



Ears From Harvested Sheaves

J.C. Philpot

EARS
FROM
HARVESTED SHEAVES
OR
DAILY PORTIONS

SELECTED FROM THE WORKS OF

J. C. PHILPOT
BY HIS DAUGHTERS

*The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails
fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given
from one shepherd.—Ecclesiastes 12. 11.*

*A word spoken in due season, how good is it! —
Proverbs 15. 23.*

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P R E F A C E

IT is 120 years since J.C.Philpot's daughters, following the death of their father, made this selection from his sermons, and arranged them as daily readings. How apt was the title they chose *Ears from Harvested Sheaves*; for we believe that many a gleaner in the gospel field has found day by day in these pages a few "handfuls of purpose" (Ruth 2. 16)!

Over the years there have been several reprints and there is still a steady demand for the book, both in England and in other countries. So, the last edition being completely sold out, we are pleased once more to present *Ears from Harvested Sheaves* to the Christian reader.

Times have changed; but how J.C.Philpot would have been gratified to know that, even in the 21st century his writings are still loved by (to use his oft-repeated words) "the living family of God"!

B.A.Ramsbottom
December 2004

“The soul’s best, truest safeguard is love. Men fall into error because they never really loved the truth which they profess. Once love the truth, and error never more can have a place in your heart.”

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EARS FROM HARVESTED SHEAVES;

or

DAILY PORTIONS

January 1

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” — Psalm 90. 12.

Casting our eyes back upon the year now past and gone, are there no mercies which claim a note of thankful praise? It is sweet to see the Lord's kind hand in providence, but sweeter far to view his outstretched hand in grace. Are we then so unwatchful or so unmindful of the Lord's gracious hand in his various dealings with our soul as to view the whole past twelve months as a dead blank in which we have never seen his face, nor heard his voice, nor felt his power? “Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?” (Jer. 2. 31,) the Lord tenderly asks. Has he been such to us also for twelve long and weary months? What! No help by the way, no tokens for good, no liftings-up of the light of his countenance, no visitations of his presence and power, no breakings-in of his goodness for all that long and dreary time—for dreary it must indeed have been for a living soul to have been left and abandoned of the Lord so long! If not blessed with any peculiar manifestations of Christ, with any signal revelations of his Person and work, blood and love, grace and glory, for such special seasons are not of frequent occurrence, have we not still found him the Way, the Truth, and the Life? If we have indeed a personal and spiritual union with the Son of God, as our living Head, there will be communications out of his fulness, a supplying of all our need, a drawing forth of faith, hope, and love, a support under trials, a deliverance from temptations, a deepening of his fear in the heart, and that continued work of grace whereby we are enabled to live a life of faith on the Son of God.

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January 2

“Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps; set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest.” — Jeremiah 31. 21.

To look at the past is often a blessed encouragement for the future. If we are travellers in the way Zionward, we shall have our various waymarks. A conspicuous call, or a signal deliverance, or a gracious manifestation of Christ; a promise applied here, or a marked answer to prayer there; a special blessing under the preached word; a soft and unexpected assurance of an interest in the blood of the Lamb; a breaking in of divine light when walking in great darkness; a sweet sip of consolation in a season of sorrow and trouble; a calming down of the winds and waves without and within by, “It is I, be not afraid” (Matt. 14. 27)—such and similar waymarks it is most blessed to be able to set up as evidences that we are in the road. And if many who really fear God cannot set up these conspicuous waymarks, yet they are not without their testimonies equally sure, if not equally satisfying. The fear of God in a tender conscience, the spirit of grace and of supplications in their breast, their cleaving to the people of God in warm affection, their love for the truth in its purity and power, their earnest desires, their budding hopes, their anxious fears, their honesty and simplicity making them jealous over themselves lest they be deceived or deluded, their separation from the world, their humility, meekness, quietness, and general consistency often putting to shame louder profession and higher pretensions—these and similar evidences mark many as children of God who cannot read their title clear to such a privilege and such a blessing. But whether the waymarks be high or low, shining in the sun or obscure in the dawn, the virgin of Israel is still bidden to “set them up,” and to “set also her heart toward the highway, even the way by which she came.”

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January 3

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” — John 12. 32.

