

THE INTERPRETER--MORNING AND EVENING BY CHARLES H. SPURGEON - VOLUME 1

by C.H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon's daily devotional providing morning and evening reflections, offering short spiritual thoughts for daily reading and meditation to guide believers through each day.

100 Chapters

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BOOK: The Interpreter--Morning and Evening

The Interpreter - Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon

The Interpreter: Or, Scripture for Family Worship. This is Volume One of Three Users may contact me if you're

interested in the other 2 volumes.

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January 1

January 1 "He prepared his ways before the Lord his God."

2 Chronicles 27:1-9 Uzziah, king of Judah, who became a leper, was succeeded by his son Jotham.

2 Chronicles 27:2

We should imitate our parents' excellencies, but not their failings. It is well that Jotham took warning from his father's sin.

2 Chronicles 27:2

They would have followed the king had he been a worshipper of idols, but they would not go with him in adoring the Lord. There was even a conspiracy hatched against him to set up the son of Tabeal, but it came to nothing.

2 Chronicles 27:4

He did what he could for the material benefit of the people, greatly mourning that they were so indifferent to their own spiritual good.

2 Chronicles 27:5 For one good man's sake God blessed the whole nation. It is sad to think that this did not lead them to follow the example of their pious king; yet how many children there are with godly parents who nevertheless continue to sin against the Lord, and grieve their father's heart. May there never be any such in this house; and if there be, may the Lord Jesus look upon them and grant them repentance unto life.

2 Chronicles 27:6

He was careful and thoughtful in his conduct, and fearful lest he should sin by inadvertence, and therefore he became strong. There is a great deal of meaning in the expression "he prepared his ways before the Lord his God;" it implies that he did not follow men, or seek their approbation, but lived as in the immediate presence of the Lord, and desired above all things to please him.

2 Chronicles 27:7-9 Thus passed away one of the six best kings of Judah; happy nation to have known such a ruler.

It may be for our instruction to notice that, during the long reign of Uzziah over Judah, the unhappy kingdom of Israel had been a scene of strife. For many years no king sat upon the throne, and when at last Zechariah, the fourth descendant from Jehu, assumed the crown, his reign was ended in six months by Shallum, who killed him in the presence of the people. Shallum also destroyed all the members of the family of Jehu, and thus the prophetic threatening was fulfilled. Shallum, the murderer, enjoyed the throne for only one month, and was in his turn murdered by Menahem, who for the next ten years oppressed the people, who were wholly given to their idols.

At this period we hear, for the first time, of an Assyrian invasion, and Menahem purchased peace by paying a heavy subsidy and yielding a number of his subjects as captives. At Menahem's death his son Pekahiah mounted the guilty throne, to pursue the same course of sin as his predecessors, but in the brief space of two years his reign was over, for Pekah, one of his captains, assassinated him, and began to reign at about the same period, or a little before Jotham; so that Pekah, as king of Israel, was contemporary with Jotham and Ahaz kings of Judah. Do not feel troubled by these details, for nothing in God's word is trivial. Those who love the Lord love every letter of his Book. The prophecy of Hosea will lose much of its interest to us if we are not acquainted with the times in which he lived. The histories of Scripture are as much inspired as the Psalms or the Gospels, and it is a shame for Christians not to be well acquainted with them.

January 1--Morning

January 1—Morning "The Lord is my light."

Genesis 1:1-5 The mere reading of the holy Scriptures will be of no avail to us, unless the Holy Spirit sanctify the truth to our souls. Let us pray that (in commencing this years Family Reading) he who commanded light to shine out of darkness may shine into our hearts and give us to know the inner meaning of his word. We shall begin at the opening page of revelation.

Genesis 1:2 Thus dark are we by nature, thus disordered are all our powers through sin. We are nothing but confusion and emptiness. The Spirit of God is the first efficient mover in the new creation. He visits the dead and dark heart, and begins the work of salvation within

Genesis 1:3 Thus powerful is the word of the gospel when heard in the soul. May its enlightening power be felt by us all.)

Genesis 1:4 Wherever God puts his grace he looks upon it with pleasure

Genesis 1:4 Grace also makes a separation, for what fellowship has light with darkness?

Genesis 1:5 Thus the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection is a day of light. May it ever be so to us.

It is interesting to notice how the New Testament, as written by John, opens in the same manner as the Old Testament, with "In the beginning." Let us add to our reading the first fourteen verses of John's Gospel. Jesus, the Lord our Saviour, is called "the Word," or the uttered mind of God.

John 1:1-14

John 1:2

Jesus was in existence when all created things began; he was with God in nature, in love, and in cooperation, and he is himself essentially God.

John 1:4 If we live unto God, and have any spiritual light, it comes to us by Jesus Christ.

John 1:5-9 No one can get light from any other source, and all who desire light may have it from him.

John 1:11 The Jews, who were his own kinsmen, rejected him; and, alas! too many of the children of godly parents refuse the Saviour. May it not be so in this house.

John 1:12 This is the essence of the gospel, Christ is the giver, we are only receivers. Faith like a hand receives Christ, and with him the privilege of adoption.

John 1:14 The Lord grant unto us to receive of his grace and to know his truth. Amen.

Ere the blue heavens were stretch'd abroad, From everlasting was the Word: With God he was;
the Word was God, And must divinely be adored.

But lo! he leaves those heavenly forms, The Word descends and dwells in clay, That he may hold
converse with worms, Dress'd in such feeble flesh as they.

Mortals with joy beheld his face, Th' eternal Father's only Son:

How full of truth! how full of grace! When through his eyes the Godhead shone!

January 1--Evening

January 1—Evening "Create in me a clean heart."

Genesis 1:6-13 The expanse of the atmosphere separates the vapours above from the waters below. Luther used to wonder at the arch of heaven, which stands unsupported by pillars. He saw in it a lesson for his faith, teaching him that the Lord could uphold him by unseen power. He who creates with a word can sustain in the same manner.

Genesis 1:7

What the Lord in the former verse commanded he in this verse creates: in the same manner one Scripture bids us believe, and another tells us that faith is the work of God.

Genesis 1:8-9

Note the frequent repetition of those little words, "and it was so." We may gather from them that none of God's words of promise or threatening will fall to the ground.

Genesis 1:10

God's care in naming "day" and "night," and "earth," and "sea," should teach us to call things by their right names; let us never call sin pleasure, or the Lord's service a weariness.

Genesis 1:11-12 When God has put light into a soul, and divided its sin from its new life, he next looks for fruit, and ere long it is brought forth to his glory.

Genesis 1:13 So far, we have considered the second and third day's work of creation: it may be well for us now to be reminded that our Lord Jesus was there, and "without him was not anything made that was made."

Proverbs 8:22-36 Proverbs 8:22-36 May we hearken to him who is "made of God unto us wisdom" and find life and favour in him.

I sing th' almighty power of God That made the mountains rise; That spread the flowing seas abroad, And built the lofty skies.

There's not a plant or flower below, But makes his glories known; And clouds arise, and tempests blow, By order from his throne.

January 2

January 2 "O Lord, I will praise thee."

Isaiah 5:1-7 In the days of Jotham, as in the reign of Uzziah, the great prophet Isaiah was pouring forth his eloquent utterances. He is the great gospel seer, who spake more of Jesus Christ than all the rest. We will now read three of his prophecies, which he gave forth in the form of songs. The first song describes Israel under the figure of a vineyard, and was, from its form and beauty, well fitted to win the attention of the people.

Isaiah 5:1-7

How much is our condition like that of Israel and Judah! What more could God have done for us? We have the Bible and the ministry of the gospel: as a family we are a garden walled around, and our country is the fruitful field of true religion. What fruit are we yielding? If we are barren, what must we expect? Judgment is always in proportion to privilege misused. May grace be upon us all, that we may bear much fruit unto the Lord our God.

Isaiah 12:1-6 Speaking of the coming of the Lord Jesus, the prophet says:—

Isaiah 12:3

What a sweet gospel song. None can sing it but those whose sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus, and to them it is a rapturous hymn. They are no longer afraid to believe the promises, and to go to the Lord for blessings: the wells are free to the citizens of Zion, and they draw water exultingly.

Isaiah 12:6

It is the delight of saved souls to magnify the Lord; they cannot contain their joy, they shout as those who divide the spoil.

Isaiah 26:1-4 When God has rebuked his peoples enemies, another song shall be on their lips.

Isaiah 26:1-4

Happy are those who are protected and kept in peace by their Omnipotent God. Is there one in our house who does not trust in the Lord? Let us pray that all our minds may be stayed on God.

January 2--Morning

January 2—Morning "Praise ye the Lord."

Genesis 1:14-23

There was light before the appearance of sun or moon; but God made these the bearers thereof, that they might declare his glory. He could have done without them, but he did not please so to do. He could enlighten men's minds without his ministers or his church; but, if he chooses to use them as lights in the world, let us be thankful for them, and pray for them.

Genesis 1:16 Thus a chaos of light was reduced to order. Order is a law of God. Families are unhappy without it.

Genesis 1:17-18 The delightful alternation of the day so suitable for labour, and the night so proper for rest, is certainly "good" for us in many ways, and we ought to adore the goodness of God therein.

Genesis 1:19-20

Thus the Lord's work of creation advanced to higher stages each day, and we shall find it so in grace; he will yet reveal choicer mercies to us.

Genesis 1:23 The inconceivable numbers of fish and fowl in the earth show how potent was this primeval blessing. Let but the Lord bless his church in the same manner, and her converts shall be as the stars of heaven for multitude. Such wonders of creation ought not to be rehearsed without a song of praise: let us therefore turn to—

Psalms 148

Psalms 148:14

All this day let us praise God with our hearts, words, and actions; for he has dealt very kindly with us as a family. Blessed be his name.

Praise him, ye gladdening smiles of morn;

Praise him, O silent night;

Tell forth his glory all the earth;

Praise him, ye stars of light!

Praise him, ye stormy winds, that rise Obedient to his word;

Mountains, and hills, and fruitful trees, Join ye and praise the Lord!

Praise him, ye heavenly hosts, for ye With purer lips, can sing—

Glory and honour, praise and power To him, the Eternal King!

January 2--Evening

January 2—Evening "Thy Maker is thine husband."

Genesis 1:26-31 The Lord first prepared the world for man, and then placed him in it. He fitted up the house before he made the tenant. This is an instance of his thoughtful care for our race.

Genesis 1:26

Note the words, "Let us make." The three divine persons hold a council; let us learn to adore Father, Son, and Spirit, as the One God. Man was the highest work of the six days' creation, and was not fashioned without special consideration. He was made to be lord of the world; and if now the beasts rebel against him, it is only because he also has rebelled against his God.

Genesis 1:29 Before he sinned man did not kill animals, but lived on fruits; every meal of flesh should remind us of our fall.

Genesis 2:7-25

Genesis 2:7-10

Thus there was abundance of food and drink, and a pleasant variety of prospect: the garden was a paradise of comfort. "No herb, no flower, no tree was wanting there that might be of ornament or use; whether for sight, or for scent, or for taste. The bounty of God wrought further than to necessity, it provided for comfort and recreation."

Genesis 2:15

Some occupation is necessary to happiness. Lazy people would not enjoy even Eden itself. A perfect man is a working man.

Genesis 2:16-17 This was an easy yoke. Only one tree out of thousands was denied him as a test of his obedience. The Lord's commandments are not grievous.

Genesis 2:18

Before Adam knew that he wanted a companion, his tender Creator knew it, and resolved to find him one. Thus with gracious foresight does the Lord supply our needs.

Genesis 2:21-23

We ought dearly to love mother, and wife, and sister, and aunt. These dear friends greatly minister to our happiness; and boys and young men should always treat them with tender respect.

Genesis 2:24-25

We ought never to be proud of our clothes, for our weakness makes us need them; and they prove that we are sinful, since until we are covered we are ashamed to be seen. May Jesus cover us

with his glorious righteousness.

January 3--Morning

January 3—Morning "Jesus Christ is Lord."

Psalms 8 Our last reading showed us man fresh from the hand of his Maker. It will be well to pause and consider the Lord's goodness to our race. We cannot find a fitter assistance for our meditation than David's joyful vintage hymn.

Psalms 8:2

It is a part of the excellence and glory of God that he magnifies himself by means of insignificant creatures. Though his name is excellent in all the earth yet babes may praise it, and though his glory be above the heavens sucklings may proclaim it. It needs a great orator to win men's admiration for a doubtful character; but so surpassingly glorious is the Lord, that even a child's tongue suffices to baffle his foes, and charm his friends.

Psalms 8:4 The heavens are so vast and he so small; the moon so bright and he so mean; the stars so glorious and he so grovelling; Lord, how canst thou stoop from the sublimities of heaven to visit such a nothing as man? The study of astronomy is calculated to humble the mind as well as to enlarge it: and at the same time it excites adoring gratitude when we see the Lord lavishing his love upon creatures so insignificant as ourselves.

Psalms 8:5

Since he is mortal and angels are immortal, man is a little lower than they; yet it is but for a little time and then man's coronation with glory and honour shall have come. Then shalt it be seen that angels are but servants to the saints, and that all creatures work for their benefit.

Psalms 8:8

All these creatures he either tames to his hand, or slays for his use. His fear and dread are on them all. Marred as man's dominion is, he still walks among the inferior animals with something of that awe, which, as a poet saith, "doth hedge a king." In Adam's innocence man's rule of the lower races was no doubt complete and delightful; one imagines him leaning upon a tawny lion, while a fawn frisks at the side of Eve. In the Lord Jesus, however, we see man most eminently in the place of honour, exalted in the highest. We know that the position of our Lord Jesus is a representative one for all his people, for the members are like the Head. In Jesus man is indeed "crowned with glory and honour." It is both our duty and our privilege to rise superior to all the things of earth. We must take care to keep the world under our feet, and the creatures in their proper place. Let none of us permit the possession of any earthly creatures to be a snare unto us; we are to reign over them, and must not permit them to reign over us.

Lord, what is man, or all his race,
Who dwell so far below,
That thou shouldst visit him with grace,
And love his nature so?

That thine eternal Son should bear To take a mortal form, Made lower than his angels are, To save a dying worm?

Let him be crown'd with majesty Who bow'd his head to death; And be his honours sounded high By all things that have breath.

We raise our shouts, O God, to thee, And send them to thy throne;

All glory to the united Three, The undivided One.

'Twas he, and we'll adore his name, That form'd us by a word;

'Tis he restores our ruin'd frame:

Salvation to the Lord!

January 3--Evening

January 3—Evening "Rest in the Lord."

Genesis 2:1-3

We have grouped together a few of the texts which refer to the Sabbath, in order that at one reading we may have the subject before us. In the history of the creation, we have the institution of the sacred day of rest.

Genesis 2:1-3 This primitive institution was confirmed at the giving of the Law upon Sinai; and is therefore surrounded by as solemn sanctions as any other precept of the Decalogue.

Exodus 20:8-11

Mark 2:23-28

We are not, however, to regard this law as forbidding the doing of works of piety, charity, or necessity, for our Lord Jesus has awarded us full liberty on these points. He corrected Jewish misconceptions, and taught us not to make a bondage of the day of rest.

Mark 2:28

Luke 14:1-5 Our Lord performed many of his noblest cures on the Sabbath, as if to show that the day was ordained to glorify God by yielding benefit to man. If at one time more than another the healing virtue flows freely from our Lord, it is on that one day in seven which is reserved for holy uses, and is called "the Lord's Day." In the passage which we are about to read he shows how suitable it is that a holy day should be crowned with holy deeds of mercy and love.

O day of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light, O balm of care and sadness, Most beautiful, most bright!

Thou art a cooling fountain In life's dry, dreary sand; From thee, like Pisgah's mountain, We view our promised land.

May we, new graces gaining From this our day of rest, Attain the rest remaining To spirits of the blest; And there our voice upraising To Father and to Son, And Holy Ghost, be praising Ever the Three in One.

January 4--Morning

January 4—Morning "The wages of sin is death."

Genesis 3:1-19 The present portion of Scripture contains the sad record of the Fall, in which through our first parents we all fell

Genesis 3:1 The devil often begins as if he were an enquirer.

Genesis 3:3

She should have been more precise. God did not say, "lest ye die," but "ye shall surely die." Error commences in little departures from truth.

Genesis 3:5 He cruelly slanders God. He hints that God was afraid that man would grow too great.

Genesis 3:6

See the progress of sin, she listened, she saw, she took, she gave to Adam. She had been wiser if she had turned away at first.

Genesis 3:12 He throws the blame on God for giving him a wife. Alas! what wretched ingratitude.

Genesis 3:13 Sinners are ready with excuses, and yet they have never a good one. Open confession of our wrongdoing is far better.

Genesis 3:15

Here a blessed promise lies like a pearl in a shell. The serpent's curse is for us a blessing, for Jesus our Saviour is therein foretold.

Genesis 3:17 See how obliquely the curse falls. It glances rather on the ground than on man. Wondrous is God's mercy.

Genesis 3:19 Thus sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.

Yet, mighty God, thy wondrous love Can make our nature clean, While Christ and grace prevail above The tempter, death, and sin.

The second Adam shall restore The ruins of the first, Hosanna to the sovereign power That new creates our dust.

January 4--Evening

January 4—Evening "The Lord our righteousness."

Romans 10:12-21 The New Testament is the key to the Old. There we find an explanation of the position of Adam in reference to the race of man. He represented us all, and we all share the sad effects of his transgression. He was the door through which both sin and death entered into our world. So the apostle Paul teaches us in

Romans 5:12 All men sinned in Adam who stood as representative for them all, and therefore all men die.

Romans 5:14 It is clear that there was sin in the world before the law because men died; that sin came in through the fall,

Genesis 5:14 even infants die through Adam's sin, though without personal guilt,

Genesis 5:14 For Jesus is the second head of the race, the second representative man. As we fell by our union with Adam, so if we are in Christ we shall rise by virtue of our union with the Lord Jesus, who is here intended by the term, "him that was to come." But he is the Head and Leader of a believing people: the great question is, are we believers in him?

Romans 5:15

Note that salvation is not the reward of merit, but a free gift; and mark how God's grace outruns human sin. The apostle speaks of "much more," as if he meant, more likely, more easily, more abundantly. It was God's strange work when he condemned the race for Adam's sin; but it is his delight to accept men for the sake of his dear Son.

Romans 5:16 One sin destroyed us, but grace blots out many sins.

Romans 5:17 Ruined by one man's sin, restored by one man's righteousness. The rise will be greater than the fall.

Romans 5:18 All in Adam fell by Adam, all in Christ are restored by Christ.

Romans 5:19 This is the fundamental doctrine of the gospel; Jesus makes us righteous in his righteousness. We are accepted in the Beloved.

Romans 5:20 The law of Moses makes us conscious of sin, it probes our wounds, it brings out into action the evil which lurks in our hearts, and so by the blessing of the Holy Spirit it drives us from self-dependence, and compels us to look to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The floods of grace prevail above the mountains of our sins. Almighty love paints a rainbow on the blackest clouds of human transgression.

Romans 5:21

Happy are those in whom reigning grace has implanted spiritual life, for the same grace will sustain, increase, and perfect that life till it melts into glory. Are all the members of this family saved in Christ Jesus? Endeavour every one of you to answer the question. Let us not be divided, but let us together seek the Lord, and may we all meet in heaven.

We were lost, but we are found, Dead, but now alive are we;

We were sore in bondage bound, But our Jesus sets us free.

Strangers, and he takes us in, Naked, he becomes our dress, Sick, and he from stain of sin
Cleanses with his righteousness.

Therefore will we sing his praise Who his lost ones hath restored, Hearts and voices both shall
raise Hallelujahs to the Lord.

January 5--Morning

January 5—Morning "Lord, save me."

Romans 3:9-26

Having by our last reading been taught our own connection with Adam's fall, we will now attentively consider a passage of Scripture which shows the consequent corruption of human nature in all times and places. Let us read In this portion Paul quotes the words of several Old Testament authors, puts them all together, and presents them to us as a terrible, but truthful, description of fallen man. Of the boastful Jews the apostle asks the question—

Romans 3:9 As an old divine puts it, "whole evil is in man, and whole man in evil."

Romans 3:10

What the prophet said of one is here applied to the whole race, for the nature of man is in all cases the same. Note how strong are the three negatives here, how they quench all hope of finding a natural righteousness in man.

Romans 3:11-18

See how in character and nature, without and within, in every faculty, in mouth, feet, heart, and eyes, the disease of sin has affected us. We may not actually have committed all the evils here mentioned, but they are all in our nature. Circumstances and education prevent our being so bad in practice as we are in heart, but as the poison is in the viper even when it stings not, so is sin always within us.

What crimson sins are these which defile us! How divinely powerful must that medicine be which can purge us from such deadly diseases. After this indictment of human nature there follows a declaration that by the works of the law none can be saved, since all are already guilty, and the book of the law itself contains the evidence of their guilt and condemnation.

Romans 3:20

We use the law rightly when it convinces us of sin and drives us to the Saviour, but we altogether abuse and pervert it if we look to be saved by obedience to it.

Romans 3:21-22

There is no difference in the fact of guilt, in the impossibility of salvation by merit, and in the plain and open way of justification by faith.

Romans 3:23-26

What a precious gospel verse. May every member of this family understand it, and be a partaker in the substitution of the Lord Jesus. We are all fallen; may every one of us be justified freely by

God's grace through faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus. Let us earnestly pray to be cleansed by the atoning death of him who bore for his people all the curse of the law.

To the dear fountain of thy blood, Incarnate God, I fly;

Here let me wash my spotted soul From crimes of deepest dye.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm, On thy kind arms I fall; Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.

January 5--Evening

January 5—Evening "Love is of God."

Genesis 4:1-15

She probably hoped that this was the Messiah. Alas! how often are parents hopes deceived. It was not "a man—the Lord" who had come to Eves bosom, but a man of sin, a child of the wicked one.

Genesis 4:2 Her second child she called "Vanity" and yet he was precious in the sight of the Lord. What mistakes we make about our children.

Genesis 4:5

Cain had no faith, and he had no eye to the blood of atonement: Abel had both. These should be main points in all our religious duties.) (Wroth not with himself as he ought to have been, but with his brother and with God.

Genesis 4:7 It is sin which blocks the way.

