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**EARS FROM HARVESTED SHEAVES; OR,**

## **DAILY PORTIONS**

By Joseph C Philpot (1802 – 1869)

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

### **PREFACE**

With deep feelings of pleasure we have responded to a call for a second edition of this work, and would add to our gratitude for the blessing so graciously vouchsafed to many on its perusal, the heartfelt desire and prayer that our ever-loving Saviour, who is able to do for His people exceeding abundantly above all they ask or even think, will continue to make the book useful, not only to the godly into whose hands it may fall, but also to a generation yet to come, and to his name be all the praise.

S. & D. M. PHILPOT  
Croydon, 1896.

"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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# **DAILY PORTIONS**

**BY JOSEPH C. PHILPOT**

**PRESENTED BY THE BIBLE TRUTH FORUM**

**December 1**

**"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed." Psalm 65:1**

**What a sweet thing it is to bless and praise God! There is no feeling upon earth equal to it. But how often are we in that state when we can neither pray nor praise, when sullenness, frowardness, and peevishness seem to take such complete possession, that, so far from praising God, there is no power even to seek his face; and so far from blessing him, there are even dreadful things working up in the heart against him, which awfully manifest the enmity of the carnal mind. Those who are painfully exercised with such feelings are certain, therefore, that it is God's work to enable them to praise and bless his holy name. And does not the heaven-taught soul come sometimes into this spot, "O that the Lord would give me something to praise him for, would bring me out of this trial, break this wretched snare, remove this awful temptation, lift me out of this providential difficulty, bless and water my soul, comfort my heart, strengthen my spirit, give me some sweet testimony of his covenant love!" "O," says the soul, "how I would then bless and praise him! I would spend all my breath in exalting his holy name." But when the Lord withholds from the soul the blessings it so eagerly covets, it can only look at them at a great distance, view them wishfully, and long to experience them. But it says, "Until they come with power, until they are brought in with sweetness, until they are sealed upon my very heart, so as to take full possession of my breast, I cannot, I dare not, bless and praise God's holy name." O what a dependent creature a heaven-taught soul is! How it hangs upon the Spirit of God to work in it that which is well-pleasing in his sight; how convinced it is that it cannot feel sin nor confess it, that it cannot breathe forth prayer nor praise unless the "God of all grace" create by his own powerful hand these blessed fruits of the lips (Isaiah 57:19). Are you so helpless in your feelings as this?**

**Are you such complete dependents upon sovereign grace? Then you are spiritually taught of God; for it is God's teaching in the soul which brings a man to an experimental knowledge of his own complete helplessness before him.**

**December 2**

**"Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." Isaiah 51:1**

**It is as though the Lord would here by the pen of his prophet turn our eyes to our native origin. And what is that? The same quarry out of which the other stones come. If you and I, by God's grace, are "living stones," we come out of the same quarry with the dead, unbelieving, unregenerate world; there is no difference in that respect. Nay, we are perhaps sunk lower in the quarry than some of those in whom God never has and never will put his grace. It is not the upper stratum, what is called "the capstone," of the quarry, which is to be taken to be hewn into a pillar; they go down deep into the pit to get at the marble which is to be chiselled into the ornamental column. So with God's saints. They do not lie at the top of the quarry; but the Lord has to go down very low, that he may bring up these stones out of the depths of the fall, and lift them, as it were, out of deeper degradation than those which lie nearer the surface. I remember reading once an expression which a Portland quarryman used when he was asked a question with respect to the hard labour of getting out the stone. He said, "It is enough to heave our hearts out." The stone lay so deep, and required such severe bodily exertion, that the labourer was forced to throw not only all his weight, sinews, and muscles into the work, but his very heart also. So it is with the elect of God. They are sunk so low, in such awful depths of degradation, at such an infinite distance from God, so hidden and buried from everything good and godlike, that, so to speak, it required all the strength and power of Jehovah to lift them out of the pit. In raising them out of the quarry of nature, he spent, as it were, upon them all his heart; for wherein was the heart of God so manifested as in the incarnation of his only-begotten Son, and in the work, righteousness, sufferings, blood, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ?**

**December 3**

**"The eternal God is thy refuge." Deuteronomy 33:27**

**There is, to my mind, much sweetness in the contrast betwixt the eternal God being the refuge of his people, and the lying refuges that most hide their heads in. God's people want an eternal refuge. They have a never-dying soul; and unless they have a never-dying refuge, it is not sufficient for a never-dying soul. Works! these are for time; the never-dying soul wants something to stand when works and wonders cease. Doctrines, opinions, sentiments, ordinances, the good opinion of men, the applause and flattery of the creature—these are of the earth, earthy; they fail when a man gives up the ghost. But a child of God wants a refuge, not merely that his soul may anchor in it in time, but that when time is ended, when the angel proclaims, "There shall be time no longer," and his liberated soul escapes its prison-house, and is wafted into the presence of the eternal God, it may find in Him at that solemn moment a refuge. Nay, all through eternity, in the rolling circle of its never-ending ages, the soul will still want a refuge. For could it even in eternity exist for a moment out of Christ—in a word, were the refuge of the elect anything but eternal, the moment the limited time of their shelter closed, the frowns of God would hurl them into perdition; so that nothing but an eternal God can ever be a refuge for a never-dying soul. It does not say, "His grace is thy refuge." No; because grace will end in glory. Nor does it say, "His mercy is thy refuge," for his mercy will end in blessing and praise. Nor does it say, "His attributes or his perfections are a refuge." It drops the gifts and leads the soul up to the Giver, as though God's own gifts and mercies were not sufficient, but that the immortal soul must have the immortal God, and the never-dying spirit is only safe in the bosom of an eternal Jehovah.**

