

The Desires of a Living Soul

Life and Poetry of Clive J. Jefferys



Clive James Jefferys 1984

The Desires of a Living Soul

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Publisher's Note: The Gospel Standard Trust issues this book with the hope that it might be spiritually profitable. Although we only issue books we feel set forth a Scriptural standard, there will be differences in opinion and interpretation, and the most gracious of men still have to say, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.' We trust our readers will prayerfully 'prove all things' and 'hold fast that which is good,' whilst bearing in meekness with any imperfections.

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PREFACE

Uncle Clive composed poems over a period of many years. He wrote those which showed his love of the countryside and God's living creatures, poems to people he knew, and on different themes. These which I have selected for this booklet are of Uncle's spiritual desires.

In 1970 Uncle also commenced writing down some of his exercises. These writings, which he called *Desires*, stated how he sought the Lord's guidance and blessing in every step of life, how the Lord helped him, and the many exercises he had. Short extracts from these writings are given with each poem in this book.

Those of us that are familiar with Uncle's poetry feel an echo in our hearts with what he wrote; their simplicity and heart yearnings touch a chord.

I hope and trust they will also be loved and valued by those who never knew him, and bring encouragement to many who perhaps feel they, "can only speak of little things." (see poem page 34)

May the Lord's rich blessing rest upon these verses.

Elisabeth
January 2008

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BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CLIVE JAMES JEFFERYS

This has been collated from information gathered from his wife Lois and sister Kathleen.

Clive was born on 4th September 1914 at *Middle Farm*, near Chippenham in Wiltshire, of parents who sought to bring up their five children, Leslie, Clive, Nellie, Grace and Kathleen, “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

His father and mother (Walter and Elsie) were hard working farmers, living in difficult times, each member of the family helping on the farm once they were old enough. His sister Kathleen speaks of them being a happy family of children who loved and respected their parents. This is shown in Clive’s poem written in 1983, *On looking again at dear Mother and Father’s grave* (p92). The family attended Little Zoar Strict Baptist Chapel, Studley and Clive worshipped there throughout his life.

Clive had a caring and fun-loving disposition. He also had a great love of nature and the countryside, which stayed with him to the end of his life.

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He often wrote verses when he was young, but, as he reached his twenties and the Lord began a work of grace in his soul, these altered, and many of them now expressed the longings and desires of his soul. It is in his poetry that he expressed the Lord's saving grace towards him. He was much favoured with a spirit of meditation which provided him with subject matter for his poetry. Latterly, he also recorded periodic writings under the subject of "Desires."

In 1948 the family moved to a smaller home near to *Middle Farm*, called *Willowbarne*. Clive remained in farming, with his brother Leslie. On 21st April 1955 Clive married Lois Wilkins from Redhill, and for several years they lovingly and tenderly cared for his widowed father and, later, Lois's parents. In 1970, an injury to his shoulder, and other difficulties, caused them to feel that they should give up the farm.

On 30th June 1959 Clive was baptized at *Little Zoar* after being blessed under a sermon preached by Mr. Oakley from the words: "Wilt thou go with this man?"

Clive suffered with heart problems during the latter years of his life, and several times he had to be taken into hospital. One of these times was in August 1984 when he recorded how, "Sweet and precious the dear Lord was made to my soul ... Jesus was precious." His poem, *Seeking for a crumb on affliction's bed* (p112), was written whilst in hospital at that time.

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On the first Lord's day in 1987, Clive had what he described as "rather a precious and special day." All three of his requests to the Lord were granted — namely that Christ might be highly extolled; that there might be something from the Song of Solomon; and that hymn 156 might be sung. The preaching was from Psalm 45. 1,2, and was made very sweet to him. The evening reading was Solomon's Song, chapters 5 and 6; and at the Lord's Supper, hymn 156 was given out.

In the same month (January 1987) he was elected to be a deacon at Studley, and wrote in his *Desires* how he felt himself to be, "...so insufficient, but be Thou my sufficiency and help." And how a feeling of "...burning love to Thee and Thine came into my soul ... to serve Thee, in my small way, in Thy courts." Sadly he passed away on 13th March, and so "served" for only a few weeks.

