

Watching Daily at My Gates

Reprinted from Daily Meditations for Spiritual Comfort by Rev. John A. Heys, minister emeritus from the Protestant Reformed Churches

November 1

THE BELIEVERS BLESSED AFFLICTIONS It makes a world of difference whether you stand at the cross of Christ and see the hatred of the unbelieving Jews, and the shed blood and pain which He endured, or whether you look at what He was earning for us through that suffering and death. It makes a world of difference also whether you look simply at your own afflictions, or at that which these afflictions will bring you. Thus in II Corinthians 4:17 we read, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Look at those bodily afflictions and you will see what Adam brought upon man through his sin. If you look no deeper, you will judge the punishment of God to be falling upon the afflicted. But if you look into the heart of the child of God who is being afflicted, you see the work of God's grace whereby He is bringing that child of God to heavenly glory. As Paul says to the Philippians in chapter 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Get that! For the child of God to suffer and die brings him gain, not loss. This is certainly true when the affliction is persecution because of faith in God. It is that to which Paul refers here in II Corinthians 4:17. These afflictions will be "for a moment," but they bring us to everlasting glory in a life completely without affliction. When you look at what God did to your soul you see what He will do pretty soon to your body. Sooner or later men are going to see our dead bodies in coffins. But take hold of this comforting truth that through death God brings our souls out of all misery and pain into an endless life of heavenly glory. Therefore it is also a sign that the body will be raised, when Christ returns, and will be changed into one that will never have an ache or pain, but enjoy an everlasting fellowship with God in a more wonderful world than Adam and Eve enjoyed before they fell into sin. Fear not if the world persecutes. Look at what God is doing. **Read: II Corinthians 4.**

November 2

REST FOR THE RESTLESS Ever since man fell into sin, he has been restless. For the curse which fell upon mankind, when Adam sinned, gives man no rest. Resting is not ceasing from all activity. Man must cease from his physical activity, and take the rest of sleep in order to be able to work the next day. But while he sleeps, his heart keeps beating, and his body is performing the work of making it able to take up work once again as before. When then in Matthew 11:28 Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He is not promising us idleness and inactivity. Do we not read of God resting the seventh day after creating heaven and earth and all their creatures? And is He inactive today? Do we not also in Hebrews 4:9 read that "there remaineth to the people of God" a rest? Will we then be idle in the new Jerusalem? No, we shall be very busy serving and praising God. To enter into that blessed rest we must come unto Christ. For He earned it for us and opened the way for us to enter into it and enjoy it. He made it possible for restless people to have an end to their restlessness, and for them to enjoy being active in heavenly glory. His cross finished the work of salvation so that we could begin to walk in love for God. And since we cannot get rid of our load of sin and guilt which is upon us, we have this call to come to Christ, Who removed our load of guilt which we hopelessly try to get rid of, and opened the door for us to come where, with body and soul, we may serve God every moment of everlasting life. Seek then your salvation in Christ, for there is no rest for the weary except through Him. On His cross He cried out that it is finished. Through Him we can enter the glorious state and condition of serving God with perfect souls in glorified bodies. **Read: Hebrew 4.**

November 3

DWELLING WITH GOD IN HIS TABERNACLE What lies ahead for the world of unbelievers is the opposite of that which the believers will forever enjoy. This is presented to us in Revelation 21:3, where we read, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Now, a tabernacle is a dwelling place; and here we have the place where God will dwell with His people. He needs no dwelling place. He is not limited to one place. He is the everywhere present God. He has, however, promised, and is preparing, a place where His people will have fellowship with Him. That is the truth presented in this verse. Look then and see that there is a dwelling place which God makes for His people so that they may have sweet communion with Him. This life with God will be far richer than what Adam and Eve enjoyed before they fell into sin and death. Their fellowship with God was wonderful, but it was far more limited than the one now being prepared by God through Christ and His cross. This dwelling place brings us, as the next verse states, where God wipes away all tears from our eyes, where there is no death, sorrow, crying, or pain. And that means that here will be boundless and endless rejoicing, singing, and delight. For we shall be with God as we are with Christ, Who is God come in our flesh. Take hold of that word “Behold.” Look at and into the blessings which God has realized for us through His Son and which will be given us, as far as our souls are concerned, the moment we die, and fully when Christ returns and gives us glorified bodies. Here is the rest which we considered yesterday: dwelling with God and knowing to a wonderful degree His love for us as revealed in and bestowed upon us through Christ. Behold this blessedness now by faith in God and in His Christ. **Read: Revelation 21.**

November 4

THAT CERTAIN VICTORY It might seem strange. In fact it may even appear to be that which should not have been written in our holy Bible. For in Psalm 2:4 we read, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” However, if you turn to Psalm 37:13 and Psalm 59:8, you will find the same statements. For God is not laughing because He is pleased with what He sees and hears. That He shall have them in derision reveals that He considers all the works of the unbelievers to be folly. The idea is that our God considers all the attempts of the ungodly to destroy His church to be sheer folly. The point is that our God does not worry. He does not in fear watch Satan, the antichrists, and the whole world of unbelievers as they attack and try to destroy His church. All things are always completely under His control. Satan with all the fallen angels and human enemies of God’s church have their plans, and think that they will succeed in getting the godless kingdom of the Anti-Christ established and victorious. But the almighty God, our covenant Father, knows the folly and hopelessness of their plans. Here is a truth we should hold on to tightly. Here is that which should make us laugh, not in the sense of expressing delight in the worlds attempt to set up its devilish kingdom, but in the peace of mind and joy that all is well. The world is today striving desperately to do what the unbelievers tried when they began building the tower of Babel. But they failed then and are going to fail again. The kingdom of the Antichrist will stand briefly. But rejoice in the truth that even in this the ungodly world shall serve God’s plan and purpose. Satan, the Antichrist, and all the ungodly are but tools in God’s hand to work all things together for our good. Our victory is sure. **Read: Psalm 37:1-17.**