Wherever Jesus is graciously and experimentally manifested to the soul, and made known by any sweet revelation of his glorious Person, atoning blood, and finished work, a secret yet sacred power is put forth, whereby we are drawn unto him, and every grace of the Spirit flows toward him as towards its attractive centre. Thus Jeremiah speaks of the saints of God as coming and singing in the height of Zion, and flowing together to the goodness of the Lord. And thus Isaiah speaks to the church of God, “Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear [or as the word rather means, shall ‘palpitate’ with love and joy], and be enlarged” (Isa. 60. 5). This view of Christ by faith is what the apostle speaks of to the Galatians, as Jesus evidently set forth before their eyes. As thus set before our eyes, he becomes the object of our faith to look at, (“Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth” Isa. 45. 22); “the altogether lovely,” (S. of S. 5. 16) to whom love flows; and the Intercessor within the veil in whom hope effectually anchors. As, then, the blessed Lord is revealed to the soul by the power of God, his glorious Person held up before the eyes of the spiritual understanding, his blood and righteousness discovered to the conscience, and his suitability to all our wants and woes experimentally manifested, the blessed Spirit raises up a living faith whereby he is looked unto and laid hold of, and thus he becomes precious to all that believe in his name.

January 4

“Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?” — Psalm 88. 10, 11.

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This is not the language of a soul dead in trespasses and sins, but it is the breathing of a living soul struggling and grappling with death. What a difference there is, where there is life working in and under death, and where death reigns absolutely! between the quickened soul and that in which there is nothing but death, death without one spark of spiritual life, death without one ray of heavenly teaching. There is no groan, no sigh, no lamentation, no piteous inquiry, no pouring out of the heart before God, where the soul is utterly dead, any more than there is life and breath in a corpse in the tomb. But wherever life is implanted in the soul from the Fountain of life, that life groans under death. It sighs from out of the grave; it gasps for breath, under the corpse which overlies it; and seeks to heave itself up from that dead weight, from that superincumbent mass of carnality which clasps it in its rigid and chilling embrace; it endeavours to uplift and extricate itself from that body of sin and death which spreads its cold and torpid mass all round it so that it is unable to arise. Do you know the workings of life in this way? the heavings, the gaspings, the uprisings of the life of God in your soul, pressed, overlain, overwhelmed, and all but suffocated by that carnal, dead, barren, earthly, devilish nature, which lies as a weight upon you? Depend upon it if you have never known what it is to gasp and pant and groan and sigh under the weight of a body of sin and death, you know nothing of the vital operations of the Holy Ghost in your conscience.

January 5

“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.” — Proverbs 31. 6.

The wise mother of king Lemuel gave her son gracious directions when she spake these words. It is when we begin to feel the misery into which we have been cast by sin, and thus become ready to perish,

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and of heavy hearts, that the pure wine of gospel grace is suitable to our lost condition. As the holiness and justice of God are discovered to the conscience, and we are made to see and feel the depths of the Adam fall, we look out of ourselves for a salvation which we could not find in our fallen nature or in our deeply corrupt and unbelieving heart. When, then, we obtain by living faith a view of the Son of God as a Mediator between God and men, when we see by the eye of faith the blood of the cross, and the full and complete atonement which he, as the Lamb of God, made for sin, then we heartily embrace him “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor.1. 30). We see and feel that there is salvation in him and in no other; and as this salvation is seen to be worthy of God and suitable to us, as it answers all the demands of God’s holy law, and glorifies it by rendering it an obedience as far excelling ours as heaven excels earth, and God surpasses man, we embrace it as our justifying righteousness and covering robe, from the eyes of him who, out of Christ, is a consuming fire.

January 6

“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”— Hebrews 6. 12.

Patience is necessary in order to prove the genuineness and reality of faith. The Lord generally—I may say invariably—does not accomplish his purposes at once. He usually—I might say almost invariably—works by gradations. Is not this the case in creation? Do we see the oak starting up in all its gigantic proportions in one day? Is not a tiny acorn committed to the ground; and is not the giant oak, whose huge limbs we admire, the growth of a century? Men and women are years growing up to their full stature. So spiritually. “He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28. 16). Faith in the soul is of slow growth for the most part; for

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the Lord takes care that every step in the path shall be tried by the perplexities and difficulties that surround it. And he has appointed this that it may be a means of distinguishing the faith of God's elect from the faith of those who have a name to live while dead. They apostatize and turn away from the faith. Like the stony-ground hearers, they believe for a time, but in temptation fall away. The various hindrances of nature, sense and reason, sin, the devil, and the world get the better of them; thus they turn back, often give up all profession of religion, and die in their sins. But the Lord's people cannot so die. Their faith is of a lasting nature, because what God doth he doth for ever. Thus their faith stands every storm and endures for ever.

January 7

“To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” — Romans 8. 6.