Genesis 4:8-9

We shall either be our brother's keeper or our brother's murderer. If we do not labour to save others, we shall be guilty of their blood.

Genesis 4:13

He makes no confession of his sin, but only murmurs at his punishment. We know many whose minds are in a similar state. They cavil at hell, but they persevere in sin.

1 John 3:10-15 This ancient record of the first murder is used by John as a picture of the action of the unregenerate in all time. Love marks the children of God, and hate is the sure ensign of the heirs of wrath. Thus writes the beloved apostle:—

John 3:10-15

O for grace to purge our hearts of all anger, envy, malice, and bitterness of every kind, that like Jesus we may be full of love and gentleness.

Lord, from anger purge my heart, Bid all enmity depart;

New-created from above, Let my very life be love.

Quench in me each evil fire, Envious thought or fierce desire.

Flame from heaven upon me fall!

Love of God be all in all.

January 6--Morning

January 6—Morning "Abide in me."

Genesis 5:21-24 Our reading leads us to think upon that eminent saint of the antediluvian church, Enoch, the seventh from Adam.

Genesis 5:21-24

Here it is worthy of notice that the sacred writer says once that Enoch "lived;" but he changes the word and writes Enoch "walked with God" thus teaching us that communion with God was Enoch's life, and truly so it ought to be ours. He was not a mere talker about God, but a walker with God. This holy patriarch lived in unbroken intercourse with the Lord for three hundred years, not now and then visiting with God, but habitually walking with him. This is a point of great difficulty. To draw near to God is comparatively easy; but to remain in undivided fellowship, "this is the work, this is the labour." Yet the Holy Spirit can enable us to accomplish even this. Continued communion is what we should aim at, and we should not be content with anything short of it.

Some excuse themselves from seeking after unbroken fellowship with God because of their calling, their circumstances, and their numerous engagements. Enoch had the cares of a family upon him, and he was also a public preacher, and yet he kept up his walk with God: no business or household cares should make us forget our God. Society with God is the safety of saints, it is their solace and delight, it is their honour and crown. More to be desired is it than gold, yea, than much fine gold. Happy was Enoch to enjoy it so sweetly, and so continuously. The long intercourse of this good man with his God ended in his being borne away from earth without death to that place where faith is lost in sight. He did not live like others, and therefore he did not die like others.

Paul tells us a little more concerning this holy man, and we will gather up the fragments of his history which remain on record, that nothing may be lost.

Hebrews 11:5-6

Hebrews 11:5-6

Faith was the spring from which his communion was derived. Works do not make us walk with God; but faith brings us into his presence, and keeps us there. It is very likely that Enoch's pious conversation did not please men, but that little mattered since it pleased God.

Jude 1:14-15 From Jude we learn that Enoch had an eye to the coming of Christ. The pure in heart who see God are the seers of their age, and look far ahead of others. What Enoch saw he told forth for the warning of others, and it is our duty to do the same, that sinners may be led to flee from the wrath to come.

Jude 1:14-15

How important is the doctrine of the advent of the Lord from heaven, since so early in the world's history one of the holiest of prophets proclaimed it. There must surely be some very powerful influence in this truth, since the greatest teachers of it mentioned in Scripture were also among the most eminent for close fellowship with heaven. Enoch "walked with God" Daniel was a "man greatly beloved" and John was "that disciple whom Jesus loved." O Lord, if the expectation of thy coming will make us walk with thee, be pleased to fill us with it.

Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear, It is not night if thou be near, Oh! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.

Abide with me from morn till eve, For without thee I cannot live;

Abide with me when night is nigh, For without thee I dare not die.

January 6--Evening

January 6—Evening "The end of all things is at hand."

Genesis 6:5-22 At first men lived for hundreds of years, but a few generations of long-lived men sufficed to make the race very wicked; and, when the holy seed of Seth intermarried with the graceless race of Cain, the people of God degenerated, the salt lost its savour, and the whole earth became corrupt.

Genesis 6:5 What a charge against man, and it is true of us all still.

Genesis 6:8

What a blessed but was that. In the midst of wrath the Lord remembered mercy; even as in punishing sin he remembers Christ and all those who are of his family. The distinction made was the fruit of grace. It is not said that Noah deserved preservation, but Noah found grace.

Genesis 6:9 In this he was a worthy descendant of Enoch.

Genesis 6:11 Those who are corrupt towards God are sure to be violent towards men.

Genesis 6:15 In all our actions we must follow the divine rule. If our religious observances have not this inscription upon them—"Thus saith the Lord," they will profit us nothing.

Genesis 6:16

Noah must make the ark after God's plan, and those who expect to be saved must receive salvation in God's way. Not our whims but God's word must guide us.

Genesis 6:18-20 As Noah was the preserver of life so is Jesus; and as he became the new head of the saved race, so our Lord is the Head of his church, which is the seed saved out of the world.

Genesis 6:22

Noah's faith led him to obedience. If we would be saved from the destruction which is coming upon the world, we must submit ourselves without reserve to the commands of our Lord Jesus. We shall not be saved for keeping the commands of God, but if we have true faith we shall prove it by following the Lord's directions.

O Lord, we praise thy sovereign grace, Grace o'er the raging flood supreme.

How well didst thou secure the race Thou hadst determined to redeem.

They in the ark serenely housed, Smiled on the universal wreck.

Fierce were the waves by vengeance roused, But mercy held them all in check.

January 7--Morning

January 7—Morning "I give unto my sheep eternal life."

Genesis 7

Genesis 7:1 When the Lord said, "Come," it was a gracious intimation that he was already in the ark, and meant to be there with his servant. It is also a type of the gospel invitation, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

Genesis 7:3 In Christ, the ark of our salvation, the unclean shall be sheltered as well as the clean. Noah was to bring them in, and such is the privilege of every believer; he is to labour for the saving of the souls of others.

Genesis 7:11-14

It was wonderful that all these creatures should willingly enter the ark; and it is even more wonderful that sinners of all kinds should be led by sovereign grace to find refuge in the Lord Jesus. They must come when grace calls.

Genesis 7:16

What a blessed thing for Noah. Those whom God brings into Christ, he takes care to shut in, so that they shall go no more out. God did not shut Adam in Paradise, and so he threw himself out; and we should every one of us get out of Christ, if the Lord had not in mercy closed the door.

Genesis 7:20

It was then too late to look to the ark. Dear friends, may we never put off faith in Jesus until it is too late. It will be an awful thing to find ourselves lost in a flood of wrath, with no eye to pity and no arm to save. Yet so it must be if we neglect the great salvation.

Genesis 7:23 As there was no safety out of the ark, so is there no salvation out of Christ. The Lord grant that every member of this family may flee to Jesus at once, and be saved by faith in him.

Come to the ark, come to the ark, To Jesus come away: The floods of wrath are bursting forth, O haste to Christ, to-day.

Come to the ark, all, all that weep Beneath the sense of sin:

Without, deep calleth unto deep; But all is peace within.

Come to the ark, ere yet the flood Your lingering steps oppose;

Come, for the door which open stood Is now about to close.

January 7--Evening

January 7—Evening "My God, in Him will I trust."

Psalms 91 Our last reading showed us Noah saved from amidst a drowning world. This may well lead us to consider the special protection which the Lord grants to his own people, of which the psalmist sings so sweetly in—

Psalms 91:1 When through the blood of Jesus a soul is brought into sweet fellowship with God, its real dangers are all over: it is, and must be, for ever safe. Noah was secure the moment he entered the ark, and so are we so soon as we are in Christ.

Psalms 91:4 What a tender picture. We, like the little birds, hide beneath the wings of God.

Psalms 91:6 As from apparent dangers so from concealed evils God's people are preserved. There are heresies which would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect; but they shall not be deceived, for the Lord is their keeper.

Psalms 91:7-8

Noah saw the utter ruin of the ungodly world, and this, no doubt, led him the more devoutly to bless the grace which had rescued him from the like sin and doom.

Psalms 91:13 Those who sought our destruction shall themselves be overthrown. Their power and subtlety shall not avail them.

Psalms 91:15

Trouble we must experience, there is no immunity from that, but prayer meets every case, and brings suitable succours under all dangers. Conquered trials honour the Lord who helps us through them, but they also put the honours of experience upon those who have been exercised by them.

Psalms 91:16 The years of the righteous may be few, and yet they may live long, for men's lives are not to be measured by the years through which they breathe, but by the good they accomplish, the favour of God which they enjoy.

Let us, as a family, thank God that our lives have been preserved from infectious diseases, from sudden death, and from fatal accidents. God's providence is our inheritance. The throne of grace and a promise of being accepted when we approach it are among our choicest treasures. If we be indeed God's children, angel guards are hovering over us at this hour; and we may rest assured that whatever ills may be abroad, we are safe beneath the wings of God. We ought, therefore, as Christians, to be very calm in troublous times, and show by our holy courage that we have a sure ground of confidence.

Parents, store this Psalm in your hearts, and ye children and young people treasure it in your memories; it is more precious than the much fine gold.

He that hath made his refuge God Shall find a most secure abode, Shall walk all day beneath his shade, And there at night shall rest his head.

Then will I say, "My God, thy power Shall be my fortress and my tower:

I, that am form'd of feeble dust, Make thine almighty arm my trust.

January 8--Morning

January 8—Morning "Return unto thy rest, O my soul."

Genesis 8

Genesis 8:1 The Lord did not forget the saved ones. He thought on Noah first, and then on those with him, and even thus he remembers his dear Son, and us for his sake.

Genesis 8:2

How readily are all things ordered by the Lord's providence. Winds and waters move at his bidding, as well for the deliverance of his people as for the destruction of his foes.

Genesis 8:7 This foul bird could light on carrion; just as wicked men find delight in sin.

Genesis 8:9

Even thus our weary souls when renewed by grace find no rest in polluted things, but return unto Jesus their rest; and he graciously draws us in to himself when we are too faint to come.

Genesis 8:12 In the new and renovated world the dove could live at liberty, as regenerated souls dwell amid holy things.

Genesis 8:15-18

He did not come forth till he was bidden to do so by the same voice which called him into the ark. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

Genesis 8:20 Before he built a house he built an altar. God must be first worshipped in all things.

Genesis 8:21-22

Thus Noah's sacrifice was pleasing to the Lord and the ground of a new covenant; and so the offering of the Lord Jesus is evermore a sweet savour, and for his sake the covenant of grace is made with all the saved ones. Have all of us an interest in it?

O Jesus, Saviour of the lost, Our ark and hiding place, By storms of sin and sorrow toss'd, We seek thy sheltering grace.

Forgive our wandering and our sin, We wish no more to roam;

Open the ark and take us in, Our soul's eternal home.

January 8--Evening

January 8—Evening "He will ever be mindful of His covenant."

Genesis 9:8-17 In this portion we have fuller particulars of the gracious covenant made with Noah and his seed.

Genesis 9:8-11 To those who have been saved in Christ no future destruction is possible. They are for ever secure from the floods of wrath.

Genesis 9:14 The covenant sign is seen in cloudy times when faith most requires a seal of the Lord's faithfulness. No cloud, no bow. It is worth while to have a cloud to have a rainbow painted upon it.

Genesis 9:16 This is better than man's looking upon it, for He will never gaze with forgetful eye. The word everlasting has heavenly music in it. A temporary covenant is of small value, but an everlasting covenant is a wellspring of delight.

Genesis 9:17 The rainbow is thus made the lovely symbol of God's truth. A bow unstrung, for war is over; a bow without a string never to be used against us; a bow turned upward, that we may direct our thoughts and prayers thither; a bow of bright colours, for joy and peace are signified by it. Blessed arch of beauty, be thou to us ever the Lord's preacher.

We will now turn to a passage in the prophets where the covenant of divine grace is linked with this bow.

Isaiah 54:4-10

Isaiah 54:10

Let us henceforth be ashamed to doubt the Lord. These steadfast signs should create in us unstaggering confidence in the faithfulness of our immutable God. Only let us make sure that we are exercising true faith in Him.

The warm affections of his breast Towards his chosen burn; And in his love he'll ever rest, Nor from his oath return.

Still to confirm his oath of old, See in the heavens his bow; No fierce rebukes, but joys untold Await his children now.

January 9--Morning

January 9—Morning "The Lord reigneth."

Genesis 11:1-9

Genesis 11:4

They would found a universal monarchy of which this tower should be the centre. They planned the tower that they might not be scattered, and they thus forgot the command to replenish the earth. Ambition was at the bottom of the plan; by centralising all mankind they hoped to build up an empire, which, like their tower, should defy heaven itself.

Genesis 11:5 To him their huge tower was a mere nothing; he is said, after the manner of men, to come down from heaven in order to see such a trifle.

Genesis 11:8

How easily can God thwart our plans, and bring to pass his own purposes, despite all opposition. The scene has been very graphically sketched by Bishop Hall. "One calls for brick, the other looks him in the face, and wonders what he commands, and how and why he speaks such words as were never heard, and instead thereof brings him mortar, returning him an answer as little understood; each chides with other, expressing his choler, so as he only can understand himself. From heat they fall to quiet entreaties, but still with the same success. At first every man thinks his fellow mocks him; but now perceiving this serious confusion, their only answer was silence, and ceasing: they could not come together, for no man could call them to be understood; and if they had assembled, nothing could be determined, because one could never attain to the other's purpose."

Psalms 33:10-22 As a fit comment on the transaction at Babel we will read apart of

Psalms 33:22

We have done with self-confidence which is but a vain tower of Babel, and we fly unto the Lord our God who is a tower of defence to save us.

In his providential reign, Oh, what various wisdom shines!

He confounds the pride of man, Blasts the people's vain designs;

Brings their counsels all to nought;

Only his abideth sure;

What the gracious Lord has thought Shall from age to age endure.

January 9--Evening

January 9—Evening "I am a stranger with Thee."

Genesis 12:1-8

Genesis 12:1-3

God had elected Abram, and therefore in due time he called him, and so separated him unto himself. All the chosen seed must in this be conformed to the father of the faithful.

Genesis 12:4 The grace which chose him made him obedient, and he left all at the divine command. Only in the separated life could he inherit the blessing, and therefore he cheerfully forsook all to follow his Lord.

Genesis 12:5 It is not enough to set out, we must persevere to the end.

Genesis 12:6

Though the land was given to the patriarch by promise, yet he did not actually possess a single foot of it. Unbelief would have reckoned this to be a very shadowy inheritance; but faith is the substance of things hoped for, and makes us content to wait. The Canaanite is still in the land, yet we rightly reckon that all things are ours.

Genesis 12:8 The patriarch was careful to maintain the worship of God wherever he might be placed. Go where we may, let us not forget to render devotion and obedience to God.

Hebrews 11:8-10 The secret of Abram's prompt action may be seen in—

Hebrews 11:8-10

Abram had to come out from idolatrous Chaldea, and so must we be separate from the world which lieth in the wicked one. He became a pilgrim and a sojourner, and so must we. This is not our rest, ours is a pilgrim's life, we are wanderers till we reach the city which hath foundations. He pitched his tent and wandered up and down in the land as a stranger, but he was no Canaanite: here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. He who finds a rest here has none in heaven.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 2 Corinthians 6:18 Oh, that the Lord may make us, as a family, separated unto himself.

We've no abiding city here;

Then let us live as pilgrims do:

Let not the world our rest appear, But let us haste from all below.

We've no abiding city here;

We seek a city out of sight:

Zion's its name—the Lord is there;

It shines with everlasting light.

January 10--Morning

January 10—Morning "Lie not one to another."

Genesis 12:10-20

Genesis 12:13 To say that she was his sister was part of the truth, but the intention was to deceive. Whether what we say be true or not, if our object be to mislead others, we are guilty of falsehood. Let us pray for grace to be strictly truthful.

Genesis 12:16 Yet surely these gifts must have given Abram but little pleasure; he must have felt mean in spirit and sick at heart.

Genesis 12:19

It must have been very humbling to the man of God to be rebuked by a heathen. It is sad indeed when the worldling shames the believer; yet it is too often the case.

Genesis 12:20 From this Scripture we learn that the best of men, though in the path of duty, will nevertheless have their trials. It is Abram, he is a pilgrim according to God's command, and yet he is afflicted by the famine which falls upon the land in which he dwells. Trials find out the weak places in good men, and even the holy patriarch had some blemishes. He went into Egypt, into a land where he had no right to be: he was out of the path of duty, and therefore out of the place of safety. On the devil's ground he was in slippery places, and found it hard to maintain his uprightness. He equivocated, in order to save himself and Sarai; he deceived Pharaoh by telling him only half the truth, and he exposed his wife to great peril: all this arose out of the unbelief which marred even the mighty faith of the father of the faithful. The best of men are but men at the best, and this record suffices to show us that even the chief of the patriarchs was a man of like passions with ourselves. Why can we not have Abram's faith, since Abram had our infirmities? The same Spirit can work in us also a majestic faith, and lead us to triumph by its power.

Genesis 13:1-4

Genesis 13:1

He did not feel safe till he had returned to his separated condition. Association with the world is not good for the believer's soul. The more he is a sojourner with his God, and a separatist from sinners, the better.

Genesis 13:2-4

Doubtless he confessed his sinful weakness, and renewed the allegiance of his faith in God. If we have erred or backslidden, let us also return to our first love, to that Bethel where first we set up an altar unto the Lord.

Oh send thy Spirit down, to write Thy law upon my heart! Nor let my tongue indulge deceit, Nor act the liar's part.

Order my footsteps by thy word, And make my heart sincere;

Let sin have no dominion, Lord, But keep my conscience clear.

January 10--Evening

January 10—Evening "All things are yours."

Genesis 13:5-18

Genesis 13:7

Rich men may be godly, and godly men may be rich, but riches are the sure source of trial. In this case abundance did not bring peace, but became the source of discomfort. Good men cannot rule their servants' tempers, even though they control their own. When relatives dwell together they must be very careful, lest they be made to disagree through their servants. It is a rare thing for relations in the second degree to live in the same house without strife; and it becomes every inmate of such a household to watch against suspicions, envies, and bickerings.) (The presence of such powerful enemies ought to have made these good men cautious how they disagreed. Since the eyes of the world are upon us we must be careful how we act. Let not a Christian household make sport for worldlings by internal disagreements.

Genesis 13:9

Abram was the older, the greater, the richer, and the better man, yet he gave way to his nephew. In all differences it becomes the more powerful to be the first to yield. By so doing he will prove himself to be of the nobler disposition. Abram's faith brought forth in this case the fruit of a noble, generous, yielding spirit. All true faith is thus fruitful.

Genesis 13:13 This was a grave fault on Lot's part. He looked only to the richness of the country, and not to the character of the people. He walked by sight not by faith; he looked at temporal advantage, and did not seek first the kingdom of God. Hence he became worldly himself and gave up the separated life of faith to go and dwell in a city; thus he forfeited all claim to the promised inheritance, and pierced himself through with many sorrows. In the end, he who sought this world lost it, and he who was willing to give up anything for the honour of God found it. When friends leave us we may look for renewed visits from the Lord to sustain and console us, for when Lot was gone the Lord appeared again to Abram.

Genesis 13:17

He was bidden to survey his possessions and walk abroad like an owner in his own grounds: even thus may our faith behold the covenant blessings which are ours in Christ Jesus, and we may rejoice in them with joy unspeakable.

So let our lips and lives express The holy gospel we profess; So let our works and virtues shine, To prove the doctrine all divine.

Thus shall we best proclaim abroad The honours of our Saviour God, When his salvation reigns within, And grace subdues the power of sin.

January 11--Morning

January 11—Morning "He teacheth my hands to war."

Genesis 14:1-3; Genesis 14:10-24 Genesis 14:10-12

All is not gold that glitters. Lot had made a poor choice after all. Those believers who conform to the world must expect to suffer for it. For the sake of gain Lot went to Sodom, and now he loses all at a blow: if we are too careful to grow rich, the Lord can soon impoverish us.

Genesis 14:14 If our relatives desert us we must not desert them. Lot left Abram but Abram did not forget Lot.

Genesis 14:15-16

Thus whether in peace or war faith made Abram the victor; but, alas for poor Lot, his worldly conformity was not cured by his trouble, for he went back again to Sodom to reside in it. He was vexed by the sins of the city, but he loved the ease of its settled life.

Genesis 14:17-18 When we are weary with fighting the Lord's battles, we may expect that Jesus will appear to our refreshment.

Genesis 14:19 The Lord Jesus never meets his people without blessing them: his lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.

Genesis 14:20 To our great Melchizedek we cheerfully offer of our substance. Melchizedek was rightly a receiver of Abram's temporals, since Abram had received of his spirituals.

Genesis 14:21

He felt no interest in what was passing between Abram and Melchizedek, but broke in upon their holy intercourse with his secular business.

Genesis 14:22-24

What the king of Sodom offered was Abram's due by the laws of war, but he would not take it. Sometimes it is right to waive our rights. Abram felt that God could give him all he needed without his being beholden to the king of Sodom. Faith is royally independent of man. She will not give the world an opportunity to stop her glorying in the Lord. Jehovah All-sufficient is enough for us without our leaning upon an arm of flesh.

King of Salem, bless my soul!

Make a wounded sinner whole!

King of righteousness and peace, Let not thy sweet visits cease!

Come, refresh this soul of mine With thy sacred bread and wine!

All thy love to me unfold, Half of which can not be told.

Hail, Melchizedek divine;

Great High-Priest, thou shalt be mine;

All my powers before thee fall;

Take not tithe, but take them all.

January 11--Evening

January 11—Evening "He ever liveth to make intercession."

Hebrews 7:1-25

It would be unwise to pass by the story of Melchizedek without noticing its typical meaning. This is fully expounded to us in—

Hebrews 7:1-3 No ancestors, or predecessors, or successors to Melchisedec are mentioned, and the apostle finds a meaning in the silence of Scripture. Some will not learn from what the Bible plainly says; but the apostle could learn even from what it does not say. In Melchisedec the regal and priestly offices were united, and he received his priesthood not by inheritance, but by an immediate divine ordination. In these things he was eminently a type of our Lord Jesus.

Hebrews 7:13-14

Therefore our Lord did not receive the priesthood by descent, but, like Melchisedec, his ordination was direct from God.

Hebrews 7:15-17 This is the inspired testimony of David in Psalms 110., where he speaks of the Lord Jesus as his Lord, and salutes him as king and priest.

