

MORNING BY
MORNING

OR

DAILY READINGS

for the family or the closet

C. H. SPURGEON

Author of "Evening by Evening," "Sermons," &c.

"He waketh morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear
as the learned."

Isaiah l. 4.



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PREFACE



Poets have delighted to sing of the morning as “Mother of the Dews,” “sowing the earth with orient pearl;” and many of the saints, upstarting from their beds at the first blush of dawn, have found the poetry of nature to be the reality of grace as they have felt the dews of heaven refreshing their spirits. Hence morning exercises have ever been dear to enlightened, heaven-loving souls, and it has been their rule, never to see the face of man till they have first seen the face of God. The breath of morn redolent of the smell of flowers is incense offered by earth to her Creator, and living men should never let the dead earth excel them; truly living men tuning their hearts for song, like the birds, salute the radiant mercy which reveals itself in the east. The first fresh hour of every morning should be dedicated to the Lord, whose mercy gladdens it with golden light. The eye of day openeth its lids, and in so doing opens the eyes of hosts of heaven-protected slumberers; it is fitting that those eyes should first look up to the great Father of Lights, the fount and source of all the good upon which the sunlight gleams. It augurs for us a day of grace when we begin betimes with God; the sanctifying influence of the season spent upon the mount operates upon each succeeding hour. Morning devotion anchors the soul, so that it will not very readily drift far away from

God during the day: it perfumes the heart so that it smells fragrant with piety until nightfall; it girds up the soul's garments so that it is less apt to stumble, and feeds all its powers so that it is not permitted to faint. The morning is the gate of the day, and should be well guarded with prayer. It is one end of the thread on which the day's actions are strung, and should be well knotted with devotion. If we felt more the majesty of life, we should be more careful of its mornings. He who rushes from his bed to his business and waiteth not to worship, is as foolish as though he had not put on his clothes, or cleansed his face, and as unwise as though he dashed into battle without arms or armor. Be it ours to bathe in the softly-flowing river of communion with God, before the heat of the wilderness and the burden of the way begin to oppress us.

In penning these short reflections upon certain passages of Holy Writ, the author has had in view the assistance of the private meditations of believers. A child may sometimes suggest a consolation which might not otherwise have cheered a desolate heart; and even a flower smiling upward from the sod may turn the thoughts heavenward: may we not hope that, by the Holy Spirit's grace, as the reader turns, morning by morning, to our simple page, he will hear in it a still small voice, whose speech shall be the word of God to his soul? The mind wearies of one thing, and we have therefore studied variety, changing our method constantly; sometimes exhorting, then soliloquizing, then conversing; using the first, second, and third persons, and speaking both in the singular and the plural—and all with the desire of avoiding sameness and dulness. Our matter, also, we venture to hope, is wide in its range, and not altogether without a dash of freshness. Readers of our sermons will recognize many thoughts and expressions which they may have met with in our discourses; but much is, to the author at least, new, and, as far as anything can be when it treats upon the common salvation, it is original. We have written out of our own heart, and most of the portions are remembrances of words which were refreshing in our own experience, and therefore we hope the daily meditations will

not be without savor to our brethren; in fact, we know they will not if the Spirit of God shall rest upon them.

Our ambition has led us to hope that our little volume may also aid the worship of families where God's altar burns in the morning. We know that it has been the custom in some households to read Mason, Hawker, Bogatsky, Smith, or Jay, and without wishing to usurp the place of any of these, our "MORNING BY MORNING" aspires to a position among them. Our happiness will overflow should we be made a blessing to Christian households. Family worship is, beyond measure, important both for the present and succeeding generations, and to be in part a chaplain in the houses of our friends, we shall esteem to be a very great honor.

We have written no prayers, because we think that a prayer is good for nothing if it be not written on the heart by the Holy Spirit, and made to gush forth warm from the soul. We should as soon think of printing a form for our children to use in addressing their parents, as draw up a form to be offered to our Father who is in heaven. It has been said in defence of forms, "Better to go on crutches than not at all;" but it is our firm conviction that those who truly *go* in the sense of worshipping aright, might with a little effort, and an earnest cry to the Holy Spirit for assistance, go much better on their own proper legs than upon the cripple's wearisome aids.