Just in proportion as our heart and affections are engaged on heavenly objects, shall we feel a sweet savour of heaven resting upon our spirit; and as we can only give back what we receive, every going forth of divine life from the soul below is but the fruit and effect of the incoming of that life from above. Christ is our life above; and as he by his Spirit and grace maintains the life of faith in the soul, it manifests itself in gracious actings upon himself. Without this spirituality of mind, religion is but a mere name, an empty mask, a delusion, and a snare. God does not take into heaven, into the fulness of his own eternal bliss, those whom he does not love, and who do not love him. It is a prepared people for prepared mansions. And this preparedness for heaven, as an inward grace, much consists in that sweet spirituality of mind whereby heavenly things become our only happiness, and an inward delight is felt in them which enlarges the heart, ennobles the mind, softens the spirit, and lifts the whole soul, as it were, up into a holy atmosphere in

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which it bathes as its choice element. This is “life”, not the cold, dead profession of those poor carnal creatures who have only a natural faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the truths of his gospel; but that blessed life which shall never die, but live in the eternal presence of God when earth and all it holds shall be wrapped in the devouring flames. And it is “peace”—the Redeemer’s dying legacy—whereby, as he himself fulfils it, he calms the troubled waves of the soul, stills every rebellious movement, and enthrones himself in the heart as The Prince of Peace.

January 8

“I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.” — Psalm 119. 146.

If you know anything for yourself inwardly and experimentally of the evils of your heart, the power of sin, the strength of temptation, the subtlety of your unwearied foe, and that daily conflict betwixt nature and grace, the flesh and the spirit, which is the peculiar mark of the living family of heaven, you will find and feel your need of salvation as a daily reality. Think not that the only salvation to be felt and known is salvation past—salvation accomplished by the bloodshedding and death of the Son of God. There is salvation present—an inward, experimental, and continual salvation communicated out of the fulness of Christ as a risen Mediator. Don’t you want to be daily and almost hourly saved? But from what? Why, from everything in you that fights against the will and Word of God. Sin is not dead in you. If you are reconciled and brought near to God; if you have an interest in the precious blood of Christ; if your name is written in the Lamb’s book of life, and heaven be your eternal home, that does not deliver you from the indwelling of sin, nor from the power of sin either, except as grace gives you present deliverance from it. Sin still works in your carnal mind, and will work in it till your dying hour.

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What then you want to be saved from is the guilt, filth, power, love, and practice of indwelling sin.

January 9

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

— John 8. 31, 32.

The truth is not known at first in all its sweetness, liberty, and power. We have “to continue in the Word”; it may be at times in very great darkness, distress, exercise, temptation, and trouble; and yet, such has been the power of the Word upon the heart, it cannot, will not let us go. We see and feel the misery of departing from the truth, the wretchedness of getting back into the world, and being entangled in the spirit of it; and what must be the consequence if we leave those things we profess to know and believe, and embrace error or fall into the arms of sin! There is, therefore, a continuance in the Word—it may be often, as I have said, in much darkness, much exercise, many trials, many temptations: but still we are brought to this point, never to give up the Word which has been made life and spirit to the soul. And though the Lord sometimes may very much hide his face, and we seem to be very poor, dull scholars, and to be much condemned for our unfruitfulness, to know so little of the spirit of the Master, and walk so little in his blessed ways; yet there is a looking unto him, a longing after him, a cleaving to him; and this manifests genuine discipleship. Now, as we still cling, cleave, hang, trust, and hope, we begin to know the truth; it is opened up to the mind, it is made exactly suitable to our state and case; and the wonderful way in which it addresses and adapts itself to our various and pressing wants and necessities becomes more and more manifest.

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January 10

“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” — 1 John 2.1.

This advocacy is here called, as elsewhere, “pleading the cause” of the believer, and is connected with deliverance, for such an advocate can never fail: “O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life” (Lam. 3. 58). The figure is taken from a lawyer pleading the cause of a criminal, and using his best endeavours to bring him off uninjured. But such advocacy may fail for two reasons: 1. the incompetency of the advocate; or 2. the badness of the cause. But there are no such hindrances to the success of the advocacy of Christ. How he can plead his own sufferings, blood, and obedience. His very Person as the Son of God, and yet son of man, gives unspeakable value and validity to every plea of the great Intercessor. What validity, then, has his intercession in the court of heaven! It is true that he cannot deny the truth of the charge brought by the accuser of the brethren against his client; but he can present his own meritorious sufferings, and the sorrows he endured for the culprit. On this ground he can stand up as his surety and representative, and plead with the Father that he has suffered in his place and stead. On the firm, solid ground, then, of justice and equity, he can plead on his behalf, “Let him go, for I endured the penalty due to him”.

January 11

“Watch and pray.” — Mark 13. 33.

