaches

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exodus 4:12).

Many a true servant of the LORD is slow of speech, and when called upon to plead for his LORD, he is in great confusion lest he should spoil a good cause by his bad advocacy. In such a case it is well to remember that the LORD made the tongue which is so slow, and we must take care that we do not blame our maker. It may be that a slow tongue is not so great an evil as a fast one, and fewness of words may be more of a blessing than floods of verbiage. It is also quite certain that real saving power does not lie in human rhetoric, with its tropes, and pretty phrases, and grand displays. Lack of fluency is not so great a lack as it looks. If God be with our mouth, and with our mind, we shall have something better than the sounding brass of eloquence or the tinkling cymbal of persuasion. God's teaching is wisdom; His presence is power. Pharaoh had more reason to be afraid of stammering Moses than of the most fluent talker in Egypt; for what he said had power in it; he spoke plagues and deaths. If the LORD be with us in our natural weakness we shall be girt with supernatural power. Therefore, let us speak for Jesus boldly, as we ought to speak.

Aug 3

The Right to Holy Things

"But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat" (Leviticus 22:11).

Strangers, sojourners, and servants upon hire were not to eat of holy things. It is so in spiritual matters still. But two classes were free at the sacred table, those who were bought with the priest's money and those who were born into the priest's house. Bought and born, these were the two indisputable proofs of a right to holy things. Bought. Our great High Priest has bought with a price all those who put their trust in Him. They are His absolute property -- altogether the LORD's. Not for what they are in themselves, but for their owner's sake they are admitted into the same privileges which He Himself enjoys, and "they shall eat of his meat." He has meat to eat which worldlings know not of. "Because ye belong to Christ," therefore shall ye share with your LORD. Born. This is an equally sure way to privilege. If born in the Priest's house we take our place with the rest of the family. Regeneration makes us fellow-heirs and of the same body, and, therefore, the peace, the joy, the glory, which the Father has given to Christ, Christ has given to us. Redemption and regeneration have given us a double claim to the divine permit of this promise.

Aug 4

He Blesses and Keeps

"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee" (Numbers 6:24).

This first clause of the high priest's benediction is substantially a promise. That blessing which our great High Priest pronounces upon us is sure to come, for He speaks the mind of God. What a joy to abide under the divine blessing! This puts a gracious flavor into all things. If we are blessed, then all our possessions and enjoyments are blessed; yea, our losses and crosses and even our disappointments are blessed. God's blessing is deep, emphatic, effectual. A man's blessing may begin and end in words, but the blessing of the LORD makes rich and sanctifies. The best wish we can have for our dearest friend is not "may prosperity attend thee," but "the LORD bless thee." It is equally a delightful thing to be kept of God; kept by Him, kept near Him, kept in Him. They are kept indeed whom God keeps; they are preserved from evil; they are reserved unto boundless happiness. God's keeping goes with His blessing, to establish it and cause it to endure.The author of this little book desires that the rich blessing and sure keeping here pronounced may come upon every reader who may at this moment be looking at these lines. Please breathe the text to God as a prayer for His servants.

Aug 5

Law in the Heart

"The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31).

Put the law into the heart, and the whole man is right. This is where the law should be; for then it lies, like the tables of stone in the ark, in the place appointed for it. In the head it puzzles, on the back it burdens, in the heart it upholds. What a choice word is here

used, "the law of his God"! When we know the LORD as our own God His law becomes liberty to us. God with us in covenant makes us eager to obey His will and walk in His commands. Is the precept my Father's precept? Then I delight in it. We are here guaranteed that obedient-hearted man shall be sustained in every step that he takes. He will do that which is right, and he shall therefore do that which is wise. Holy action is always the most prudent, though it may not at the time seem to be so, We are moving along the great highroad of God's providence and grace when we keep to the way of His law. The Word of God has never misled a single soul yet; its plain directions to walk humbly, justly, lovingly, and in the fear of the LORD are as much words of wisdom to make our way prosperous as rules of holiness to keep our garments clean. He walks surely who walks righteously.

Aug 6

Go; Take Your Property

"Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged" (Deuteronomy 1:21).