November 5

THAT WONDERFUL PEACE OF GOD When in Philippians 4:6 Paul tells us to be careful for nothing, he is not telling us to be careless. The Greek word Paul uses here means to worry. We are told not to worry, but instead to put all our trust in God and in all the promises which He gives us in Christ. That becomes very plain when in verse 7 he writes, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” What is more, he exhorts us to let all our requests be made known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Our hearts

and minds must be fixed upon God's promises, but also on what He wrought for us through Christ Jesus, His Son and our Savior. Do that and you will have peace of mind and heart. The idea is that we must not doubt God's ability to keep the promises which He gave us, but also that no matter what happens, God is fulfilling every letter in every promise which He has given us in Christ. We may be sure that, at the cross of Christ, His mother, the disciples, and other men and women who believed in God and in His Christ, were filled with care and anxiety, and worried about the outcome of it. But all that changed when He arose from the dead. For then they saw that His cross had not put an end to His work, but that by it He realized more blessedness for His people. We also, as we approach not only darker days and persecution, but also our own sicknesses, losses, and bereavements, must not worry. Instead we should take hold of the truth which we find in a versification of Psalm 149: "His saints shall not fail, but over the earth their power shall prevail; All kingdoms and nations shall yield to their sway. To God give the glory and praise Him for aye." **Read: Philipians 4.**

November 6

SEEKING OUR GOD The longest book of prophecy is Isaiah, which has 66 chapters. In Isaiah 55:6 we find this striking exhortation: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." This verse, however, is better translated, "Seek ye the Lord in His finding, call ye upon Him in His nearness." For the Hebrew preposition used here basically is "in." not "while" He is near. For God does not change. His name "Jehovah" means "I Am." He does not change, and does not "plead" with men to "accept" an "offer" which He will withdraw. This militates against Ephesians 2:1 which tells us that we are spiritually dead before He begins salvation in us. To those whom He did not eternally choose in Christ, God presents salvation only in the sense of setting the truth before them, not in the sense of inviting, begging, pleading that they accept it. But there is a place where God can be found, and where He graciously is near His elect children. He is near them in Christ His Son. And it is in Christ that we can call upon Him and be heard. We must seek Him in Christ, and call upon Him in Christ, after He has already implanted in us the spiritual life which Christ earned for us. The blessed fruit of such seeking in Christ is in the next verse: He will have mercy upon us and abundantly pardon. He will enable us to believe in Him that He is merciful and does pardon us through the cross of Christ. The awesome truth is that only when we, by His grace, seek Him and call upon Him will we experience the blessings which come through His Son. Then we not only know that Jehovah saves, but we will be enjoying that salvation. Seek Him then in Christ. Call upon Him through Christ and you will receive the joy of salvation, and be assured of its fullness when Christ returns. **Read: Isaiah 55.**

November 7

RICH TOWARD GOD There were in Old Testament times men of God to whom God gave much material wealth. There was Job with his host of sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys. There was also Solomon, who was an extremely rich man. And today there are children of God who have more luxurious homes, more beautiful clothes, and more effective means of transportation than those Solomon had. All this is well. It is God's gift. But what counts is the gift of spiritual riches. Jesus expressed this very plainly in Luke 12:21, when He concluded His parable about a foolish rich man, who was an unbeliever, who lost all his earthly goods, because God took away his life. Concerning him Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God." That man had said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." He went into the everlasting torment of hell! He could not take with him the smallest part of the earthly treasures, which he had not received as that wherewith to serve God. Here we are taught to be, first of all and very seriously concerned with being rich spiritually, with blessings from the hand of God through His Son and His cross. What counts is whether we are rich toward God, not how much earthly treasure we have for a short period of time. What counts is what we will have everlastingly after we have left this life which is a continual death. What counts is not what we have materially in this

present life, but what we will receive when this life ends, and our souls go to their everlasting goal. Our bodies for a while will be in the grave; and then earthly treasures will mean nothing to them. Let us then seek the kingdom of God. Jesus applied this parable with the words, "Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." **Read: Luke 12:11-31.**

November 8

PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD Through the years there have been wars between nations. In fact, the first child to be born, namely Cain, in anger killed his brother Abel. Because people want earthly things they fight to get possessions. Now, fighting is not always sin. In fact God tells us in Ephesians 6:11 to "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." This means that we must fight against Satan, because he is fighting us through men. God told us in the day that Adam sinned that we would have to fight, because there would be enmity between the serpent and his seed and the woman and her seed. He also in that declaration assures us that we will have the victory. We can in that light understand that we need armor in a very dangerous battle. And we can be thankful to God that He gives us protection. He changes His elect children and makes them hate the devil and all the sin he brings into this world. The devil hates those whom God has changed spiritually so that they love God and hate sin. Let us not forget that this spiritual battle is far more important than, physical warfare of men who hate men for worldly reasons and carnal craving. Now our fighting must be spiritual, not physical. We must be fighting against the lie, against false doctrines, against sin of every kind, and against all the attempts of the devil and his soldiers (men and fallen angels) which tempt us to walk in sin, and thus in hatred against God, Whose law we must keep fully and constantly. Seek your protection then from all false doctrines which today are increasing in number and subtlety. Never give in to a false doctrine. Fight against all attempts to get us to turn away from God. And remember what happened to Adam and Eve when they agreed with Satan. Seek all the protection you can against Satan and his lies and love of sin. **Read: Ephesians 6:10-19.**