There is no keeping up faith except by *prayer and watchfulness*. As prayer declines in the bosom, so does the strength of faith. You may go on neglecting prayer and supplication until every grain of faith seems lost out of your bosom, and may come at last to think you never knew anything of a work of God upon your heart, and have been deceived in believing there was any grace

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there. By watchfulness also is the love of God maintained. Unless you watch against your besetting sins, against the snares spread for your feet, against the temptations that daily and hourly beset your path, against being overcome by the strength or subtlety of your unwearied foe, you are sure to fall; and if you fall you will bring guilt and bondage, darkness and distress into your mind, and cut off for a time all friendly intercourse with God. Therefore you must pray and watch; for without watchfulness, prayer is of little efficacy. And if we neglect the Scriptures, or read them carelessly, unbelievingly, they will do us little good. They must be read with believing eyes and heart, received as the revelation of God, and must be mixed with faith, or assuredly they will not profit us. The life of God is a very deep, secret, and sacred thing in the soul. God, it is true, will maintain it; he will not leave his work unaccomplished; but unless we read and pray, watch and meditate, wage war against besetting sins, and seek the Lord's face continually, we shall find the strength and power of faith very sensibly decline; and if so, there is no comfortable walking with God.

January 12

"I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." —

John 10. 9.

There is a finding pasture in providence. A sweet and healthy pasture indeed this is to watch the Lord's providential dealings with us spread through a long series of years. It is seeing the Lord's providential hand which makes the commonest temporal mercies sweet. Every nibble of grass or lock of hay which we can believe to be specially provided for us by the hand of that good Shepherd becomes thereby doubly sweet. But O what pastures in grace has God provided for his hungry sheep! Look at the promises and declarations, the sacred truths and heavenly consolations scattered up and down the Scriptures of truth. But of all spiritual pasture thus provided for the flock, the

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chiefest is the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus. This is his own divine declaration: "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6. 55). And every communication of grace to the soul out of the fullness of Christ, every promise applied with a divine power to the heart, every truth which drops with heavenly savour, every season of encouragement; in a word, every part of God's word which the soul can eat and feed upon is spiritual pasture. Thus the prophet found it of old: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer. 15. 16).

January 13

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." — 1 Peter 4. 12.

The "fiery trial", then, is not a strange thing which happens only to a few of the Lord's family, but is more or less the appointed lot of all. Do we not hear the Lord saying to his Zion, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction"? (Isa. 48. 10) All then that are chosen must pass through the furnace of affliction, and all know experimentally the fiery trial, for by it they are made partakers of Christ's sufferings. But this is indispensable in order to be partakers of his glory. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8. 17). Thus they suffer with him, "that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4. 13). And this suffering with and for Christ in the furnace of affliction salts the soul, preserves it from corruption, communicates health, gives it savour and flavour, is a token of interest in the everlasting covenant, and is a seal of friendship and peace with God.

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January 14

“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” — 2 Corinthians 6. 17.

If we are entangled in the love of the world, or fast bound and fettered with worldly anxieties, and the spirit of the world is rife in our bosom, all our profession will be vapid, if not worthless. We may use the language of prayer, but the heart is not in earnest; we may still manage to hold our head high in a profession of the truth, but its power and blessedness are neither known nor felt. To enjoy any measure of communion with the Lord, whether on the cross or on the throne, we must go forth from a world which is at enmity against him. We must also go forth out of self, for to deny it, renounce it, and go forth out of it lies at the very foundation of vital godliness. There must be a “mortifying, through the Spirit, of the deeds of the body;” a being “always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4. 11); and unless there is a going forth out of self by this self-crucifixion, there is no walking in hand with Christ, no manifest union, no heavenly communion with him; for there can no more be a partnership between Christ, the soul, and self than there can be a partnership between Christ, the soul, and sin.

January 15

**“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—
2 Corinthians 4. 7.**

Be not surprised if you feel that in yourself you are but an earthen vessel; if you are made deeply and daily sensible unto what a frail body God has communicated light and life. Be not surprised if your

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clay house is often tottering; if sickness sometimes assails your mortal tabernacle; if in your flesh there dwelleth no good thing; if your soul often cleaves to the dust; and if you are unable to retain a sweet sense of God's goodness and love. Be not surprised nor startled at the corruptions of your depraved nature; at the depth of sin in your carnal mind; at the vile abominations which lurk and work in your deceitful and desperately wicked heart. Bear in mind that it is the will of God that this heavenly treasure which makes you rich for eternity should be lodged in an earthen vessel. We are to carry about a daily sense of our base original to hide pride from our eyes. We are to be despised by others; and by none so much as by our own selves. We have ever to feel our native weakness, and that without Christ we can do nothing; that we may be clothed with humility, and feel ourselves the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints. We thus learn to prize the heights, breadths, lengths, and depths of the love of Christ, who stooped so low to raise us up so high.

January 16

“Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” — Ephesians 2. 20, 21.