There is a heritage of grace which we ought to be bold enough to win for our possession. All that one believer has gained is free to another. We may be strong in faith, fervent in love, and abundant in labor; there is nothing to prevent it; let us go up and take possession. The sweetest experience and the brightest grace are as much for us as for any of our brethren; Jehovah has set it before us; no one can deny our right; let us go up and possess it in His name. The world also lies before us to be conquered for the LORD Jesus. We are not to leave any country or corner of it unsubdued. That slum near our house is before us, not to baffle our endeavors, but to yield to them. We have only to summon courage enough to go forward, and we shall win dark homes and hard hearts for Jesus. Let us never leave the people in a lane or alley to die because we have not enough faith in Jesus and His gospel to go up and possess the land. No spot is too benighted, no person so profane as to be beyond the power of grace. Cowardice, begone! Faith marches to the conquest.

Aug 7

Rules for Prosperity

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from It to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:7).

Yes, the LORD will be with us in our holy war, but He demands of us that we strictly follow His rules, Our victories will very much depend upon our obeying Him with all our heart, throwing strength and courage into the actions of our faith. If we are halfhearted we cannot expect more than half a blessing. We must obey the LORD with care and thoughtfulness. "Observe to do" is the phrase used, and it is full of meaning. This is referred to every part of the divine will; we must obey with universal readiness. Our rule of conduct is "according to all the law." We may not pick and choose, but we must take the LORD's commands as they come, one and all. In all this we must go on with exactness and constancy Ours is to be a straightforward course which bends neither to the right nor to the left. We are not to err by being more rigid than the law, nor turn out of levity to a more See and easy way. With such obedience there will come spiritual prosperity. O LORD, help us to see if it be not even so! We shall not test Thy promise in vain.

Aug 8

Confidence Not Misplaced

"The LORD God will help me" (Isaiah 50:7).

These are in prophecy the words of Messiah in the day of His obedience unto death, when He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He was confident in divine support and trusted in Jehovah. O my soul, thy sorrows are as the small dust of the balance compared with thy LORD's! Canst thou not believe that the LORD God will help thee? Thy LORD was in a peculiar position; for as the representative of sinful men -- their substitute and sacrifice -- it was needful that the Father should leave Him and cause Him to come under desertion of soul. No such necessity is laid upon thee: thou art not bound to cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Did thy Savior even in such a case still rely upon God, and canst not thou? He died for thee and thus made it impossible that thou shouldst be left alone; wherefore, be of good cheer. In this day's labors or trials say, "The LORD God will help me." Go forth boldly. Set your face like a flint and resolve that no faintness or shamefacedness shall come near you. If God helps, who can hinder? If you are sure of omnipotent aid, what can be too heavy for you? Begin the day joyously, and let no shade of doubt come between thee and the eternal sunshine.

Aug 9

Pruning for Fruit-Bearing

"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth

more fruit" (John 15:2).

This is a precious promise to one who lives for fruitfulness. At first it seems to wear a sharp aspect. Must the fruitful bough be pruned? Must the knife cut even the best and most useful? No doubt it is so, for very much of our LORD's purging work is done by means of afflictions of one kind or another. It is not the evil but the good who have the promise of tribulation in this life. But, then, the end makes more than full amends for the painful nature of the means. If we may bring forth more fruit for our LORD, we will not mind the pruning and the loss. Still, purging is sometimes wrought by the Word apart from trial, and this takes away whatever appeared rough in the flavor of the promise. We shall by the Word be made more gracious and more useful. The LORD who has made us, in a measure, fruit-bearing, will operate upon us till we reach a far higher degree of fertility. Is not this a great joy? Truly there is more comfort in a promise of fruitfulness than if we had been warranted riches, or health, or honor. LORD Jesus, speedily fulfill Thy gracious word to me and cause me to abound in fruit to Thy praise!

Aug 10

He Lowers to Raise

"Thy LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up" (1 Samuel 2:7).