Hebrews 7:20-22 The priesthood of Jesus therefore deals with sure things which cannot pass away or change, since the oath of God confirms them.

Hebrews 7:23-25

Jesus resembles Melchisedec in being both king and priest, in having no predecessor or successor in office, and in being greater than the Levitical Priesthood. He is a priest for ever by the oath of God, and we who trust in him have this sweet consolation that our Great High Priest ever lives, is always in power, is always accessible, and always ready to perform his office on our behalf.

Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb, We love to hear of thee; No music's like thy charming name, Nor half so sweet can be.

Oh may we ever hear thy voice, In mercy to us speak; And in our Priest we will rejoice, Thou great Melchizedek.

January 12--Morning

January 12—Morning "I am thy shield."

Genesis 15:1-18

Genesis 15:1

Let those fear who touch the Lord's anointed, but as for those who trust in the living God they have no cause for alarm. Five kings or fifty kings may come against them, but while Jehovah defends them they are secure. Perhaps the Lord saw a rising fear in Abram's mind, and therefore came to him with this word of comfort: God is not willing that his servants should be in bondage to fear.

Genesis 15:4 The strongest faith has its conflicts. Abram's heart was set upon being the progenitor of the Messiah, and he believed in the promise of God that he should be so, but still it appeared impossible, for he had no son, nor did it appear likely that he would ever have one. It is wise always to spread our doubts before the Lord, for he can meet them for us.

Genesis 15:6

Over the head of every difficulty and physical impossibility he believed in God; and therefore he stood accepted as righteous before the Lord.

Genesis 15:7-11 The sacrifice ratifying the covenant is the most satisfying food for faith. Let us see Jesus confirming the promises and we are content. True, a few distracting questions like these ravenous birds will molest us, but by faith we chase them away. When the Lord covenanted with his servant over the bodies of the beasts slain in sacrifice, he gave him the strongest possible confirmation; and in the death of Jesus we have solid assurance that the promises shall all be fulfilled.

Genesis 15:17 This symbolised the history of the chosen seed: the furnace of affliction with its darkening smoke is often theirs, but the lamp of God's salvation is never removed from them.

Genesis 15:18 Thus was the fear of Abram cured by the covenant: let us ever resort to the same remedy.

'Tis mine the covenant of grace, And every promise mine;

All flowing from eternal love, And sealed by blood divine.

On my unworthy, favour'd head, Its blessings all unite;

Blessings more numerous than the stars, More lasting and more bright.

That covenant the last accent claims Of this poor faltering tongue; And that shall the first notes employ Of my celestial song.

January 12--Evening

January 12—Evening "Christ is all."

Romans 4:1-25

Paul was moved by the Spirit to explain to us the bearings of the solemn transaction which we considered in our last reading. Let us hear his exposition.

Romans 4:23-25 The argument is very clear and conclusive. Abraham was justified by faith, therefore by grace; and this justification was not given to him as a circumcised man, for he was not circumcised till years after; therefore the covenant blessings are not given in connection with the law and its work, but in connection with faith and grace. The covenant promise was made to a seed to be born not after the flesh but according to promise, and in that promise all nations had an interest, for out of them would come a blessed people whose badge should be faith, and not the deeds of the law. Jesus is the promised seed, and those believing in him are Abraham's seed. Are we all in this family believers in Jesus? Who is there among us unsaved? Pass the solemn question round.

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;

I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.

The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne;
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.

January 13--Morning

January 13—Morning "Thou God seest me."

Genesis 16:1-15

Genesis 16:1

Sarai therefore proposed to Abram that Hagar should become his secondary wife. This was a very usual custom in those days, but it was not a commendable one, and it was an unbelieving act on Sarai's part to propose it. It is not always easy to patiently wait the Lord's time. We are all too apt to run to expedients of our own; as if the Lord needed our help to fulfil his promises.

Genesis 16:2

Thus those we love best may be the means of leading us astray. The father of mankind sinned by hearkening to his wife, and now the father of the faithful follows his example.

Genesis 16:5

It was Sarai who proposed the arrangement, and now she upbraids her husband for it. It is of no use to lay the blame of our faults upon others, for if we step out of the straight path we shall be sure personally to smart for it.

Genesis 16:6

Thus Sarai was first unbelieving to God, next unkind to her husband, and then cruel to her servant; so one wrong step leads to others. Unbelief sins, and produces other sins. Even this holy woman was not without infirmity. "There is none good, save one, that is God."

Genesis 16:8 She did not say where she was going, for she did not know. Let each of us ask himself. "Whither am, I going?"

Genesis 16:10 No one could use such language as this but the Angel of the Covenant. Here is a proof of the inspired declaration, "My delights were with the sons of men."

Genesis 16:13 First, God sees us; and then, by his gracious visitations, he leads us to look after himself.

Genesis 16:14 The well of the living One, my Seer;

Genesis 16:15 But this was not, as he had hoped, the promised heir; on the contrary, he became the occasion of much trial to the family. When we call in legality to help grace, or sight to assist faith, we miss our object, and ensure for ourselves no little sorrow. The whole scene is a painful one, and should warn us that even in a gracious household sin may sow dissension, and cause heartburnings and distress.

Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make!

Awake my soul, when sin is nigh, And keep it still awake.

Oh may the least omission pain My well-instructed soul; And drive me to the blood again, Which makes the wounded whole!

January 13--Evening

January 13—Evening "Search me, O God."

Psalms 139:1-24

Hagar in the desert learned the omniscience of God, and exclaimed, "Thou God seest me:" it will profit us if we meditate at this time upon that solemn truth, as we find it written out at large in—

Psalms 139:1-3 Rising or resting, God beholds me. Awake or asleep, his eye is upon me!

Psalms 139:4 Not only the words on my tongue which have been uttered, but those in my tongue which as yet have not been sounded. The words I mean to speak he knows.

Psalms 139:13 The most secret parts of my being thou dost penetrate with a glance:

Psalms 139:15 Our bodily frame is like a very skilful piece of embroidery "curiously wrought;" its nerves, veins, and muscles are fashioned with divine art. At our first formation the wisdom of the Lord was present, working all things with benevolent design. He who made the watch understands it, and even thus the Creator knows all the secret workings of our souls.

Psalms 139:18 The omniscient eye is not that of an enemy, but an eye which watches over us to do us good. The Lord's heart is never removed from his people: he thinks upon them to bless them.

Psalms 139:19 Since the Lord sees and punishes the wicked, we should not be found in their company, lest we share in their doom.

Psalms 139:20 And this they do in the Lord's own presence, thus provoking him to his face.

Psalms 139:22 A faithful servant of God has the same interests, the same friends, and the same enemies as his Master.

Psalms 139:23-24 This is the way in which to derive gracious advantage from that attribute of God which to the sinner is full of terror. Since the Lord will pardon all the sins of believers in Jesus, we are glad that he should see them all, so that he may completely and effectually remove them.

Lord, thou hast search'd and seen me through;

Thine eye commands with piercing view My rising and my resting hours, My heart and flesh, with all their powers.

Within thy circling power I stand; On every side I find thy hand;

Awake, asleep, at home, abroad, I am surrounded still with God.

January 14--Morning

January 14—Morning "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Genesis 18:1-15

Genesis 18:1-5

Abraham here became an example of hospitality, and thereby entertained angels unawares. He ran to meet the strangers, he saluted them respectfully, welcomed them heartily, and even made a favour to himself of their resting near his tent. Ungenerous spirits who never entertain either God's servants or the poor, miss many a blessing. May we never be a churlish household.

Genesis 18:8 The noble old man waited with pleasure upon the strangers. He spoke of a morsel of bread, but he made a feast. He was all kindness, goodness, and humbleness of mind: at once a true nobleman and a believer in God. Such are the fruits of elevated piety. Would to God we saw them in all professors.

Genesis 18:9 Where she should be. She was a worthy wife of her worthy husband, and therefore cheerfully aided him in providing for the guests. She was at that moment busy with household duties. We are in the way of blessing when we are in the way of duty. Abraham must have wondered how the chief one of the three strangers knew the name of his wife.

Genesis 18:12 Here was unbelief, which can express itself as much in a laugh as in a cry.

Genesis 18:14

What an encouraging question is that. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Our family troubles, cares, and needs are not beyond the power and wisdom of our heavenly Father. Let us not despair, but in faith cast our burden upon him.

Genesis 18:15

He who discerns all hearts could not be deceived. See how honest Holy Scripture is, for it records the faults even of the best of the saints; and yet how tender is the Spirit of God, for in the New Testament Sarah's fault is not mentioned, for it had been forgiven and blotted out, but the fact that she called her husband "lord" is recorded to her honour. We serve a gracious God who, when our hearts are right, commends our good fruit, and leaves the untimely figs to drop out of notice. Let us be careful not to mar the joy of his promises and his grace by any unseemly expressions or actions. It would be a sad remembrance for us amid the recollections of divine love, to have to confess that we laughed at the promise. The thing surpasses all my thought; But faithful is my Lord;

Through unbelief I stagger not, For God hath spoke the word.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, And looks to that alone;

Laughs at impossibilities, And cries, "It shall be done!"

January 14--Evening

January 14—Evening "Pray without ceasing."

Genesis 18:16-17; Genesis 18:22-33 Genesis 18:17

One of the three was the Lord himself, who for the time had taken upon him a human form. It may be that Jesus, who was one day to be born a man, thus anticipated his incarnation. Truly, "his goings forth were of old." What condescension was this on Jehovah's part that he would make Abraham his confidential friend! He is willing to do the same with us, for even now "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

Genesis 18:22 Two angels went to Sodom, but the third, the Lord of angels, staid to commune with Abraham, his friend.

Genesis 18:25 When we are favoured with close access to God we should use it for intercession on the behalf of others. Note the arguments the patriarch used. We also should bring forth our strong reasons when we plead. The Lord is moved with pleas like those of Abraham. Undoubtedly he saves wicked nations for the sake of the saints who dwell among them, and, indeed, all the saved are forgiven not for their own sakes but for Jesus' sake.

Genesis 18:26-27 In our boldest pleadings we must not forget what poor creatures we are, and how condescending it is on the Lord's part to let us plead with him.

Genesis 18:28 The Lord kept pace with his servant, being quite as willing to answer as he was to ask.

Genesis 18:29-32

There is a time to keep silent as well as a time to speak. Abraham had gone as far as the Spirit of the Lord guided him, and he did not attempt to go further.

Genesis 18:33 Had there been but the small remnant of ten, Sodom and Gomorrah would have escaped. See then how precious the saints are to a nation. They may be unknown or despised, but they are the salt which preserves the whole. May our family be a part of that good salt; parents, children, and servants, all being through divine grace numbered with the righteous. But we must first have salt in ourselves by possessing a living faith in the Lord Jesus; otherwise we cannot benefit others, for we are not even saved ourselves. Our guilt might draw thy vengeance down On every shore, on every town: But view us, Lord, with pitying eye, And lay thy lifted thunder by.

Forgive the follies of our times, And purge our land from all its crimes:

Reform'd and deck'd with grace divine, Let Britain yet arise and shine.

January 15--Morning

January 15—Morning "I have prayed for thee."

Luke 13:1-9

We must not suffer the intercession of Abraham to pass away from our thoughts till it has reminded us of the yet more powerful advocacy of our Blessed Lord Jesus. We see him in one of his own parables describing himself as preserving the sinful by his pleadings, and the passage is a fit sequel to our yesterday's reading.

Luke 13:3

See the need of repentance. Philip Henry once said, "Some people do not like to hear much of repentance; but I think it so necessary that if I were to die in the pulpit, I should desire to die preaching repentance, and if I should die out of the pulpit I hope to die practising it."

Luke 13:4-5 When we hear or read of terrible judgments upon sinners, such as these here recorded, and that which befell Sodom of old, we ought not to congratulate ourselves as though we were exempted because of our innocence, but rather we should regard these events as warnings to ourselves; since, if we fall into the same sins, sooner or later a doom equally overwhelming will come upon us. If any enquire why it has not come already, let them pay special attention to the parable which follows. There has been an intercessor at work, or we should have perished long ere this.

Luke 13:6

It was in good soil, and under the gardener's care; it would therefore yield fruit, or prove itself to be good for nothing.

Luke 13:7

Three years was long enough for a test: there might have been two bad seasons to account for the absence of fruit, but when a third time the tree was fruitless the fault must be in the tree itself. God gives us time enough for trial. All of us have been borne with quite long enough to prove us, and perhaps at this moment the Lord is saying, "Cut it down." How very like are some of us to the barren tree! In itself it is of no use, it fills the place of a good tree, it draws the goodness from the soil, and hurts others near it. It is thus that men live useless lives, and meanwhile are occupying wastefully positions in which others would bring glory to God.

Luke 13:8

It is the voice of Jesus the Intercessor. He is unwilling to see the axe uplifted, for he is full of compassion. See how unconverted men owe their lives to Jesus. They are not preserved by their own worth or worthiness, but they live upon sufferance, and will die as soon as the voice of Jesus ceases to plead for them.

Luke 13:9 May we who have been without grace till now hear the word of God at this hour and live; for this may be our last year of grace, and when it is over we may be cast into the fire of hell. Jesus has pleaded that we may be tried once more; but there is a limit to his pleadings. Note the two ifs, "And if," "and if not." Upon these two ifs hang eternity. The Lord grant that none of us may be cut down and cast into the eternal burnings.

See how the fruitless fig-tree stands, Beneath its owner's frown: The axe is lifted in his hands, To cut the cumberer down.

"Year after year, I come," he cries, "And still no fruit is shown;

Nothing but empty leaves arise, Then cut the cumberer down."

Sinner, beware! the axe of death Is rais'd and aimed at thee:

Awhile thy Maker spares thy breath, Beware, O barren tree!

January 15--Evening

January 15—Evening "Remember Lot's wife."

Genesis 19:1-3; Genesis 19:15-26

Genesis 19:2

Bad as his neighbours were, Lot had not forgotten to be hospitable. Grace does not flourish in bad companionship, but still it lives.

Genesis 19:3

Then at nightfall followed a horrible scene in which the angels saw for themselves that Sodom was filthy, cruel, malicious, and abominable. Those holy beings, therefore, shut to the door, and waited till the morning to execute the sentence of God upon the city. It was time that such a den of abominations should be swept away. Meanwhile, Lot went to his sons-in-law, and urged them to fly with him, but they thought him mad, and refused.

Genesis 19:15

It is true kindness to men to warn them earnestly of their danger; and we cannot be too pressing in urging them to escape.

Genesis 19:16

We must repeat our warnings, and use holy violence with sinners. At the same time let us beware of lingering ourselves. We are never safe a single moment till we have fled to Jesus.

Genesis 19:17-22

Though Lot was not such a believer as Abraham, yet being a good man his prayer was heard, and at his request a little city was saved. Was not this also an answer to Abraham's prayer?

Genesis 19:26

Lot's prayer saved Zoar, but could not save his wife. A minister may bring thousands to Jesus, and yet his own household may perish. The Scripture says, "Remember Lot's wife." Remember that she was Lot's wife, and yet was destroyed. She was half way to Zoar and out of Sodom, and yet escaped not, and all because her heart was still with sinners, and she could not leave them. She started to escape, but she started aside. O for grace to persevere.

Remember Lot's wife, and beware of even a desire to return to old sins, lest we prove ourselves unworthy of eternal life. This terrible chapter should make us tremble if we have not reached the mountain of atoning love. Let us not delay, but flee to Jesus now, and put our trust in him.

Hasten, sinner, to be blest, Stay not for the morrow's sun, Lest perdition thee arrest Ere the morrow is begun.

Lord, do thou the sinner turn!

Rouse him from his senseless state;

Let him not thy counsel spurn, Rue his fatal choice too late!

January 16--Morning

January 16—Morning "Thy testimonies are very sure."

Genesis 21:1-21

Genesis 21:2 The Lord's promises are always fulfilled to the hour.

Genesis 21:3 Or laughter, for both parents had laughed for joy. The best laughing in all the world is that which arises from fulfilled promises; then is our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.

Genesis 21:4

Abraham's laughter was no worldly merriment, but a joy which led him to be obedient to the Lord's will. This is solid pleasure.

Genesis 21:5-6 When the promise is realised by any of us, others ought to share our joy. Let us tell the saints what the Lord has done for us, that they may rejoice also.

Genesis 21:9

Children are too apt to do this; but how wrong it is for the elder to tease and grieve the younger. God notices it and is displeased.

Genesis 21:10-13 It was hard for Ishmael to be sent from home, but God ordered it for the best, even for him.

Genesis 21:16 Had she forgotten the Lord who appeared to her before? So it seems. Our forgetfulness of former mercy is the root of present despair.

Genesis 21:17

God takes pity on boys and girls, and hears their little prayers as well as those of their fathers and mothers. Dear children, do you pray?

Genesis 21:21

Thus God who ordered Hagar and her son to be sent away, took good care of them in the desert: he will therefore watch over us if we commit ourselves to his care. Our Lord is rich and merciful, Our God is very kind;

O come to him, come now to him, With a believing mind.

The Lord is great and full of might, Our God is ever nigh:

O trust in him, trust now in him, And have security.

January 16--Evening

January 16—Evening "We are the children of promise."

Galatians 4:21-31

Paul teaches us how to gather instruction from the ancient story of Ishmael and Isaac. Writing to those who were anxious to introduce Jewish ceremonialism into the Christian church, he says in—Galatians 4:21-31.

Galatians 4:21 Are ye not able to see a meaning in the incidents it records? Will ye only learn one part of its teaching, and shut your ears to the rest?

Galatians 4:28 We were not made sons of God by the energy of nature, but by the power of divine grace.

Galatians 4:29

Pharisees and self-righteous persons display great enmity towards those who depend upon the grace of God in Christ Jesus. They call them presumptuous, and revile their doctrine as tending to licentiousness.

Galatians 4:30 The system of salvation by works must be banished if grace is to reign; you cannot mix the two systems. The power and energy of self must also be no longer our trust if we desire to be saved through the promise. Human merit, the child of the flesh, will never agree with faith, the offspring of the promise.

Galatians 5:1-6

Galatians 5:1 Do not go back to legal hopes, and ceremonial observances. You are freeborn; do not submit to the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:4

If a man could be justified by the law he would have left the system of grace altogether, for the two are diametrically opposed. Thanks be to God, we dare not even hope for a legal righteousness, and if we never fall from grace till we have become justified by the law, that evil will never befall us.

Galatians 5:5 Our confidence is in the promise and grace of God; thus we are true Isaacs, born of the promise of God.

Galatians 5:6 The outward is disregarded and the inward becomes all-important. The flesh, like Ishmael, is sent away, and the newborn nature abides with the father, and inherits the covenant promises. All believers understand this riddle: can all of us in this household interpret it?

Once all my servile works were done A righteousness to raise;

Now, freely chosen in the Son, I freely choose his ways.

"What shall I do," was then the word, "That I may worthier grow?"

"What shall I render to the Lord?" Is my enquiry now.

January 17--Morning

January 17—Morning "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Genesis 22:1-19

Genesis 22:1 This was at once the patriarch's crowning trial and grandest victory, and it came after he had obtained the choicest blessing of his life. Great privileges involve great trial.

Genesis 22:3 His obedience was speedy, unhesitating, and complete. Think of that early hour, and the task of cleaving the wood for such a sacrifice. Could we thus obey the Lord?

Genesis 22:4

Those days of deliberation must have severely tried him. We can do in a hurry what we should shrink from if we weighed it calmly.

Genesis 22:5 Perhaps he feared lest the servants should interpose to prevent his obedient act.

Genesis 22:6-7 A touching question, but Abraham would not allow his feelings to master his faith.

Genesis 22:8 These were grandly prophetic words, and have been divinely fulfilled;

Genesis 22:14 Jehovah-jireh or the Lord will provide

Genesis 22:18

Thus was the covenant renewed in full, in connection with this great intended act of sacrifice: it is sweet to see the covenant of grace confirmed in the actual offering up of Jesus, the Only Begotten of the Father. O for grace to be in covenant with God in Christ Jesus. My God and Father! while I stray Far from my home, in life's rough way, Oh! teach me from my heart to say, "Thy will be done!" "Thy will be done!"

If thou shouldst call me to resign What most I prize—it ne'er was mine;

I only yield thee what was thine:

"Thy will be done!"

January 17--Evening

January 17—Evening "He shall see of the travail of His soul."

Isaiah 53:1-12 The sacrifice of Isaac reminds us of the Divine Father, who spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all. Let us read Isaiah's account of the sufferings of the Great Son of God.

Isaiah 53:1 None believe the gospel, but those who are wrought upon by the power of God.

Isaiah 53:3 The Eternal Father out of love to man sent forth his Son to be thus dishonoured, and shamefully entreated among men. Herein is love!

Isaiah 53:5

Four words are used to describe the pains of the Lord Jesus—"wounded," "bruised" "chastisement" "stripes." How many, how varied, and how acute were his pains none of us can tell.

Isaiah 53:6

Here is the essence of the gospel—sin was laid on Jesus, and lies no longer on his people. Jehovah himself made the transfer, and therefore none dare question the lawfulness of it.

Isaiah 53:10

Jehovah took pleasure in the atoning sacrifice. So great was his love that he bruised the Son of his love to save rebellious sinners;

Yes, Jehovah himself put his own Son to grief. In this God commendeth his love towards us, and we ought to give our whole souls to him in return.

Isaiah 53:11-12

Those who unfeignedly trust in the Lord Jesus may rest assured that their sins have ceased to be, for Jesus has fully discharged their debt: they may also rejoice that the prevalent plea of the exalted Intercessor secures them from all harm. Let us draw near to the cross of Jesus, and rest our souls beneath the shadow of the Crucified. God has provided himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering, the victim is slain, the covenant is established, believers are secure. For this let the Eternal Father be evermore adored.

Nature with open volume stands, To spread her Maker's praise abroad; And every labour of his hands Shows something worthy of a God.

But in the grace that rescued man His brightest form of glory shines;

Here, on the cross, 'tis fairest drawn In precious blood and crimson lines.

Here I behold his inmost heart, Where grace and vengeance strangely join,
Piercing his Son with sharpest smart, To make the purchased pleasures mine.

January 18--Morning

January 18—Morning "The just shall live by faith."