Christ is the Head of every member individually, as he is the Head of the whole body collectively. Growth of the body, from babyhood to manhood, is the growth of individual members in the body. If, then, I am a member of the mystical body of Christ Jesus, I shall grow. My growth may be so slow and gradual as to be scarcely perceptible; but it will be growth still. If I have union with Christ, I shall be supplied, at least in some measure, out of his fulness. He is my life, and he has promised, because he lives, I shall live also; and if I live by him, I shall live upon and unto him. Paul

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could say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2. 20); and also, "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5. 15). By a sound gospel ministry our souls are fed. Christ is set before us in all the glories of his divine Person, in his Deity and Sonship, and in all the graces of his suffering humanity. His covenant characters and gracious relationships, his blood and righteousness, his death and resurrection, his ascension and glorification at the right hand of the Father, his present mediation and intercession, his sympathy as a once suffering but now exalted high Priest, and his ability to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, are brought before us as the food of our faith; and as we taste that he is gracious, and feed upon him as the bread of life, there is a growth into him.

January 17

"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." — 1 John 4. 7, 8.

If ever you have loved Jesus with a pure affection; if ever you have felt him near, dear, and precious to your soul, that love can never be lost out of your heart. It may lie dormant; it does lie dormant. It may not be sweetly felt in exercise; but there it is. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Cor. 16. 22). You would be under this curse if the love of the Lord Jesus Christ were to die out of your heart. But this love is often sleeping. When the mother sometimes watches over the cradle and looks upon her sleeping babe with unutterable affection, the infant knows not that the mother is watching its slumbers; but when it awakes, it is able to feel and return its mother's caresses. It is so with the soul sometimes when

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love in the heart is like a babe slumbering in the cradle. But as the babe opens its eyes, and sees the mother smiling upon it, it returns the smiles, and stretches forth its arms to embrace the bending cheek; so when the eyes of the soul are opened to see the smiling face of Jesus stooping to imprint a kiss of love, or drop some sweet word into the heart, and there is a flowing forth toward him of love and affection—this is the power of love.

January 18

“For we are his workmanship.” — Ephesians 2. 10.

Consider what is here declared of those who are saved by grace through faith—that they are God’s “workmanship”—the fruit and product of his creative hand. All, then, that we are and all that we have that is spiritual, and as such acceptable to God, we owe to the special operation of his power. There is not a thought of our heart, word of our lips, or work of our hands, which is truly holy and heavenly, simple and sincere, glorifying to God or profitable to man, of which he is not by his Spirit and grace the divine and immediate Author. How beautifully is this expressed by the church of old, and what an echo do her accents find in every gracious heart: “But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand” (Isa. 64. 8). How suitable, how expressive is the figure of the clay and the potter. Look at the moist clay under the potter’s hand. How soft, how tender, how passive is the clay; how strong, how skilful are the hands which mould it into shape. As the wheel revolves, how every motion of the potter’s fingers shapes the yielding clay, and with what exquisite skill does every gentle pressure, every imperceptible movement impress upon it the exact form which it was in his mind to make it assume. How sovereign was the hand which first took the clay, and as divine sovereignty first

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took it, so divine sovereignty shapes it when taken into form.

January 19

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” — Romans 8. 5.

None but those who are partakers of a heavenly birth feel heavenly realities to be their choice element, holy things their sweetest meditation, and the solemn worship of God their supreme delight. Look at this mark as a touchstone of divine life; for to be spiritually minded a man must be spiritual, and to be spiritual he must have received the Spirit and been made a partaker of that “kingdom of God which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14. 17). Have you never found in reading the Scriptures a sweet peace distil over your soul, as the glorious promises came forth one after another as the stars in the evening sky, each one brighter and clearer, and you felt a blessed persuasion of your interest in them? When at the throne of grace, favoured with liberty of spirit and access to your heavenly Friend, have you never felt the peace of God to drop into your heart, and like oil upon the waves, to allay every rising of rebellion within? Have you never found, in conversing with the saints of God, a sweet flowing of heart to heart and soul to soul, and felt that such conversation left behind a blessed fragrance upon your spirit? Have you never in the house of prayer had your heart and affections drawn up to the things of God; and as you sat and heard Christ, his Person and work, his grace and glory set forth, faith was drawn out to believe, hope to cast forth its anchor, and love and affection to flow, so that you experienced a spirituality of mind, a heavenly calm, and a holy peace that touched every spring of your soul, and watered it as

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the river that went out of Eden to water the garden?