All my changes come from Him who never changes. If I had grown rich, I should have seen His hand in it, and I should have praised Him; let me equally see His hand if I am made poor, and let me as heartily praise Him. When we go down in the world, it is of the LORD, and so we may take it patiently: when we rise in the world, it is of the LORD, and we may accept it thankfully. In any case, the LORD hath done it, and it is well. It seems that Jehovah's way is to lower those whom He means to raise and to strip those whom He intends to clothe. If it is His way, it is the wisest and best way. If I am now enduring the bringing low, I may well rejoice, because I see in it the preface to the lifting up. The more we are humbled by grace, the more we shall be exalted in glory. That impoverishment which will be overruled for our enrichment is to be welcomed. O LORD, Thou has taken me down of late and made me feel my insignificance and sin. It is not a pleasant experience, but I pray Thee make it a profitable one to me. Oh, that Thou wouldst thus fit me to bear a greater weight of delight and of usefulness; and when I am ready for it, then grant it to me, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Aug 11

Waiting, Not Running

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation" (Psalm 62:1).

Blessed posture! Waiting truly and only upon the LORD. Be this our condition all this day and every day. Waiting His leisure, waiting in His service, waiting in joyful expectation, waiting in prayer, and content. When the very soul thus waits, it is in the best and truest condition of a creature before his Creator, a servant before his Master, a child before his Father. We allow no dictation to God, nor complaining of Him; we will permit no petulance and no distrust. At the same time, we practice no running before the cloud and no seeking to others for aid: neither of these would be waiting upon God. God, and God alone, is the expectation of our hearts. Blessed assurance! From Him salvation is coming; it is on the road. It will come from Him and from no one else. He shall have all the glory of it, for He alone can and will perform it. And He will perform it most surely in His own time and manner. He will save from doubt, and suffering, and slander, and distress. Though we see no sign of it as yet, we are satisfied to bide the LORD's will, for we have no suspicion of His love and faithfulness. He will make sure work of it before long, and we will praise Him at once for the coming mercy.

Aug 12

Light in Darkness

"For Thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness" (2 Samuel 22:29).

Am I in the light? Then Thou, O LORD, art my lamp. Take Thee away and my joy would be gone; but as long as Thou art with me, I can do without the torches of time and the candles of created comfort. What a light the presence of God casts on all things! We heard of a lighthouse which could be seen for twenty miles, but our Jehovah is not only a God at hand, but far off is He seen, even in the enemy's country. O LORD, I am as happy as an angel when Thy love fills my heart. Thou art all my desire. Am I in the dark? Then thou, O LORD, wilt lighten my darkness. Before long things will change. Affairs may grow more and more dreary and cloud may be piled upon cloud; but if it grow so dark that I cannot see my own hand, still I shall see the hand of the LORD. When I cannot find a light within me, or among my friends, or in the whole world, the LORD, who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, can say the same again. He will speak me into the sunshine yet. I shall not die but live. The day is already breaking. This sweet text shines like a morning star. I shall clap my hands for joy ere many hours are passed.

Aug 13

Before and During the Call

"It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24).

Quick work this! The LORD hears us before we call and often answers us in the same speedy manner. Foreseeing our needs and our prayers, He so arranges providence that before the need actually arises He has supplied it, before the trial assails us He has armed us against it. This is the promptitude of omniscience, and we have often seen it exercised. Before we dreamed of the affliction which was coming, the strong consolation which was to sustain us under it had arrived. What a prayer-answering God we have! The second clause suggests the telephone. Though God be in heaven and we upon earth, yet He makes our word, like His own word, to travel very swiftly, When we pray aright we speak into the ear of God. Our gracious Mediator presents our petitions at once, and the great Father hears them and smiles upon them. Grand praying this! Who would not be much in prayer when he knows that he has the ear of the King of kings? This day I will pray in faith, not only believing that I shall be heard, but that I am heard; not only that I shall be answered, but that I have the answer already. Holy Spirit, help me in this!

Aug 14

Child Chastisement Not Forever

"And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever" (1 Kings 11:39).