Hymns we have selected; but our fear is that comparatively few English families will use them; on the northern side of the Tweed the singing of the psalm is far more general. Would to God that the daily turmoil were less vehement—that we had more time and heart for praising the name of the Lord! Praise makes worship complete, and without it the pillar of devotion lacks its capital.

If there be not time to read both our morning portion and the usual chapter, we earnestly entreat that our book may be dispensed with, for it were a sore affliction to us to know that any family read the Word of God less on our account. We have had it in our heart to lead our friends to search their Bibles more than ever, and therefore we have culled

passages out of corners and nooks of Scripture, that curiosity might lead to a search for their context; we shall be disappointed indeed, if, after all, we frustrate our own design by diverting one moment of time to the perusal of our remarks which ought to have been given to searching the Word of God itself.

The hope has also been cherished that village and cottage preachers may sometimes glean a text and suggestions for a sermon from our daily page. Certainly they are very free to do so if they can; the thoughts are not ours, but are common property. Tossed about by cares, and worried by business, men's minds are not always in a condition on Saturday evenings to rise from earth and start upon a line of meditation; but once let their thoughts get wing, they can fly well enough, and the very events of the week help their flight; perhaps we may lift some heart upwards, and if so, God be praised. Possibly a hint here given may serve as a match to set fire to a preacher's soul, and that heart on a blaze may warm and gladden hundreds. Amen, and the Lord our God say so too.

Hoping for a favorable reception for our present attempt, we have already commenced a volume of the same size and character for *evening reading*, which will, by Divine permission, follow so soon as we can prepare it. Meanwhile, with many prayers for Heaven's blessing upon this our labor of love, and with earnest requests for the prayers of the faithful, this work is humbly dedicated to the honor of the Triune Jehovah, and respectfully presented to the Christian Church.

CLAPHAM, December, 1865.

JANUARY 1

“They did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.”

— Joshua v. 12.

Israel's weary wanderings were all over, and the promised rest was attained. No more moving tents, fiery serpents, fierce Amalekites, and howling wildernesses, they came to the land which flowed with milk and honey, and they ate the old corn of the land. Perhaps this year, beloved Christian reader, this may be thy case or mine. Joyful is the prospect, and if faith be in active exercise, it will yield unalloyed delight. To be with Jesus in the rest, which remaineth for the people of God, is a cheering hope indeed, and to expect this glory so soon is a double bliss. Unbelief shudders at the Jordan which still rolls between us and the goodly land, but let us rest assured that we have already experienced more ills than death at its worst can cause us. Let us banish every fearful thought, and rejoice with exceeding great joy, in the prospect that this year we shall begin to be “forever with the Lord.”

A part of the host will this year tarry on earth, to do service for their Lord. If this should fall to our lot, there is no reason why the New Year's text should not still be true. “We who have believed do enter into rest.” The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance. He gives us “glory begun below.” In heaven they are secure, and so are we preserved in Christ Jesus; there they triumph over their enemies, and we have victories too. Celestial spirits enjoy communion with their Lord, and this is not denied to us: they rest in His love, and we have perfect peace in Him; they hymn His praise, and it is our privilege to bless Him too. We will this year gather celestial fruits on earthly ground, where faith and hope have made the desert like the garden of the Lord. Man did eat angels' food of old, and why not now? O for grace to feed on Jesus, and so to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan this year.

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 2

“Continue in prayer.” — Colossians iv. 2.