Galatians 3:6-18 In this passage the apostle shows that Abraham's righteousness was gained by his faith; that the covenant made with him was upon the tenure of faith; and that by the way of faith alone we who are sinners of the Gentiles are made partakers of covenant blessings.

Galatians 3:6-7 Not the trusters in works and boasters in circumcision; these, even among the Jews, are but his children by the power of nature, to whom no more belongs than to Ishmael. Abraham was the father of the faithful, or believing. In his grandest aspect he is not the sire of a rebellious nation, but of the believing seed.

Galatians 3:8-9 For in no other way can all nations share in the blessing, since they neither inherit it by descent, nor obtain it by circumcision, nor earn it by merit.

Galatians 3:10

Let us learn this verse well, and may it ring the death knell of all legal hopes. All that the law can do for sinners is to judge them, condemn them, and curse them. Let us flee from the vain hope of ignorant and proud men, and look to another way of salvation; which, indeed, is the only one.

Galatians 3:11 The only just men before God are the men of faith, and these do not live by their works, but by believing; hence it is clear that the law has nothing to do with their righteousness.

Galatians 3:12

Hence we cannot be saved partly by faith and partly by works. The roads are distinct. We must keep the whole law if we would be saved by it. Our only hope is in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ received by faith.

Galatians 3:13-14 His the curse, that ours might be the blessing. By the gate of Substitution all blessings come to us, and even that best of blessings—the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:15

Once made, a covenant cannot be justly altered by an afterthought, or affected by an unforeseen event. What consolation is here!

Galatians 3:16

Mark how the apostle believed in verbal inspiration, for he finds a meaning in so small a matter as the use of a singular word instead of a plural.

Galatians 3:17 Sinai and Leviticus cannot supersede the covenant of grace. Notwithstanding the law, the believer is secure in faith.

Galatians 3:18 And we by faith grasping the promise are made partakers of it, not at all by our doings, but by the simple act of reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ. In vain we ask God's righteous law To justify us now;

Since to convince and to condemn, Is all the law can do.

Jesus, how glorious is thy grace! When in thy name we trust, Our faith receives a righteousness That makes the sinner just.

January 18--Evening

January 18—Evening "Be ye also ready."

Genesis 23:1-19

Genesis 23:1-2 Into the holiest and happiest households death will come, but faith learns how to make him welcome.

Genesis 23:3-4

Dear as our beloved ones maybe in life, we cannot endure to look upon their dead bodies, but affection itself demands that we hide them in the dust. What an instructive expression is that,—"the possession of a burial place;" it is often the only landed estate the godly possess.

Genesis 23:6 But this would not be after Abraham's mind. He would not wish to sleep in the same grave with those from whom he was separated in life. He would maintain his separateness unto God even to the end.

Genesis 23:7 Courtesy is due even to the ungodly. A believer should not be any the less gentle in manners because gracious in heart.

Genesis 23:12 This is a second time mentioned. The truly noble are conciliatory and courteous. A believer is not a bear.

Genesis 23:14-16 Abraham would not put himself under obligation to idolaters. True faith produces an independent spirit.

Genesis 23:18 This is as precise as a legal document. Faith does not make a man less business-like in his transactions.

Genesis 23:19 In firm faith that the land would one day be all his own he laid down the bones of his beloved spouse in the promised soil, and so, as it were, took possession of the country till the set time should come for entering upon it.

What though this goodly mortal frame Sink to the dust, from whence it came;

Though buried in the silent tomb, Worms shall my skin and flesh consume;

Yet on that happy rising morn, New life this body shall adorn;

These active powers refined shall be, And God my Saviour, I shall see.

January 19--Morning

January 19—Morning "Thy dead men shall live."

Job 14:1-13 As the last lesson brought us to Machpelah with the weeping train who buried Sarah, it may be a fitting season for a "meditation among the tombs."

Job 14:1 Our life is not short and sweet, but brief and bitter. Its only fulness is fulness of trouble. Sin has done all this.

Job 14:2 The flower is not always allowed to flourish till it withers, but is cut down by the scythe while yet in its glory; and so is man full often taken away in the midst of his days.

Job 14:3 Job wonders that the Lord should think upon so frail a creature as mortal man.

Job 14:4 The length of our troubles and the shortness of our lives are both caused by the impurity of our nature; and that is a matter of inheritance, for from unclean flesh there cannot come a pure posterity. A poisonous plant bears poisonous seed. A fallen man becomes the father of fallen children.

Job 14:5-6 We have a day and a work appointed us, and we are immortal till these are ended.

Job 14:7-10 So far as this visible world is concerned, man at death is gone never to return. For him there is no second budding and sprouting into another mortal life. The ancients chose the cypress as the symbol of death, because when once cut down it puts forth no shoots, but dies altogether. As regards this earthly existence their choice was wise and instructive. Let us then live while we live.

Job 14:12

Job had seen lakes or inland seas evaporated, and torrent-beds left dry, and he compares them to man's decay. But as rain from heaven can refill the pools and cause the torrents to rush with boundless strength, so will the Lord restore life to the dead. When the heavens are no more, but shall have passed away with a great noise, the graves shall yield up their charge, and men shall rise again.

Job 14:13 Hide me as a treasure, kept by its possessor The sufferer begged for rest, he petitioned for pity, he prayed the Lord to remember him; but, indeed, the Lord never forgets his servants.

Job 14:15 When the waking morn shall come, the saints shall answer to their Creators resurrection-call, and rise to eternal life. In order to share in this blessedness we must have personal faith in the risen Saviour. Is this the case with all in our family? Is there an unsaved one among us? If so, since we may die to-day, may God arouse us that we may at once seek salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus, who is always ready to save.

God my Redeemer lives, And often from the skies Looks down, and watches all my dust, Till he shall bid it rise.

Array'd in glorious grace Shall these vile bodies shine: And every shape and every face, Look heavenly and divine.

These lively hopes we owe To Jesus' dying love:

We would adore his grace below, And sing his power above.

January 19--Evening

January 19—Evening "The Lord shall guide thee continually."

Genesis 24:1-4; Genesis 24:10-31

Genesis 24:1 This is the summing-up of his life. Yet the former chapters record many and painful afflictions; and, doubtless, the Lord had made these also to be blessings.

Genesis 24:2-4 The godly seed must be kept separate. It is not fit for believers to be joined in marriage with the unregenerate.

Genesis 24:10-31 That business will be sure to speed which is carried on in the spirit of prayer. All matters concerning marriage should especially be prayed over.

Genesis 24:15 Here was the hand of Providence. Observe it in your own lives also.

Genesis 24:27 Answered prayer should be thankfully acknowledged unto God.

Genesis 24:31

All difficulties vanished, everything was as he could wish it. It may not be thus with us; but if any course of conduct can make it so, it is that which begins and ends with prayer.

January 20--Morning

January 20—Morning "Follow thou Me."

Genesis 24:50-67

Laban, having heard Eliezer's story and seen the jewels, which were no doubt great arguments with his mercenary mind, consented that Rebekah should go with him to Isaac.

Genesis 24:51 It is always right for young people to seek the consent of parents and natural guardians in such an important business.

Genesis 24:52

He was too devout a man to fail to adore ingratitude; too many, however, only pray in need, but forget to worship in thanksgiving.

Genesis 24:53 He was a wise steward, and knew what arguments weighed most with Laban.

Genesis 24:54 God's servants should imitate this steward, and never be loiterers.

Genesis 24:56 We ought not easily to be delayed from duty. To loiter is to disobey. When God speeds us we should speed indeed.

Genesis 24:58

How happy would ministers be if all young people could be as readily led to the great Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. He accepts the willing mind. He asks for the heart. Alas, how many deny their consent to his loving claims.

Genesis 24:60 The blessing of parents is a precious dowry.

Genesis 24:63 This good man, in his choice of a suitable place and time for one of the most heavenly of occupations, is an example to us all. If we meditated more we should be far more gracious than we are;

Genesis 24:66

Happy is that servant of God who dare tell his Master in heaven all that he has done. What a sad account would some have to render; for, "who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" In all my Lord's appointed ways, My journey I'll pursue;

"Hinder me not," ye much-loved saints, For I must go with you.

Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead, I'll follow where he goes;

"Hinder me not," shall be my cry, Though earth and hell oppose.

My spirit looks to God alone; My rock and refuge is his throne; In all my fears, in all my straits, My soul on his salvation waits.

Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways.

Pour out your hearts before his face; When helpers fail, and foes invade, God is our all-sufficient aid.

January 20--Evening

January 20—Evening "Love not the world."

Hebrews 11:8-19 The portion of Scripture we shall now read gives us a retrospect of our former reading, and shows us what it was which sustained the patriarchs in their wandering and separated life.

Hebrews 11:8

Faith is a better guide than mere reason, if it be faith in God. Our knowledge is partial and may mislead us, but trust in the omniscient Lord gives us an infallible guide.

Hebrews 11:9-10 His eye saw into the far off future, and his hope was set upon eternal things. Are we also looking beyond this world for our portion? Shame will one day cover our faces if it be not so, for all the things which are seen will melt away like the mist of the morning. Heaven has a foundation, earth has none, for Job tells us concerning the Great Creator, "he hangeth the world upon nothing."

Hebrews 11:12

Abraham himself was so aged as to be long past the years in which children could naturally be born to him; and therefore his body was as dead. Yet the father of the faithful staggered not at the promise of the Almighty God. There is no exaggeration in the description of the patriarch's descendants, for not only the Jews, but all believers, are reckoned as the seed of Abraham. The spiritual seed are countless and glorious as the stars; and the natural or earthly seed are a great host like the sand of the sea shore.

Hebrews 11:14

Even thus at this day we are here as strangers and foreigners, and we seek a city out of sight. "Jerusalem the golden" is the desire of our hearts, but here we have no continuing city. This is to walk by faith.

Hebrews 11:15

Correspondence with the old country was easy, and the temptation to seek their fatherland was a strong one, but they persevered in the pilgrim life, and so must we. Opportunities to return to sin are legion, but we must by the power of the Holy Spirit continue to walk with God.

Hebrews 11:19

Isaac lived as if he had been raised from the dead, for he was dead in Abraham's intent and expectation. In this way he became to the patriarch a living type of the resurrection. The faith of Abraham was tried in many fires, and so must ours be. Will it stand the test? Are we resting upon the faithfulness and omnipotence of God? Any pillars less strong than these will give way beneath

us. The faith of God's elect, which is the gift of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit, will endure and overcome and land us safely in the promised inheritance. Have we this faith or no? May the Lord grant us this most precious grace. My rest is in heaven, my rest is not here, Then why should I tremble when trials are near? Be hush'd my dark spirit, the worst that can come But shortens thy journey, and hastens thee home.

It is not for me to be seeking my bliss, Or building my hopes in a region like this;

I look for a city that hands have not piled, I pant for a country by sin undefiled.

January 21--Morning

January 21—Morning "He giveth not account of any of his matters."

Romans 9:1-13

We omit some of the minor details of the history as contained in Genesis, and pass on to the birth of Isaac's twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Let us see how the New Testament explains the Old. We shall read in this chapter the apostle illustrates the doctrine of election by the history of the households of Abraham and Isaac, in which the will of the Lord made differences irrespective of merit. Here he brings us into a great deep; but if we only wish to know what God reveals and no more, we may safely follow where Scripture leads. Election is not a fit subject for idle curiosity, neither is it to be passed over in neglect, for whatever is taught us in the Word is profitable for some gracious purpose.

Romans 9:1-3

Paul did not write as he did because he hated the nation to which he belonged. Far from it. He would have sacrificed everything for their good; and he felt almost ready to be cast away himself, if by such a fate he could have rescued the Jewish people. Passionate love speaks a language which must not be weighed in the balances of cold reasoning. View the words as the outburst of a loving heart, and they are clear enough. O that all Christians had a like love for perishing sinners.

Romans 9:4-5 Paul pauses to adore the Lord whom he loved. Let us bow our heads and worship also.

Romans 9:6-7

Here was a difference made according to the divine will. God has a right to dispense his favours as he pleases, and it is not for us either to censure his actions or ask an account of them.

Romans 9:8-13

God passed by Esau, and gave Jacob the covenant blessing. This is a fact to be believed, and not to be made a matter for human judgment. Who are we that we should summon Jehovah to our bar? God is righteous in all his ways. We find that Esau despised his birthright, and sold it for a mess of pottage, and so by his actions abundantly justified, as well as fulfilled, the purpose of God.

How it ought to humble us when we remember that we have no claims upon God. If he should leave us to go on in sin and perish, we have no right to complain, for we deserve it. How earnestly and humbly should we implore him to look upon us in mercy, and save us with his great salvation. "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," is the voice of Jesus, and whether we see it or not, it is quite consistent with the predestination taught in this chapter. The Lord has a chosen people, and yet his gospel is to be preached to every creature. Believe, but do not cavil. When we believe on the Lord Jesus, we are in the way to make our calling and election sure. Only by faith can we be assured that the Lord has called and chosen us.

'Tis not that I did choose thee, For, Lord, that could not be; This heart would still refuse thee, But thou hast chosen me:

Thou from the sin that stain'd me Wash'd me and set me free, And to this end ordain'd me, That I should live to thee.

January 21--Evening

January 21—Evening "Hold thou me up."

Genesis 25:27-34 Having read of the purpose of God concerning Esau and Jacob, we will now follow their history.

Genesis 25:27

Children of the same parents may differ greatly in disposition, in conduct, and in character. The sovereign grace of God creates grave distinctions when it begins to operate, and every year makes the differences more apparent. Esau was wild and Jacob gentle. The one was roving, unsteady, and proud, and the other domesticated, thoughtful, and sedate.

Genesis 25:28 This was bad on the part of both parents. Favouritism ought to be avoided, for nothing but discontent and ill feeling can come of it. Yet if Rebekah loved Jacob because of his quiet, pious disposition, she had good reason for it, which is more than can be said of Isaac's love of the rough huntsman Esau, only because "he did eat of his venison."

Genesis 25:31 This was unbrotherly and ungenerous of Jacob; the only good point about it is that he set a high value upon the birthright, and so showed his spiritual understanding. It is plain from this that Jacob's salvation was due to the mercy of God, for his natural character was by no means commendable. The good points in him were of the Lord, the bargaining propensity was inherited from his mother's family.

Genesis 25:32-34

He valued it so little that a sorry mess of lentiles could buy it of him. Surely it was the dearest dish of meat man ever bought, though we remember a little fruit which cost us more. Many a worldling barter his soul for the pleasures of an hour, crying, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." In order to be rich, to indulge in pleasure, or to have their own way, men have thrown aside all hope of heaven. This is to exchange pearls for pebbles, realities for shams, lasting bliss for fleeting mirth. May those who are just growing up into life take warning from this sad act of Esau, and choose earnestly the good part which shall not be taken from them. The apostle turns Esau's story to good account in Hebrews 12:15-17

Hebrews 12:15

We are to watch lest any of us who profess to be children of God should fall short of grace, like an arrow which does not quite reach the target. To fail to possess grace in the heart is a fatal thing.

Hebrews 12:15 Sin is a bitter root, and brings forth sorrow and shame.

Hebrews 12:16 It is a profane thing to compare the priceless blessing of God to a merely sensual enjoyment. It is an acted blasphemy.

Hebrews 12:17 The deed was done, the blessing had been given to Jacob, and Isaac could not withdraw it from him. If men sell their hope of heaven for the joys of earth they will in the world to come repent of their bargain, but there will be no repentance with God. He that is filthy must be filthy still. Should I to gain the world's applause, Or to escape its harmless frown, Refuse to countenance thy cause, And make thy people's lot my own;

I sell my birthright in that day, And throw my precious soul away.

No! let the world cast out my name, And vile account me if they will;

If to confess the Lord be shame, I purpose to be viler still. For thee, my God, I all resign, Content if I can call thee mine.

January 22--Morning

January 22—Morning "A righteous man hateth lying."

Genesis 27:1-5; Genesis 27:17-29

Genesis 27:1-5 When Rebekah heard this she determined to obtain the blessing for her favourite son Jacob by a crafty stratagem. She prepared two kids of goats in a savoury manner, dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes, put skins upon his hands and neck that he might appear to be hairy like his brother, and sent him in to deceive his father.

Genesis 27:20 When we begin to sin we go from bad to worse. It was base enough of Jacob to utter so many falsehoods, but to bring in the Lord God of his father to give them the appearance of truth, was much worse.

Genesis 27:24

Thus Jacob persisted in his falsehood. This narrative shows us the truthfulness of God's word, since it does not conceal the faults of its most eminent saints. Had the Old Testament been a cunningly devised fable, it would never have exhibited the great progenitor of the twelve tribes in so sorry a light.

Genesis 27:25

Isaac did not seek counsel of the Lord, hence his mistake. By this he was punished for his ill-placed partiality to Esau, for it was very unworthy of the patriarch to prefer his profane son "because he did eat of his venison."

Genesis 27:26-29

Thus the prophecy concerning Esau and Jacob was repeated with enlargements, "the elder shall serve the younger." God's purpose was accomplished, but this did not excuse Rebekah and Jacob, or screen them from the chastisements of God, which commenced at once. We ought never to do evil that good may come.

Father, to that firstborn of thine Thou hast the blessing given,
The power, and dignity divine, Th'
inheritance of heaven.

O how shall I the younger son, The Elder's right obtain?

I'll put my Brother's raiment on, And thus the blessing gain.

Father, I joyfully believe Thou art well pleased with me;

Thou dost at my approach perceive A heavenly fragrancy.

Thou dost thy gracious will declare, Thou dost delight to bless;
And why? My Brother's garb I wear,
My Saviour's righteousness.

January 22--Evening

January 22—Evening "I will not leave thee."

Genesis 28:10-22

Esau vowed to kill Jacob, and therefore Rebekah was obliged to send her favourite son away. This she little expected when she travelled a crooked way to earn him promotion.

Genesis 28:10

Alone, without a servant to attend him, or a beast to carry him, with only his staff to lean upon, the heir of the promises set out upon his long journey of about five hundred miles.

Genesis 28:11

He had a hard bed and a cold bolster, but he had a sweet sleep, and a sweeter dream. Often when the head lies hardest the heart is lightest. Our times of great trial are times of heavenly visitation.

Genesis 28:12

Note the many "beholds" in the passage. They call for our special attention. The patriarch dreamed of Jesus—sweetest of all dreams. He saw how heaven and earth are joined by the Messiah, and how free is the intercourse between God and man by the way of the Mediator.

Genesis 28:15

Having seen the Messiah as the ladder, he beheld the glory of Jehovah the covenant God, and received the covenant blessing. Every syllable must have sounded as sweetest music in his ears. Note that choice word, "I will not leave thee." Whom God loves he never leaves. "Till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of;"—saying and doing are two very different things with men, but not with God.

Genesis 28:16-17

He was full of awe, even to trembling. He felt as if he had slept in the temple of Jehovah, and therefore as a sinner he was moved with fear. He had not been afraid of wild beasts or heathen men, but now though filled with holy confidence he is equally filled with sacred awe.

Genesis 28:18

We must honour God with our substance. Some set up a stone of remembrance, but they pour no oil on the top of it, for they offer nothing unto the Lord.

Genesis 28:19 Beth-el the house of God

Genesis 28:22

Here was a little of the bargaining spirit in covenanting for bread to eat and raiment to put on, but still there was genuine faith. He renounces all other trusts, casts himself upon the divine care, and dedicates a tithe unto the Lord. God has dealt so well with each of us, that we ought never to stint his cause. Can we not do something even now to honour the Lord with our substance and with the firstfruits of our increase?

Jesus that ladder is Th' incarnate Deity, Partaker of celestial bliss And human misery;

Lo! up and down the scale The angels move! with love! And God, the Great Invisible, Himself appears above.

January 23--Morning

January 23—Morning "The Lord is my helper."

Genesis 31:36-44

Jacob reached the house of Laban, and there married his two wives, Leah and Rachel. After toiling hard for Laban for years, he felt a longing to see his father's face again. Besides, he felt that Laban had treated him badly, and that it was time to separate and become his own master. He therefore stole away with his family and his goods, but was hotly pursued by Laban, who evidently intended him no good. The night before Laban overtook Jacob the Lord visited him in a dream, and warned him against doing Jacob any violence, or attempting to entice him back to Haran. This was a very gracious interposition, and the patriarch had abundant cause to bless the Lord for it. Laban was thus providentially restrained from doing mischief. However, he accused Jacob of having stolen his images: Jacob did not know that Rachel had concealed them, and when Laban could not find them, the patriarch upbraided him for bringing such a groundless charge against him.

Genesis 31:36-42

Laban was a great boaster, but a miserable churl. He claimed credit for leaving Jacob unharmed, but the patriarch saw through his pretences, and knew that he had only been harmless because the Lord had laid an embargo upon him.

Genesis 31:44

He made a merit of necessity, and so, by the good hand of the Lord, what might have been a fearful slaughter ended in a friendly compact. The Lord can make the wrath of men to praise him, and restrain it when he pleases. This event reminds us of one of David's grateful songs.

Psalms 124

Psalms 124:1-8 In all times of danger from men our wisest course is to fly to the Lord our helper. He has ways and means for delivering us which we know not of. He can either turn our enemies into friends, or else so check all their efforts that they shall do us no real injury. Blessed are those men whose trust in the Lord never wavers.

Israel, a name divinely blest, May rise secure, securely rest;

Thy holy Guardian's wakeful eyes Admit no slumber, nor surprise.

Should earth and hell with malice burn, Still thou shalt go, and still return, Safe in the Lord; his heavenly care Defends thy life from every snare.

January 23--Evening

January 23—Evening "I give myself unto prayer."

Genesis 32:6-13; Genesis 32:21-31 No sooner had Jacob escaped from Laban than he was plunged into another trial, for he had to face his injured brother Esau. We shall see how the Lord again preserved his servant.

Genesis 32:7-12

Men of faith are yet men of common sense. We are to use our wits as well as our prayers. Grace does not make men stupid.) (This is a master argument, "and thou saidst." It is real prayer when we plead the promise, and hold the Lord to his word.

Genesis 32:24

Solitude is the fit helper of devotion. Company distracts us, but alone we enter into the very soul of prayer); (Prayer must become an agony, a wrestling, if we mean to prevail.

Genesis 32:25

He who shrank one sinew could have crushed Jacob's whole body: if we overcome the Lord in prayer, it is because he lends us strength, and condescends to be conquered.