November 9

LIVING IN HOLINESS One who claimed to be a shepherd of Christ's sheep once said, "Christ died for our sins. Dare we make His martyrdom meaningless by not committing them?" Must we make Christ's death on His cross the reason for us to commit sin, so that His cross gets more meaning and importance? Did not the apostle Paul write in Romans 6:1, 2, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Salvation does not mean simply that our guilt is removed, and that we now are righteous before God. It also means that we are made holy, and that salvation implants in us love for God, and thus the desire to be pleasing in His sight in all that which we do. The evidence that He died for us is that we have been given love of God, and in that love want to be pleasing in His sight. It reveals, that salvation does, that we want to walk as our Savior did, walk in obedience and love for God. Would you want to drink poison so that the skill and wisdom of your doctor would be revealed? Being cured, would you want to take even more of that poison to give that physician more honor and credit for his skill? Instead, you would be making it possible for your mortician to earn a bit more money by your funeral. No, of course not! Likewise, if you are saved from sin, you are saved from the love of sin. If Christ died for your sins, He will cause you to be born again with a life that wants to walk every step of the way in the obedience wherein He walked. With Paul you will say, "God forbid." You will take hold of the truth in verse 23 that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life. That means a life like that of Christ Who saved us. **Read: Romans 6.**

November 10

COMING AFTER CHRIST AS was pointed out yesterday, salvation not only saves us from the punishment we deserve, but also from the love of sin. We must not take man's word about this, but

Christ's. For in Mark 8:34 He says, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." The point here is: that we come into heavenly glory only by coming after Christ. We must walk after Him in God's holy law. And to do this we must deny ourselves and take up our cross, and follow Christ. In the beginning of history Adam turned away from God and went the way his flesh wanted. Yes, this was the way designed by Satan and suggested to man by him. Adam agreed to go the way of sin. We now must deny this evil desire wherewith we were born. That we take up our cross means that we willingly suffer what the world wants to inflict upon us. It cannot mean taking up Christ's cross. On it He cried out that "It is finished." It means that we suffer at Satan's and his followers' hands. It means that we confess Christ to be our Savior. And it means that we are willing to suffer the ridicule, mockery, and pain the world wants to inflict upon us. We must walk after Christ, no matter how much affliction the world heaps upon us. Only by following Christ will we arrive where He is in heavenly glory. No, we do not earn that glory by that walk. Christ paved the way to glory, and He gives the life and strength to follow Him. If we do not come after Him, we are coming against Him. Then we are not following Christ but following Satan; and that leads to hell and its everlasting woes. Deny your flesh and its love of sin. Confess God to be your God; and do this not simply with your lips. Do it with all your works. Come after Christ no matter what it costs physically. You will then have assurance of everlasting blessedness with Christ in glory. **Read: Mark 8:34-38.**

November 11

MAKING OUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE Are you sure that you are an elect child of God? No, the question is not whether you made it sure in God's mind. When in II Peter 1:10 we read, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall," this refers to our minds, not God's. We cannot give God information which He does not eternally have. We cannot move Him to make a decision concerning our salvation. To mention that is to present a god over whom we have control. It is to deny that He is Jehovah, which name literally means I AM. And because He is Jehovah we can not change His mind, or bring into it something that is not eternally there. With us it is so different. We are sure that aches and pains, misery and grief are all around us, and that death is coming for us. What we as sinners deserve is everlasting torment in hell because of our guilt before God. We know that there are elect children of God, because the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation teach us that there are such. Beginning in Genesis 3:15 God made known that there are two seeds, those of the devil, and those of Christ. Our calling is to give diligence to make it sure in our minds that God called us to spiritual life and makes us know our eternal election. As noted yesterday, we must walk as Christ walked. Then we will receive the assurance that we are by God called to be His children, those for whom Christ died. Read repeatedly, and study God's Word for this truth. Walk in love toward God, keeping His commandments. Seek the comfort and peace of mind that Christ died for your sins, by finding yourself walking here below as Christ did. Then you will make your calling and election sure in your mind, and you will find the peace that passeth all understanding. **Read: II Peter 1:1-11.**