It is interesting to remark how large a portion of Sacred Writ is occupied with the subject of prayer, either in furnishing examples, enforcing precepts, or pronouncing promises. We scarcely open the Bible before we read, “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord;” and just as we are about to close the volume, the “Amen” of an earnest supplication meets our ear. Instances are plentiful. Here we find a wrestling Jacob—there a Daniel who prayed three times a day—and a David who with all his heart called upon his God. On the mountain we see Elias; in the dungeon Paul and Silas. We have multitudes of commands, and myriads of promises. What does this teach us, but the sacred importance and necessity of prayer? We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of it. So deep are our necessities, that until we are in heaven we must not cease to pray. Dost thou want nothing? Then, I fear thou dost not know thy poverty. Hast thou no mercy to ask of God? Then, may the Lord’s mercy show thee thy misery! A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honor of a Christian. If thou be a child of God, thou wilt seek thy Father’s face, and live in thy Father’s love. Pray that this year thou mayest be holy, humble, zealous, and patient; have closer communion with Christ, and enter oftener into the banqueting-house of His love. Pray that thou mayest be an example and a blessing unto others, and that thou mayest live more to the glory of thy Master. The motto for this year must be, “Continue in prayer.”

JANUARY 3

“I will ... give thee for a covenant of the people.” — Isaiah xlix. 8.

Jesus Christ is Himself the sum and substance of the covenant, and as one of its gifts He is the property of every believer. Believer, canst thou estimate what thou hast gotten in Christ? “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Consider that word “God” and its infinity, and then meditate upon “perfect man” and all his beauty; for all that Christ, as God and man, ever had, or can have, is thine—out of pure free favor, passed over to thee to be thine entailed property forever. Our blessed Jesus, as God, is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Will it not console you to know that all these great and glorious attributes are altogether yours? Has He power? That power is yours to support and strengthen you, to overcome your enemies, and to preserve you even to the end. Has He love? Well, there is not a drop of love in His heart which is not yours. You may dive into the immense ocean of His love, and you may say of it all, “It is mine.” Hath He justice? It may seem a stern attribute, but even that is yours; for He will, by His justice, see to it, that all which is promised to you in the covenant of grace, shall be most certainly secured to you. And all that He has as *perfect man* is yours. As a perfect man the Father’s delight was upon Him. He stood accepted by the Most High. O believer, God’s acceptance of Christ is thine acceptance; for knowest thou not that the love which the Father set on a perfect Christ, He sets on thee *now*? For all that Christ did is thine. That perfect righteousness which Jesus wrought out, when through His stainless life He kept the law and made it honorable, is thine, and is imputed to thee. Christ is in the covenant.

“My God, I am thine—what a comfort divine!
What a blessing to know that the Saviour is mine!
In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of his name.”

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 4

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” — 2 Peter iii. 18.

Grow in grace—not in one grace only, but in *all* grace. Grow in that root-grace, *faith*. Believe the promises more firmly than you have done. Let faith increase in fulness, constancy, simplicity. Grow also in *love*. Ask that your love may become extended, more intense, more practical, influencing every thought, word, and deed. Grow likewise in *humility*. Seek to lie very low, and know more of your own nothingness. As you grow *downward* in humility, seek also to grow *upward*—having nearer approaches to God in prayer and more intimate fellowship with Jesus. May God the Holy Spirit enable you to “*grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.*” He who grows not in the knowledge of Jesus, refuses to be blessed. To know Him is “life eternal,” and to advance in the knowledge of Him is to increase in happiness. He who does not long to know more of Christ, knows nothing of Him yet. Whoever hath sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ doth satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction, that the appetite is not cloyed, but whetted. If you know the love of Jesus—as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so will you pant after deeper draughts of His love. If you do not desire to know Him better, then you love Him not, for love always cries, “Nearer, nearer.” Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven. Rest not then content without an increasing acquaintance with Jesus. Seek to know more of Him in His divine nature, in His human relationship, in His finished work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His present glorious intercession, and in His future royal advent. Abide hard by the Cross, and search the mystery of His wounds. An increase of love to Jesus, and a more perfect apprehension of His love to us, is one of the best tests of growth in grace.

JANUARY 5

“And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.” — Genesis i. 4.