Genesis 32:26 This was bravely spoken. Those who thus plead must win the day.

Genesis 32:28

One night spent in prayer ennobled Jacob. How few of us have ever tried to win a prince's rank in this way. How much might we gain if we would wrestle for it. When Jacob overcame the angel he virtually disarmed Esau. He who has power with God will surely prevail with men.

Genesis 32:29 He did not gratify his curiosity, but he did better, he enriched him with a divine blessing.

Genesis 32:30 Peniel or the face of God

Genesis 32:31 And who would not be content to halt if he might win what Israel won?

Lord, I cannot let thee go, Till a blessing thou bestow; Do not turn away thy face, Mine's an urgent pressing case.

No—I must maintain my hold, 'Tis thy goodness makes me bold;

I can no denial take, When I plead for Jesu's sake,

January 24--Morning

January 24—Morning "I the world ye shall have tribulation."

Genesis 37:2-14; Genesis 37:18-24; Genesis 37:28; Genesis 37:31-35

Joseph was Jacob's best loved and most tried son. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. This chapter opens a long scene of suffering.

Genesis 37:2-4 His piety led him to protest against the wrongdoing of his brethren. He would not join them in evil, nor aid them by concealing their evil deeds.

Genesis 37:9-11 Whom God favours the ungodly are sure to dislike. The evil hate the righteous.

Genesis 37:34-35 This was a very painful transaction, but let us not forget that the Lord overruled it for the highest good.

Crosses and changes are their lot, Long as they sojourn here; But since their Saviour changes not, What have his saints to fear?

January 24--Evening

January 24—Evening "The Lord shall preserve thy soul."

Genesis 39:1-6; Genesis 39:16-23

Genesis 36:1-2

Grace enabled Joseph to make the best of his position, and to be amiable, industrious, and useful. This was as it should be. A child of God, even as a slave, should honour his religion, and God will bless him in so doing.

Genesis 36:3 This shews that Joseph did not fall into Egyptian idolatry, but avowed his faith in Jehovah, so that his master saw that Jehovah was with him.

Genesis 36:4 The fear of God leads to honesty and faithfulness, and this is often the road to promotion even among men. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is.

Genesis 36:6 This became a trial to him. Personal beauty is a dangerous gift: we must not be proud of it, but be the more guarded in our conduct if we possess it.

Joseph found a tempter in his master's wife, who would have led him into great sin. He refused to listen to her disgraceful request, and said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" The wicked woman again and again sought to lead him astray, and at last seized him, and held him, so that, to escape from her, he had to leave his garment in her hand. Then her wicked heart turned to malice, and she charged Joseph with being guilty of that unclean action which he had so earnestly refused.

Genesis 36:16-18

Thus she convinced her husband by showing the garment, which, could it have spoken, would have declared his innocence. A great deal of evidence may be brought against a perfectly innocent man. Let us, therefore, be slow to condemn persons of unblemished character.

Genesis 36:19-20 Here his feet were hurt with fetters, and the iron entered into his soul.

Genesis 36:21 God is as much with his servants in a prison as in a palace; he does not desert us however low we may be brought.

Genesis 36:22 When a good man is thrown down he is soon up again. Truth ever floats where sin is drowned.

Genesis 36:23 May each youthful descendant of godly parents be so kept by God's grace that the Lord may always be with him. Keep God's favour, and nothing is lost. Lose that, and all is gone.

Endow me, Lord, with godly fear, A quick discerning eye, To look to thee when sin is near, And from the tempter fly.

Create in me a holy mind, A sin-abhorring will, That tramples down, and casts behind The baits of pleasing ill.

January 25--Morning

January 25—Morning "God is for me."

Genesis 40:1; Genesis 40:3-23

Genesis 40:3-4 Thus providence regulated the royal household with an eye to Joseph, who was even in prison favoured of the Lord.

Genesis 40:5 Not only men awake but asleep also shall be made to serve Joseph's interests.

Genesis 40:6-7

Thus should we show kindly sympathy, and seek each other's welfare. What was fitting in a prison is even more so in a family.

Genesis 40:8-11 Joseph bore brave witness to the living God; every believer should do so.

Genesis 40:12-15

How lovingly does Joseph hide his brethren's fault, and speak not of his being sold but "stolen." He was stolen, for the Ishmeelites bought what the sellers had no right to sell. Let us use the gentlest word when called to speak of the wrong doing of others.

Genesis 40:20-22 Whether for good or evil, the word of the Lord will be accomplished. Be it ours to have it in reverence.

Genesis 40:23

Sad would it have been for Joseph had he put his trust in man; but though the butler forgot him his God did not. The Lord was reserving Joseph for a more timely deliverance; he was to come out of prison to a throne, and that was best secured by his waiting a little longer. It is good for a man to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God.

Put thou thy trust in God; In duty's path go on;

Fix on himself thy steadfast eye, So shall thy work be done.

Though years on years roll on His mercy shall endure;

Though clouds and darkness hide his path, His promised grace is sure.

January 25--Evening

January 25—Evening "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

Genesis 41:1; Genesis 41:8-16; Genesis 41:25-36

Two years rolled away and Joseph was still in prison, for the right time had not come. If the vision tarry let us wait for it.

Genesis 41:14

Joseph was under no obligation to any one for his release; he was fetched out of prison because the king needed him. Like his ancestor Abraham he owed not a thread or a shoe latchet to any man. God's people shall thus be made the head and not the tail. The king of Egypt could not say, "I have made Joseph rich." The Lord will exalt his servants in the best time, and in the best manner.

Genesis 41:16

Then the king detailed his double dream to Joseph, which was at once interpreted by divine illumination, Joseph humbly and plainly ascribing all his knowledge to the true God. Pharaoh had complimented him, but he was not a man of vain mind, and therefore disclaimed all honour for himself.

Genesis 41:33-36

Here was practical wisdom. This is what we should seek of God. Knowledge is of little service unless it be prudently utilised. To be anxiously careful for the future is wrong, but provident prudence is so evidently a virtue, that we wonder any should question it.

Ill that God blesses is our good, And unblest good is ill, And all is right that seems most wrong, If it be his dear will.

I have no cares, O blessed Lord! For all my cares are thine;

I live in triumph, Lord, for thou Hast made thy triumphs mine.

January 26--Morning

January 26—Morning "All things work together for good."

Genesis 41:37-43; Genesis 41:46-57 We left Joseph before Pharaoh, whose dream he had interpreted, and to whom he had given sage advice.

Genesis 41:38

Joseph's words concerning the Lord had a manifest effect on idolatrous Pharaoh, and he spoke with reverence. We need never be ashamed to avow our faith. Good will come of holy speech.

Genesis 41:39-43

What a change from the prison to the chariot. Thus was the Lord Jesus uplifted from the grave, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Such honours in their degree shall all persecuted saints obtain either here or hereafter.

Genesis 41:46 Prosperity did not spoil him. He set about his business, and discharged the duties of his office with great diligence.

Genesis 41:47-51 Our afflictions leave no sting behind. The Lord's love so rinses out our cup of sorrow that no bitterness remains. Such forgetfulness is sweet.

Genesis 41:52

Here again he ascribes his happiness to his God, and blesses him for his double gift. To forget the past, and bear fruit in the present is a precious boon.

Genesis 41:53-55

We may call this a typical gospel, for poor hungry sinners are now bidden to go unto Jesus, and what he saith unto them do. May we be every one of us led of the Spirit of God to seek unto him who alone can open the well-stored granaries of grace.

Genesis 41:57 To whom else can men go for salvation but to Jesus, the Saviour? Have all who join in this reading gone unto the Redeemer for heavenly bread? If not—why not?

Hail to the Prince of life and peace Who holds the keys of death and hell! The kingdoms of the earth are his, And sovereign power becomes him well.

In shame and sorrow once he died, But now he reigns for evermore;

Bow down ye saints before his feet, And all ye angel-bands adore.

January 26--Evening

January 26—Evening "The Lord trieth the righteous."

Genesis 42:1-4; Genesis 42:6-10; Genesis 42:13-24

Genesis 42:2

It is wise to seek relief, and not sit down in despair. If we need heavenly bread we must bestir ourselves and go to Jesus for it.

Genesis 42:6 Now was his dream fulfilled, though two-and-twenty years had intervened, and he had passed through slavery and prison.

Genesis 42:16

Evil communications corrupt good manners. Joseph swears by the life of Pharaoh. He did it to conceal his true character, for they would assuredly judge that such was not the language of the seed of Israel.

Genesis 42:17

He awakened their reflections by exciting their fears, dealing with them in the same manner as the Lord does with sinners whom he intends to reconcile unto himself. Divine severity brings the chosen to repentance.

Genesis 42:18 This assurance must have been alike surprising and consoling to them. He who fears God will do his fellow men no wrong.

Genesis 42:21 Their sin found them out, as ours will do sooner or later. When we sow wild oats we ought to remember that we shall have to reap them.

Genesis 42:22 He who has a clear conscience is buoyed up in times of calamity.

Genesis 42:23-24 This is a touching picture. Joseph in his great wisdom felt bound not to reveal himself at once, but his love was so great that he could not restrain his tears. When the Lord deals roughly with sinners to make them more deeply conscious of sin, he loves them notwithstanding all. Jesus has an eye of sympathy for weeping penitents.

Oh that I could repent, With all my idols part, And to thy gracious eyes present A humble, contrite heart.

Jesus on me bestow The penitent desire; With true sincerity of woe My aching breast inspire.

January 27--Morning

January 27—Morning "Fear thou not: for I am with thee."

Genesis 43:1-14

Joseph's brethren returned to their father with abundant provisions, but these were before long exhausted, and the same distress filled Jacob's household. Bread that perisheth does not endure like the bread of heaven.

Genesis 43:1-5

Israel had said positively "My son shall not go down," and yet it was needful that he should do so. We had better not be too positive in our determinations, or we may have to eat our words.

Genesis 43:6

Poor Jacob, out of fear for his darling son, thinks his sons unkind. We should not do injustice to others because of our partiality to one, but we are very apt to do so.

Genesis 43:7-10

Judah in becoming surety for Benjamin is a delightful type of our Lord Jesus, who is the surety of the New Covenant. He will assuredly fulfil his obligations and say at the last, "Of all those whom thou hast given me I have lost none."

Genesis 43:11 This was prudence. Faith in God is not above using the means. It was well to conciliate those upon whom they were so dependent.

Genesis 43:12 The money had been put into their sacks by Joseph's order, but they were not aware of that fact; therefore they were to restore it. This was scrupulous honesty, but not too scrupulous. We are not permitted to take advantage of the oversights of others. Every honest man will rectify mistakes by which another is the loser, even though he had no share in the error. Note what a good calculator Jacob was, and how he knew that the corn would rise in price, "Take double money" says he. Men of faith are not simpletons.

Genesis 43:13-14

Jacob's faith now came to the front. He left the issues of his case with the all-sufficient God, and in holy resignation accepted the trial, if the Lord willed to lay it upon him. When we resign our mercies cheerfully, we are most likely to have them back again. Abraham was allowed to keep Isaac because he was willing to part with him at the divine bidding, and so Israel received Benjamin again because, after some struggling, he at last acquiesced in the Lord's will. When we are at the end of our selfwill we are not far off the close of our trials. Our times are in thy hand, Why should we doubt or fear? A Father's hand will never cause His child a needless tear.

Our times are in thy hand, Jesus, the Crucified! The hand our many sins had pierced Is now our guard and guide.

January 27--Evening

January 27—Evening "His banner over me was love."

Genesis 43:15-16; Genesis 43:18-23; Genesis 43:26-34 So deeply interesting is this story of Joseph, that we must needs linger over it. The Holy Spirit indulges us with details, and we may be sure that he intended our profit thereby.

Genesis 43:15-16 Thus Joseph's love sought an opportunity for closer personal intercourse with them.

Genesis 43:18

Love intended pleasure, but fear turned it into dread. Beware of doubts and mistrusts of the Lord Jesus, lest even his goodness should make us afraid.

Genesis 43:19-22 Open confession was natural to honest men when in fear; it is also the ready way to peace with God.

Genesis 43:23 The hostage being delivered all was well. The bringing of our Lord Jesus from the dead was a token for good to all his brethren.

Genesis 43:28 By calling their father "thy servant," and making obeisance for themselves and him, they fulfilled his second dream. The sun and the moon and the eleven stars did him homage.

Genesis 43:29-30

Love longs to express itself, but there is a time for everything. Jesus loves his brethren always, but he prudently conceals himself at times for their good.

Genesis 43:31-34

How they must have wondered while they feasted to see the order in which he placed them, and the favour shown to Benjamin. How plainly everything said, "I am. Joseph" yet they perceived him not; and just so, despite all the loving deeds of Jesus, none ever discover him till he reveals himself by his Spirit.

Speak to us, Lord, thyself reveal, While here on earth we rove;

Speak to our hearts and let us feel The kindlings of thy love.

With thee conversing, we forget All time, and toil, and care;

Labour is rest, and pain is sweet, If thou, our God, art there.

January 28--Morning

January 28—Morning "Thou has pleaded the causes of my soul."

Genesis 44:14-34

Joseph ordered a silver cup to be placed in Benjamin's sack, and when his brethren had set out upon their journey he sent his steward after them to bring them back. By this means Joseph tried his brethren, and brought them into a fit condition to be informed of their relationship. Our reading commences with the scene when the brothers had been brought back into Joseph's court-house.

Genesis 44:15 This he said to help himself in acting the part he had assumed.

Genesis 44:16 Though innocent of the present charge, Judah confesses that their sad plight was well deserved by other sins.)

Genesis 44:17 To this Judah, the surety, could not yield; but pleaded in a marvellously touching manner. Note how eloquent he was. Our surety is our advocate, and his pleadings are mighty.

Genesis 44:18-34 The power of Judah's advocacy lay very much in its truth. It is a simple unvarnished narrative of facts. But its master weapon is found in the proposed substitution of himself for Benjamin. He is ready to smart for his suretyship. Do we not remember how Judah's great antitype not only proffered to be our substitute but actually was so: in this lies the power of his intercession. Where high the heavenly temple stands, The house of God not made with hands, Jesus, our Judah, stands to plead, A brother born for time of need.

He, who for men their surety stood, And pour'd on earth his precious blood, Pursues in heaven his mighty plan, The advocate and friend of man.

January 28--Evening

January 28—Evening "He loved me."

Genesis 45:1-15 After Judah's thrilling speech a solemn pause would follow. All hearts were full, but all tongues were silent.

Genesis 45:1

It was not meet that strangers should view that tender scene. When Jesus reveals himself to his chosen, it is "not unto the world."

Genesis 45:2 His heart long pent up burst forth at last uncontrollably.

Genesis 45:3

How amazed they must have been to see before them the brother whom they sold for a slave, and themselves in his power. What a discovery the soul makes when it perceives that Jesus whom it crucified is Lord and God.

Genesis 45:4

Tenderness courts communion and seeks to cast out fear. The words before us are such as Jesus uses to his troubled brethren; let us not be slow to draw near.

Genesis 45:5-8

He has so completely pardoned them, that he does not speak of forgiving them himself, but urges them to forgive themselves. He labours to expel from them the sorrow of the world which worketh death, for he knew that there would then be more room for godly sorrow.

Genesis 45:9-10 To be near to Joseph would be the choicest joy to Jacob. To be in fellowship with Jesus is the believer's heaven.

Genesis 45:11

He who forgives provides bountifully for the pardoned ones. Those whom Jesus cleanses from sin shall have all their wants supplied.

Genesis 45:14 The loves of Jesus and his favoured ones are mutual. What one feels the other feels.

Genesis 45:15

These kisses were seals of love, comparable to the witness of the Spirit in believing men. Such tokens unloose the tongue, and enable us to talk with Jesus in the holy familiarities of sacred fellowship. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" saith the spouse in the song. Amen. The Lord do so unto each one of us.

Oh see how Jesus trusts himself Unto our childish love, As though by his free ways with us Our earnestness to prove!

His sacred name a common word On earth he loves to hear;

There is no majesty in him Which love may not come near.

The light of love is round his feet, His paths are never dim; And he comes nigh to us when we Dare not come nigh to him.

January 29--Morning

January 29—Morning "The Lord will provide."

Genesis 45:16-28

Joseph's meeting with his family could not be long concealed; the happy fact oozed out, and the news was carried to the King himself

Genesis 45:16 They were glad because so great a benefactor of their nation was made happy.

Genesis 45:17-19 take you wagons or chariots

Genesis 45:20

Pharaoh thus delicately and with lordly generosity, spared Joseph any scruples about inviting his kinsmen to dwell in the land; they were to come into the country as the king's own guests. Observe how he bids them leave all their "stuff" behind, as if he meant to give them so much that would be better that they need not bring their tents or their furniture with them. Certainly, when we come to Jesus, and receive his treasures of grace, all earthly things become mere "stuff" to us.

Genesis 45:22

How Joseph's goodness contrasted with their former cruelty. "They sent him naked to strangers, he sends them in new and rich liveries; they took a small sum of money for him, he gives them large treasures; they sent his torn coat to his father, he sends variety of costly garments; they sold him to be the load of camels, he sends them home in chariots." Far greater still is the contrast between our ungenerous treatment of the Lord Jesus and his bountiful returns of grace to us.

Genesis 45:24

He knew them well, and feared that they might begin accusing each other, or might even become envious of Benjamin, as, they had formerly been of himself.

Genesis 45:25-26 A sad heart is far more ready to believe a mournful falsehood than a joyful truth. When his sons wickedly shewed him Joseph's coat he said, "Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces," but when they tell him a true story, he believes them not. It is a pity when despondency makes our judgment lose its balance.

Genesis 45:28

First the words, and then the wagons aided Jacob's faith, even as the words of Jesus and the gifts of Jesus enable us to believe on him. The venerable patriarch was more glad to hear that his son was "alive," than that he was "governor over all the land of Egypt." This was enough for him, and he resolved to have a sight of his beloved one. Where there is true love there will be a desire for communion. Those who love the Son of God will not be willing to live without heavenly fellowship. O may all united here in family worship, see Jesus by faith before they die, when they die, and

then for ever.

Jesus, these eyes have never seen That radiant form of Thine!

The veil of sense hangs dark between Thy blessed face and mine!

Yet though I have not seen, and still, Must rest in faith alone;

I love thee, dearest Lord! and will, Unseen, but not unknown.

When death these mortal eyes shall seal, And still this throbbing heart,

The rending veil shall thee reveal, All glorious as thou art

January 29--Evening

January 29—Evening "We shall see Him as He is."

Genesis 46:29-34

Genesis 46:30 As if now he could lie down and sleep, for his last desire was fulfilled. Bishop Hall says, "And if the meeting of earthly friends be so unspeakably comfortable, how happy shall we be in the light of the glorious face of God our Father! of that of our blessed Redeemer, whom we sold to death for our sins, and who now, after his noble triumph, hath all power given him in heaven and earth"

Genesis 46:33-34 To speak the honest truth is always the best policy, and to follow an honest calling the best condition. Joseph might have bid them ask to be made nobles, but he knew that they would prosper better as shepherds. "Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not."

Genesis 47:2-10; Genesis 47:12

Genesis 47:2-9

He avowed himself a pilgrim, thus bearing witness to the hope which sustained him, but he gave to Pharaoh a more gloomy view of pilgrim life than Abraham or Isaac would have done. However, since this man of many trials yet reached the promised rest, even so shall every afflicted believer.

Genesis 47:10 The reverend age of Jacob gave him liberty to bless even the monarch of the land. An old mans blessing is precious. Let us so act towards the aged, that they may invoke blessings upon us.

Genesis 47:12

Thus our elder brother Jesus, who is Lord over the whole earth for the good of his church, takes care to nourish all his Father's household "according to their families? Be pleased, O Jesus, to let this family share in thy great love. When famine frowns and fields are bare God shall for saints provide;

He has a land of Goshen where He makes their souls abide.

In darkest times they need not fear, Their wants are all foreknown;

Jesus their Lord shall now appear As Joseph on the throne.

January 30--Morning

January 30—Morning "O give thanks unto the Lord."

Psalms 105:1-24 The Psalmist commemorates the providential care of the Lord towards the chosen family in the delightful verses of—

Psalms 105:1

Thankfulness should sweeten our spirit, worship should be our delight, and to make known the goodness of the Lord our constant employment.

Psalms 105:2

Both singing and talking ought to be consecrated to the Lord's honour, though, alas! they are too often desecrated to the most unworthy purposes.

Psalms 105:3 We are very prone to glory in something; wise are they who glory only in the Lord.

Psalms 105:4 Even when we have found him and know his love, let us press onward and seek him more and more.

Psalms 105:5-6

Those who receive special favours should consider themselves under peculiar obligations to glorify God by publishing abroad his goodness and power.

Psalms 105:8

Glory be to God, he has never ceased to be faithful to the covenant of grace. It is ordered in all things and sure, and not one word of it has ever fallen to the ground. His promises stand fast for ever, firm as the throne of the I AM.

Psalms 105:15 With ease the surrounding potentates might have crushed the chosen race while one single tent could hold them; but the Preserver of men mysteriously guarded them, as evermore he keeps the little flock of his people. The persons of the saints are sacred, and sanctified unto God, they cannot be touched with impunity.

Psalms 105:16

Before the famine came, arrangements had been made for the housing of Jacob and his family. Before our trials befall us the way out of them has been prepared. There was a Joseph before there was a famine.

Psalms 105:17-19

God's word caused the trial, and the same word ended it. There is as much a divine fiat concerning our daily trials as there was in the creation of the world. One word from God can bring

us down, but, blessed be his name, another can raise us up.

Psalms 105:23

Even favoured Israel must go into Egypt where trouble awaited his household; but it was needful for the preservation of the race, and therefore a matter for praise. Let us bless God also when we go down into Egypt, for the hand of the Lord is in it. To God, the great, the ever bless'd, Let songs of honour be address'd; His mercy firm for ever stands;

Give him the thanks his love demands.

Remember what thy mercy did For Jacob's race thy chosen seed; And with the same salvation bless The meanest suppliant of thy grace.

January 30--Evening

January 30—Evening "God shall be with you."