In the family of grace there is discipline, and that discipline is severe enough to make it an evil and a bitter thing to sin. Solomon, turned aside by his foreign wives, had set up other gods and grievously provoked the God of his father; therefore, ten parts out of twelve of the kingdom were rent away and set up as a rival state. This was a sore affliction to the house of David, and it came upon that dynasty distinctly from the hand of God, as the result of unholy conduct. The LORD will chasten His best beloved servants if they cease from full obedience to His laws: perhaps at this very hour such chastening is upon us. Let us humbly cry, "O LORD, show me wherefore thou contendest with me." What a sweet saving clause is that -- "but not for ever"! The punishment of sin is everlasting, but the fatherly chastisement of it in a child of God is but for a season. The sickness, the poverty, the depression of spirit, will pass away when they have had their intended effect. Remember, we are not under law but under grace, The rod may make us smart, but the sword shall not make us die. Our present grief is meant to bring us to repentance that we may not be destroyed with the wicked.

Aug 15

A Name Guarantee

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

It is not every believer who has yet learned to pray in Christ's name. To ask not only for His sake, but in His name, as authorized by Him, is a high order of prayer. We would not dare to ask for some things in that blessed name, for it would be a wretched profanation of it; but when the petition is so clearly right that we dare set the name of Jesus to it, then it must be granted. Prayer is all the more sure to succeed because it is for the Father's glory through the Son. It glorifies His truth, His faithfulness, His power, His grace, The granting of prayer, when offered in the name of Jesus, reveals the Father's love to Him, and the honor which He has put upon Him. The glory of Jesus and of the Father are so wrapped up together that the grace which magnifies the one magnifies the other. The channel is made famous through the fullness of the fountain, and the fountain is honored through the channel by which it flows. If the answering of our prayers would dishonor our LORD, we would not pray; but since in this thing He is glorified, we will pray without ceasing in that dear name in which God and His people have a fellowship of delight.

Aug 16

Uncover and Confess Sin

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

Here is the way of mercy for a guilty and repenting sinner. He must cease from the habit of covering sin. This is attempted by falsehood, which denies sin; by hypocrisy, which conceals it; by boasting, which justifies it; and by loud profession, which tries to make amends for it. The sinner's business is to confess and forsake. The two must go together. Confession must be honestly made to the LORD Himself, and it must include within itself acknowledgment of the wrong, sense of its evil, and abhorrence of it. We must not throw the fault upon others, nor blame circumstances, nor plead natural weakness. We must make a clean breast of it and plead guilty to the indictment. There can be no mercy till this is done. Furthermore, we must forsake the evil; having owned our fault, we must disown all present and future intent to abide in it. We cannot remain in rebellion and yet dwell with the King's majesty.

The habit of evil must be quitted, together with all places, companions, pursuits, and books which might lead us astray. Not for confession, nor for reformation, but in connection with them we find pardon by faith in the blood of Jesus.

Aug 17

Who Has the Majority?

"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16).

Horses and chariots and a great host shut up the prophet in Dothan. His young servant was alarmed. How could they escape from such a body of armed men? But the prophet had eyes which his servant had not, and he could see a greater host with far superior weapons guarding him from all harm. Horses of fire are mightier than horses of flesh, and chariots of fire are far preferable to chariots of iron. Even so is it at this hour. The adversaries of truth are many, influential, learned, and crafty; and truth fares ill at their hands; and yet the man of God has no cause for trepidation. Agencies, seen and unseen, of the most potent kind, are on the side of righteousness. God has armies in ambush which will reveal themselves in the hour of need. The forces which are on the side of the good and the true far outweigh the powers of evil. Therefore, let us keep our spirits up, and walk with the gait of men who possess a cheering secret, which has lifted them above all fear. We are on the winning side. The battle may be sharp, but we know how it will end. Faith, having God with her, is in a clear majority: "They that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Aug 18

Seekers, Finders

"If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee" (1 Chronicles 28:9).