He was frequently favoured under the ministry of the Word, and he had a particular affection towards Mr. G. Buss, the pastor at Chippenham, and his ministry. Mr. Buss lovingly officiated at his funeral on March 19th. It was at Chippenham he attended his last service when the preaching, from another of the Lord's servants, was based on John 1 v12-13. He wrote of it being "so good, having a savoury sweetness."

Three days before his death he gave out his last hymn at a Studley prayer meeting,

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“O love divine, how sweet thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up with thee?”

Clive passed away very suddenly and peacefully in his home, to be “with Christ; which is far better.”

The following are extracts from his writings:

Saturday, 17th January, 1970. Gracious Lord, do help me rightly to record Thy goodness to me a worthless worm of the earth this week. Because we feel led to sell the farm, O I do want guidance in this great step which will alter my whole life if I am spared, and O I do feel to want that wisdom which is from above; also grace and humility to want no will but God's and to be made entirely submissive. But how contrary this is to my own self-will which so often wants to be everything! On Thursday evening both L. and I felt at the end of our tether, if I may reverently say this. Having had an interview with an auctioneer in the afternoon, several other factors of the day also weighed us down and we both felt we shouldn't sleep that night. But as I knelt by the bed feebly trying to commit my case into the Lord's hands, these words dropped in with sweetness: “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain!” and I immediately felt calmer, L. at the same time was feeling much calmer whilst reading Mr. Philpot's daily portion,

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which was so suitable. Then when I got into bed I read Mr. Bourne's 15th letter (I am reading them this year for portions), which was wonderfully suited to our case. We both felt much comforted and slept well that night. O dearest Jesus, help us to acknowledge Thy goodness to us each. Another thing that was weighing me down was the business of the next day — ten cattle to send to market. R. was going to help with two of his men, it was true, but my unbelieving heart told me that all would end in chaos. But O! once again, gracious Lord, how great is Thy goodness to sinful, worthless, unbelieving me! R. with D. and another took everything out of my hands — the cleaning, etc. and helping with the sale in the ring. The cattle sold wonderfully well. Truly an answer to prayer!

Wednesday, 25th March. I have been reading and very much enjoyed a sermon by the late D. Macdonald of Shieldaig called "The Rose of Sharon" (Solomon's Song 2. 1-3) I hope I can truthfully say I have experienced a very little of these blessed things. Alas! 'tis very little, but I do want more. O dear Lord, do make me to feel Thee more, that sweet Rose of Sharon. Grant I may feel Thee in my soul's experience indeed "as the apple tree among the trees of the wood." Enable me by living faith to sit down under Thy shadow; indeed it will be great delight. Yea, dear Lord, and grant if it be Thy will that the fruit may be more and

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more sweet to my taste. Also these words I felt very sweet: "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved that thou dost so charge us? My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand."

Sunday, June 25th, 1972. A week ago today 118 souls were suddenly plunged into eternity in a terrible air disaster. How solemn! A week ago enjoying life, I mean "life" as this world knows it, and now they have been but a week in an eternity which is for ever and ever and ever. I would judge no man, God forbid, and maybe out of that number there may have been one soul or souls who cried unto God in those last few dreadful moments and He heard them. But O! the question is; dear Jesus, prepare me to stand before Thy face, O shelter me beneath Thy precious blood. Let me, dear Lord, never be deceived.

Monday, January 29th, 1973. J. B. yesterday exhorted us his hearers to look back to where we were, to the pit whence we were digged and to where, but for grace, we should still solemnly be. I felt constrained to reflect on some of those spots and places where I trust the dear Lord drew my heart out to Him with the drawings of His love. One of the earliest desires I can recollect was when I was between eight and ten years old. Mother was ironing in the breakfast room at the old home and singing, "There is a land of pure