November 12

THAT PERFECT PEACE There is that which has never been realized by man, and never will be accomplished by man, but is God's perfect gift to us as believers. That gift is peace, perfect peace that will never end. The very first child to be born of man killed his first brother. And Scripture throughout speaks of wars and predicts more of them. All these wars are here because man began to fight against God. Satan got Adam and Eve to go against God by doing what He had forbidden them. World War I and World War II are only pictures of what is coming. But a wonderful and blessed truth is presented to us in Isaiah 26:3. There we read, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Here is THE peace that passeth all understanding. Here is the perfect and everlasting peace. For here is peace with God. Then all is well. Where there is no peace with God, there

is no peace among men. Of that we can be sure. It is because God sent His own Son into our flesh, so that He could blot out our sins and remove all our guilt, by His life of perfect obedience and His death and suffering of hellish agony which we deserve, that today and everlastingly we can have peace with God, and will live together in perfect peace in His coming Kingdom of Heaven. Having peace with God we have no reason to be afraid of what happens in this world wherein we live now. It all is due to what God does to realize the day when His Son returns and brings forth a world of perfect peace, a world wherein all men love God and reveal this in love to one another. Trusting in God means that we accept Him as God alone. It also means that we have no doubt as to whether He will keep His promises. It means that we are sure all is well, because He is the almighty, ever-faithful God, Who has already brought His Son to this perfect peace to bring us there. **Read: Isaiah 26.**

November 13

WHAT REALLY COUNTS In many ways people do not agree. Some people prefer this color, and the taste of this kind of fruit. Others prefer a different color for a coat or dress, and this food rather than that. For some, the more money they have the richer they think that they are. But in his wisdom, wealthy Solomon, as moved by God, wrote in Proverbs 15:16, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." The best thing for us to have is the fear of God. Earthly treasures can bring joy to our flesh. But the fear of God assures us of everlasting blessedness in God's kingdom. Now, by fear of the Lord Solomon means faith, reverence, respect for God. The most precious possession we can have in this life is trust and confidence in God as our heavenly Father, Who sent His Son to earn our salvation by His cross. Yes, we become rich by losing! We must lose all our guilt. Every sin must be blotted out, or we go to everlasting woe. All the gold and silver in the world, all the houses and lands, cannot remove the punishment of ONE sin! In fact, the more earthly goods we have, the more we are tempted to forget God, to walk in sin, and to have no thought for salvation. What counts is what we have in our hearts, not in our pockets or bank account. What is most precious is faith, hope, and love of God. And all the material possessions which we have in this life should be used to cause our faith to grow and to be strengthened. The material must be used to the strengthening of our spiritual life. What counts is what is in Christ and what brings us to live with Him and to serve God perfectly. Thank God for that spiritual gift of God's grace: faith in Him. And use material things for a deeper and richer enjoyment of the spiritual wealth that Christ earned for us. **Read: Matthew 6:19-34.**

November 14

SEEING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN It is amazing what we see today that men could not see in days gone by. Today we can see what is happening on the other side of this earth while it is taking place. Television is an amazing device which man learned how to make. Today we see things in full color, and hear the words spoken as they come out of a man's mouth on the other side of the earth. What counts, however, is what our God does and says to man. A few there are that hear and see what He is doing, and what He says to us. Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Here we have what it counts to see. Do not see the kingdom of heaven, and you will some day see hell and all the holy wrath of God against sin and sinners. What is more, that we will see (i.e., enjoy) all the blessings of God's kingdom is possible because of what God does to us, not what we invent, find, or make. We must be born again, that is, receive a new spiritual life from God in our souls. In fact, if we are not born again we will not even care to see the kingdom of God, and we will fight against those who are its citizens. All those who were not born again, and who did not see the kingdom of God, when they saw Christ, its king, killed Him, not having any interest in His kingdom. We see that kingdom because God caused us to be born again. We see Christ, His Son, as the door which opened the way for us, who were born again, to enter with our souls at the moment of death, and with our bodies when Christ returns. Pray then unto God that He will give you to see more of that kingdom, to see it more clearly, and more in detail, as what He

wrought for us through His Son and His cross and resurrection and ascension up into heaven. **Read: Romans 9:14-26.**

November 15

SAVED THROUGH FAITH Never should we claim to be saved because of what we did. It is true that we are saved through faith, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8. But God does not offer salvation and wait to see whether we accept it or not. He is not limited by our will and work. It is true what Paul said to the jail keeper: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). This was his answer to the prison keepers question, “What must I do to be saved?” But take note of the fact that the very question asked by this jail keeper reveals that God had already begun the work of salvation in him. He had implanted in his soul the desire for salvation. God does not “offer” salvation and wait to see whether sinners are going to let Him save them. That insults the almighty God. He is never frustrated by any creature. He does not depend upon man’s will and work. No, Paul tells this jailer that if he believes, and if those in his house believe, then salvation has already been begun in them by God, and will be fully accomplished when Christ returns on the judgment day. For we are saved by grace, not by our works (Ephesians 2:8-10). God’s grace gives us the new spiritual life that wants salvation, wants spiritual life that believes in Christ as our Savior. Believe, and you know that God has begun it. Believe, and that means that already you have been engrafted into Christ by faith as God’s gift. We are saved through faith, not because we believe by our own power. We are saved by God, not by letting God save us by “accepting” His “offer.” God saves us by making us to be believers. Then He brings salvation into our consciousness. If we are saved, we will thank God for every bit of our salvation, and confess Him to be our complete Savior. **Read: John 3:1-21.**