**December 4**

**"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4**

**"Man shall not live by bread alone." There is heavenly food to support his soul, as well as natural food to support his body. If a**

man is supported spiritually by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, if this be the only food the Lord's people enjoy, how little they have! If you and I have no more religion than that which comes from what God has spoken into our soul; if that be the bread we are to live upon; if that be the strength of our heart; if that be our living portion and our dying sufficiency;—how it narrows up our religion into so small a compass, that sometimes we seem to require a microscope to see whether we have any or not. But thus we learn this lesson, "that man liveth not by bread alone." He cannot live by doctrines in the head. He cannot live by bodily gestures. He cannot live by rites and forms and ceremonies. He cannot live by anything that springs from the creature. His life is first given by God, and his life is maintained by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. What the Lord teaches, he knows; what the Lord works, he feels; what the Lord gives, he possesses; what the Lord speaks to his heart, he has in his soul, as from the lips of the sovereign Majesty himself. But what a narrow path is this! How it cuts up all creature righteousness! How it lays the creature low in the dust of abasement! With all your religion, you have none but what God gives, nor can you procure a grain; for you have to live, not by bread alone, as in your natural life, but on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. How then are you spiritually to live, except from time to time the Lord speak a word to your soul?

December 5

"What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies." Song of Solomon 6:13

Are you not often a mystery to yourself? Warm one moment, cold the next; abasing yourself one half-hour, exalting yourself the following; loving the world, full of it, steeped up to your lips in it to-day; crying, groaning, and sighing for a sweet manifestation of the love of God tomorrow; brought down to nothingness, covered with shame and confusion, on your knees before you leave your room; filled with pride and self-importance before you have got down stairs; despising the world, and willing to give it all up for one taste of the love of Jesus when in solitude; trying to grasp it with both hands when in business. What a mystery are you! Touched by love, and stung with enmity; possessing a little wisdom, and a great deal of folly; earthly-minded, and yet having

the affections in heaven; pressing forward, and lagging behind; full of sloth, and yet taking the kingdom with violence! And thus the Spirit, by a process which we may feel but cannot adequately describe, leads us into the mystery of the two natures, that "company of two armies," perpetually struggling and striving against each other in the same bosom. So that one man cannot more differ from another than the same man differs from himself. But do not nature, sense, and reason contradict this? Do not the wise and prudent deny this? "There must be a progressive advance," they say, "in holiness; there must be a gradual amendment of our nature until at length all sin is rooted out, and we become as perfect as Christ." But the mystery of the kingdom of heaven is this, that our carnal mind undergoes no alteration, but maintains a perpetual war with grace: and thus, the deeper we sink in self-abasement under a sense of our vileness, the higher we rise in a knowledge of Christ; and the blacker we are in our own view, the more comely does Jesus appear.

December 6

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7

Trials and temptations are the means which God employs to manifest to the soul the reality and strength of the faith which he bestows upon it; for there is in every trial and temptation opposition made to the faith that is in the heart; and every trial and temptation, so to speak, threaten the life of faith. And they threaten it in this way. Under the trial God for the most part hides himself. He puts forth, indeed, a secret power whereby the soul is held up, or otherwise it would sink into utter despair, and be overcome and swallowed up by the power of unbelief. Hence comes the conflict between the trial that fights against the faith and the faith which fights against or rather under the trial. Now, when in this trial, in this sharp conflict, in this hot furnace, faith does not give way, is not burned up, is not destroyed, but keeps its firm hold upon the promise and the faithfulness of him who has given it, this trial of faith becomes very precious. It is precious to the soul when God again smiles upon it, and becomes thus manifest as genuine. It is precious in the sight of God's people,

who see it and derive strength and comfort from what they witness in the experience of a saint thus tried and blessed; and it is precious also in the sight of God himself, who crowns it with his own manifest approbation, and puts upon it the attesting seal of his own approving smile. But above all things, it will be found precious at the appearing of Jesus Christ, and that not only in his various appearings in grace, but in his final appearance in glory, for of that the Apostle mainly speaks when he says that "it may be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

### December 7

**"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter 5:10**

If "the God of all grace" has indeed "called you unto his eternal glory,"—if he has indeed touched your heart with his blessed finger,—remember you will have to walk, from beginning to end, in a path of suffering; for the whole path, more or less, is a path of tribulation. And, while walking in this path, and suffering from sin, Satan, the world, and the evil of your own heart, it is only to lead you up more unto "the God of all grace;" it is only that God may, in his own time, "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you." And when your soul has passed through these trials, you will see God's hand in all, praise him for all, and will perceive how good it was for you to have been afflicted, and to have walked in this painful path; that having suffered with Christ Jesus, you might sit down with him in his eternal glory!