We need our God; He is to be had for the seeking, and He will not deny Himself to any one of us if we personally seek His face. It is not if thou deserve Him, or purchase His favor, but merely if thou "seek" Him. Those who already know the LORD must go on seeking His face by prayer, by diligent service, and by holy gratitude: to such He will not refuse His favor and fellowship. Those who, as yet, have not known Him to their souls' rest should at once commence seeking and never cease till they find Him as their Savior, their Friend, their Father, and their God. What strong assurance this promise gives to the seeker! "He that seeketh findeth." You, yes you, if you seek your God shall find Him. When you find Him you have found life, pardon, sanctification, preservation, and glory. Will you not seek, and seek on, since you shall not seek in vain' Dear friend, seek the LORD at once. Here is the place, and now is the time. Bend that stiff knee; yes, bend that stiffer neck, and cry out for God, for the living God. In the name of Jesus, seek cleansing and justification. You shall not be refused. Here is David's testimony to his son Solomon, and it is the writer's personal witness to the reader. Believe it and act upon it, for Christ's sake.

Aug 19

Reward for the Righteous

"So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Psalm 58:11).

God's judgments in this life are not always clearly to be seen, for in many cases one event happeneth alike to all. This is the state of probation, not of punishment or reward. Yet at times God works terrible things in righteousness, and even the careless are compelled to own His hand. Even in this life righteousness has that kind of reward which it prefers above all others, namely, the smile of God, which creates a quiet conscience. Sometimes other recompenses follow, for God will be in no man's debt. But, at the same time, the chief reward of the righteous lies in the hereafter. Meanwhile, on a large scale, we mark the presence of the great Ruler among the nations. He breaks in pieces oppressive thrones and punishes guilty peoples. No one can study the history of the rise and fall of empires without perceiving that there is a power which makes for righteousness and, in the end, brings iniquity before its bar and condemns it with unsparing justice. Sin shall not go unpunished, and goodness shall not remain unrewarded. The Judge of all the earth must do right. Therefore, let us fear before Him and no more dread the power of the wicked.

Aug 20

Deliverance Not Limited

"He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (Job 5:19).

Eliphaz in this spoke the truth of God. We may have as many troubles as the workdays of the week, but the God who worked on those six days will work for us till our deliverance is complete. We shall rest with Him and in Him on our Sabbath. The rapid succession of trials is one of the sorest tests of faith. Before we have recovered from one blow it is followed by another and another till we are staggered. Still, the equally quick succession of deliverances is exceedingly cheering. New songs are rung out upon the anvil by the hammer of affliction, till we see in the spiritual world the antitype of "the Harmonious Blacksmith." Our confidence is that

when the LORD makes our trials six, six they will be and no more. It may be that we have no rest day, for seamen troubles come upon us. What then? "In seven there shall be no evil touch thee." Evil may roar at us, but it shall be kept at more than arm's length and shall not even touch us. Its hot breath may distress us, but its little finger cannot be laid upon us. With our loins girt about us, we will meet the six or the seven troubles and leave fear to those who have no Father, no Savior, and no Sanctifier.

Aug 21

Night of Weeping; Joyous Day

"For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

A moment under our Father's anger seems very long, and yet it is but a moment after all. If we grieve His Spirit, we cannot look for His smile; but He is a God ready to pardon, and He soon puts aside all remembrance of our faults. When we faint and are ready to die because of His frown, His favor puts new life into us. This verse has another note of the semi-quaver kind. Our weeping night soon turns into joyous day. Brevity is the mark of mercy in the hour of the chastisement of believers. The LORD loves not to use the rod on His chosen; He gives a blow or two, and all is over; yea, and the life and the joy, which follow the anger and the weeping, more than make amends for the salutary sorrow. Come, my heart, begin thy hallelujahs! Weep not all through the night, but wipe thine eyes in anticipation of the morning. These tears are dews which mean us as much good as the sunbeams of the morrow. Tears clear the eyes for the sight of God in His grace and make the vision of His favor more precious. A night of sorrow supplies those shades of the pictures by which the highlights are brought out with distinctness. All is well.

Aug 22

Wrath to God's Glory

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

Wicked men will be wrathful. Their anger we must endure as the badge of our calling, the token of our separation from them: if we were of the world, the world would love its own. Our comfort is that the wrath of man shall be made to redound to the glory of God. When in their wrath the wicked crucified the Son of God they were unwittingly fulfilling the divine purpose, and in a thousand cases the willfulness of the ungodly is doing the same. They think themselves free, but like convicts in chains they are unconsciously working out the decrees of the Almighty. The devices of the wicked are overruled for their defeat. They act in a suicidal way and baffle their own plottings. Nothing will come of their wrath which can do us real harm. When they burned the martyrs, the smoke which blew from the stake sickened men of popery more than anything else. Meanwhile, the LORD has a muzzle and a chain for bears. He restrains the more furious wrath of the enemy. He is like a miller who holds back the mass of the water in the stream, and what He does allow to flow He uses for the turning of His wheel. Let us not sigh, but sing. All is well, however hard the wind blows.