November 16

VICTORIOUS BY FAITH There is a striking statement in I John 5:3. There John states that God’s commandments are not grievous. If we are really serious and sincere, we will confess that it is awfully hard for us, even years after being born again, to keep God’s commandments. Even that strong servant, the apostle Paul, said, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). The comforting truth, however, is found in I John 5:4, where we read, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Faith is God’s gift to us that enables us to have the victory over the world, but also over our flesh. If we have faith in God, and in His Son Jesus Christ as our Savior, the undeniable evidence that we were born again, that is, born with a new spiritual life that loves God, is manifest. Never, before we were born physically, could we do anything. And likewise, before we were born again with that new spiritual life, we could not even desire to keep God’s commandments. Here we are taught again that our salvation is all God’s work. God causes us to be born again. We do no more for that spiritual rebirth than we did for our physical birth. We did not ask our parents to bring us forth into this world. We could not before our conception and birth even want to come into being. Our spiritual rebirth, and our salvation from beginning onward, are not what we wanted to have come into being. All of our salvation, including the desire for it, is God’s gift to us. He gives us the victory then over our spiritual death. We have the victory over the world, to which by nature we belong, because of what God did. We do and must sing: “Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.” Faith is one of these blessings for which we owe Him everlasting thanks. **Read: I John 5.**

November 17

ORDAINED TO EVERLASTING LIFE Ask a man what “life” is, and he will probably have a different idea from that of the next man whom you ask. He may even say, “I do not know.” The world sings the song, “Ah, sweet mystery of life.” But believers turn to God’s Word and say that it means knowing God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent. This we read in John 17:3 where Jesus says, “And this is life eternal,

that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” He who does not know God does not have an everlasting life. He comes into the world spiritually dead. For, did not God tell Adam that the day he committed his first sin, he would die spiritually? Because he did sin, all earthly fathers bring forth children who are spiritually dead. These children have a physical life, but not one bit of spiritual life. Everlasting life comes from the eternal God, and only unto those whom He eternally chose in Christ. Our God sent Christ to earn a life of heavenly bliss for us, an everlasting life of knowing God. This does not mean simply knowing about God. The devil knows that, and the minute men die they will know that there is one God, against Whom they sinned all their life. What Jesus means is that everlasting life is enjoying covenant fellowship with Him. That is life! That is what God promises us and what is realized for us through His Son. Everlasting life is enjoying the blessedness that God has realized for us through His Son. Do you want to know God that way? Do you want to know Him as the true God Who keeps every word of His promises, and will give His people that everlasting joy of living with Him in holiness and glory? If that is your desire, you now have proof that He has begun giving you everlasting life already. And you are going to know it fully. **Read: John 17.**

November 18

BEING SOBER CHILDREN OF GOD To be sober means to be serious- minded by putting away silliness and flippancy. But basically it means not being drunken. Drunkenness does bring on silliness and flippancy; but when in I Thessalonians 5:8 Paul wrote, “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation,” he means that we are not spiritually drunken but sober. This is plain from the fact that in the preceding verse he had written that they that be drunken are drunken in the night. We ought to take hold of that awesome truth that our God has brought us out of spiritual drunkenness into heavenly sobriety. The sad fact is, however, that worldly riches and pleasures do make us spiritually drunken. For our flesh enjoys forgetting God, and doing as Satan caused Adam to do. As spiritually drunken we follow thousands of ways of seeking and enjoying forbidden fruit, that is, enjoying sins of every kind. We behave as spiritually drunken members of the human race. Because Satan is attacking us every day through man and earthly riches, we must be armed with faith, hope, and love of God. For, as Paul presents it, we need faith and love as a breastplate in our spiritual battle; and we need hope as the helmet for the protection of our heads. But only as we are spiritually sober can we use this breastplate and helmet. In His grace God has brought us spiritual sobriety. By all means do not despise this gift, but cherish it and be thankful for it. As Paul writes, let us be sober, use that breastplate and helmet, and resist all the attacks of Satan. For in the day in which we live Satan has so many more, and more subtle, means of tempting us to spiritual drunkenness. By God’s grace we are soldiers in the battle of faith. Let us not be so foolish as to lay aside our breastplate of faith and love and our helmet of hope, that it will not protect us. **Read: I Thessalonians 5:1-11.**

November 19

THAT BREASTPLATE OF FAITH AND LOVE Yesterday we took note of a fierce and subtle spiritual battle that we have with Satan, through men who have no faith in and love for God, and who attack us. Today we do well to look more closely at Paul’s exhortation to put on the breastplate of faith and of love. It certainly is plain that Paul is speaking here of a spiritual battle. Faith and love are a spiritual breastplate for us in a spiritual battle, not in a physical warfare. We must protect ourselves but not by a steel, brass, metallic breastplate, when Satan is trying to get us to turn away from Christ and God, and to walk in unrighteousness. In Ephesians 6:14 Paul makes this very clear. For there he writes, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.” Our breastplate of faith and love is the breastplate of righteousness. Our protection against all that which Satan uses, to stop us from holding on to righteousness, is to believe God in all that which He tells us about our salvation. It is also love toward God that keeps us walking in righteousness, rather than going

with Satan in unrighteousness, as Satan got Adam and Eve to do. We are therefore, as Paul warns the Ephesians, saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Faith causes us to know and believe that we are righteous in God's judgment, and that we love Him, and are thankful to Him for having saved us from our guilt by His Son and His cross. Hold on to that truth, and do not let Satan work unbelief in you and cause you to hate God. He succeeded in this devilish work in Adam and Eve. But God has given us faith and love for Him. Hold on to these, and keep on that breastplate of faith and love. Be a soldier who fights against Satan and his seed; and be not a sinner revealing unbelief and hatred against God. **Read: Ephesians 6:10-18.**