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delight.” When she came to, “There everlasting spring abides, and never withering flowers,” I remember having such a longing: “Shall I ever get to that heavenly land?” Another time, I must have been in my early teens, I was asked to stay at home from chapel one Sunday evening and shut in the fowls. I clearly remember it now; I was up beneath the elm trees in Home field over the road by the willows, when O! such a longing came over me that I wished and longed that I could be with them at chapel and I inwardly cried, “Lord Jesus, Thou couldst enable me even now to get the fowls in and get to chapel, even though late.” So I raced round the fowls; they were many and widely scattered at that time. I found them all in although it was still light. I raced round in record time, cycled up to chapel and got there before the sermon. But O dear, O dear, to my real shame I say it, how many times later in after years I would have stayed away from chapel could I have done so, yea, vowed I would do so when I got older! O dearest Jesus, that I could praise Thee more that Thou didst not leave me to my just deserts! Another time much later, it was January 1st, 1969, I think, about half past five in the morning, and I had such a desire come over me: “Dear Lord, I would like a word from Thee with which to begin this year if it might be Thy will,” and then opened the Bible on Isaiah 62. 12; “And thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.”

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I cannot say that it came with power, but it did leave a sweetness.

Monday, January 7th, 1974. Dearest Jesus, grant me, O grant me to know my interest in Thee. Grant me faith to fly to Thee, my only Refuge, my only Hiding Place, my only Sanctuary. Grant me too to know and to realise, if it be Thy will, that I have that rich treasure which can never be taken away from me, undeserving as I am of the least of Thy mercies. "O that my soul could love and praise Thee more!"

Thursday, January 16th. Today has been a beautiful day, so this afternoon I went for a walk down by the brook and river. It seemed so peaceful down there. Grant me, O Lord, to experience in my heart that true peace that passeth all understanding, unworthy though I feel to be. The little brook was so pure, cheerfully rippling along, and I was reminded of an old man who said he had never known the brook dry up, not even in the driest of summers, even though it had at such times got down to the merest trickle. But there is an everlasting, never-failing stream which freely flows to the most needy sinners who by the Holy Spirit are brought to feel their need of it. It is that precious fountain of which the poet writes:

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;

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And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

O dearest Jesus, plunge me in that sacred fountain. The beautiful ivy too, clinging to the trees, reminded me of the bride cleaving to Jesus Christ. O grant me that living faith, dear Lord, to cleave and cling to Thee. *June 23rd.* Today I have to go into hospital. O Lord, do help me. "My help cometh from the Lord," as dear David said, and O! no other help will do. O! be with me and preserve me in my going out and coming in, even from this time and even for evermore, dearest Jesus, and as Thou wast with the three Hebrew children in the fire, O do be with me, if it be Thy will, for Thou art the same precious Jesus yesterday, today and for ever.

July 2nd. Lord, when I reflect on Thy wonderful goodness and blessing to my soul during my past week in hospital, help me to record Thy mercies, that they may not lie forgotten in unthankfulness and without praises die. I came home on Monday 30th and truly the Lord was with me in a remarkable way through the past week. I had, previous to my going into hospital, felt a quietness and a calmness which I felt came only from the Lord, knowing what my old nature would have been like left to itself. They informed me on the Monday of arrival that they would operate on the next afternoon. Friends advised me to ask for an injection to make me sleep that night, but no,

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I felt I wanted to be clear in my mind that as enabled I might be able to wrestle in prayer for the Lord's presence and help — and O! sometime between three and four o'clock in the morning Jesus came! It was not a clear shining light, neither a word of power, but the feeling I cannot rightly describe. I felt that Jesus was just there standing by me. I felt that that "fourth like unto the Son of Man," who stood by the three Hebrews who were cast into the burning fiery furnace, and of whom Mr. P. spoke on the previous evening at chapel, was standing just there by me. All fear was taken away and I had some quiet sleep. That afternoon, shortly before being taken to the operating theatre, hymn 801 (Gadsby's) seemed so sweet to me, a hymn I had always previously felt was much too high for me. Lord, who am I that Thou shouldst look on such an unworthy sinful worm of the earth with such love and mercy.