Genesis 48:1-5; Genesis 48:8-21

Genesis 48:4

Jacob would not have Joseph fix his heart upon Egypt, but have a believing eye towards Canaan, therefore he speaks to him concerning it. We must ever guard against loving the world because things go smoothly with us.

Genesis 48:5

Thus they were to be regarded as founders of distinct tribes, and to have each of them a portion among the sons of Jacob.

Genesis 48:11 God is much better to us than our fears; yea, far better than our hopes.

Genesis 48:12-19 The order of nature is not the order of grace. Jacob well knew this, for in his own case it was written, "the elder shall serve the younger." The Lord's purposes must stand.

Genesis 48:20-21

Whoever dies, the Lord remains with his people. Let us not be in despair, though the best of our friends or the ablest of our ministers be taken from us. When good old Jacob blest the seed, From Joseph's loins that came, He cross'd his withered hands, 'tis said, And God has done the same.

Crosses each day with trials hot, The Christian's path has been; And who has found a happy lot Without a cross between?

"Not so, my father," oft we say, This pain, this grief remove;

Too blind to fathom wisdom's way, Or think 'tis sent in love.

January 31--Morning

January 31—Morning "The Lord bless thee and keep thee."

Genesis 49:1-15

Genesis 49:2

Jacob was about to speak by inspiration. The blessing of a parent whose tongue is taught of God is priceless beyond conception.

Genesis 49:3-4

Though he was the firstborn Reuben missed the birthright, because he was light and loose. Whatever good points may be in a man, if he be not sober, steady, and substantial, he will come to nothing. To be unstable as the waves of the sea is one of the worst of faults and mars the whole character.

Genesis 49:5-7 A great wrong was here disavowed by Jacob. He could not prevent it, for his sons acted hastily in selfwill, and he knew nothing of their murderous deed till it was over, but he takes care to bear his witness against it in the most solemn manner. The follies of youth will come home to men in their riper years. It is a great mercy when from our childhood, we walk uprightly.

Genesis 49:8 When the dying patriarch reached that name which is a type of Christ, he rose to a higher key, he had no more faults to mention, but fell to blessing.

Genesis 49:9 Who dare defy the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Jesus the Lord is terrible to his enemies.

Genesis 49:10 When our Lord came his enemies said, "Behold, the world is gone after him." To this day he is the greatest of loadstones to attract mens' hearts. He came just when the kingdom had gone from Judah, and now he reigns as our Shiloh, the Prince of Peace.

Genesis 49:11-12 Truly in our Immanuel's land the wine and milk flow in rivers. Come ye and buy without money and without price.

Genesis 49:13 May our sea-faring people be favoured of the Lord, and never sit in darkness as Zebulun came to do.

Genesis 49:14-15

Though quiet and industrious, it may be Issachar was somewhat deficient in courage and energy. There are no perfect characters; but it were greatly to be wished that our contented brethren were also more energetic. Yet as Issachar was a true son of Jacob, we trust our slow-moving brethren are the same. It were well, however, for each of us to be more in earnest than ever, for we serve an earnest God.

We leave the rest of the blessing for our next reading.

God of mercy, hear our prayer For the children Thou hast given;

Let them all Thy blessings share, Grace on earth, and bliss in heaven!

Cleanse their souls from every stain, Through the Saviour's precious blood;

Let them all be born again, And be reconciled to God.

January 31--Evening

January 31—Evening "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."

Genesis 49:16-33 We will now read the rest of the benedictions pronounced by Jacob upon his sons.

Genesis 49:16 Dan signifies judge; the patriarch declared that he would verify his name.

Genesis 49:17-18

Here Jacob made a pause. His utterance of weakness has neither petulance nor complaining in it, but is expressive of hope growing out of long confidence. Soon he hoped to enjoy the fulness of salvation in the presence of the Lord.

Genesis 49:19 This is often exemplified in the believer's life. Many trials press him down, but he rises up again.

Genesis 49:21 Vivacity of spirit was linked with readiness of speech, a good combination for a minister of the gospel.

Genesis 49:26 The heart of the venerable patriarch was enlarged concerning Joseph; he evidently felt that he could not pour out a benediction copious enough. And truly, if we turn our thoughts to Jesus, the greater Joseph, no language can ever express our desires for his exaltation. Watts has well put it—

"Blessings more than we can give Be, Lord, for ever thine."

Genesis 49:27 This was to be a contentious tribe. Though Benjamin stood high in his father's natural affection, he did not dare for that reason to invent a blessing for him, but speaks the word of the Lord neither less nor more. To fight from morning to night is a sorry business, unless it be against sin.

Genesis 49:28-33

He was not left even after death among the Egyptians, but slept in the family tomb of the pilgrim band, to awake with them at the resurrection. In all things he maintained his character as a sojourner with God, looking for a city yet to be revealed.

Shrinking from the cold hand of death, I soon must gather up my feet;

Must swift resign this fleeting breath, And die, my father's God to meet.

Number'd among thy people, I Expect with joy thy face to see;

Because thou didst for sinners, die, Jesus, in death, remember me!

February 1--Morning

February 1—Morning "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices."

Job 1:1-12

It is the general opinion that Job flourished at some time between the age of Abraham and the time of Moses. It is probable that Moses wrote the sacred poem which records the discussion between Job and his friends. We shall therefore, in this place, consider his history, and gather a few gems from the remarkable book which bears his name.

Job 1:1 he was but a plain "man" and not a noble, yet was he more noble than the nobles of his time. His character is given him by infallible inspiration, and surely no man could win a better. His life was well balanced and displayed all the virtues, both towards God and towards man.

Job 1:2-3 So that a rich man may be a good man, and though "gold and the gospel seldom do agree," yet it may happen that a man of substance may also have substance in heaven. Job was gracious in prosperity, and therefore was sustained in adversity.

Job 1:4

Probably they celebrated their birthdays in this happy and united manner. It is a great happiness to see brothers and sisters knit together in love.

Job 1:5

He did not forbid their festivals, for they were not in themselves sinful, but knowing how prone men are to forget their God, if not themselves, when in the house of feasting, he was anxious to remove any spot which might remain. It is to be feared that few parents are as careful as Job was in this matter.

Job 1:6 To do this he need not be in heaven. God's assembly room includes all space. What impudence it was on Satan's part to come before God! What equal impudence when hypocrites pretend to worship the Most High.

Job 1:7 He is a busy itinerant. He is never idle.

Job 1:8 Satan reflects carefully and acts craftily. He had "considered" Job, and watched him narrowly.

Job 1:10 And why not? If Job had been poor and wretched, Satan would have said that the Lord paid his servants wretched wages.

Job 1:11 A cruel insinuation, but Satan was measuring Job's corn with his own bushel.

Job 1:12 The Lord intended to glorify himself, to further perfect the character of Job, and to furnish his church with a grand example. Hence his challenge to the arch-enemy. Satan went off upon his

errand willingly enough, but he little dreamed of the defeat which awaited him.

Hast Thou protected me thus far, To leave me in this dangerous hour? Shall Satan be allow'd to mar Thy work, or to resist Thy power?

Oh never wilt Thou leave the soul That flies for refuge to Thy breast!

Thy love, which once hath made me whole, Shall guide me to eternal rest.

February 1--Evening

February 1—Evening "Many are the afflictions of the righteous."

Job 1:13-22

Job 1:13

Satan was crafty in his selection of the time. When troubles come upon us at seasons of rejoicing they have a double bitterness. The brightness of the morning of that memorable day made the darkness of the night all the darker.

Job 1:14-15

Job did not lose his property through neglect of business, the oxen were plowing, and the asses were not left to go astray: this proves that all our care and diligence cannot preserve our substance to us unless the Lord is the keeper thereof. To lose the oxen which plowed his fields, and the asses which carried his burdens was no small calamity, yet we do not find the man of God uttering one word of complaint. Some would have been in a sad way if but one ox had died.

Job 1:16 The trial increased in intensity, for the hand of God was more directly to be seen in it, and this would keenly wound the holy soul of Job. Moreover, an eastern's wealth lies mainly in his flocks, and therefore the bulk of Job's property was gone at a blow; yet he murmured not. Some professors of religion would have grievously fretted, if but one lamb had perished.

Job 1:17

How dolefully each messenger finishes his tidings. Satan knows how to drum a mournful truth into a man's ears, and weary his heart with the reiteration. Three companies of servants had thus been destroyed, and the last relics of his live stock, yet not a word did he say. His heart was so fixed in God, that he was not afraid of evil tidings. What an example for us!

Job 1:19 This was a home-thrust indeed. This would stir the man if anything would. Great reasoners make the lesser arguments lead up to the greater, so here the arch-enemy weakens Job with the lesser afflictions, and then comes to his heaviest assaults. To lose his whole family at once, was heart-breaking work, yet did not his faith fail.

Job 1:20-21

Now indeed was Job great. Surely no man, besides the Son of Man in Gethsemane, ever rose to a greater height of resignation. Instead of cursing God, as Satan said he would, he blesses the Lord with all his heart. How thoroughly beaten the evil spirit must have felt. May the Holy Spirit help each one of us to triumph over him in like manner. Neither in his heart, nor in his speech did he offend. He was taught the sacred wisdom of resignation, and in nothing was he displeased with his God.

Job 1:22 Grace made him more than a conqueror over Satan.

'Tis God that lifts our comforts high, Or sinks them in the grave, He gives, and (blessed be his name!) He takes but what he gave.

Peace, all our angry passions then, Let each rebellious sigh Be silent at his sov'reign will, And every murmur die.

February 2--Morning

February 2—Morning "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

Job 2:1-13

Job 2:1

Even the devil will attend divine worship to serve his own ends. It is, therefore, a poor confidence which looks for salvation because church or chapel have been regularly attended. We ought also to watch and pray even when we are in the assemblies of the saints, for Satan enters there, and is busy with his temptations.

Job 2:2 Full of evil as Satan is, he is not idle. A lazy man commits one more sin than the devil himself.

Job 2:3 The glory of Job's character was his sincerity and uprightness, and this like an impregnable fortress defied the attacks of hell, though the prince of darkness himself personally assailed him, with permission from God to take from him all that he possessed.

Job 2:5

Satan suggested that bodily pain would be the weapon to wound Job's faith; yea, and turn it into rebellion. There was much malicious cunning in this, for many a man has yielded before the miseries of physical pain though he had been proof against every other trial. Yet the Lord can make his people more than conquerors even there. In this wretched state he had no soft bed, but lay upon the hard ashes; nor does it seem that he had either surgeon or nurse. There he sat, the prince of misery; but there was worse to come.

Job 2:10

Satan tried to ruin Job through her who should have been his best comforter, but he was defeated, for he only led Job to utter another of those notable speeches which are now the treasures of the church.

Job 2:13 This showed sympathy, but even this was not permitted to continue lest it should comfort the afflicted one. Soon these three friends judged Job's condition, and came to the conclusion that such unusual sorrow could only have been brought about by unusual sin. Under this impression, they added the last drop of gall to Job's cup by accusing him of hypocrisy and secret sin.

I am a sinner—shall I dare To murmur at the strokes I bear?

Strokes, not in wrath, but mercy sent, A wise and needful chastisement.

Saviour! I breathe the prayer once thine, "Father! thy will be done, not mine!"

One only blessing would I claim; In me, O glorify thy name!

February 2--Evening

February 2—Evening "He shall deliver thee in six troubles."

Job 4:12-21

Eliphaz, the Temanite, though he took a wrong and cruel line of argument with Job, nevertheless, in the course of his reasoning, uttered some grand things: we will read two passages of his first speech. In the first, he shows that weak and erring man must not question the wisdom and justice of God's actions.

Job 4:12-21 In comparison with God what are men or even angels? Angels have but finite wisdom, and where their wisdom ends folly begins; theirs is not sinful folly, but such as ever must be in creatures when compared with the Omniscient One. Even angels know but little in comparison with God. How then can we think highly of frail beings, who from day to day are dying, and are so accustomed to see each other turn to dust that they think nothing of it? How can a mere insect like man, who is moreover foolish and sinful, dare to call in question the doings of the Eternal God?

Job 5:17-27 In our second extract Eliphaz teaches us not to repine under divine chastisements, for they will be blessed to our highest good.

Job 5:17 Be not averse to it, rebel not against it, ascribe it not to anger, and do not disregard it as if it were a trifle.

Job 5:18 The same Lord is in both our afflictions and our consolations, and he arranges that the one shall be surely followed by the other.

Job 5:19

Trouble may roar upon us, but it cannot devour us. It may vex us, but it shall not do us real harm. If we suffer a perfect number of trials we shall also have an all-sufficient degree of grace.

Job 5:21 a mercy indeed

Job 5:23 The Great Masters dogs will not bite his friends.

Job 5:25 The Friend of the father will be gracious to the children.

Job 5:26-27

We have not only been told this, but we have assured ourselves of it—"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

Why should I doubt his love at last, With anxious thoughts perplex'd? Who saved me in the troubles pass'd, Will save me in the next.

Will save, till at my latest hour, With more than conquest bless'd, I soar beyond temptation's power, To my Redeemer's breast.

February 3--Morning

February 3—Morning "I am the Lord, I change not."

Job 23:1-17 Our space will not allow us to give much of this wonderful book of Job, but the following is an instance of the patriarch's expressions of distress.

Job 23:1-2

Most men cry before they are hurt, or more than they are hurt; but such was not Job's case: he had good reason for every groan, and when he groaned most he fell short of expressing what he felt within.

Job 23:3

Even at his worst estate the good man knows his true refuge. When sinners turn from God in anger the saints fly to him with hope. Yet sometimes the Lord is a God that hideth himself. In this he has wise ends to answer, and he will continue it no longer than is absolutely needful.

Job 23:5

Job wished to have the question, which his three friends had raised, fairly tried in the highest court. He felt that he could with freedom plead with so righteous a judge. It is only the pure heart which can court such an investigation. He who knows that he is clear through Jesus blood is not afraid to appear in the courts of heaven.

Job 23:6

Innocence fears not power, but like Una rides on the lion. The Lord never crushes a man because he is down, but rather he delight's to lift up the prostrate.

Job 23:10

He comforts himself with the assurance that if he could not find the Lord, and speak in his own defence, yet the case was already known to him, and would in due time be decided in his favour. How blessedly his faith held its anchorage though the storm raged terribly.

Job 23:12

Again in answer to the accusations of his three unfriendly friends, he protests his innocence of their charges, and scouts the idea that he is suffering for some secret apostacy.

Job 23:14

He accounts for his trials by considering the immutable and inscrutable decrees of God, and suggests that many more troubles might yet befall him, for which he might be unable to find a reason.

Job 23:15

Great suffering could not kill his faith, but it damped his joy. He had also come to think of an absolute God doing as he willed, and it is no wonder that he trembled at the contemplation. Only when we see Jesus do we see that God is love.

Job 23:17

He wished that by an early death he had escaped suffering, but all such wishes are vain. We cannot go back: let us therefore by faith press onward.

God is a King of power unknown;

Firm are the orders of his throne;

If he resolves, who dare oppose, Or ask him why, or what he does?

He wounds the heart, and he makes whole;

He calms the tempest of the soul;

He rescues souls from long despair, And snaps in twain the iron bar.

February 3--Evening

February 3—Evening "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Job 28:1-28

Let us read Job's famous passage upon the search after wisdom, and in order that we may see its beauties we will read it in an accurate translation; arranged as it should be in parallel lines.

Job 28:3-4 The following verses describe the operations of mining, and the hazards of the miner.

Job 28:3-4 That is to say, having no use for their feet in descending the shaft, they swing in mid air.

Job 28:5-9 The solid rock is broken, and the hills are undermined by those who search for precious metals. Their tunnels pierce the centre of the Alps, and tear out the bowels of the hills.

Job 28:10-11

Miners take great care to prevent the water from breaking in upon them so as to flood the mines, and by such care they are able to penetrate into earth's deep places, and reveal her secrets.

Job 28:12-17

Glass in ancient times was a costly article, used only for splendour and luxury, but however precious it might be, wisdom far excels it.

Job 28:28

Job comes to the same conclusion as Solomon, who said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." True religion is priceless beyond all the treasures of earth. Seek it first, ye children and young men; for then shall you be truly rich. Jesus is the Captain of the mine of wisdom, and he will show you the lodes of precious knowledge. In vain we search; in vain we try;

Till Jesus brings his gospel nigh;

'Tis there such power and glory dwell
As save rebellious souls from hell.

Let men or angels dig the mines, Where nature's golden treasure shines;

Brought near the doctrine of the cross, All nature's gold appears but dross.

February 4--Morning

February 4—Morning "I will work, and who shall let it."

Job 38:1-11; Job 38:16-17; Job 38:22-23; Job 38:31-41 When the three accusers were silent, when Elihu had concluded his eloquent address, and Job had no more to say, the Lord himself interposed, and as with a long succession of thunderclaps hushed every heart and voice into awe.

Job 38:2

How solemn is that word "Who is this?" Is it a poor, weak, foolish man? Is it Job? My servant Job! Does he speak of that which he cannot understand and venture to complain of his God? Our wisdom is only wisdom when it admits its own folly.

Job 38:3-7

We know nothing of the common things of God, how foolish we are to think that we can pry into his arcana, and lay bare his mysterious secrets. We had better sing with angels, than doubt with devils. The angels all sang, sang together, and sang with one common joy. O for such unanimous joyful praise among men.

Job 38:8-17 The secrets of earth are too deep for us, how much more the mysteries of eternity. One thing, however, is consoling; if we do not see the gates of death open, we know who it is that has opened for us the door of heaven.

Job 38:32 Who among us can control the stars or change the seasons?

Job 38:33-41 In all these things the greatness of the Lord, and the nothingness of man are alike apparent. God forbid that a thought of pride should defile our spirit.

Great God! how infinite art thou!

What worthless worms are we!

Let the whole race of creatures bow, And pay their praise to Thee.

Eternity, with all its years, Stands present in Thy view; To Thee there's nothing old appears;

Great God! there's nothing new.

February 4--Evening

February 4—Evening "Thou art God alone."

Job 39:19-30 The sublime language of Jehovah in his address to Job is far above all human eloquence. Let us take a second lesson from that divine discourse. First, let us read the unrivalled description of a war-horse.

Job 39:19-25

He who created a creature so noble, powerful, and courageous, is not to be summoned to our bar, or questioned as to what he does.

Job 39:26

We commonly speak of instinct. What is it but the teaching of God? He who has given so much wisdom to birds and beasts is full of wisdom himself. Let us bow before him, and rest assured that what he does is ever best.

Job 39:30

Far-seeing and terrible, the royal bird belongs not to the kings of the earth though they figure it upon their banners: it is but another incarnation of the sublime thoughts of God, a further illustration of his greatness.

Job 40:1-14

Job 40:9

If we fancy that we can vie with God in justice, we are challenged first to compete with him in power. All the attributes of God are equally great, and if we cannot rival one, it will be wise not to impugn another.

Job 40:10 Come thou poor glow-worm, put forth thy light, and see if thou art comparable to the sun.

Job 40:11-14

Until we can manage providence as the Lord has done, so as to abase tyrants and deliver the oppressed, we had better learn submission to the divine will, and cease for ever from all rebellious questionings. In heaven and earth, in air and seas, He executes His wise decrees: And by His saints it stands confest, That what He does is ever best.

Wait, then, my soul, submissive wait, With reverence bow before His seat;

And, midst the terrors of His rod, Trust in a wise and gracious God.

February 5--Morning

February 5—Morning "I know that Thou canst do everything."

Job 42:1-13

Job 42:1-2 The patriarch made an unreserved submission. He felt that the very idea of judging the conduct of the Almighty was preposterous. Omnipotence and Omniscience render the thought of calling the Eternal into question superlatively ridiculous.

Job 42:3 That first question of the Lord abides in his memory, and now in humble wonder at his own temerity he asks it of himself. It is tantamount to that apostolic question, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" The patriarch illuminated with new light sees his own folly, and humbly confesses it before the Lord. A very great part of our religious talk consists of utterances which we ourselves do not understand, and all our complaining is based upon ignorance.

Job 42:4

Job desired to enter God's school, and to be taught of him. He will no longer be a pleader but a humble enquirer.

Job 42:6

Hearing goes for little till the Lord's arm is revealed in a man's heart. Caryl well observes, "No man knoweth what a nothing he is in knowledge, grace, and goodness till the Lord is pleased to reveal himself to him." While we compare ourselves with ourselves, or with others who are below us, we fancy ourselves important personages, but when the Lord unveils himself we become as nothing in our own eyes. The more we see of God the less shall we think of ourselves. Sound knowledge is the death of conceit.

Job 42:7

Out of zeal to defend God's providence they were not fair in argument. We have no business to defend truth with lies or suppressions. God will have honest defenders or none. He is displeased with untruthful advocates even though they fancy that they are upon the Lord's side, and at any rate desire to be so.

Job 42:8

Let us never judge others, for it may be we may come to be indebted to them for their prayers. We may have to crave their intercession, therefore let us not now judge them harshly.

Job 42:9

If the Lord accepted Job and blessed his friends for his sake, how much more doth he accept the Lord Jesus Christ who offered himself a sacrifice for sin, and how safe we, his poor offending

friends, are in him.

Job 42:10 When in a forgiving spirit we pray for those who have behaved harshly to us some blessing is in store for us.

Job 42:11-13 Thus shall the Lord's procedures vindicate themselves, and his people shall be no losers by their afflictions.

If peace and plenty crown my days, They help me, Lord, to speak thy praise;

If bread of sorrows be my food, Those sorrows work my real good.

I would not change my blest estate For all that earth calls good or great; And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinner's gold.

February 5--Evening

February 5—Evening "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise."

Exodus 1:1-14; Exodus 1:22 Our reading will now take us back from the land of Uz to the land of Egypt, where we left the chosen family in Goshen.

Exodus 1:1 The Lord knoweth them that are his. The names of the godly seed are precious to his heart.

Exodus 1:7

Thus the ancient covenant that Abraham's seed should be many received its first fulfilment. God is not unmindful of his promises.

Exodus 1:8

Out of sight out of mind; a man may confer on a nation permanent advantages, but he cannot hope for permanent gratitude. Those who serve man are generally rewarded with forgetfulness.