November 20

LOVE THAT PRODUCES LOVE In I John 4:19 we find this instructive and beautiful truth, namely, "We love him, because he first loved us." This not only explains why we love God, but also how it is possible for us to love Him. Because God loves us He causes us to love Him. That is why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that we can put on the breastplate of faith and love (II Thessalonians 5:8). Love of God will keep us safe when Satan and his army try, as they constantly are trying, to get us to hate God, and to repeat Adam's sin of doing what God forbids. The love God has for us produces in us love for God. And that love, as well as faith, is the breastplate that protects us when Satan attacks us through men and things. Love of God enables us to be Christians and to protect ourselves spiritually from all the attacks of antichristians. Satan is antichristian, for the word "anti" means "against." And being against Christ is to be against God, Who sent Him for our salvation. Christians have Christ by His Spirit in them. Antichrists and antichristians have Satan as their father. They constantly go against Christ. But through Christ God implants love for Him in us and hatred against Satan and his army. Christ revealed to us His love for us when He laid down His life on His cross. He did this with a view to implanting the love of God in us. And when He implants that love of God in us, we are willing to die at the hands of the enemy, even as He did, and to continue to walk in love toward God. The awesome question, therefore, is whether you do love God. The question is not merely whether it looks as though you love God. The question is whether you do love Him, and are willing to fight all the attempts of Satan to get you to walk in hatred towards God. By all means let the love of God, given you through Christ, make you resist all temptations to walk in sin. Let your love of God be the shield that protects your soul, and produces a walk of love toward God. **Read: I John 4: 1-19.**

November 21

HOPE AS THE ANCHOR OF OUR SOULS Our hearts are not the only organ that decides what we are going to do. Our minds work with the heart. We may with our hearts want something very strongly, but because our mind sees that what we crave may kill us, we do what our mind says, and not what our heart wants. That is also why Paul, having told us to put on the breastplate of faith and love, tells us also to put on the helmet of the hope of salvation. This truth is based on what we find in Hebrews 6:19, where we read, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the souls, both sure and steadfast." Is it not unique that in I Corinthians 13:13 Paul speaks of faith, hope, and love? The word translated as "charity" actually is the strongest word for "love" in Scripture. In I Thessalonians 5:8 Paul spoke of faith and love being our breastplate, and hope being our helmet in the battle of faith. These are three very, very important things in our lives. What we believe, what we love, and what our hope is has tremendous importance. Hope is not merely wishing. Its basic meaning is expecting what we desire to have. When then in Hebrews 6:19 it is called the anchor of our souls, we can see why it makes us steadfast when Satan through men comes to keep us from being sober, and to make us spiritually silly and foolish. In all our temptations we must have upon us the helmet of hope. Otherwise we are going to be spiritually shipwrecked. We are going to be swept into hell! Only the expectation of what Christ earned for us, and God promises us, will keep us living wisely and safely. By God's grace then seek the strengthening of your hope, so that in every temptation you may say, as Jesus did, "Get thee behind me,

Satan!” Do not let him deceive you and make you long for that which sweeps man into hell. By reading and by study of God’s Word, seek the strengthening of your hope. In that way keep on your head the helmet of hope, and stand firmly in safety. **Read: Hebrews 6.**

November 22

THE THANKSGIVING OF THE UPRIGHT There are times when one is very sad; and there are moments of great joy. There are times when we are glad that we got something we wanted; and there are times when we have lost what we had. But an important question is whether we are thankful to our God no matter what it is that He sends us, or takes from us. A truth we ought to consider is found in Psalm 140: 13. There David says, “Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence.” The question then is whether we shall give thanks to God no matter what He sends us. For the text states that the righteous give thanks, and that means that they do the right thing. Righteous people do what is right in God’s sight. And the righteous, according to Romans 8:28, know that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” All things, not merely some things. Loss as well as gain; health but also sickness; death as well as life work together for our good. We give thanks, do we not, for what we consider to be good? We have then the astounding truth that our calling is always to give thanks to God for all that which He does, whether it hurts our flesh or brings it pleasure. Look also at I Corinthians 15:57. There Paul states, “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Through Christ comes our salvation. And because He is Lord of all at God’s right hand, all that which He sends us and which He causes to happen to us and around us is for our good. Let us therefore examine our souls and lives. Are we a thankful people? Do we really believe that all things work together for our good? Is this or that physical loss a gain for us? Do we always believe that all things work together for good to those that love God? Note what David wrote: The upright shall dwell in God’s presence. Are you in God’s presence when He sends things that hurt the flesh? Be sure that He works all things together for good for each child of God. **Read: Psalm 140.**

November 23

WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT In Ephesians 5:8 we read, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” To understand this we should take note of what is written in I John 1:5. There we are told that “God is light, and in him is no darkness.” This means that God is holy. And that we came into this world as darkness means that we came in as unholy, and thus as sinners. For we all fell with Adam. Now we are called to walk a holy, sinless life. We are called to do only that which pleases God, only that of which He approves. That we now are light in the Lord means that Christ has made us holy, that is, those who hate sin and love what pleases God. Through the cross of Christ we became righteous, that is, not guilty; but by His Spirit we become holy. We are therefore people who love God and who can, by the new life which God gives us, do what is pleasing in His sight. Now to walk as children of light we must walk as Christ walked. He never committed one sin. Never had He had a sinful thought or desire; and never did He break the smallest part of any of God’s commandments. Since He is the Son of God, He is light; and surely He is a perfect example for us to follow. It is true that Satan tried to get Him to sin; but Jesus told him to get behind Him and quit his tempting. Satan comes every day trying to get us to be unholy; and we need to pay attention to this call to walk as children of light. Those who walk as Christ did are Christians. They reveal it in what they do. Stand therefore before the mirror of God’s Word to see every step of your earthly life; and then you may know whether you are a Christian, one with the life of Christ in you. Are God and Christ manifest in your life? Do men see you as a child of light? If you walk in the light, you will live with Christ in glory. **Read: I John 1:1—2: 6.**