January 20

**“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.” —
Hosea 6. 3.**

“To know the Lord” is to know experimentally and spiritually the power of Jesus’ blood and righteousness; to know our eternal union with him; to know him so as to be led by the Spirit into soul communion with him, that we may talk with him as a man talketh with his friend; to know him so that the secrets of his heart should be revealed to us, and we enter by faith into the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; to know him so as to drink into his spirit, and to have his image stamped by the Holy Ghost upon our souls; to know him as coming down into our hearts out of his glorious sanctuary, filling our souls with his presence and his love; to know him as formed in us the hope of glory, making our bodies his temple, dwelling in us, breathing himself into us, speaking in us, moving as it were every affection of our heart and every faculty of our soul. Thus to know the Lord is the sum and substance of vital godliness. And, as “to know the Lord”, implies, as well as comprehends, the knowledge of Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons and Unity of Essence, well may we say that, to know Jehovah the Father in his eternal love, to know Jehovah the Son in his redeeming blood, and to know Jehovah the Spirit in his divine operations and blessed teaching, is the foretaste of bliss below; and to know and see God as he is, is the consummation of bliss above.

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January 21

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” — James 5. 11.

The words translated “endure” and “patience” are the same in the original; and in fact, the example of Job is given as an instance of the happiness of those who endure. The same word is also used by our blessed Lord, where he says, “He that *endureth* to the end shall be saved” (Matt. 10. 22). We have need then of endurance. As he that runs a race needs not so much swiftness as enduring strength to hold out to the end, never to give up as long as he can drag one limb before another; as the British soldier must never suffer himself to be beaten; so it is in the Christian race: we must never give up; we must never say “die”; we must never allow ourselves to be beaten by sin or Satan. If God himself seem to thrust us away from his throne, we must still plead and not take “No” for an answer, like the widow with the unjust judge. O what need we have of patience or endurance still to fight, though the battle be against us; still to run, though we may almost fear to lose the race; and still press forward, in spite of every discouraging circumstance! But if in this way we do the will of God, as he would have us and patience is given to us of which we have such deep need, let us not fear but that we shall receive the promise. “Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6. 9). We are bidden therefore to be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15. 58).

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January 22

“I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” — Isaiah 27. 3.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who lives at God’s right hand, has to send down supplies of his grace continually to keep your soul alive unto himself. Without this life being kept up and maintained by these continual supplies of his grace, you cannot pray, or read, or hear the word, or meditate with any feeling or profit. You cannot love the Lord and his blessed ways; you cannot submit to his righteous dealings; or hear the rod and him who appointed it. You may approach his throne but your heart is cold, clouded, and unfeeling; your spirit sinks under the weight and burden of the trials and difficulties that are spread in your path; nor are you able to do anything that satisfies yourself, or that you think can satisfy God. By these painful but profitable lessons, you are experimentally taught that you want the life of Christ as well as the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ as much as the crucifixion of Christ; Christ as an ever-living, ever-gracious, ever-glorious Mediator, to send down supplies of his love and power into your soul, as much as you needed him to die upon the cross for your redemption.

January 23

“Man’s goings are of the Lord; how can a man then under stand his own way?” — Proverbs 20. 24.

Does not your heart sometimes quake with fear lest you have nothing but a nominal profession, lest the god of this world be blinding you, and lest your conscience be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? It is good to have such fears. He who feareth not, who has no solemn apprehensions, no anxious inquiries, who is never exercised with some internal trepidation of soul, it is much to be feared has never

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known what it is to have “the candle of the Lord searching the inward parts of the belly” (Prov. 20.27). But if God has quickened your soul into spiritual life, and you have ears to hear, I would just put two questions to you: Have you obtained righteousness by a manifestation of Christ’s righteousness? pardon by the application of Christ’s blood? love by a shedding abroad of love? deliverance by a discovery of God’s outstretched hand? My other question is this—If you have not, and let conscience bear its honest testimony—if you have never experienced righteousness, pardon, love, and deliverance, is there a cry in your soul after them? Is there anything like fervent supplication that God would bestow them? Is there anything of a groan in the depth of your spirit that the Lord would reveal them? These are marks of life; and he that has these marks will have the blessing, because God has quickened him into spiritual life. It may be long delayed, but it will come at last; it will surely come, it will not tarry. It may be withheld for wise purposes, and you may have to travel through many a dark season and many an anxious hour, but deliverance is sure; it is reserved for you in Christ, and you are reserved for it, kept by God himself “unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1. 5).

January 24

“Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.” — Psalm 119. 117.

We are surrounded with snares; temptations lie spread every moment in our path. These snares and temptations are so suitable to the lusts of our flesh, that we shall infallibly fall into them, and be overcome by them but for the restraining providence or the preserving grace of God. The Christian sees this; the Christian feels this. He has had, it may be, a bitter experience of the past. He has seen how, from want of walking in godly fear, from want of circumspection and

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standing upon his watchtower, he has been entangled in times past in the snares of death. He has rued the consequences, felt the misery of having slipped and fallen; the iron has entered into his soul; he has been in the prison house, in bondage, in darkness, and death; in consequence of his transgressions he has been "the fool" described in Psalm 107, as "afflicted because of his iniquity," and can re-echo Hart's mournful description of his own miserable folly:

"That mariner's mad part I played,
Who sees, yet strikes the shelf."