January 23rd, 1984. So remiss I am in not recording God's many mercies to me again in affliction's pathway. Truly I can say with the Psalmist: "Who remembered us in our low estate, for His mercy endureth for ever." In October last I had to go into Bath R.U. Hospital, following a heart attack, on a Sunday afternoon. Only a few days before, I had been concerned because I seemed to be fighting a losing battle in the garden with the work. But while being taken to the

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hospital in the ambulance, I felt such a calmness and quietness given me so that I felt I could leave *all* in the Lord's all-wise hands. Soon after arriving in the Coronary Unit, the words dropped in: "The Lord hath done it." Later, when in the hospital ward, I witnessed solemn things, searching things that made me inwardly have to say, "Who hath made me to differ?" Especially as I have since had to prove solemnly the evils, the corruptions, the hardness of my sinful heart, after all the kindness, the goodness, the mercies shown me by a precious Jesus! Although I may now have a weak heart, O dearest Lord, do grant me to know Thou hast given me that *new* heart which only Thou canst give and without which I can never be with Thee, whom I love (I hope I can say), "beyond, beyond the grave."

September 3rd. I feel that I should record, but I only desire to write to the honour and glory of God, that on Friday morning just after midnight I had to be rushed into Chippenham Hospital because of a heart turn, for which of course the doctor had to be sent. That evening on the hospital bed and, I am thankful to say, already feeling a little better, I was reading from the 4th and 5th chapters of Solomon's Song — a book which I trust the dear Lord has on more than one occasion made very sweet and precious to my soul — when I came to verse 4 of chapter 5; "My Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door,

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and my bowels were moved for Him. I rose to open to my Beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock." O such a sweetness came into my soul as it seemed that Jesus put in His hands by the hole of the door into my soul and left such a sweet perfume there! For a while I seemed to have no care in the world; time things seemed to drop into their right place and Jesus *was* precious. Truly I have to say,

Why me, why me, O blessed God,
Why such a wretch as me?
Who must for ever lie in hell,
Were not salvation free.

But O alas! how even since such favours I have to prove such evils still live within my heart, and that "the Canaanites still dwell in the land"! *October 5th.* The words of the psalmist in that precious 84th Psalm dropped in this morning. "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," and for a few moments I trust I felt that was also the cry of my heart. O gracious Lord, do create in my heart vehement cries such as this for Thy presence, for O! I do want to feel Thee near and "less than Thyself will not suffice and Thou canst give no more!"

December 28th. Solemnly realising that many go into unconsciousness and do not come round again in this time state, I especially considered

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what Samuel Rutherford wrote to godly John Kennedy, who had been miraculously saved in a terrible storm from perishing at sea: "If ye forget anything when your sea is full and your foot in that ship (the ship of death), there is no returning again to fetch it." "Ye can die but once and if ye mar or spill that business, ye cannot come back to mend that piece of work again." O how solemn! But later, reading Colossians 3. 3, 4 seemed very sweet and left, I feel, a savoury feeling: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." O gracious Lord, do not leave me to presume but grant, if it be Thy will, that this is truly from Thee to my soul. This, this is all I wish for as we come down towards the end of another year.

November 16th, 1985. The other night I had a solemn dream. I was over the edge of a cliff and clinging to the face of it with hundreds of feet sheer drop below me. I found myself crying, "Lord help me! Lord help me!" But just then, as it seemed I must be plunged to certain death, I awakened with these thoughts: "How terrible if that had been real, but how far, far more solemn to fall into endless woe, the bottomless pit!" There was an inward cry to the Lord to hide me, to shelter me, and to say unto my soul, "I am thy salvation." Then I opened the hymnbook on Hymn 265 and O! it did seem so sweet to me, even

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every line of it, and especially those petitions in the last two verses.

November 22nd. I have through the years read the Book of Ruth many times, but this morning in bed on reading it through again, I think I can say I never felt it more sweet or saw such a depth of teaching in it. Dear Lord, I would bless Thee for this: I feel I can say from the bottom of my heart with Ruth: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

April 10th, 1986. Early this morning feeling far off, cold and dead because of infelt sin, when going upstairs, having gone down to get some tea, I inwardly felt to cry, "O that Thou, dear Lord, would come near enough so I could lean on Thee!" When I got back into bed, I opened the Bible on Ephesians 2. 12, 13, and verse 13 seemed so sweet. Also something seemed to say, "Read Hosea." Chapter 2 of that book also seemed sweet, as it has I trust before. O Lord, I would thank Thee for these blessed things, for they are blessed and far above any earthly riches if they are indeed from Thee, applied by Thy Holy Spirit to my soul.