November 24

THAT BLESSED RECONCILIATION What does salvation mean to you? From what do you want to be saved? As a child of God you are going to say that you want to be saved from sin. The question however is, What do you mean by salvation from sin? It is so easy for our flesh to say that we want to be saved from all the aches and pains of life here below, from death and all that everlasting punishment in hell which comes upon all those who hate God. With all the unbelievers we want to be saved from God's wrath and the punishment which it brings. We are right, if we want all this with a view to something deeper, something which is the heart of our salvation. We must want to be saved from our act of sin, not simply from its punishment. Paul presents this so beautifully in Colossians 1:21, when he writes, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." That is what we need and need first. We need to be reconciled, that is, to be changed spiritually, if we are to have our life changed physically by relief from all the punishment of sin. It means that we want to be saved from our hatred toward God, and to be given a deep, abiding love toward Him. It means that we want to be able to do only that which pleases our God. Do you find that in your heart and mind? That must be there, or you are not one whose body and soul are saved from all the punishment of God's curse. When God told Satan that He would put enmity in our hearts against him, so that there would be love of God in us, He spoke of the heart of our salvation. It will come not only by Christ's heel being crushed, but by His Spirit implanting hatred against sin in our hearts. Look deeply then into your soul. Look for love of God in that soul. And if you find a desire to be saved from sin, you can be sure that God will save you from the punishment of sin. Reconciliation is a blessed pearl of our salvation that assures us of glorification. **Read: Colossians 1:1-22.**

November 25

SURE OF OUR CALLING AND ELECTION There is a reason why our God tells us in Scripture that His name is Jehovah. For a truth to which we must hold on to tightly is that He is unchangeable. Never may we say that He was or will be different from what He is now. He Himself says in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I change not." In fact, the Hebrew word translated here as "Lord" actually is "Jehovah," which means "I Am." Thus here He says, "I am the I Am." When then we read in II Peter 1:10 that we must "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail," we take the position that Peter is speaking here of what we have and desire, not what God will do and desires. We can become doubtful about our salvation and calling as well as our election. We must make sure in our hearts that God called us and elected us eternally and unchangeably. We must give diligence for the confirmation of this in our minds. We must strive to obtain assurance, by a holy walk of life, that we are God's children who will receive everlasting blessedness. For in verses 4-9 he tells us that if we lack faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, we are blind, cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that God purged us of our sins through His Son and His cross. We do not make our calling and election sure in God's mind. It is sure in Him Who is the I Am and changes not. Very urgent therefore is our calling here to strive to grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. For as we do that we become sure in our minds that God called us to be His children, and did so because He eternally elected us to be such. The important question here is whether our walk of life gives us this assurance that God called us and elected us to be His covenant people. Take hold then of this word to give diligence to become stronger in your faith that you are a child of God. **Read: II Peter 1**

November 26

A CALL TO TRY THE SPIRITS Ever since Satan succeeded in getting Adam and Eve to fall into sin, through his lie about what God said, we have the calling to be sure that those who "preach the gospel" do indeed bring forth the "good news" of our salvation through Christ and His cross and Spirit. Satan did not after his victory quit bringing false doctrines to man. Instead he has increased his intensity, especially after Christ's birth, cross, resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand. He, the Deceiver,

is today working very hard with his lie that we can become gods through sin. The form of his lie changes, but that makes it even more deceitful and dangerous. Therefore we should hold on to the truth, and to the calling which we find in I John 4:1. There we read, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." We should heed this warning, because there is such a strong effort put forth by Satan today to promote a wrong harmony and peace in the church world, by compromises rather than by clearer and richer understanding of that which God says in His Word. The tendency today is to get bigger in numbers, rather than richer in the truth. The preaching seeks to please man's flesh rather than to glorify God. The aim is to make men happy about fleshly advantages, rather than about glorification of our God and His Son. The question we must try to answer is whether the preaching glorifies God and sets Him forth as the holy God that He is. It is God Himself Who through John calls us to try the spirits that preach. If they are of God, they are going to call us to glorify Him, not change His Word for the glory of man's flesh. Be concerned then with God's glory. Defend the truth that all of our salvation is His gift to us, including the desire for that salvation. That is what He declares in His Word. Try, that is, test, the spirits that preach. **Read: I John 4:1-6**