Exodus 1:10 The ungodly always try to make out that God's people are a dangerous set, but indeed, if they would treat them kindly they would find them the best of neighbours. It is only when they wilfully stumble at this stone that it breaks them. The Egyptians tried to prevent the increase of Israel. Vain was this attempt. Pharaoh might as well have tried to stem the sea, or prevent the rising of the Nile. Jehovah had determined that the people should be multiplied, and no policy of kings and princes could prevent it. Great was the monarch's worldly wisdom, his plan had in it both the subtlety and cruelty of Satan, and yet he was but a fool, and his schemes failed at every point.

Exodus 1:12

Unscrupulous and determined as the enemies of God's people have been, they have nevertheless been unable to achieve their design. The church must spread, and spread too by the very means made use of to destroy her. There are herbs which increase rapidly when they are trodden upon, and true religion is one of them.

Exodus 1:13-14 This was with the view of degrading them, crushing their spirit, and lessening their vigour, but the cruel device succeeded not. No weapon can prosper against the Lord's chosen. Hard labour is after all less injurious than pampered indolence. Better slave in a brick-kiln than canker in laziness.

After a futile attempt to procure the murder of all the male children by those who attended at their birth, Pharaoh passed a tyrannical decree which is thus recorded.

Exodus 1:22

Murder was thus called in to make an end of the elect people, but it was in vain. The Lord of Israel was greater than the King of Egypt, and proved more than a match for all his plots and plans.

What though to make our numbers less Our foes their wisdom try, The more our enemies oppress,
The more we multiply.

Then let the world forbear its rage, Nor put the church in fear, Israel must live through every age
And be th' Almighty's care.

February 6--Morning

February 6—Morning "Who is on the Lord's side."

Exodus 2:1-10

Exodus 2:4 to wit or know Faith watches to see what God will do.

Exodus 2:5

Providence is manifest here. How was the ark kept from the crocodiles? Why did the princess come to that particular spot? How came her eye to light upon that little floating coffer hidden among the bulrushes? Why should she desire to look within it? Surely the Lord's hand was in it all.

Exodus 2:6 The providence which brought the princess to the spot, brought the tears into the babe's eyes at the very moment when they would be seen, and aid in touching the beholder's pity.

Exodus 2:7-8 How graciously the Lord arranges for us.

Exodus 2:9

Thus speaks the Lord to every godly mother. No service upon earth is so well repaid to a parent as the pious nurture of her children.

Hebrews 11:24-26

Hebrews 11:24

He had been so called in his youthful days, but when he could choose for himself he declined the highest rank as an Egyptian, and took his place with persecuted Israel.

Acts 7:22-29

Acts 7:22 His education, when sanctified by God's Spirit, helped to prepare him for his eminent position as the leader and lawgiver of the tribes. No other prophet until our Lord came was mighty both in words and deeds.

Acts 7:23 The life of Moses divides itself into three forties—forty at court, forty with Jethro, and forty in the wilderness.

Acts 7:24-28 The mission of the greatest and best of men is not at once perceived.

Now for the love I bear His name, What was my gain I count my loss; My former pride I call my shame, And nail my glory to His cross.

Yes, and I must and will esteem All things but loss for Jesus' sake:

Oh may my soul be found in Him, And of His righteousness partake!

February 6--Evening

February 6—Evening "I have surely seen the affliction of My people."

Exodus 3:1-8; Exodus 3:10-20

Exodus 3:1

Though a man of deep learning he did not disdain the shepherd's calling. There is no disgrace in work, but great shame in idleness,

Exodus 3:2-3 This is a standing emblem of the church, and often both friend and foe, like Moses, are puzzled to understand the marvel. It is wonderful that so poor and powerless a thing as a bush should survive the fires which try it so severely.

Exodus 3:6 Kike his ancestor Jacob, he felt "how dreadful is this place." Fear rather than joy prevailed.

Exodus 3:11 The more fit a man is for God's work the lower is his esteem of himself.

Exodus 3:12 What an answer to all fears is that sweet word "Certainly I will be with thee."

Exodus 3:14 By these two names the immutability and self-existence of God are set forth. Our God for ever exists and is for ever the same.

Exodus 3:15-17

Sooner or later the Lord will bless his people and deliver them. He may for awhile leave them under severe trial, but he is mindful of his covenant and will visit them at the set time.

Love's presence keeps the bush alive, Grace 'mid the flames can make us thrive; Nor need th' afflicted saint despair, Though in the fire, the Lord is there.

February 7--Morning

February 7—Morning "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Exodus 4:1-16

Exodus 4:1 Those whom God sends are often slow to go, and yet men whom the Lord never sent push themselves into office eagerly.

Exodus 4:2-3 This was a sign to him that though now a humble shepherd he would become so powerful as to terrify Pharaoh. The pastoral staff should be dreadful as a serpent.

Exodus 4:5

Here he learned that the power with which he was endowed while it would be as a terrible serpent towards Egypt, would be for himself and for Israel a harmless shepherd's crook. Both the signs would encourage Moses.

Exodus 4:7-8 This he saw that the Lord can both wither and restore. All who work for the Lord should remember this.

Exodus 4:9-13 By this reluctance Moses lost much honour, for Aaron became the high priest, and he obtained a helper who also proved to be a hindrance.

Jeremiah 1:6-9

It is interesting to note that other eminent prophets besides Moses have shrunk at first from their commission. We will read how Jeremiah did so.

Jeremiah 1:6-9 O Lord, grant that all thy ministers may have their mouths touched in the same manner.

Father of mercies, bow thine ear, Attentive to our earnest prayer;

We plead for those who plead for thee, Successful pleaders may they be!

Lord, how can sinful lips proclaim The honours of so great a name!

O for thine altar's glowing coal, To touch their lips, and fire their soul.

February 7--Evening

February 7—Evening "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion."

Exodus 5:1-4; Exodus 5:6-23

Exodus 5:2 Though his proud spirit defied Jehovah, he had before long good reason to know who Jehovah was.

Exodus 5:3 This was by no means a large demand, and was doubtless meant to be a test question. He who would not yield the less would be sure to refuse the greater.

Exodus 5:4 let or hinder

Exodus 5:4 With what impudent scorn he defied the messengers of the Lord, haughtily treating them as slaves, who had better go back to their labour at once.

Exodus 5:6-9 As the bricks were made of mud mixed with straw, and the straw had hitherto been supplied to them in the brickfields, it was a heavy addition to their toils when they had to collect straw themselves.

Exodus 5:15-16

These poor Israelitish officers thought that the Egyptian taskmasters were unwarrantably keeping back the straw, but indeed they were acting under the King's own orders.

Exodus 5:17-21 Things are always worst when they are about to mend, but these downcast spirits could not see far before them.

Exodus 5:22-23 Moses did well thus to refer the case to the Lord. Let us bring all our troubles to our heavenly Father.

Mighty Redeemer set me free From my old state of sin, O break these bonds of slavery, This iron worn within.

From daily load and daily smart Thy pleading captive free, Then shall my liberated heart Thy willing servant be.

February 8--Morning

February 8—Morning "Pride goeth before destruction."

Exodus 7:1-5; Exodus 7:10-22

Exodus 7:1-5

God's judgments hardened Pharaoh's heart. They are sure to harden if they do not soften. The monarch was of such a nature that terrors and plagues only made his spirit more unbending.

Exodus 7:10 They had delivered their message, they here show their credentials.

Exodus 7:11-13

He concluded that Moses was only a magician, like those in his own pay, and he therefore again defied the power of Jehovah.

Exodus 7:14-18

They had before defiled the river with the blood of innocents, and now it appears to them in blood-red colours; as if it published aloud their murderous deeds.

Exodus 7:19-21

Horrible! A crowd of horrors! Their drink becomes blood; the river which they accounted sacred pours forth an intolerable stench; the delicious water grows worse than putrid; and the fish which were a great part of their food float dead upon the abominable stream! This was a plague indeed.

Exodus 7:22

Proud Pharaoh cares not. His magicians ingeniously imitate the miracle by sleight of hand, and the heartless king cares nothing for the sufferings of his people.

Lo, Moses scatters plagues of wrath, A ministry of fire and death, But our Immanuel cometh forth, With life and love in every breath.

He turn'd their water into blood, For vengeance was his dread design:

But, thanks to our incarnate God, He turn'd our water into wine.

February 8--Evening

February 8—Evening "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud."

Psalms 105:24-38 As our endeavour is to gather up the substance of the Scriptures during the reading of one year, we are unable to pause over each of the ten great plagues. We ought, each one of us, to read them for our own instruction. We have them for our family reading summed up in

Psalms 105:24 The Lord is just as able to increase his church at this time, and he will do so in answer to prayer.

Psalms 105:25

Persecution generally attends the prosperity of the church. Where God blesses, Satan is sure to stir up all his wrath to vex the church.

Psalms 105:26 When evil days come, the Lord has deliverers provided, who shall appear at the exact moment when they are most required. Let us pray the Lord to raise up eminent ministers and evangelists at this time, for they are greatly needed.

Psalms 105:28 This unusual darkness filled all hearts with horror, and the Egyptians were so cowed that they yielded for the time, but were hardened again when the plague was over.

Psalms 105:29-30

Fish died, but frogs lived. God can with one hand kill our comforts, and with the other multiply our miseries. This time Pharaoh himself had to endure personal annoyance, for frogs swarmed upon the royal bed.

Psalms 105:31

Here filthiness and venom were united; these little tormentors made the Egyptians feel the power of the great God. Often little plagues are the worst of plagues. From this visitation Pharaoh's bodyguards could not defend his royal person. Such enemies laughed at sword and spear.

Psalms 105:32

It is a judgment indeed when the fountains of blessing become the channels of wrath, and the very rain is fire. Let the enemies of God beware.

Psalms 105:33

God's blows are heavy, and they leave no place unbruised. Egypt must miss its wine and its pleasant fruits if it will not obey the Lord.

Psalms 105:34-35

Locusts literally eat up every green thing, and there is no preserving anything from them. God has many ways of punishing men. In this case we wonder at the hardness of heart of those who stood out against such humbling judgments. He who can with a word bring up countless hosts of devourers is not a God to be trifled with.

Psalms 105:36 This was the last and heaviest blow, and the proud king and nation staggered under it. When one arrow does not suffice, the Lord has others in his quiver, and one way or another he will hit the mark.

Psalms 105:37

What a miracle that after all their toil and bondage they should all be in health. They were all called to go upon a long journey, and therefore the Lord prepared them for it.

Psalms 105:38 Thus can providence so work that the stoutest opponents shall only be too glad to yield.

Let us beware of provoking this terrible God. Let us by faith enlist him upon our side: then we shall have no ground for fear, for all the creatures he has made will be our friends. Fire and water, locusts and flies, darkness and death, were all the allies of Israel. He who is at peace with God has the whole creation enlisted upon his side.

Thus shall the nations be destroy'd That dare insult the saints;

God hath an arm t'avenge their wrongs, An ear for their complaints.

Thine honours, O victorious king;

Thine own right hand shall raise, While we thine awful vengeance sing, And our Deliverer praise.

February 9--Morning

February 9—Morning "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

Exodus 12:1-15

Israel's deliverance from Egypt was a redemption both by blood and by power. In the following chapter we read of the redemption by blood.

Exodus 12:1-2 To be redeemed is the greatest event in a mans history. The day in which we realise redemption must be the pearl of days to us for ever.

Exodus 12:5 Jesus was perfect, and in the fulness of his strength when he became the lamb of our passover.

Exodus 12:6

It was both in the evening of the day and in the evening of time, that by the general voice of the nation, Jesus was put to death.

Exodus 12:7 Not on the threshold, for woe unto the man who tramples on the blood of Christ.

Exodus 12:8 Do these bitter herbs signify our repentance or the Redeemers woes? Perhaps both.

Exodus 12:9 Our Lord's sufferings are well symbolised by the fire before which the lamb was roasted.

Exodus 12:10 We must feed upon Christ and upon a whole Christ.

Exodus 12:13

Mark that word, "when I see the blood." Our sight of the atonement brings us comfort, but the Lord's own sight of it is the true reason of our salvation.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Sin is that sour leaven which must go from the heart where Jesus is the Saviour. The apostle Paul puts this more at length in 1 Corinthians 5:6 It is a spreading thing, and if any be left it will speedily multiply itself.

1 Corinthians 5:8 May the Holy Spirit grant us grace to accomplish this sweeping of the house. Where the precious blood is sprinkled, no sin can be tolerated.

Saints behold your Paschal lamb, Trust his blood, and praise his name;

Keep the sacred feast and be Now from guile and malice free.

Stand as pilgrims, staff in hand, Quitting soon this servile land, Follow on where Christ has trod, Till he brings you home to God.

February 9--Evening

February 9—Evening "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob."

Exodus 12:21-36 Our last reading set forth the Lord's command as to the passover, we shall now see it obeyed.

Exodus 12:21-22 They must abide under the shelter of the blood or perish.

Exodus 12:23

Else had Israel died as well as Egypt. It was not character or position, but the sprinkled blood which made the difference. The sacrifice of Jesus is the true reason of our salvation.

Exodus 12:24 Whatever else we forget we must hold by the substitutionary atonement as long as time endures.

Exodus 12:25-27 The youngest ought to be instructed in the doctrine of atonement by blood: it is the most vital truth of our most holy faith.

Exodus 12:28-30

Death reigned where the blood was not sprinkled, and so must it be. Are we all marked with the blood of our Great Substitute?

Exodus 12:31-32

Here was the overthrow of pride. The haughty tyrant surrenders, and becomes himself a suppliant. God's sword can reach the heart of leviathan himself, though he thinks himself invulnerable and invincible.

Exodus 12:35

These were not borrowed as we understand the word, but asked for, and freely given, because the people honoured the Israelites, and were afraid to incur their anger.

Exodus 12:36 Their long and unpaid services were thus, in a measure, requited by the gifts of the Egyptians. When souls are spiritually set free from sin, the Lord is pleased to adorn them with many precious things; for he is abundant in lovingkindness towards his people.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed, All our sins on Thee were laid: By almighty love anointed, Thou hast full atonement made:

All Thy people are forgiven Through the virtue of Thy blood:

Open'd is the gate of heaven;

Peace is made 'twixt man and God.

February 10--Morning

February 10—Morning "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

Exodus 13:17-18; Exodus 13:20-22

Exodus 13:18 The Lord is mindful of the infirmities of his people. He meant them to see many wars hereafter, but as yet they were all unused to fighting, and therefore were to be led by a quieter though a longer road. Blessed be God, our troubles shall not be ready for us till we are ready for them.

Exodus 13:20-22 The pillar was their infallible conductor; it also screened them by day and lit up the camp by night. God's mercies are many-sided. We can only do one thing well at a time, but the Lord accomplishes many devices at one stroke.

Exodus 14:1-5; Exodus 14:8-14

Exodus 14:1-2 This seemed a strange direction, but Moses obeyed it without question. Let us go where the Lord bids us though the way be perilous.

Exodus 14:8

God's plagues had not changed the King's rebellious nature. When he saw that he had lost his valuable slaves, his greed made him rush after them.

Exodus 14:12 This unbelief was both unjust and cruel. Had they not seen the Lord's works in the great plagues? Could they not believe that he who had wrought such marvels could and would deliver them? They were smitten with panic, and were willing to return to bondage; whereas true freemen never debate which of the two to choose, slavery or death.

Exodus 14:13-14 This meekest of men answered the people meekly and believingly, for prayer enabled him to conquer his own spirit.

Forward! but whither shall we go? The desert is on either side, Behind us the Egyptian foe, Before, the interposing tide!

Yet while we thy command obey, Our road impassable pursue, The ocean yields an open way, And lets thy ransomed people through.

February 10--Evening

February 10—Evening "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

Exodus 14:15-31

Exodus 14:15

We read not that Moses had spoken a word; but his heart cried unto the Lord. The Lord bade him no longer hesitate, but cry, "Forward," and advance through the sea.

Exodus 14:16-19 The glory of the Lord was their reward.

Exodus 14:20

Both God's word and providence have a twofold aspect, they frown on sinners while they smile on saints. Thus God still sets a difference between Israel and Egypt.

Exodus 14:22

Calmly the historian records it, but what a wonder is here! Water erect like solid ice, and a damp sea bed made dry and fit to be a highway for a marching army.

Exodus 14:23 What infatuation! Were they beguiled by the darkness around them or that within them?

Exodus 14:24-25 One look from Jehovah was enough, one flash from his eye of fire, struck the host with panic.

Exodus 14:26-28 Even thus "our tyrannous sins are buried and drowned, and though they be sought for they shall not be found."

Exodus 14:29-30 So completely was Egypt shattered, that though the Israelites were for forty years close to the Egyptian borders, they were never molested by their former oppressors.

Exodus 14:31 And well they might, but, alas, this good state of mind did not last long.

Awake, awake, thou mighty Arm, Which has such wonders wrought! Which captive Israel freed from harm, And out of Egypt brought.

Art thou not it which Rahab slew? And crush'd the dragon's head?

Constrain'd by thee the waves withdrew From their accustom'd bed.

Again thy wonted prowess show, Be thou made bare again: And let thine adversaries know That they resist in vain.

February 11--Morning

February 11—Morning "He hath triumphed gloriously."

Exodus 15:1-21 We will now read the song of Moses, which is prophetically typical of the ultimate victory of the Lord Jesus.

Exodus 15:1-21 In order to leave the song unbroken, we have reserved our few notes for the end of it.

Observe the sublimity and simplicity of the composition. Fine, florid language suits the little elegancies of man but not the glories of the Lord. Note how all the song is to the praise of the Lord alone, there is not a note for Moses or for Aaron; no hint of secondary agents, but Jehovah alone is exalted. Remark the noise, hurry, and violence of the foe, in verse 9, and the calmness of the Lord, in verse 10. It will be well to read them both again. Man is raving and threatening, and the Lord in placid omnipotence defeats his rage. Consider also, how the poet infers the future from the present. God who brought his people through the sea, would surely bring them into their heritage. He who has wrought marvels of grace already, will not leave us till grace is turned into glory.

What a noble hallelujah is that of verse 18, "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever." It is a plain inference from his overthrow of his enemies. Let us triumph in our reigning God. He has overcome sin, death, and hell for us; let us therefore, like Miriam, rejoice with all the saints. Let our heart dance, and our hand make music unto our Redeemer, who has cast our enemies into the depths of the sea.

February 11--Evening

February 11—Evening "Thou art the Lord that doest wonders."

Psalms 77:1-20 On this occasion we shall read Psalms 77. This will show us the way in which holy men of old derived comfort from the great miracle of the Red Sea. Here is Asaph, almost in despair, encouraged by remembering the Lord's wonders of old.

Psalms 77:1-2 His spirits sank so low that like a sick man who cannot eat what is good for him, he was unable to believe cheering truths.

Psalms 77:3 God's people know by experience the lonely glens of soul trouble.

Psalms 77:3 This is a musical pause, or perhaps it means "lift up the tune." Let us lift up our hearts.

Psalms 77:7

These questions are suggested by fear, but they may serve as the cure of fear. Their answers are both self-evident and heart-cheering.

Psalms 77:10 This accounts for most of our fears. They have no real ground, but are based upon our weakness of faith. The evil is in us, not in providence; the change in our hearts, not in the immutable God

Psalms 77:12 "Remember," "meditate," "talk,"—this is a wise order. Imitate it.

Psalms 77:16

Quiet caves of the sea, far down in the abyss, were stirred with fright; and the waters fled as if they feared the face of the Lord.

Psalms 77:18

According to Josephus there was a terrible storm when the Egyptians were in the midst of the sea; there would seem from the text to have been rain, tempest, and earthquake combined. All the elements are the allies of Israel, and the enemies of the ungodly.

Psalms 77:19 Our God has mysterious ways of delivering his people, but deliver them he will.

Psalms 77:20

They felt no storm and feared no ill, but were as quiet and safe as sheep protected by their shepherd. Even thus shall all the saints be secure, while their enemies are utterly overwhelmed.

I'll call to mind thy works of old, The wonders of thy might; On them my heart shall meditate, Them shall my tongue recite.

Thy people, Lord, long since have thee A God of wonders found:

Long since hast thou thy chosen seed With strong deliv'rance crown'd.

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea I Jehovah hath triumph'd: his people are free.

Sing, for the pride of the tyrant is broken, His chariots and horsemen all splendid and brave, How vain was their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken, And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!

Jehovah hath triumph'd: his people are free.

February 12--Morning

February 12—Morning "The Lord heareth you murmurings."

Exodus 15:22-27

Exodus 15:22 Their first trouble was too much water, the second is too little; our trials are of all kinds.

Exodus 15:23 This was tantalizing, they had water, but could not drink it.

Exodus 15:25-26 God has provided remedies for all ills, sweetening trees for bitter waters, and the cross to sweeten all.

Exodus 15:27 It is not all rough work with pilgrims to Canaan, they have their pleasant seasons. Let them thank God for them.

Exodus 16:1-10

Exodus 16:1

It was strange that God should lead two millions of people into a desert, but wisdom directed his course. Strange providences are gracious providences.

Exodus 16:2 With shameful readiness they ran to a low-minded form of complaining. There was no spirit in them. The flesh pots and the bread were all they thought of; the brick-making and the whips they overlooked. It is easy to make out the past to have been bright when we wish to find fault with the present.

Exodus 16:4-5 Our mercies are tests; let us eat and drink to God's glory.

Exodus 16:8

We think it a small thing to murmur, against parents and friends, but this sheds a new light upon the matter. It is clear that a discontented heart really murmurs against God himself.

Exodus 16:9-10 This is a solemn truth; let all grumblers remember it. The cross on which the Saviour died, And conquer'd for his saints; This is the tree by faith applied To sweeten all complaints.

When we by faith behold the cross, Though many griefs we meet;

We draw a gain from every loss, And make our Marahs sweet

February 12--Evening

February 12—Evening "I am the living bread."

Exodus 16:11-31

Exodus 16:11-12

One would have expected a far severer rebuke than this, but the Lord was very pitiful towards them, as he is also towards us. These first murmurings were not visited so severely as those further on. The Lord is loath to use his rod.

Exodus 16:15

They had the best of flesh and better than the best of bread. No king's table was better spread than theirs. Rest assured he who fed murmurers will not desert believers.

Exodus 16:16 Heaven's bread must be gathered. We must hear the word, and retain it, or it cannot profit us.