Light might well be good, since it sprang from that fiat of goodness, “Let there be light.” We who enjoy it, should be more grateful for it than we are and see more of God in it and by it. Light *physical* is said by Solomon to be sweet, but *gospel* light is infinitely more precious, for it reveals eternal things, and ministers to our immortal natures. When the Holy Spirit gives us *spiritual* light, and opens our eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we behold sin in its true colors, and ourselves in our real position; we see the Most Holy God as He reveals Himself, the plan of mercy as He propounds it, and the world to come as the Word describes it. Spiritual light has many beams and prismatic colors, but whether they be knowledge, joy, holiness, or life, all are divinely good. If the light received be thus good, what must the *essential* light be, and how glorious must be the place where He reveals Himself! O Lord, since light is so good, give us more of it, and more of Thyself, the true light.

No sooner is there a good thing in the world, than *a division is necessary*. Light and darkness have no communion; God has divided them, let us not confound them. Sons of light must not have fellowship with deeds, doctrines, or deceits of darkness. The children of the day must be sober, honest, and bold in their Lord’s work, leaving the works of darkness to those who shall dwell in it forever. Our churches should by discipline divide the light from the darkness, and we should by our distinct separation from the world do the same. In judgment, in action, in hearing, in teaching, in association, we must discern between the precious and the vile, and maintain the great distinction which the Lord made upon the world’s first day. O Lord Jesus, be Thou our light throughout the whole of this day, for Thy light is the light of men.

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 6

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

— 1 Peter v. 7.

It is a happy way of soothing sorrow when we can feel—“HE careth for *me*.” Christian! do not dishonor your religion by always wearing a brow of care; come, cast your burden upon your Lord. You are staggering beneath a weight which your Father would not feel. What seems to you a crushing burden, would be to Him but as the small dust of the balance. Nothing is so sweet as to

“Lie passive in God’s hands,
And know no will but His.”

O child of suffering, be thou patient; God has not passed thee over in His providence. He who is the feeder of sparrows, will also furnish *you* with what you need. Sit not down in despair; hope on, hope ever. Take up the arms of faith against a sea of trouble, and your opposition shall yet end your distresses. *There is One* who careth for you. His eye is fixed on you, His heart beats with pity for your woe, and His hand omnipotent shall yet bring you the needed help. The darkest cloud shall scatter itself in showers of mercy. The blackest gloom shall give place to the morning. He, if thou art one of His family, will bind up thy wounds, and heal thy broken heart. Doubt not His grace because of thy tribulation, but believe that He loveth thee as much in seasons of trouble as in times of happiness. What a serene and quiet life might you lead if you would leave providing to the God of Providence! With a little oil in the cruse, and a handful of meal in the barrel, Elijah outlived the famine, and you will do the same. If God cares for you, why need you care too? Can you trust Him for your soul, and not for your body? He has never refused to bear your burdens, He has never fainted under their weight. Come, then, soul! have done with fretful care, and leave all thy concerns in the hand of a gracious God.

JANUARY 7

“*For me to live is Christ.*” — Philippians i. 21.

The believer did not always live to Christ; he began to do so when God the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin, and when by grace he was brought to see the dying Saviour making a propitiation for his guilt. From the moment of the new and celestial birth the man begins to live to Christ. Jesus is to believers the one pearl of great price, for whom we are willing to part with all that we have. He has so completely won our love, that it beats alone for Him; to His glory we would live, and in defence of His gospel we would die; He is the pattern of our life, and the model after which we would sculpture our character. Paul’s words mean more than most men think; they imply that the *aim and end of his life was Christ*—nay, his life itself was Jesus. In the words of an ancient saint, he did eat, and drink, and sleep eternal life. Jesus was his very breath, the soul of his soul, the heart of his heart, the life of his life. Can you say, as a professing Christian, that you live up to this idea? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? Your business—are you doing it *for Christ*? Is it not done for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage? Do you ask, “Is that a mean reason?” For the *Christian* it is. He professes to live for Christ; how can he live for another object without committing a spiritual adultery? Many there are who carry out this principle in some measure; but who is there that dare say that he hath lived wholly for Christ as the apostle did? Yet, this alone is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, its end, all gathered up in one word—*Christ Jesus*. Lord, accept me; I here present myself, praying to live only in Thee and to Thee. Let me be as the bullock which stands between the plough and the altar, to work or to be sacrificed; and let my motto be, “Ready for either.”