November 27

THE REVELATION OF THE MAN OF SIN Sin is in a sense like man in that there was a moment in time when sin was conceived and born, and through the years has grown and will soon present in the world the Man of Sin. We have the warning in Scripture that this man of sin is coming. In II Thessalonians 2:3 Paul wrote, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." What Paul says here is that sin will reach a climax before Christ returns to bring His church to glory. Of this return he spoke in the preceding verses. He calls attention to the Thessalonians, that they were taught the false doctrine that Christ was coming in their lifetime. How correct Paul was, for now, almost 2,000 years later, Christ still has not returned. The Thessalonians had been taught that which was not the truth. This was not a false doctrine of the world, but one taught in the churches. It was preached by men whom one would be inclined to believe, because they did preach some undeniable truths. This demonstrates why what we considered yesterday is so important. We must try the spirits whether they are of God. We may be sure that the richer the truth is in a church, the more feverishly Satan works to get his false doctrines there. Satan is sly, crafty, and extremely dangerous. Today, as we rush toward the days of the Anti-Christ, we should be very careful, and alert to the fact that Satan is trying to get us to eat, with our souls, forbidden fruit, doctrines that God commands us not to eat. It is revealing that God moved John to call him, who will be Satan's most powerful and crafty tool, the Antichrist. "Anti" means "against." There are many today who are in the church but against Christ as tools of Satan. It is well for us to be warned, as we approach the day of that Antichrist's coming. Satan deceived Adam and Eve; and he is trying to deceive us today. **READ: II THESSALONIANS 2.**

November 28

GOD'S GIFT OF SALVATION Never, no never, should we accept and believe that which denies God His glory, and makes Christ's salvation dependent upon what man does. Let us avoid all teachings which are a modern form of Satan's lie to Adam and Eve, that man can by his works become a god. Our works do not determine whether we are going to obtain salvation. Our salvation, as God's work, determines whether we are those whom Christ saves. We need to be saved from the lack of interest in salvation. God must and does give to His elect even the desire for salvation. If we desire salvation we have the evidence that God has already begun that work in us, and will finish it when Christ returns. A very important truth which God gave us through Paul is found in Philippians 2: 13. There we read, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Note that all that God works in us is not due to what we gave Him. HE works in us to will as well as to do. We believe and

want salvation; but it is God Who makes us want that salvation. He gives us all of our faith. Notice carefully that Paul says that God works in us, and that we must work out that salvation. God commands us to believe, but He also gives us the desire and power to do so. Note that God through Paul here tells us that He works in us to will as well as to do of His good pleasure. Before we can will and believe, God has already caused us to be born again. He does not wait to see whether spiritually dead people will believe and “accept” salvation. Be careful then and take a strong hold on the truth that even our desire for salvation is God’s gift to us. WE cannot give God anything that He has not already given us. In Him we live and move and have our being, physically but also spiritually. **Read: Philippians 2:1-12.**

November 29

THE CHURCH’S CERTAIN SAFETY In the Old Testament the church is presented as having a host of enemies. For a long time all the members of the church of God lived in a small section of this earth, namely, the land of Canaan. Today the church is scattered over all the earth in every nation, tongue, and tribe. It pleases our God to gather the members of the body of Christ, His church, from far and wide, from all types of people. Whereas in the old dispensation the church was limited mostly to the Jewish race, now it is gathered from every color, race, and nationality. Even as our bodies have different kinds of members, and need different kinds of members, so the church has different kinds of people from a physical point of view. Even though the church has only a handful of people, compared with the millions upon millions of those outside that church, we have a very comforting truth concerning us in Deuteronomy 33:28. There we find Moses stating, as God’s mouthpiece, “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon the land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.” We do well to take note of the fact that the church shall dwell in safety alone, and that its members shall have all that which we need. That corn, wine, and dew must be taken figuratively. These literally will not be in the new Jerusalem that is coming when Christ returns. What we have here is that word of comfort which God gives His church. She is safe. We do correctly sing, “Safe in the arms of Jesus.” The church has that calling which we considered yesterday. She has a host of enemies, a number greater than we can count. But all is well. And as we approach the days of the Antichrist, as pictured in Revelation 13, we need not fear. The almighty God is our protector and savior. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of need, and trouble (Psalm 46). **Read: Deuteronomy 33:26-29.**

November 30

SAFE IN GOD’S ALMIGHTY ARMS What a comforting truth! What an evidence that all is well with God’s church! We are rushing toward the day when the Antichrist, as pictured in Revelation 13, will rule the world and persecute God’s church. But take hold of that truth which we find in Deuteronomy 33:27, which makes possible what we read of in the next verse. There, as moved by God, Moses declares, “The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.” Our God, the only true God, is eternal. He has everlasting arms that can and will destroy our enemies completely. Yea, He will cause all of His own children to reach everlasting heavenly blessedness. That does not mean that we are not going to suffer and die physically, and that many of us will not be killed by Satan’s army. Revelation 13 shows us that this will happen to many believers. But Satan, and all his host together, cannot take one bit of strength out of God’s arms. These arms will have everlasting power of infinite might that will cause to happen everything that He promises us. He is the eternal God, and He is our refuge eternally. His almighty arms are under us and will carry us away from Satan and all his hatred, and into His house of many mansions through Christ. We will all reach all the glory that He promised us in Christ. Do not for one split second question His power or faithfulness. Remember that Jesus cross made it all look hopeless; but it served the preparation of our way to heavenly glory in God’s everlasting power and

grace. He was our refuge there; and He is our refuge every moment of time with His arms underneath us to carry us to glory. In His wisdom and power He used Satan so that Christ was crucified to earn a place for us in heavenly glory. Put all your trust in Him; and be sure that His arms are carrying you to victory, and using Satan and his servants to serve us, not hurt us. **Read: Psalm 48.**

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