Aug 23

Love and Seek True Wisdom

"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me" (Proverbs 8:17).

Wisdom loves her lovers and seeks her seekers. He is already wise who seeks to be wise, and he has almost found wisdom who diligently seeks her. What is true of wisdom in general is specially true of wisdom embodied in our LORD Jesus. Him we are to love and to seek, and in return we shall enjoy His love and find Himself. Our business is to seek Jesus early in life. Happy are the young whose morning is spent with Jesus! It is never too soon to seek the LORD Jesus. Early seekers make certain finders. We should seek Him early by diligence. Thriving tradesmen are early risers, and thriving saints seek Jesus eagerly. Those who find Jesus to their enrichment give their hearts to seeking Him. We must seek Him first, and thus earliest. Above all things Jesus. Jesus first and nothing else even as a bad second. The blessing is that He will be found. He reveals Himself more and more clearly to our search… Happy men who seek One who, when He is found, remains with them forever, a treasure growingly precious to their hearts and understandings. LORD Jesus, I have found Thee; be found of me to an unutterable degree of joyous satisfaction.

Aug 24

God Above Human Philosophy

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Corinthians 1:19).

This verse is a threatening so far as the worldly wise are concerned, but to the simple believer it is a promise. The professedly learned are forever trying to bring to nothing the faith of the humble believer, but they fail in their attempts. Their arguments break

down, their theories fall under their own weight, their deep-laid plots discover themselves before their purpose is accomplished. The old gospel is not extinct yet, nor will it be while the LORD liveth. If it could have been exterminated, it would have perished from off the earth long ago. We cannot destroy the wisdom of the wise, nor need we attempt it, for the work is in far better hands. The LORD Himself says, "I will," and He never resolves in vain. Twice does He in this verse declare His purpose, and we may rest assured that He will not turn aside from it. What clean work the LORD makes of philosophy and "modern thought" when He puts His hand to it! He brings the fine appearance down to nothing; He utterly destroys the wood, hay, and stubble. It is written that so it shall be, and so shall it be. LORD, make short work of it. Amen, and amen.

Aug 25

Food and Rest

"I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the LORD God" (Ezekiel 34:15).

Under the divine shepherdry saints are fed to the full. Theirs is not a windy, unsatisfying mess of mere human "thought," but the LORD feeds them upon the solid, substantial truth of divine revelation. There is real nutriment for the soul in Scripture brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself is the true life-sustaining Food of believers. Here our Great Shepherd promises that such sacred nourishment shall be given us by His own self. If, on the LORD's Day, our earthly shepherd is empty-handed, the LORD is not. When filled with holy truth the mind rests. Those whom Jehovah feeds are at peace. No dog shall worry them, no wolf shall devour them, no restless propensities shall disturb them. They shall lie down and digest the food which they have enjoyed. The doctrines of grace are not only sustaining but consoling: in them we have the means for building up and lying down. If preachers do not give us rest, let us look to the LORD for it. This day may the LORD cause us to feed in the pastures of the Word and make us to lie down in them. May no folly and no worry but meditation and peace mark this day.

Aug 26

He of Tender Conscience

"I will judge between cattle and cattle" (Ezekiel 34:22).