As, then, a burnt child dreads the fire, so he dreads the consequence of being left for a moment to himself; and the higher his assurance rises and the clearer his views become of the grace of God which bringeth salvation, and of his own interest in it, the more is he afraid that he shall fall. If his eyes are more widely opened to see the purity of God, the blessedness of Christ, and the efficacy of atoning blood, the more also does he see of the evil of sin, and his own weakness and inability to stand against temptation in his own strength. And all these feelings combine to raise up the earnest cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe".

January 25

**"Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned;
renew our days as of old." — Lamentations 5. 21.**

Are you not often destitute of the power to repent, and confess your sins before God? Does not conscience often bring to view a melancholy retrospect of carnal thoughts, wicked desires, vain imaginations, foolish words, frivolous speeches, and all that catalogue of evils, that huge bill which godly fear sometimes files in the court within, as seen in all our departures from the life of God? But are you able to repent?

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are you able to feel cut to the very heart? are you able to mourn and sigh because conscience brings against you this long indictment? Can you always feel your soul melted down with sorrow on account of it? Are you always able to feel contrition because you are proud, worldly, covetous, everything that is evil, everything that is hateful in God's sight? But, then, there are times and seasons when the Lord is pleased to work upon the conscience, to move and stir the soul, to touch the heart with his gracious finger—then repentance and godly sorrow flow forth. It is with us as with the rock that Moses struck. There was water in the rock; but it required to be struck with the rod before the waters flowed out. So we may have the grace of repentance in our souls; but it requires the divine hand to strike the rock, to cause the waters of godly sorrow to gush forth.

January 26

“And he taught them many things by parables.” — Mark 4. 2.

The Scripture employs two beautiful figures to illustrate the reception of the divine testimony. One is the committing of the seed to the ground, as in the parable of the sower. The husbandman scatters the seed in the bosom of the earth, and the ground having been previously ploughed and reduced to a beautiful tilth, opens its bosom to receive the grain. After a little time the seed begins to germinate, to strike a root downward, and shoot a germ upward; as the Lord speaks, “First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4. 28). This emblem beautifully represents how the testimony of Jesus Christ finds an entrance to the soul, takes root downward and carries a shoot upward. The root downward is into the depths of a tender conscience, and the shoot upward is the aspiration, breathing, and longing of the soul for the living God. The other figure is that of grafting. “Receive,” says

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James, “with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1. 21). Now when a scion is first put into the stock, after a little time sap begins to flow out of the stock into the scion, and this sap unites the two together. So it is spiritually when the soul receives the testimony of Christ. The testimony of Christ is received into a broken heart, as the scion is inserted into and received by the stock. As, then, life flows out of the stock into the scion, it creates and cements a sweet and blessed union with God’s word and him of whom the word testifies. Thus it grows up into a living bough, which brings forth blossoms of hope, leaves of a consistent profession, and fruit of a godly life.

January 27

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” — Ephesians 2. 1.

Death in sin is of course a figure, and must be interpreted as such; for moral death is its meaning, and by moral death we understand the utter absence of everything holy, heavenly, spiritual, and divine; the entire want of participation in, and conformity to the life which God lives as essentially and eternally holy, pure, wise, and good, and for ever dwelling in the glorious light of his own infinite perfections. To be dead, then, is to have no present part or lot with God; no knowledge of him, no faith, no trust, no hope in him; no sense of his presence, no reverence of his terrible Majesty; no desire after him or inclination toward him; no trembling at his word, no reliance on his promise, no longing for his grace, no care or concern for his glory. It is to be as a beast before him, intent like a brute on satisfying the cravings of lust, or the movements of mere animal passion, without any thought or concern what shall be the issue, and to be bent upon

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carrying out into action every natural purpose, as if we were self-creators, and were our own judge, our own lord, and our own god. O what a terrible state is it to be thus dead in sin, and not to know it, not to feel it, to be in no way sensible of its present danger and certain end, unless delivered from it by a mighty act of sovereign power! It is this want of all sense and feeling which makes the death of the soul to be but a representation of, as it is the prelude to, that second death which stretches through a boundless eternity.

January 28

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” — Ephesians 2. 6.