### December 8

**"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."  
Romans 5:20**

In order to know what grace is in its reign over sin, and in its superaboundings over the aboundings of iniquity, we must be led experimentally into the depths of the fall. We must be led by God himself into the secrets of our own heart; we must be brought

down into distress of mind on account of our sin and the idolatry of our fallen nature. And when, do what we will, sin will still work, reign, and abound, and we are brought to soul poverty, helplessness, destitution, and misery, and cast ourselves down at the footstool of his mercy—then we begin to see and feel the reign of grace, in quickening our souls, in delivering us from the wrath to come, and in preserving us from the dominion of evil. We begin to see then that grace superabounds over all the aboundings of sin in our evil hearts, and as it flows through the channel of the Saviour's sufferings, that it will never leave its favoured objects till it brings them into the enjoyment of eternal life! And if this does not melt and move the soul, and make a man praise and bless God, nothing will, nothing can! But until we have entered into the depths of our own iniquities, until we are led into the chambers of imagery, and brought to sigh, groan, grieve, and cry under the burden of guilt on the conscience and the workings of secret sin in the heart—it cannot be really known. And to learn it thus, is a very different thing from learning it from books, or ministers. To learn it in the depths of a troubled heart, by God's own teaching, is a very different thing from learning it from the words of a minister or even from the word of God itself. We can never know these things savingly and effectually, till God himself is pleased to apply them with his own blessed power, and communicate an unctuous savour of them to our hearts, that we may know the truth, and find to our soul's consolation, that the truth makes us free!

December 9

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."  
Isaiah 43:2

How many of the dear saints of God, when they have been brought into tribulation and sorrow, have found the fulfilment of this most gracious promise! And is there not one of these waters through which all must go—that deep and rapid Jordan which every one must pass through? How dark and gloomy those waters have appeared to the eyes of many a child of God, in whom is continually fulfilled the experience of the words, "Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." But how often have these waters only been terrible in prospect, in anticipation. How different has been the reality. When he comes

down to the river's bank and his feet dip in these waters, and it appears as though they would rise higher and higher, the Lord suddenly appears in his power and presence, and then the water sinks. He speaks a word of peace to his soul upon a dying bed—reveals Christ in his love and grace and blood—removes those doubts, fears, and disturbing thoughts which have perplexed him for years, and brings into his heart a holy calm, a sweet peace, assuring him that all is well with him, both for time and eternity. Has he not then the fulfilment of the promise, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee?"

### **December 10**

**"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:21**

The Apostle declares, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). If, then, we are joined to the Lord, in other words, have a union with him, this is the closest of all unions. A man and his wife are one flesh, but Jesus and the saint are one spirit. If possessed of this we are one spirit with him; we understand what he says; we have the mind of Christ; we love what he loves, and hate what he hates. But out of this spiritual union flows communion with him, intercourse with him, communications from him, and the whole of that divine work upon the heart whereby the two spirits become one. The Spirit of Christ in his glorious Person and the Spirit of Christ in a believing heart meet together, and meeting together as two drops of rain running down a pane of glass, or two drops of oil, kiss into each other, and are no longer two but one. Now if you have been ever blest with a manifestation of Christ, your spirit has melted into his, and you have felt that sweet union and communion with him that you saw as with his eyes, heard as with his ears, felt as with his heart, and spoke as with his tongue.

### **December 11**

**"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28**

**When we rest, we find relief to our weary limbs. So spiritually. When the soul comes to Jesus, he gives it rest and relief from its burdens; as well as deliverance from anxiety, and cessation from the labour that distresses and distracts it. He promises to give this—"Come unto me, and I"—who else can do it? None, either in heaven or earth—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How? By communicating to the soul out of his infinite fulness, by sprinkling upon the conscience his atoning blood, by shedding abroad in the heart his dying love, and enabling the soul to believe on his name, and cling to his Person. In this there is rest—nothing else will do it—nothing else will give it. Other remedies will leave us at last under the wrath of God. But he that comes to and leans upon Jesus, his finished work, his dying love, will have rest here and heaven hereafter. Are not our poor minds often restless, often anxious, and pensive, because of a thousand doubts, perplexities, painful trials, and grievous afflictions—do they not all make your spirit weary and restless within you? There never can be anything but restlessness while we move round this circle of sin and self. But when by precious faith we come out of our own righteousness, our own strength, our own wisdom, our own worthiness; come to, believe in, hang upon, and cleave unto the Person, blood, and work of the only-begotten Son of God, so as to feel a measure of his preciousness in our hearts—then there is rest. This is solid, this is abiding, this is not delusive; this will never leave the soul deceived with false hopes. No, it will end in eternal bliss and glory—in the open vision of eternal love—in seeing him face to face whom the soul has known, looked to, believed in, and loved upon earth.**

**December 12**

**"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."  
Romans 8:26**

**In all our prayers, in all our approaches to the throne, our mercy and wisdom will be to seek to possess the mind of the Spirit; to desire to know the will of God, and do it; to look up more believingly and continually to the Lord Jesus, that he himself**

would teach and guide us; that he would by his Spirit and grace conform us more inwardly and outwardly to his suffering image; that he would grant unto us to know him more, and serve him better; that our prayers may day by day be more and more fervent, earnest, and sincere, more spiritual, more in accordance with the will of God; that thus they may be more and more manifested as the interceding breath of the Spirit of God in our hearts, and as such may bring more clear and evident answers down. Pray for the manifestation of Christ to your soul, for a revelation of the Person, blood, righteousness, and love of Jesus; seek to have your signs and evidences of divine life more cleared up; your Ebenezers and tokens for good more brightly shone upon; your doubts and fears more plainly dispelled, and a fuller and sweeter assurance of personal interest given in the finished work of Christ. Desire also to have the promises applied to your heart, the word of God brought with divine power into your conscience, and a living faith raised up and drawn forth to mix with the truth which you read or hear. Beg, as the Lord may enable, for submission, patience, resignation, brokenness, contrition, humility, godly sorrow for sin, heavenly affections, and that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace. Above all, seek an inward assurance that your prayers are heard and accepted, and then watch for the answer. This will give you the surest and best of all evidences that the blessed Spirit is himself interceding for you with groanings which cannot be uttered.