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 8

“*The iniquity of the holy things.*” — Exodus xxviii. 38.

What a veil is lifted up by these words, and what a disclosure is made! It will be humbling and profitable for us to pause awhile and see this sad sight. The iniquities of our public worship, its hypocrisy, formality, lukewarmness, irreverence, wandering of heart and forgetfulness of God, what a full measure have we there! Our work for the Lord, its emulation, selfishness, carelessness, slackness, unbelief, what a mass of defilement is there! Our private devotions, their laxity, coldness, neglect, sleepiness, and vanity, what a mountain of dead earth is there! If we looked more carefully we should find this iniquity to be far greater than appears at first sight. Dr. Payson, writing to his brother, says, “My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the melioration of both, proceed either from pride, or vanity, or indolence. I look at the weeds which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? It may be that I may walk out and say to myself, ‘In what fine order is my garden kept!’ This is *pride*. Or it may be that my neighbors may look over the wall and say, ‘How finely your garden flourishes!’ This is *vanity*. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is *indolence*.” So that even our desires after holiness may be polluted by ill motives. Under the greenest sods worms hide themselves; we need not look long to discover them. How cheering is the thought, that, when the High Priest bore the iniquity of the holy things, he wore upon his brow the words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD; and even so while Jesus bears our sin, He presents before His Father’s face not our unholiness, but His own holiness. O for grace to view our great High Priest by the eye of faith!

JANUARY 9

“I ... will be their God.” — Jeremiah xxxi. 33.

Christian! here is all thou canst require. To make thee happy thou wantest something that shall *satisfy* thee; and is not this enough? If thou canst pour this promise into thy cup, wilt thou not say, with David, “My cup runneth over; I have more than heart can wish”? When this is fulfilled, “*I am thy God,*” art thou not possessor of all things? Desire is insatiable as death, but He who filleth all in all can fill it. The capacity of our wishes who can measure? but the immeasurable wealth of God can more than overflow it. I ask thee if thou art not complete when God is thine? Dost thou want anything but God? Is not His all-sufficiency enough to satisfy thee if all else should fail? But thou wantest more than quiet satisfaction; thou desirest *rapturous delight*. Come, soul, here is music fit for Heaven in this thy portion, for God is the Maker of Heaven. Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings, can yield such melody as this sweet promise, “I will be their God.” Here is a deep sea of bliss, a shoreless ocean of delight; come, bathe thy spirit in it; swim an age, and thou shalt find no shore; dive throughout eternity, and thou shalt find no bottom. “*I will be their God.*” If this do not make thine eyes sparkle, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state. But thou wantest more than present delights—thou cravest something concerning which thou mayest exercise *hope*; and what more canst thou hope for than the fulfilment of this great promise, “I will be their God”? This is the masterpiece of all the promises; its enjoyment makes a heaven below, and will make a heaven above. Dwell in the light of thy Lord, and let thy soul be always ravished with His love. Get out the marrow and fatness which this portion yields thee. Live up to thy privileges, and rejoice with unspeakable joy.

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 10

“There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”

— 2 Timothy iv. 8.

Doubting one! thou hast often said, “I fear I shall never enter heaven.” Fear not! all the people of God shall enter there. I love the quaint saying of a dying man, who exclaimed, “I have no fear of going home; I have sent all before; God’s finger is on the latch of my door, and I am ready for Him to enter.” “But,” said one, “are you not afraid lest you should miss your inheritance?” “Nay,” said he, “nay; there is one crown in heaven which the angel Gabriel could not wear; it will fit no head but mine. There is one throne in heaven which Paul the apostle could not fill; it was made for me, and I shall have it.” O Christian, what a joyous thought! thy portion is secure; “there remaineth a rest.” “But cannot I forfeit it?” No; it is entailed. If I be a child of God I shall not lose it. It is mine as securely as if I were there. Come with me, believer, and let us sit upon the top of Nebo, and view the goodly land, even Canaan. Seest thou that little river of death glistening in the sunlight, and across it dost thou see the pinnacles of the eternal city? Dost thou mark the pleasant country and all its joyous inhabitants? Know then that if thou couldst fly across thou wouldst see written upon one of its many mansions, “This remaineth for such a one; preserved for him only. He shall be caught up to dwell forever with God.” Poor doubting one, see the fair inheritance; it is *thine*. If thou believest in the Lord Jesus, if thou hast repented of sin, if thou hast been renewed in heart, thou art one of the Lord’s people, and there is a place reserved for thee, a crown laid up for thee, a harp specially provided for thee. No one else shall have thy portion; it is reserved in heaven for thee, and thou shalt have it ere long, for there shall be no vacant thrones in glory when all the chosen are gathered in.