There is a distinction between being quickened together with Christ and being raised up together with him. Is not this true in the experience of God’s people? To be quickened into divine life, to be convinced of sin, to have the fear of God planted deeply in the soul, is the commencement of a work of grace. But this is not a deliverance, not a being raised up out of darkness, bondage, doubt, guilt, and fear. This is not a knowledge of Christ, and the power of his resurrection; this is not a full coming out of the dark and silent tomb into the glorious light and warmth of day. But here is the great blessedness of a mystical union with the Lord Jesus Christ that, as by virtue of interest in him there is a partaking of the benefit and power of his having been quickened, so there is a partaking in the benefit and power of his having been raised up. God does not quicken a soul into divine life to let it remain in the dark tomb of doubt, fear, guilt, and bondage. In raising up Christ there was not only a pledge of the spiritual, but a virtual resurrection of the members of his body. Liberty, then, the liberty of the gospel, deliverance from all doubt and fear, the manifestation of pardon and peace, the

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shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart, are blessings as much assured to the members of Christ's mystical body as their first quickening into spiritual life, and both are equally assured them in Christ their covenant Head.

January 29

“A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.” — Proverbs 14. 16.

I believe no living soul can be satisfied with a notional religion: though a miserable backslider, and driven into the fields to feed swine, he cannot feed on their husks, but sighs after the bread of his Father's house. The eyes being enlightened to see the nature of sin, the justice and holiness of God, and the miserable filthiness of self, the quickened soul can find no rest in anything short of a precious discovery of the Lamb of God; and the more that the soul is exercised with trials, difficulties, temptations, doubts, and besetments of various kinds, the more does it feel its need of that blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. What is a Christian worth without inward trials and exercises? How dead and lifeless are our prayers; how cold and formal when the soul is not kept alive by inward exercises! Where are the sighs, cries, groanings, wrestlings, and breathings of a soul that is at ease in Zion? The world is everything and Christ nothing, when we become settled on our lees, and are not emptied from vessel to vessel; but inward exercises, fears, straits, and temptations stir up the soul to cry, and pray, and beg for mercy. The certainty, the power, the reality of eternal things are then felt, when guilt, and wrath, and fear, and inquietude lay hold of the soul. Mere notions alone of Christ, false hope, a dead faith, a presumptuous confidence, a rotten assurance, are all swept away as so many refuges of lies, when the soul is made to feel its nakedness and nothingness, its guilt and helplessness before God. And thus all these inward exercises pave the

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way for discoveries of Christ—those views of his blood and righteousness, that experimental acquaintance with his Person, love, grace, and work, which is life and peace.

January 30

“The King’s daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.” — Psalm 45. 13, 14.

This is a beautiful description of the bridal garments of the church as the queen. The gold was to be wrought into her clothing, the raiment to be of needlework, intimating that her robe of justifying righteousness was wrought, as it were, as in needlework, stitch by stitch; yet that every thread was embroidered with gold. Here we have the thread of the humanity in union with the gold of Deity, and yet each in such close union that the thread is but one. In gold thread the beauty, the value is in the gold; yet how close the union. Gold by itself could not be made into embroidery. So Deity cannot suffer, bleed, or die; but humanity can in union with it. Thus, as our blessed Lord went through the whole work which the Father gave him to do, his Deity, being in union with his obeying, suffering humanity, stamped each successive movement, as he went through it, with all the value and validity of Godhead. It is this union of Deity with humanity which made the work of redeeming love so unspeakably glorious, and so meritoriously efficacious. As Hart says:

“Almighty God sighed human breath.”

It is indeed a mystery; but “great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16). O glorious mystery!

“The highest heavens are short of this;
’Tis deeper than the vast abyss;
’Tis more than thought can e’er conceive,
Or hope expect, or faith believe.”

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January 31

“Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

— Ephesians 1. 11.

By these words the apostle brings before our eyes God's omnipotent power as carrying into effectual performance the counsel of his own will towards the objects of his distinguishing favour. An especial blessing is couched in this. Next to a believing view of the purposes of God's grace, and a sweet persuasion of our interest in them, nothing is more strengthening and encouraging than a realising apprehension of the power of God to carry them into full execution. Feeling, as we do, our own miserable helplessness, sinking under the pressure of our daily weakness, mourning over continual failures, and grieving on account of perpetual backslidings, encompassed by foes, and distressed by fears, how strengthening it is to our faith, thus tried to the utmost, to believe that he who has purposed has power to perform. This persuasion of the almighty power of God was the support and strength of Abraham's faith, which bore him up in the face of seeming impossibilities, and whereby he gave glory to God. When, then, as walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham, we can look up believingly to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we behold sovereign grace in his heart, and infinite wisdom in his mind, so we see almighty strength in his arm, and thus become sweetly persuaded that all which his loving heart feels, his infinite wisdom directs, and his omnipotent power can execute.

February 1

“They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them.” — Jeremiah 31. 9.

Until God is pleased to pour out upon us the spirit of grace and of supplications, we cannot worship him aright; for God is a Spirit, and those