**December 13**

**"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Hebrews 5:9**

**By his sufferings in the garden and upon the cross the Lord Jesus was made perfect. But what perfection was this? It clearly does not mean that by these sufferings in the garden and upon the cross our Lord was made perfect as the Son of God, nor perfect as the Son of man, for he was perfect before as possessing infinite perfection in his eternal Godhead, and was endued also with every possible perfection of which his sacred humanity was capable. He needed no perfection to be added to his Godhead; it was not susceptible of it; no perfection to be added to his manhood, for it was "a holy thing" in union with eternal Deity. But he needed to be made perfect as a High Priest. It was through his sufferings**

that he was consecrated or dedicated in an especial manner to the priesthood, for this corresponds with his own words: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself" (John 17:19); that is, I consecrate or dedicate myself to be their High Priest. The two main offices of the high priest were to offer sacrifice and make intercession. Sacrifice came first; and the sufferings of our Lord in the garden and upon the cross were a part of this sacrifice. He was therefore "made perfect through suffering," that is, through his sufferings, blood-shedding, and death he was consecrated to perform that other branch of the priestly office which he now executes. Thus as Aaron was consecrated by the sacrifice of a bullock and a ram, of which the blood was not only poured out at the bottom of the altar and sprinkled upon it, but put also on his right ear and hand and foot, so was his great and glorious Anti-type consecrated through his own sacrifice and blood-shedding on the cross; and thus being made perfect, or rather, as the word literally means, being perfected, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

December 14

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." Jeremiah 9:23, 24

So we are allowed to glory. But in what and in whom? Not in ourselves; that is for ever disannulled. The Lord has purposed to pour contempt upon all human glory, that none should glory in himself, whatever he be or whatever he have. But when a man has a view of the Son of God in his beauty, in his suitability, in his heavenly grace and divine glory, then he can and may glory in the Lord. He can say, "O what a Lord there is above! How glorious is he in his excellency, in his suitability, and in his blessedness; how glorious his wisdom, his righteousness, his sanctification, and his redemption. Let my whole glory be there; let me not take to myself a single atom of it. If I am wise, let me give him the glory of being my wisdom; if righteous, let me give him the glory of being my righteousness; if I have any fruit of the Spirit, let me give him the glory of being my sanctification; if I am redeemed from death and hell, let the glory of my redemption be his." This is doing as God would have us to do, glorying in his dear Son. And the Lord

will bring all his people to this spot sooner or later. He will give them such views of the effects of the fall, of the misery of sin, and of their own helplessness; and will give them such gracious views of his dear Son, as shall wean them from glorying in the creature and make them glory in the Lord as all their salvation and all their desire. It may be by a long course of severe discipline, but the Lord will eventually bring all his people there; for he has determined to glorify his dear Son, and when we can thus glorify him, then we have the mind of Christ, and are doing the will of God.

December 15

"Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Isaiah 45:24

The same blessed Spirit who shines as with a ray of light and life into the conscience, to make it feel the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and its own miserable state as a transgressor, leads it also into this secret, that it has no strength. Have you never felt that you were utterly powerless—that you would believe, but could not; would hope, but could not; would love, but could not; would keep God's word, but could not; would obey his commandments, but were not able? Has a sense of your own miserable impotency and thorough helplessness never pressed you down almost to despair? You felt sure that there was a faith, a hope, a love, a blessing, and a blessedness in the truth of God; a pardon, a peace, a heavenly joy; an assurance of salvation, a union and communion with the Lord Jesus, which you saw, but could not reach. You felt that if you could believe, all would be well, but believe you could not. Thus you learnt you had no strength, and as we learn our weakness in this way, we begin to learn also in whom is our strength; and as we get access to Christ by a living faith, we receive strength out of him for a supply of our spiritual necessities. Despairing of all strength in self, we look to the Lord Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father, to give us his; we lift up our prayers and supplications to the great High Priest over the house of God, to strengthen us with strength in our soul; and when he is pleased, in answer to prayer, to send down his Spirit and grace, we are "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." This is being "strong in the Lord and in the power of

his might;" and a being "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

December 16

"Beloved of God, called to be saints." Romans 1:7

The very word "saint" has become, through man's perverseness and wickedness, a word of reproach and contempt. But God will honour it, let men dishonour it as they please. God has put a crown of glory upon it, let men despise it as they may. There is no privilege or blessing that God can confer so great and glorious as to crown you with the crown of saint. He might have given you titles without number; he might have showered riches upon your head in the greatest profusion; rank, fame, talent, beauty, health, all might have been poured at your feet; but what would all these be compared to making you a saint of God? But what is it to be a saint? It is to be sanctified by God the Father, set apart for himself, to shew forth his praise. It is to be washed in the atoning blood and clothed in the justifying righteousness of the Son, and to be regenerated by the Spirit of God. It is to be introduced into a new world by being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. What heart can conceive or tongue express the state of blessedness to which the despised saints of God are advanced even in this time state! They are sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; jewels in Jesus' mediatorial crown; members of his mystical body, and as such united to him by indissoluble ties; pillars in the temple of God which shall go no more out; sheep redeemed by precious blood; virgin souls espoused to the Lord the Lamb. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and mansions of glory are prepared for them beyond the skies. There they shall sit as overcomers with Christ on his throne, and there they shall sing upon harps of gold the praises of a Three-One God to all eternity.