Exodus 16:17-19

There were misers in the wilderness, and their hoardings stank; there are other misers now upon the earth, whose scrapings are cankered and corrupt. Covetousness is loathsome.

Exodus 16:21 Yet it could be cooked! Strange that it could bear one heat and not another.

Exodus 16:25-26

Thus the seventh day was honoured by the ceasing of the visible manna, but our first-day Sabbath has a double fall of spiritual manna, and we ought to gather in good store for all the week-days.

Exodus 16:27 This was the surest way of stopping the sin, but it was very grievous that a people so marvellously favoured should be guilty of such a superfluous provocation.

Exodus 16:31 God might have made it bitter, but he delights to see his creatures happy. What a blessed God he is!

Day by day the manna fell;

Oh! to learn this lesson well:

Still by constant mercy fed, Give me, Lord, my daily bread.

"Day by day," the promise reads;

Daily strength for daily needs;

Cast foreboding fears away;

Take the manna of to-day.

February 13--Morning

February 13—Morning "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."

Exodus 16:32-35

Exodus 16:32 The education of future generations should be the earnest care of the people of God, since the Lord himself so constantly ordained means for perpetuating the memory of his deeds of grace. The Lord knows that the race is apt to forget even his greatest wonders, and therefore he puts them in remembrance.

Exodus 16:33-34

Even thus should we treasure the memory of the Lord's great goodness to us. In the ark of our memory, the golden pot should be kept in store.

Exodus 16:35 The storehouses of Jehovah are never exhausted. All the while the Lord's people are in the wilderness, whether it be forty years or eighty years, their bread shall be given them, their waters shall be sure. Trust ye in the Lord for ever.

John 6:47-58 The manna was a very full and instructive type of our Lord Jesus, who is the spiritual bread of his people. In order to understand this, let us read his own words in

John 6:48 He is life to believers and the support of their life.

John 6:48

Though the manna came from heaven, yet it brought not immortality with it as Jesus does. The Jews died, and died very terribly too, many of them; but those who feed on Jesus live for ever.

John 6:50 This spiritual bread confers, supports, and preserves spiritual life.

John 6:52 They looked at the words and did not discern the sense, and hence they asked this very natural question.

John 6:53 Our Lord would not explain his parabolic speech to them. It was not given to them to understand.

John 6:55

Some persons dream that this applies to the Lord's supper, which was not even instituted at the time. It refers neither to the supper, nor to the mass, nor to any sacrificial bread, but to our Lord himself, who must be fed upon spiritually and not in symbol only. Too many even now are like the Jews, and cannot understand spiritual truth, but stumble over the literal meaning.

John 6:56 The nearest possible union is established between Jesus and the believer.

John 6:57-58 Have we all in our hearts received Jesus? Are we trusting in Him alone? Do we commune with him? For this is to feed upon him, and enter into living union with him.

Bread of heaven! on thee I feed, For thy flesh is meat indeed;

Ever may my soul be fed With this true and living bread.

Those who feed on thee are blest, Never more by hunger pressed;

Day by day with strength supplied, Through the life of Him who died.

February 13--Evening

February 13—Evening "Be careful for nothing."

Matthew 6:25-34 The way in which the Lord supplied the needs of his people in the desert, suggests to us a meditation upon the divine care and faithfulness as to the temporal wants of his people. It is our privilege to depend upon the Lord for everything as much as Israel did in the wilderness. It is still true that our God will supply all our needs. Hence our Lord Jesus has taught us to keep clear of all carking care and to walk by faith. Let us read his words in

Matthew 6:25 So not fret and worry about such secondary things. God who gives us lives and bodies will give us food and clothing.

Matthew 6:26

Martin Luther was one day walking in the fields when in great straits', with his Bible in his hands, and reading the Sermon on the Mount, was much comforted by Matthew 6:26, "Behold the fowls of the air, they toil not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." Just then a little bird was hopping from sprig to spray, with its sweet chirping note, seeming to say "Mortals, cease from toil and sorrow, God provideth for the morrow."

It then came to the ground to pick up a crumb, and rising merrily, again seemed to repeat its simple song—

"Mortals, cease from toil and sorrow, God provideth for the morrow." This greatly comforted the Reformers heart.

Matthew 6:27 All the thought in the world cannot lengthen our stature or our life.

Matthew 6:28-30 This is good reasoning: he who cares for poor fading lilies and robes them so sumptuously, will not let his own immortal sons go bare. Surely we can trust our own Father.

Matthew 6:31-32

All anxious care is forbidden. We have a Father in heaven, shall we fret as if we had none? Doubt not till you have cause to doubt.

Matthew 6:34

Never anticipate troubles, each day has its own, and enough of them; yes, and enough grace comes daily to bear us through them.

Psalms 23:1-6 Let us cheer our hearts by reading that delicious song of contentment, Psalm 23.

He leads me to the place Where heavenly pasture grows, Where living waters gently pass, And full salvation flows.

If e'er I go astray, He doth my soul reclaim; And guides me in his own right way, For his most holy name.

February 14--Morning

February 14—Morning "I give waters in the wilderness."

Exodus 17:1-7

Exodus 17:1 God's people are never long untried.

Exodus 17:2

Complaining of second causes is really complaining of the Lord, let us disguise it as we may. What, after all, had Moses to do with it? The root of this sin of murmuring was unbelief. Could they not trust Jehovah? Would he not be sure to supply their wants? Had he ever been unmindful of them? Alas, notwithstanding all our experience of his faithfulness we ourselves are not clear from unbelief. He that is without fault among us, let him throw the first stone at Israel.

Exodus 17:4

Moses took the case into the right court. The people cried against him, but he cried unto the Lord. Here is our best resource. We may cry to God now.

Exodus 17:6

See how the Lord answers their murmurings; not by fulfilling their bitter speeches and leaving them to die of thirst, but by fetching living streams from a rock. Surely the Lord, who thus recompenses good for evil, deserves our heart's unwavering confidence from this day forward. It is wanton insult to doubt one who is so overflowing with kindness. Render not evil for good.

Exodus 17:7 The Lord takes note of his peoples chidings and commemorates them. We must not think a grumbling spirit to be a small evil. The Lord has here set a mark and a brand upon it.

Isaiah 41:17-18 The God who supplied Israel with natural water is ready to grant us the living water of his grace. Hear what his words are in Isaiah 41:17-18.

Isaiah 43:18-21 To strengthen our faith in this promise we are bidden to look back upon the Lord's wonders of old and to expect yet greater things, for God has not changed, nor are the fountains of his power and grace exhausted.

Isaiah 43:21

Glory be unto the Lord, we can bear witness that we daily and hourly receive fresh supplies of grace from him. No good thing hath he withheld from us. His praise shall continually be in our mouths.

Poor needy souls athirst and faint, Who gasp for my redeeming love;

I will attend to their complaint, And pour them rivers from above.

Water'd by me, the desert-soul, The garden of the Lord shall prove, Replenished as a wide-spread
pool, By springs of everlasting love.

February 14--Evening

February 14—Evening "Watch and Pray."

Exodus 17:8-16

Exodus 17:8

These ferocious wanderers attacked Israel unawares in a cowardly and unprovoked manner, when they were least able to defend themselves. They seem to have been of all Israel's foes the most wantonly malicious, and hence they are instructive emblems of sin and Satan.

Exodus 17:9

We must fight as well as pray. Though effort without prayer would be presumption, prayer without effort is mockery. Joshua must go to battle as well as Moses to the hill. Jesus said, "Watch and pray."

Exodus 17:12

Let all of us labour to uphold the prayerfulness of the church, for if that flags all flags. "Lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees." Spiritual evil can only be overcome by the energy of prayer, and when we fail in devotion, the enemy easily overcomes us.

Exodus 17:13-14

It has been suggested by a quaint author, that the Lord's reason for specially commanding this event to be recorded is, that his people may imitate it. We are to fight against sin, and to expect victory over it by God's help, afforded us in answer to supplication. Our Lord Jesus is both our Joshua to slay our sins, and our Moses to intercede for us against them, and his hands never need upholding. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." Amalek shall be utterly destroyed, and we shall be for ever freed from sin.

Exodus 17:15 or, the Lord my banner, for the uplifted rod had been as a sacred banner to Israel. Whenever we win victories we ought to bring thank-offerings, and ascribe the glory unto the Lord alone.

Exodus 17:16 We find this war carried on in Saul's day, and he was bidden to root out the nation.

Deuteronomy 25:17-19 On account of the sinfulness of Amalek, as well as its unprovoked hostility to the tribes, the nation was doomed by divine justice to utter extirpation, even as our sins are by divine grace doomed to be crucified with Christ, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Let us read Deuteronomy 25:17-18 God will not endure it that his people should be assailed. He counts their injuries as done to himself.

Deuteronomy 25:17; Deuteronomy 25:19 By the aid of the Eternal Spirit let us carry on war to the knife against all sin, whether in ourselves or others. All sins are our deadly foes, with whom we

must hold neither truce nor parley. Death to them all, for they all aim at our death, and they were the crucifiers of our Lord Jesus.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide, Success was found on Israel's side; But when through weariness they fail'd, That moment Amalek prevail'd.

O thou whose hand is stretch'd out still, Our sinking hands confirm and stay;

While praying for us on the hill, Fight with us in the plain to-day.

February 15--Morning

February 15—Morning "With God all things are possible."

Psalms 78:13-32 Upon this occasion we shall read a part of the outline of Israel's history contained in Psalms 78:13-32.

Psalms 78:13 This recapitulation begins at the Red Sea even as our spiritual liberty begins at the drowning of all our sins in Jesus blood.

Psalms 78:14

Thanks be to God for providential guidance. We are not wanderers who have lost their way amid a trackless waste, but we follow where the unerring wisdom of Jehovah leads.

Psalms 78:15-16

Here were abounding and extraordinary supplies; apt symbols of the streams of grace which flow to us from the great deeps of electing love and covenant faithfulness.

Psalms 78:17

What a change from grace to sin! It is enough to make us weep to see how good God is, and how base a return man makes. It would seem as if the more the Lord blessed man the less man blessed his God.

Psalms 78:18 To desire God to aid us in gratifying unholy appetites, is to tempt the Lord; but his holiness will not yield to our solicitations, for God cannot be tempted.

Psalms 78:20 To question the Lord's power is to speak against him. Unbelief is essentially a slandering of the Omnipotent and gracious God.

Psalms 78:21-22 Nothing so angers God as unbelief. O for grace to be kept from it.

Psalms 78:23-24 This made unbelief so much the worse. Mercies received aggravate the criminality of distrust. It is so much the worse to doubt when we have received already such great favours from our gracious Father.

Psalms 78:25-28 God gives plenteously when he gives.

Psalms 78:30-31

No. Gratification does not kill the passion. Man can be satiated with evil, but he is not nauseated with it. He changes the form of the sin, but sins on. Note here that God's bounties in this case were not pledges of love, but rather tokens of anger.

Psalms 78:13 God often smites the mighty when he has pity on the poor and weak.

Psalms 78:32 As mercy did not soften, so chastisement did not humble them. Lord, what is man!

God of eternal love, How fickle are our ways! And yet how oft did Israel prove Thy constancy of grace!

Now they believe his word, While rocks with rivers flow;

Now with their lusts provoke the Lord, And he reduced them low.

Yet when they mourn'd their faults, He hearken'd to their groans;

Brought his own covenant to his thoughts, And call'd them still his sons.

February 15--Evening

February 15—Evening "Come boldly to the Throne."

Exodus 19:1-23

Exodus 19:1-9

What a loving preface to the law! If anything could have engaged rebellious man to obedience, this would have done it, but, alas, the Lord has nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against him.

Exodus 19:10-11 Their garments smell of Egypt, and must be washed, to show them that man is unholy and all about him, and even when God meets him in love he must be cleansed from impurity.

Exodus 19:16 He who has ears to hear the law must tremble, for it condemns all who are under it.

Exodus 19:21-23

Such is the spirit of the law. It shows us our sinfulness, and so sets us at a distance from God, but the gospel removes our sin and brings us nigh. Hear how the Holy Ghost speaks concerning it, by his servant Paul, in Hebrews 12:18-26 Hebrews 12:25-26

Dear members of this family, let these solemn words sink deep into your souls. Despise not the Lord Jesus, but believe in him now. Not to the terrors of the Lord, The tempest, fire, and smoke; Not to the thunder of that word Which God on Sinai spoke:

But we are come to Sion's hill, The city of our God, Where milder words declare his will, And spread his love abroad.

February 16--Morning

February 16—Morning "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Exodus 20:1-17

We are now about to read that solemn epitome of the law of God, which is contained in Exodus 20:1-17; but, before we read a line, let us beseech the Lord to forgive our offences against his holy name, and to accept us in the Son of his love, by whom this law has been magnified and made honourable. We are now to read a code of law in which there is no omission and no redundancy. It is the only perfect law in the universe. None of us have kept it, and therefore it were folly to look for salvation by it, since nothing but perfect obedience can be accepted by the justice of God.

Exodus 20:1-3

There is but one God, and we must not dare to worship or obey another. Beware of making gold or your self, or your dearest relation into a god. "Little children keep yourselves from idols."

Exodus 20:4-6

We are in the second commandment forbidden to worship God under any visible symbol, or after any other fashion than he has commanded. How great are the crimes of those who worship crosses, pictures, and bread, and even attach the idea of holiness to enclosures and buildings.

Exodus 20:7

Any unhallowed use of the divine name is exceedingly sinful. Beware of flippantly saying, "O Lord," and such like irreverent speeches.

Exodus 20:8-11

One day in seven is the Lord's, and to rob him of it is to injure ourselves as well as to disobey our Maker. Rest and worship are two of our sweetest blessings, and to them the day should be sacredly given.

Exodus 20:12 Respect, love, and obedience are our parents' due. This is the first commandment with promise.

Exodus 20:13 Anger, and the doing of anything injurious to the health of ourselves or others, are here forbidden.

Exodus 20:14 This forbids lust of heart, thought, and look, as well as actual uncleanness.

Exodus 20:15 This forbids pilfering, cheating, and every kind of wrong.

Exodus 20:16 All lying is herein condemned.

Exodus 20:17 This touches a heart sin, and shews that the precept is exceeding broad, and reaches thoughts and imaginations. Who can read it and then hope to be saved by his own doings? Lord have mercy upon us, and forgive us our transgressions of this thy holy law.

Lord, make me understand thy law;

Show what my faults have been; And from thy gospel let me draw The pardon of my sin.

Not one can e'er be just with God By works his hands have wrought; For thy command's exceeding broad, And reaches every thought.

My God, 'tis through thy Son I wait For thy salvation still;

While thy whole law is my delight, And I revere thy will.

February 16--Evening

February 16—Evening "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."

Romans 10:1-21 We have selected for our present reading a chapter which illustrates the difference between the law and the gospel.

Romans 10:1 The true spirit of Christianity is that of love and sympathy, it leads to prayer even for persecutors, and to hope for the most obdurate of men. Paul pleaded for the Jews.

Romans 10:2 Do not deny the good points in others, even if they are not all we could wish them to be.

Romans 10:3-4 He fulfils the law's purpose for us, and when we have him we have all the law requires.

Romans 10:6-9 Precious gospel. Not doing, but believing, saves us. We have not to do or feel great things but simply to trust.

Romans 10:13

Think over this verse, for it ought to comfort even the most depressed seeker. Real prayer will be heard sooner or later.

Romans 10:17 Be constant in attendance upon the gospel ministry, and be devoutly attentive while hearing, for it is the way by which faith comes.

Romans 10:18 Alas, all hearers do not become believers. The many hear with deaf ears, and obey not the truth.

Romans 10:19-20

Sovereign grace sometimes saves the most unlikely, while those who sit under the gospel harden their hearts and perish. Beware of resting in outward privileges: ye must possess real faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:21 So that they were sincerely warned, and lovingly invited, yet it was all in vain. Shall it be so with any of this household? God forbid.

All the doing is completed, Now 'tis "look, believe, and live;"

None can purchase His salvation, Life's a gift, that God mast give

Grace, through righteousness, is reigning, Not of works, lest man should boast;

Man must take the mercy freely, Or eternally be lost.

February 17--Morning

February 17—Morning "We have access by faith."

Hebrews 9:1-14

After the giving of the law upon Sinai, Moses received instructions as to the institution of public worship and sacrifice. As all that which was then appointed was typical of spiritual things, we will read the New Testament summary of it, contained in

Hebrews 9:1 and a worldly or material

Hebrews 9:2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first or outer tabernacle

Hebrews 9:2 which is called the sanctuary or holy place.

Hebrews 9:3-5 Holiest of all or Holy of Holies

Hebrews 9:7 The greatest of the Jewish high priests had to admit that they were sinners themselves, for they had to present sin-offerings on their own account, but our Lord Jesus has no sin of his own; hence in part his ability to bear our sin.

Hebrews 9:8 The Holy of Holies was not open to all men, but only to Jews; and not to all Jews, but only to priests; and not to all priests, but to the high priest alone; and not even to him at all times, or indeed at any time, except upon one solitary day in the year:

Hebrews 9:9 They could not expiate sin, and consequently could not give the conscience peace.

Hebrews 9:10 The appearance of the substance and the putting away of the shadows, was a reformation, or emendation. Is it not wonderful that any should wish to undo this reformation, and go back to the beggarly elements of the law? Nay, worse, they would even revive the follies of old Rome.

Hebrews 9:12 Our Lord's offering is never to be repeated. It has been presented once, and has effectually secured the eternal redemption of all for whom he bled as a substitute. O what joy to see Jesus within the veil with a perfect offering, and to know that the one sacrifice has saved us.

Hebrews 9:13-14 Who can answer this question, "How much more?" It amounts to a solemn affirmation. Jesus can most assuredly remove our sins. Beloved, has he removed yours? Answer as before the living God!

Jesus, in Thee our eyes behold
A thousand glories more
Than the rich gems, and polish'd gold,
The sons of Aaron wore.

They first their own burnt-offerings brought
To purge themselves from sin:

Thy life was pure, without a spot;
And all Thy nature clean.

Once in the circuit of a year, With blood, but not his own, Aaron within the veil appears, Before the golden throne.

But Christ by His own powerful blood Ascends above the skies, And in the presence of our God Shows His own sacrifice

February 17--Evening

February 17—Evening "Our Fellowship is with the Father."

Exodus 24:1-15; Exodus 24:18

Exodus 24:1-2

Even the most favoured under the law came not very near to God. Even when he said "Come up unto Jehovah," it was added, "but they shall not come nigh." How different the gospel, for now, in Christ Jesus, we, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Jesus.

Exodus 24:3 Their tongues went faster than their lives. Man is swift at promising, but lame in performing.

Exodus 24:8 The blood is the main thing in all communion with God. No road is open to us but the crimson one. Where the blood of Jesus falls peace comes, but apart from that we are unclean, and, consequently, unfit for communion with God. Dear friends, has the blood of Jesus ever been sprinkled upon you? Faith, like the bunch of hyssop, applies the blood: have you that faith?

Exodus 24:11 When the blood was on them, they could come near, and enjoy quiet fellowship, even to eating and drinking. What they saw is not described to us except in one point, they saw the azure pavement beneath the sacred feet. All our conceptions fall below the glory of our God, we see only the place of his footstool.

Exodus 24:13

Moses enjoyed a higher degree of communion than any other man, and went up alone into the cloud. There are elect ones out of the elect to whom it is given to lie in their Master's bosom, and to walk in the light as he is in the light. To be highly favoured in this respect is honour and joy indeed.

Exodus 24:14-15 This was a sweet retreat for Moses, who would now for awhile forget the burden of the people.

Exodus 24:18

O sweet stretch of intercourse with heaven. Six weeks with God! What a rest! Alas, Moses needed it, for the people were rebelling down below, and making trouble for their leaders heart.

Through the sacrificial blood, Shed in honour of his law, Chosen men drew near to God, And his gracious glory saw.

Underneath his feet serene, Sapphires, like a pavement, lay, Bright as heaven itself is seen, On a clear and cloudless day.

Heaven no frowning aspect wears;

Boldly we approach the throne:

Brighter grace to us appears Than on Sinai's Mount was shown.

February 18--Morning

February 18—Morning "Be ye holy."

Exodus 30:11-16

Exodus 30:12

Each census was to be attended with a redemption. Every one of the Lord's people was thus to be redeemed as a testimony to all generations that redemption is essential to acceptance with God. Had we not been bought with a price, the fierce plagues of divine punishment would have followed us even to the lowest hell.

Exodus 30:13

God sets his own estimate upon men, for he best knows their value. The standard of our indebtedness is not left to be fixed by our own feelings; the Lord's own will is the law of our condition. Duty is duty, because He requires it.

Exodus 30:14-15

Believers vary in knowledge, gifts, and graces, but they are all redeemed with the same price. The meanest believer was bought with the same blood as the chief of the apostles. The poor, the obscure, the faulty, the illiterate, are as dear to the heart of Jesus as the richest and most gifted saint. What a sweet thought! Here is the true equality. "His righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference." Let us all equally bless and love the Lord by whose blood we are equally redeemed.

Exodus 30:16 A memorial of them testifying that the price was paid, and a memorial to them of their great indebtedness to the Redeemer.

1 Peter 1:15-21 The obligations arising out of our redemption by the Lord Jesus are set forth in 1 Peter 1:15-21.

1 Peter 1:16 The essence of religion consists in the imitation of him whom we worship.

1 Peter 1:17

Let a childlike fear of offending your Great Father ever restrain you from sin. "Blessed is the man who feareth always."

1 Peter 1:18-19 The same price which redeems us from destruction also redeems us from our vain conversation; and this is no less than the heart's blood of the Son of God. Until the world can offer us something more precious than the blood of Jesus, we shall feel ourselves bound by bonds of love to walk in holiness, to Jesus' praise.

1 Peter 1:20-21 The love of Jesus to us is no novelty; he was ordained to redeem us ere worlds began; let none of the trifles of earth charm us with their new pretensions. It was truly practical love which brought him to earth to be our suffering substitute; let our love be practical too; not in word only, but in deed and in truth. O to be a redeemed family, and to live as such. The Lord grant it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Lord, I desire to live as one Who bears a blood-bought name, As one who fears but grieving Thee,
And knows no other shame.

As one by whom Thy walk below Should never be forgot; As one who fain would keep apart
From all Thou lovest not.

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