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September 5th. Yesterday was my birthday [his last]. Again, I am a living witness to God's sparing mercies to a guilty sinner. He has wonderfully helped me through another year. "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." None of us know how many more birthdays we shall be spared to see, or if any, but O when death comes:

In that dread moment, O to hide
Beneath His sheltering blood;
'Twill Jordan's icy waves divide,
And land my soul with God.

September 10th. Reading early this morning the 14th chapter of Mark's Gospel, a little sweetness was felt within and mellowness, and I trust some union with a precious, suffering Jesus, and the words came:

Was it for crimes that I had done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

October 14th. How I have solemnly to prove so often what vile filth and iniquity there is in my heart when lying awake on my bed at night! The night before last was no exception to this. Then I tried to go off to sleep by trying to memorize all the hymns I knew, and to ask the Lord to help me to cease from my sinful thoughts. Eventually I

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went off to sleep, and although most of my dreams leave me so carnal, in this dream I dreamt that I was translated or taken to heaven. Much of that dream I am afraid would be mockery to relate, but what so struck or impressed me was, Jesus told me that nothing would ever defile me — not sin or anything else, and that is what seemed *so exceedingly sweet and left such an impression.*

Heaven is that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles;
Where God unveils His blissful face,
And looks, and loves, and smiles.

January 28th, 1987 (part of his last entry). Dear Lord Jesus, I can say, I trust from my heart, that O! such a burning love to Thee and Thine came into my soul, feeling if enabled by Thee to serve Thee in my small way in Thy courts, what a favour it would be, although so unworthy in and of oneself! O do grant, in Thy mercy and condescension, grace and love to serve Thee who “art fairer than the children of men” (Psal. 45. 2), even “Him whom my soul loveth” (Song of Solomon 1,7).

POETRY

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THE OLD BIBLE

It may be old with its leaves oft torn,
Its covers tattered and badly worn;
But how much better to see well used
A Bible, its pages much perused.

And far, far better to see oft read
The Precious Word of God, instead
Of one neglected and put aside
On a dusty shelf to there abide

O may its Author oft unfold
Its secrets, ever new, though old;
O may He give us appetites
To prove its depth and hidden heights.

And even if it does look torn,
Shabby looking and badly worn;
Even in places come apart,
What matters this if in our heart

God searches us and blesses oft,
And melts our hearts and makes them soft;
Then Him we'll praise for a Bible true,
Though shabby outside, within all new.

“Oh ... dear Lord ... make Thy Word and Thy statutes my delight. Oh Lord I would thank Thee for these blessed things, for they are ... far above any earthly riches.”

IF GOD HOLDS MY HAND

My childhood days have now passed by,
Life's pathway does before me lie.
The future's dark and all obscure,
There will be hardships to endure;
So, when the years of life expand,
I hope that God will hold my hand.

When dangers lie along the way,
And difficulties, day by day,
Shall make our journeyings more tough,
And rocks and briars should make it rough;
I shall not find it hard to stand,
If through the way God holds my hand.

Of course, there may be sunny hours;
The pathway smooth and fair with flowers,
But dangerous is the smoothest way,
So easy then to go astray,
Could easily prove the, "sinking sand,"
If God should fail to hold my hand.

If ease should tempt to lure aside,
May I have Jesus for my Guide;
If blackest woe bring near despair,
Still darker growing everywhere,
E'en then I'll reach the heavenly land
If all the way, God holds my hand.

Poetry

Keep me from thinking I shall be
Quite safe alone - forsaking Thee.
Help me to look to Thee and pray
For help, for guidance, every day.
Then if I reach the heavenly land,
'Twill be because Thou held'st my hand.

January 1941

These verses were written when Clive's youngest sister was 16 years old, facing an operation in a Bath hospital. This was during the Second World War, at a time when the air raids were particularly bad in that area. In a letter, his sister wrote home to her loved ones, she said, "I feel all will be well if God holds my hand." As she slowly recovered, her brother sent these verses to her in reply.