December 17

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no many; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1

**How many a poor sensible sinner has, upon the strength of these words, looked unto Jesus and been lightened (Psalm 34:5), come to him and met with a kind reception. By the power which attends such invitations the heart is opened, as was the heart of Lydia, to attend unto the things spoken in the gospel. It is not put away as too holy for a poor polluted sinner to touch, nor is the Lord Jesus viewed as an angry judge; but in these invitations his clemency, tenderness, and compassion are seen and felt, and beams and rays of his mercy and grace both enlighten the understanding and soften and melt the heart. Thence spring confession of sin, self-loathing, renunciation of one's own righteousness, earnest desires and breathings after the Lord, and an embracing of the love of the truth so far as made known. And as all these effects, so different from the old dead pharisaic religion, are produced by the power of the word upon the heart, the Bible becomes a new book, and is read and studied with attention and delight. The ears, too, being unstopped, as well as the eyes opened, if there be the opportunity of hearing the preached gospel, with what eagerness is it embraced, and what a sweetness there is found in it. All who have passed through these things will agree with us that there are no such hearing days as what Job calls "the days of our youth, when the secret of God is upon our tabernacle" (Job 29:4).**

**December 18**

**"That I may be found in him." Philippians 3:9**

**The Apostle knew a time was coming when God would search Jerusalem as with candles. He knew a day was hastening on when the secrets of all hearts would be revealed. He knew an hour was approaching when the eyes of the Lord would try, and the eyelids of the righteous judge would weigh the words and actions of men. And he knew in his own soul's experience, that all who, in that awful day, were not found in Christ, would be consigned to the eternal pit of woe. He knew that when the judge took his seat upon the great white throne, and heaven and earth fled away from his presence, no one could stand before his look of infinite justice and eternal purity, but those who had a vital standing in the Son of God. And therefore, looking to that awful time, and the solemnities of that day of judgment, that day of wonders, this was the desire of his soul—and towards that he pressed forward, as an**

active runner presses towards the goal—"that he might be found in him;" that when the Lord comes a second time to judgment, and his eyes run over the assembled myriads, he might be found in the Man who is "a refuge from the storm, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," the only Saviour from the wrath to come, which will one day burst upon the world.

December 19

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:15

It is true that real grace can suffer neither loss nor diminution, but its manifestations and its actings may. Who that possesses faith is not conscious that it ebbs and flows, rises and sinks, is strong and weak, and varies from day to day and from hour to hour? Thus when a sharp trial comes, its immediate effect is to depress faith. It falls upon it like a weight, and bends it down to the ground. Faith may be compared to the quicksilver in a weather-glass, or in a thermometer. The quantity of mercury in the bulb never varies; but it rises or falls in the tube, according to the weight of the air, or the heat of the day. Thus faith, though it abides in the heart without loss or diminution, yet rises or sinks in the feelings, as the weather is fair or foul, or as the sun shews or hides himself. Did Job's faith, for instance, mount equally high when "in the days of his youth"—the spring of his soul—"the secret of God was upon his tabernacle," and when "he cursed his day," and cried, "O that I knew where I might find him?" Was Peter's faith as strong when he quailed before a servant girl as when he was ready to go to prison and to death? Or Abraham's when he denied Sarah to be his wife, and when with but three hundred and eighteen men he pursued and smote the army of four mighty kings? If faith never fluctuates, never sinks and never rises, then we have at once the dead assurance of a professor; then faith is in our own keeping; then it does not hang on the smile or frown of God; then we are no more beggars and bankrupts, living on supplies given or withholden, but independent and self-sufficient; then we "have no changes, and so fear not God." But if faith ebb and flow, what is the cause? Is it in self? Can we add to its stature one cubit, or make one hair of it black or white? If not, then must its ebbings and flowings come from God.

**December 20**

**"And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Hosea 2:15**

**Now the "valley of Achor" signifies the "valley of trouble." It was the valley in which Achan was stoned. And why stoned? Because he had taken the accursed thing; because his eye had been captivated by the Babylonish garment and golden wedge, and he had buried them in the tent. This may throw a light on what the "valley of Achor" is spiritually. Perhaps you have been guilty of Achan's sin; you have been taking the accursed thing; have been too deeply connected with the world; have done things which God's displeasure is against. Let conscience speak in the bosom of each. The consequence has been, that you have got into the "valley of Achor!" Trouble, sorrow, and confusion are your lot, and you do not know whether the lot of Achan may not await you there.**

**Now it is in this "valley of Achor," or sorrow, confusion, and fear, that the "door of hope" is opened. But why "in the valley of Achor?" That we may cease to hope in self; that a sound and true gospel hope may enter within the veil as an anchor sure and steadfast, and there be no hope but in the precious blood of the Lamb, and in a sweet manifestation of that blood to the conscience. This is the "door of hope" through which the soul looks into the very presence of God; sees Jesus on the throne of grace, the sprinkled mercy-seat, and the great High Priest "able and willing to save to the uttermost." Through this "door of hope," by which Christ is seen, the soul goes forth in desires, breathings, hungerings, and thirstings after him; and through this "door of hope" descend visits, smiles, tokens, testimonies, mercies, and favours. And thus, there is "a door of hope," no longer barred, closed, and shut back, but thrown wide open in the bleeding side of an incarnate God. Here is a renewing of visits almost despaired of; of joys that seemed never to return; of hopes almost extinct; of consolations remembered, but remembered almost with fear, lest they should have been delusive. "She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."**