JANUARY 11

“These have no root.” — Luke viii. 13.

My soul, examine thyself this morning by the light of this text. Thou hast received the word with joy; thy feelings have been stirred, and a lively impression has been made; but, remember, that to receive the word in the ear is one thing, and to receive Jesus into thy very soul is quite another; superficial feeling is often joined to inward hardness of heart, and a lively impression of the word is not always a lasting one. In the parable, the seed in one case fell upon ground having a rocky bottom, covered over with a thin layer of earth; when the seed began to take root, its downward growth was hindered by the hard stone, and therefore it spent its strength in pushing its green shoot aloft as high as it could, but having no inward moisture derived from root nourishment, it withered away. Is this my case? Have I been making a fair show in the flesh without having a corresponding inner life? Good growth takes place upwards and downwards at the same time. Am I rooted in sincere fidelity and love to Jesus? If my heart remains unsoftened and unfertilized by grace, the good seed may germinate for a season, but it must ultimately wither, for it cannot flourish on a rocky, unbroken, unsanctified heart. Let me dread a godliness as rapid in growth and as wanting in endurance as Jonah’s gourd; let me count the cost of being a follower of Jesus; above all let me feel the energy of His Holy Spirit, and then I shall possess an abiding and enduring seed in my soul. If my mind remains as obdurate as it was by nature, the sun of trial will scorch, and my hard heart will help to cast the heat the more terribly upon the ill-covered seed, and my religion will soon die, and my despair will be terrible; therefore, O heavenly Sower, plough me first, and then cast the truth into me, and let me yield Thee a bounteous harvest.

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 12

"Ye are Christ's." — 1 Corinthians iii. 23.

Ye are Christ's. You are His by donation, for the Father gave you to the Son; His by His bloody purchase, for He counted down the price for your redemption; His by dedication, for you have consecrated yourself to Him; His by relation, for you are named by His name, and made one of His brethren and joint-heirs. Labor practically to show the world that you are the servant, the friend, the bride of Jesus. When tempted to sin, reply, "I cannot do this great wickedness, for I am Christ's." Immortal principles forbid the friend of Christ to sin. When wealth is before you to be won by sin, say that you are Christ's, and touch it not. Are you exposed to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you are Christ's. Are you placed where others are sitting down idly, doing nothing? Rise to the work with all your powers; and when the sweat stands upon your brow, and you are tempted to loiter, cry, "No, I cannot stop, for I am Christ's. If I were not purchased by blood, I might be like Issachar, couching between two burdens; but I am Christ's, and cannot loiter." When the siren song of pleasure would tempt you from the path of right, reply, "Thy music cannot charm me; I am Christ's." When the cause of God invites thee, give thyself to it; when the poor require thee, give thy goods and thyself away, for thou art Christ's. Never belie thy profession. Be thou ever one of those whose manners are Christian, whose speech is like the Nazarene, whose conduct and conversation are so redolent of heaven, that all who see you may know that you are the Saviour's, recognizing in you His features of love and His countenance of holiness. "I am a Roman!" was of old a reason for integrity; far more, then, let it be your argument for holiness. "I am Christ's."

JANUARY 13

“Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.”

— 1 Kings xxii. 48.