Some are fat and flourishing, and therefore they are unkind to the feeble. This is a grievous sin and causes much sorrow. Those thrustings with side and with shoulder, those pushings of the diseased with the horn, are a sad means of offense in the assemblies of professing believers. The LORD takes note of these proud and unkind deeds, and He is greatly angered by them, for He loves the weak. Is the reader one of the despised? Is he a mourner in Zion and a marked man because of his tender conscience? Do his brethren judge him harshly? Let him not resent their conduct; above all let him not push and thrust in return. Let him leave the matter in the LORD's hands. He is the Judge. Why should we wish to intrude upon His office? He will decide much more righteously than we can. His time for judgment is the best, and we need not be in a hurry to hasten it on. Let the hard-hearted oppressor tremble. Even though he may ride roughshod over others with impunity for the present, all his proud speeches are noted, and for every one of them account must be given before the bar of the great Judge. Patience, my soul! Patience! The LORD knoweth thy grief. Thy Jesus hath pity upon thee!

Aug 27

Choice Men

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10).

This has long been the motto fixed before our eye upon the wall of our bedroom, and in many ways it has also been written on our heart. It is no mean thing to be chosen of God (Jn 15:16, 19). God's choice makes chosen men choice men. Better to be the elect of God than the elect of a whole nation. So eminent is this privilege, that whatever drawback may be joined to it we very joyfully accept it, even as the Jew ate the bitter herbs for the sake of the Paschal Lamb (Ex 12:6, 7, 8). We choose the furnace, since God chooses us in it. We are chosen as an afflicted people (Ps 18:27-note) and not as a prosperous people, chosen not in the palace but in the furnace. **In the furnace beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, glory is consumed, and yet here eternal love reveals its secrets and declares its choice**. So has it been in our case. In times of severest trial God has made to us our calling and election plain, and we have made it sure (2Pe 1:10KJV-note): then have we chosen the LORD to be our God, and He has shown that we are assuredly His chosen. Therefore, if today the furnace be heated seven times hotter, we will not dread it (Da 3:17, 18), for the glorious Son of God will walk with us amid the glowing coals (Da 3:19, 25).

Aug 28

Out of Any Circumstance

"As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me" (Psalm 55:16).

Yes, I must and will pray. What else can I do! What better can I do? Betrayed, forsaken, grieved, baffled, O my LORD, I will call upon Thee. My Ziklag is in ashes, and men speak of stoning me; but I encourage my heart in the LORD, who will bear me through this trial as He has borne me through so many others. Jehovah shall save me; I am sure He will, and I declare my faith. The LORD and no one else shall save me. I desire no other helper and would not trust in an arm of flesh even if I could. I will cry to Him evening, and morning, and noon, and I will cry to no one else, for He is all sufficient. How He will save me I cannot guess; but He will do it, I know. He will do it in the best and surest way, and He will do it in the largest, truest, and fullest sense. Out of this trouble and all future troubles the great I AM will bring me as surely as He lives; and when death comes and all the mysteries of eternity follow thereon, still will this be true: "the LORD shall save me." This shall be my song all through this autumn day. Is it not as a ripe apple from the tree of life? I will feed upon it. How sweet it is to my taste!

Aug 29

Plentiful Refreshment

"Their soul shall be as a watered garden" (Jeremiah 31:12).

Oh, to have one's soul under heavenly cultivation; no longer a wilderness but a garden of the LORD! Enclosed from the waste, walled around by grace, planted by instruction, visited by love, weeded by heavenly discipline, and guarded by divine power, one's favored soul is prepared to yield fruit unto the LORD. But a garden may become parched for want of water, and then all its herbs decline and are ready to die. O my soul, how soon would this be the case were the LORD to leave thee! In the East, a garden without water soon ceases to be a garden at all: nothing can come to perfection, grow, or even live. When irrigation is kept up, the result is charming. Oh, to have one's soul watered by the Holy Spirit uniformly -- every part of the garden having its own stream; plentifully -- a sufficient refreshment coming to every tree and herb, however thirsty by nature it may be; continually -- each hour bringing not only its heat, but its refreshment; wisely -- each plant receiving just what it needs. In a garden you can see by the verdure where the water flows, and you can soon perceive when the Spirit of God comes. O LORD, water me this day and cause me to yield Thee a full reward for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Aug 30

Solace, Security, Satisfaction

"Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow" (2 Samuel 23:5).