**December 21**

**"Whom having not seen, ye love." 1 Peter 1:8**

**How this speaks to our hearts; and cannot some, if not many of us say too, "Whom having not seen, we love?" Do we not love him, dear readers? Is not his name precious to us as the ointment poured forth? But we have not seen him. No, not by the eye of sense and nature; but we have seen him by the eye of faith; for he has manifested himself to us, or to some of us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It is, then, by faith that we see Jesus. We read of Moses that, "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." So by faith we see Jesus who is invisible; for as faith is "the substance of things hoped for," so is it "the evidence of things not seen." Thus we see that it is by Jesus coming to the soul and manifesting himself unto it that we see him. And as he always comes with his love, and in manifesting himself manifests himself in his love, that manifested love kindles, raises, and draws up a corresponding love in the believer's heart. It is the express, the special work of the Holy Ghost to testify of Christ, to glorify him, to receive of the things which are Christ's and to shew them unto the soul; and thus in the light of Christ's own manifestations of himself and the blessed Spirit's work and witness of him, what faith believes of the Person and work of Christ love embraces and enjoys.**

**December 22**

**"In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter 1:8**

**Here we have linked together faith, love, joy, and glory. The word translated "rejoice" means a high degree of joy, and signifies literally, to leap with joy. Spiritual joy, holy joy, is therefore distinguished from earthly joy, natural joy, not only in nature, but in degree. Natural joy can never rise very high, nor last very long.**

**It is of the earth, earthy, and therefore can never rise high nor long endure. It is always marred by some check, damp or disappointment; and, as in the bitterest cup of the righteous "There's some thing secret sweetens all," so in the sweetest cup of the ungodly there is something secret embitters all. All their mirth is madness; for even "in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." God frowns upon all the worldling's pleasure, conscience condemns it, and the weary heart is often sick of it, even unto death. It cannot bear inspection or reflection, has perpetual disappointment stamped upon it here and eternal sorrow hereafter. But how different is the joy of faith and love. It is unspeakable, for it is one of the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man; and therefore human language, which can only express human thoughts and feelings, has no words for this. Those who have experienced it understand it when spoken of by others, but not from the words themselves, but because those words are as if broken hints, dim and feeble shadows, imperfect and insufficient utterances, but interpreted by their own experience. "And full of glory." It is literally "glorified," that is, the joy is a joy which God especially honours by stamping upon it a divine glory. It is, therefore, a blessed preparation for, and foretaste of the glory that shall be revealed.**

**December 23**

**"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:27**

**God's will must ever stand, it is as unchanging and as unchangeable as God himself. Our wills are ever fluctuating; God's will fluctuates not. And as that will must ever live and rule, it will be our highest wisdom and richest mercy to submit to, and be conformed unto it. Now the will of God to you who desire to fear his name is not your destruction, but your salvation; your profit now, your happiness hereafter; your present grace, and eternal glory. And the Spirit is making intercession for you according to the will of God; for is it not your earnest desire and prayer that your soul should be saved and blessed, that you should serve God and live to his glory, and when you die be with him for ever? Lie, then, at his feet. Be the clay, and let him be**

**your heavenly Potter. Think not of saving yourself, or of putting your own hand to God's gracious work. Be content to be nothing. Sink even lower than that; be willing to be less than nothing, that Christ may be all in all. Covet above all things the Spirit's interceding breath; for in possessing that you will have a sure pledge that he will guide you in life, support you in death, and land you in glory. With his guidance we can never err; with his supporting arms we can never fall; taught by him we shall see the path of life plainly; upheld by his strength we shall walk in it without fear. Without his light we are dark; without his life we are dead; without his teaching we are but a mass of ignorance and folly. We cannot find the way except he guide; but if he do guide, we cannot but find it. The more we confide in his teaching and guidance the better it will be for us; and the more that under this teaching we can lie submissively at the Lord's feet, looking up to him for his will to be made known in us and perfected in us, the more it will be for our present peace, and the more it will redound to his eternal praise.**

**December 24**

**"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Psalm 119:71**

**We may have everything naturally that the carnal heart desires, and only be hardened thereby into worldliness and ungodliness. But to be brought down in body and soul, to be weaned and separated from an ungodly world by affliction sanctified and made spiritually profitable, to be brought to feel our need of Christ, and that without an interest in his precious blood our soul must be for ever lost—how much better it is really and truly, to be laid on a bed of affliction, with a hope in God's mercy, than to be left to our own carnality and thoughtlessness. Affliction of any kind is very hard to bear, and especially so when we begin to murmur and fret under the weight of the cross; but when the Lord afflicts it is in good earnest; he means to make us feel. Strong measures are required to bring us down; and affliction would not be affliction, unless it were full of grief and sorrow. But when affliction makes us seek the Lord with a deep feeling in the soul that none but himself can save or bless, and we are enabled to look up unto him, with sincerity and earnestness, that he would manifest his love and mercy to our heart, he will appear sooner or**

later. The Lord, who searcheth the heart, knoweth all the real desire of the soul, and can and does listen to a sigh, a desire, a breath of supplication within. He knows our state, both of body and soul, and is not a hard taskmaster to require what we cannot give, or lay upon us more than we can bear, but can and does give all that he desires from us. But very often he delays to appear, that he may teach us thereby we have no claim upon him, and that anything granted is of his pure compassion and grace.