Solomon's ships had returned in safety, but Jehoshaphat's vessels never reached the land of gold. Providence prospers one, and frustrates the desires of another, in the same business and at the same spot, yet the Great Ruler is as good and wise at one time as another. May we have grace to-day, in the remembrance of this text, to bless the Lord for ships broken at Ezion-geber, as well as for vessels freighted with temporal blessings; let us not envy the more successful, nor murmur at our losses as though we were singularly and specially tried. Like Jehoshaphat, we may be precious in the Lord's sight, although our schemes end in disappointment. The secret cause of Jehoshaphat's loss is well worthy of notice, for it is the root of very much of the suffering of the Lord's people; it was his alliance with a sinful family, his fellowship with sinners. In 2 Chronicles xx. 37, we are told that the Lord sent a prophet to declare, "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works." This was a fatherly chastisement, which appears to have been blessed to him; for in the verse which succeeds our morning's text we find him refusing to allow his servants to sail in the same vessels with those of the wicked king. Would to God that Jehoshaphat's experience might be a warning to the rest of the Lord's people, to avoid being unequally yoked together with unbelievers! A life of misery is usually the lot of those who are united in marriage, or in any other way of their own choosing, with the men of the world. O for such love to Jesus that, like Him, we may be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; for if it be not so with us, we may expect to hear it often said, "The Lord hath broken thy works."

~ C. H. SPURGEON ~

JANUARY 14

“Mighty to save.” — Isaiah lxiii. 1.

By the words “to save” we understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire onward to complete sanctification. The words are *multum in parvo*; indeed, here is all mercy in one word. Christ is not only “mighty to save” those who repent, but He is able to make men repent. He will carry those to heaven who believe; but He is, moreover, mighty to give men new hearts, and to work faith in them. He is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, and to constrain the despiser of His name to bend the knee before Him. Nay, this is not all the meaning, for the divine power is equally seen in the after-work. The life of a believer is a series of miracles wrought by “the Mighty God.” The bush burns, but is not consumed. He is mighty to keep His people holy after He has made them so, and to preserve them in His fear and love until He consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ’s might doth not lie in making a believer and then leaving him to shift for himself, but He who begins the good work carries it on; He who imparts the first germ of life in the dead soul, prolongs the divine existence, and strengthens it until it bursts asunder every bond of sin, and the soul leaps from earth, perfected in glory. Believer, here is encouragement. Art thou praying for some beloved one? O give not up thy prayers, for Christ is “mighty to save.” You are powerless to reclaim the rebel, but your Lord is Almighty. Lay hold on that mighty arm, and rouse it to put forth its strength. Does your own case trouble you? Fear not, for His strength is sufficient for you. Whether to begin with others, or to carry on the work in you, Jesus is “mighty to save;” the best proof of which lies in the fact that He has saved *you*. What a thousand mercies that you have not found Him mighty to destroy!

JANUARY 15

“Do as Thou hast said.” — 2 Samuel vii. 25.

God's promises were never meant to be thrown aside as waste paper; He intended that they should be used. God's gold is not miser's money, but is minted to be traded with. Nothing pleases our Lord better than to see His promises put in circulation; He loves to see His children bring them up to Him, and say, "Lord, do as Thou hast said." We glorify God when we plead His promises. Do you think that God will be any the poorer for giving you the riches He has promised? Do you dream that He will be any the less holy for giving holiness to you? Do you imagine He will be any the less pure for washing you from your sins? He has said, "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Faith lays hold upon the promise of pardon, and it does not delay, saying, "This is a precious promise; I wonder if it be true?" but it goes straight to the throne with it, and pleads, "Lord, here is the promise. 'Do as Thou hast said.'" Our Lord replies, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." "When a Christian grasps a promise, if he do not take it to God, he dishonors him; but when he hastens to the throne of grace, and cries, "Lord, I have nothing to recommend me but this, 'Thou hast said it,'" then his desire shall be granted. Our heavenly Banker delights to cash His own notes. Never let the promise rust. Draw the word of promise out of its scabbard, and use it with holy violence. Think not that God will be troubled by your importunately reminding Him of His promises. He loves to hear the loud outcries of needy souls. It is His delight to bestow favors. He is more ready to hear than you are to ask. The sun is not weary of shining, nor the fountain of flowing. It is God's nature to keep His promises; therefore go at once to the throne with "Do as Thou hast said."