This is not so much one promise as an aggregate of promises -- a box of pearls. the covenant is the ark which contains all things. These are the last words of David, but they may be mine today. Here is a sigh: things are not with me and mine as I could wish; there are trials, cares, and sins. These make the pillow hard. Here is a solace -- "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant." Jehovah has pledged Himself to me, and sealed the compact with the blood of Jesus. I am bound to my God and my God to me. This brings into prominence a security, since this covenant is everlasting, well ordered, and sure. There is nothing to fear from the lapse of time, the failure of some forgotten point, or the natural uncertainty of things. The covenant is a rocky foundation to build on for life or for death. David feels satisfaction: he wants no more for salvation or delectation. He is delivered, and he is delighted. The covenant is all a man can desire. O my soul, turn thou this day to thy LORD Jesus, whom the great LORD has given to be a covenant to the people. Take Him to be thine all in all.

Aug 31

Divine, Ever-Living, Unchanging

"BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you" (1 Peter 1:25).

All human teaching and, indeed, all human beings shall pass away as the grass of the meadow; but we are here assured that the Word of the LORD is of a very different character, for it shall endure forever. We have here a divine gospel; for what word can endure forever but that which is spoken by the eternal God? We have here an ever-living gospel, as full of vitality as when it first came from the lips of God; as strong to convince and convert, to regenerate and console, to sustain and sanctify as ever it was in its first days of wonder-working. We have an unchanging gospel which is not today green grass and tomorrow dry hay but always the abiding truth of the immutable Jehovah. Opinions alter, but truth certified by God can no more change than the God who uttered it. Here, then, we have a gospel to rejoice in, a word of the LORD upon which we may lean all our weight. "For ever" includes life, death, judgment, and eternity. Glory be to God in Christ Jesus for everlasting consolation. Feed on the word today and all the days of thy life.

Sept 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.

Sept 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 promise? Rely upon Him to fulfill it.

Sept 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 (Ep 2:1) and made to rejoice in the light and liberty of spiritual life (Ro 6:4, 5, Col 3:4). 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! (Read Spurgeon's account of this event) Glory be to God for the stirring which that word of faith (Ro 10:8) caused among the dry bones. More blessed still was that heavenly breath from the four winds which made me live (Jn 3:8)! Now know I the quickening Spirit of the ever-living Jehovah, Truly Jehovah is the living God (Dt 5:26, Josh 3:10, 1Sa 17:26, etc), 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 (1Sa 2:6). 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.

Sept 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.

Sept 5

With Me Wherever I Am

"The LORD will be with you" (2 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 Savior. 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.

Sept 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.

Sept 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.

Sept 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 one. 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.

Sept 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 foreseeth 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. 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.

Sept 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 canceled. 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 in to 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.

Sept 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 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 they cross. It was good for thee when young; it will not harm thee now. For Jesus' sake, shoulder it carefully.

Sept 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 Savior 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."

Sept 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

Sept 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 he 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 Roods drown it, LORD, let Thy love nourish mine to the end.

Sept 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.

Sept 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 His 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."

Sept 17

Like Palm and Cedar

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psalm 92:12, for context read Ps 92:12, 13, 14, 15).

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 (cp Ps 1:2, 3, Je 17:7, 8). 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 (Mt 5:14, 15, 16). 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 (cp Jn 15:5, 8). 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 bough strong. LORD, so let it be with me, I pray Thee. Amen. (Scripture references added)

Sept 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 forever. What a covering is that which the LORD gives to His chosen! Not a fair roof shall cover him, nor a bomb-proof 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.

Sept 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).

That 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 saves, 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.

Sept 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 fellowmen! 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.

Sept 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 worth while 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 Rail 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.

Sept 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 aideth sin.

Sept 23

Deliverance from Dust and Chaff

"For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all sections, 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 forever. 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 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.

Sept 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 Savior, 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.

Sept 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 thing" (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 forever.

Sept 26

Among the Redeemed

"Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be redeemed among the nations" (Numbers 23:9).

Who would wish to dwell among the nations and to be numbered with them? 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 off and solitary to the end of the chapter.

Sept 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, listen to 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!

Sept 28

Work is Done; Rest in Him

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9-note).

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.

Sept 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 Savior glorified beyond expression. Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly light, and show us Jesus our LORD!

Sept 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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