**December 25**

**"Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16**

A mystery indeed it is, a great, a deep, an unfathomable mystery; for who can rightly understand how the divine Word, the eternal Son of God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us? "Who shall declare his generation?" (Isa. 53:8;) either that eternal generation whereby he is the only-begotten Son of God, or the generation of his sacred humanity in the womb of the Virgin, when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her? These are the things "which the angels desire to look into;" which they cannot understand, but reverently adore. And well may we imitate their adoring admiration, not attempting to understand, but believe, love, and revere; for well has it been said,

**"Where reason fails, with all her powers,  
There faith believes, and love adores."**

Nor, if rightly taught and spiritually led, shall we find this a barren, dry, or unprofitable subject. It is "the great mystery of godliness;" therefore all godliness is contained in it, and flows out of it. The whole of God's grace, mercy, and truth is laid up in, is revealed through, is manifested by, the Son of his love; for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" and this as Immanuel, God with us. Thus his sacred humanity, in union with his divine Person, is the channel of communication through which all the love and mercy of God flow down to poor guilty, miserable sinners, who believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. If blessed, then, with faith in living exercise, we may draw near and behold the great mystery of godliness. To tread by

**faith upon this holy ground is to come "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24); for every blessing of the new covenant, if we are but favoured with a living faith in an incarnate God, is then experimentally as well as eternally ours.**

**December 26**

**"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty." Zephaniah 3:17**

**What a mighty God we have to deal with! And what would suit our case but a mighty God? Have we not mighty sins? Have we not mighty trials? Have we not mighty temptations? Have we not mighty foes and mighty fears? And who is to deliver us from all this mighty host except the mighty God? It is not a little God (if I may use the expression) that will do for God's people. They need a mighty God because they are in circumstances where none but a mighty God can interfere in their behalf. Why, if you did not know feelingly and experimentally your mighty sins, your mighty trials, your mighty temptations, and your mighty fears, you would not want a mighty God. This sense of our weakness and his power, of our misery and his mercy, of our ruin and his recovery, of the aboundings of our sin and the superaboundings of his grace—a feeling sense, I say, of these opposite yet harmonious things brings us to have personal, experimental dealings with God; and it is in these personal dealings with God that the life of all religion consists. O what a poor, dead, useless religion is that in which there are no personal dealings with God—no calling upon his holy name out of a sincere heart; no seeking of his face, or imploring of his favour; no lying at his feet and begging of him to appear; no pitiable, lamentable case for him to have compassion upon; no wounds or sores for him to heal, no leprosy to cleanse, no enemies to put to the rout, no fears to dispel, and, I may almost say, no soul to save! And yet such is the religion of thousands. They draw near to God with their lips, but their hearts are far from him, and whilst they outwardly say, "Lord, Lord," they inwardly say,**

**"This man shall not have dominion over us." If you differ from them, and want a God near at hand and not afar off, a mighty God in the very midst of your soul, of your thoughts, desires, and affections, you may well bless him for the grace which has made you to differ, and thankfully bow your neck to sufferings and trials, as means in his hand to bring you and him together.**

**December 27**

**"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7**

**The nature of faith is to trust in the dark, when all appearances are against it; to trust that a calm will come, though the storm be overhead; to trust that God will appear, though nothing but evil be felt. It is tender, child-like, and therefore is an implicit confidence, a yielding submission, a looking unto the Lord. There is something filial in this; something heavenly and spiritual; not the bold presumption of the daring, nor the despairing fears of the desponding; but something beyond both the one and the other—equally remote from the rashness of presumption, and from the horror of despair. There is a mingling of holy affection connected with this trust, springing out of a reception of past favours, insuring favours to come; and all linked with a simple hanging and depending of the soul upon the Lord, because He is what He is. There is a looking to, and relying upon the Lord, because we have felt him to be the Lord; and because we have no other refuge.**

**And why have we no other refuge? Because poverty has driven us out of false refuges. It is a safe spot, though not a comfortable one, to be where David was, "Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Ps. 142:4). And until refuge fails us in man, in self, in the world, in the church, there is no looking to Christ as a divine refuge. But when we come to this spot, "Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living" (Ps. 142:5)—"if I perish I will perish at thy feet—my faith centres in thee—all I have and all I expect to have, flows from thy bounty, I have nothing but what thou freely givest to me, the vilest of the vile"—this is trust. And where this trust is, there will be a whole army of desires at times pouring themselves into the bosom of the Lord; there will be a whole array of pantings and longings venting themselves into the bosom of "Immanuel, God with us."**

**December 28**

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Philippians 1:29**

**After the Lord, by his special work on the conscience, has called us to repentance and confession of sin, as well as to faith in Jesus; after he has called us to godly sorrow; to live according to the precepts of the gospel; and to walk in the ordinances of his Church; he then calls us to suffer for and with Christ. But we cannot "suffer according to the will of God," that is, in a gospel sense and from gospel motives, till the Lord enables us in some measure to look to him. The same Spirit, who calls the believer to walk in a path of suffering, strengthens and enables him to do so. To suffer aright, we must walk in the steps of the great Captain of our salvation, who "though a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." The Father in this sense spared not his only-begotten Son, but led him into the path of tribulation. If the Lord of the house, then, had to travel in this dark and gloomy path of suffering, can his disciples escape? If the Captain of our salvation was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," must not the common soldiers, who occupy the ranks of the spiritual army, be baptized into the same sufferings, and taste in their measure of that cup which he drank to the very dregs? Thus, every child of God is called, sooner or later, to "suffer with Christ;" and he that suffers not with Christ, will not reign with him (2 Timothy 2:12). But the Lord, who sees what we are, as well as what we need, apportions out suffering to our several states and necessities. And however the suffering may differ, all have to pass through the furnace; for the Lord bringeth "the third part through the fire." All have to walk in the footsteps of a self-denying and crucified Jesus; all have painfully to feel what it is to be at times under the rod, and experience those chastisements of God, whereby they are proved to be sons, and not bastards.**

**December 29**

**"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5**

**The great secret in religion—that secret which is only with those who fear the Lord and to whom he shews his covenant—is first to get sensible union with the Lord, and then to maintain it. But this union cannot be got except by some manifestation of his Person and work to our heart, joining us to him as by one Spirit. This is the espousal of the soul, whereby it is espoused to one husband as a chaste virgin to Christ. From this espousal comes fellowship, or communion with Christ; and from this communion flows all fruitfulness, for it is not a barren marriage. But this union and communion cannot be maintained except by abiding in Christ; and this can only be by his abiding in us. "Abide in me, and I in you." But how do we abide in him? Mainly by faith, hope, and love, for these are the three chief graces of the Spirit which are exercised upon the Person and work of the Son of God. But as a matter of faith and experience, we have also to learn that to abide in Christ needs prayer and watchfulness, patience and self-denial, separation from the world and things worldly, study of the Scriptures and secret meditation, attendance on the means of grace, and, though last, not least, much inward exercise of soul. The Lord is, so to speak, very chary of his presence. Any indulged sin; any forbidden gratification; any bosom idol; any lightness or carnality; any abuse of the comforts of house and home, wife and children, food and raiment; any snare of business or occupation; any negligence in prayer, reading, watching the heart and mouth; any conformity to the world and worldly professors; in a word, anything contrary to his mind and will, offensive to the eyes of his holiness and purity, inconsistent with godly fear in a tender conscience, or unbecoming our holy profession, it matters not whether little or much, whether seen or unseen by human eye—all provoke the Lord to deny the soul the enjoyment of his presence. And yet with all his purity and holiness and severity against sin, he is full of pity and compassion to those who fear and love his great and glorious name. When these sins are felt, and these backslidings confessed, he will turn again and not retain his anger for ever. When repenting Israel returns unto the Lord his God, with the words in his heart and mouth: "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously;" then the Lord answers: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." Then, under the**

**influence of his love, Israel cries aloud: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."**

**December 30**

**"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof."  
Ecclesiastes 7:8**

**Thus saith the wise man, and it is often true in natural things, but invariably so in divine. Rarely at first can we foresee what will be the issue of any matter which we take in hand. We may begin it with much hope, and find in the end those hopes sadly disappointed. We may begin it with much fear, and find from the event those fears utterly groundless. Whatever we take in hand it is very rare that our expectations are fully carried out, for we have again and again to learn that "man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps," and that there are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that and that only, shall stand. But so far as we are amongst the family of God, and as such are under especial guidance and divine teaching and leading, whether our first expectations are accomplished or not, the end stamps wisdom and goodness upon all the dealings of God with us both in providence and in grace. However chequered his path has been; however, as Job speaks, his purposes have been broken off, even the thoughts of his heart; however when he looked for good, then evil came unto him, and when he waited for light there came darkness; whatever bitter things God seemed to write against him when he made him to possess the sins of his youth, yet sooner or later every child of God will be able to say, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" and this will embolden him to add, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, as they have already followed me, all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."**

**December 31**

**"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." 1 Peter 1:24, 25**

**All flesh, and everything that springs from the flesh, and is connected with the flesh, is as grass, which, for a time, looks green and flourishing, but touched with the mower's scythe, or scorched by the midday sun, soon withers and fades away. Such is all flesh, without exception, from the highest to the lowest. As in nature, some grass grows thicker and longer than other, and makes, for a while, a brighter show, yet the scythe makes no distinction between the light crop and the heavy, so the scythe of death mows down with equal sweep the rich and the poor, and lays in one common grave all the children of men. You have seen sometimes in the early spring the grass in flower, and you have noticed those little yellowish "anthers," as they are termed, which tremble at every breeze. This is "the flower of grass;" and though so inconspicuous as almost to escape observation, yet as much its flower as the tulip or the rose is the flower of the plant which bears each. Now, as the grass withereth, so the flower thereof falleth away. It never had, at its best state, much permanency or strength of endurance, for it hung as by a thread, and it required but a little gust of wind to blow it away, and make it as though it never had been. Such is all the pride of the flesh, and all the glory of man.**

**But is there nothing that endures amidst all that thus withers and falls away? Yes, the word of the Lord. "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." Now, the same gospel which was preached by the Apostles is preached unto us in the word of truth which we have in our hands; and if we have received that gospel into a believing heart, we have received for ourselves that word of the Lord which endureth for ever. And thus, though all our own flesh is as grass, and all in which we might naturally glory is but as the flower of grass, and though this grass must wither in death, and the flower thereof shall fall away, when the place which now knoweth us shall know us no more, yet we have an enduring substance in the gospel of the grace of God, and, so far as we have received that gospel, and known it to be the power of God unto salvation, when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

