

**THIS E-BOOK HAS BEEN
EDITED AND PREPARED BY**

THE BIBLE TRUTH FORUM

<http://www.bibletruthforum.com>

The Bible Truth Forum is Thankful to Present

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."

.....

July 1

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9

How mysterious are God's dealings! That such a highly-favoured man as Paul should come down from the "third heaven" to the very gates of hell (that is not too strong an expression, for "the messenger of Satan" came from hell), that he should sink in soul-feeling to the very gates of hell, there to be buffeted by "the messenger of Satan;" and all to teach him a lesson that heaven did not teach him, *the strength of God made perfect in weakness!* Do you not think, that if we are to learn our weakness, we must learn it in the same way? How did Paul get his religion? And must we not get ours, in our feebler measure, through the same channels, by the same means, and by the same inward teachings? If we are to learn the secret of Christ's strength, it is not by making daily advances in fleshly holiness, and getting stronger in self day by day. It is not by old nature being so mended and improved, as by and by to be shaded off into grace, just as the colours in the rainbow are so harmoniously blended that you can scarcely tell where the one ends and the other begins. For this is what is really meant by "progressive sanctification," that the old nature is so gradually softened and blended into grace, that we can scarcely tell where the old man ceases and the new nature commences. Did the Apostle learn Christ's strength in that way? No; but by being buffeted by Satan's messenger, and thus being beaten out of his own strength, he found Christ's strength made perfect in his weakness.

July 2

"Draw me; we will run after thee." Song of Solomon 1:4

How many of us can take the words of the bride into our lips, or have ever been able at any one time of our life to use such an expression? We must have had some sight and sense of the preciousness and loveliness of Jesus before ever we can cry, "Draw me," from the depth of a sincere heart. For the sincere soul is afraid to approach the holy Jehovah, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and insult him with mock petitions and words that it does not feel. But if ever that desire has been kindled, and that

prayer raised up in your soul, "Draw me, we will run after thee," it must have been the work of the Holy Ghost in your hearts, to raise up those feelings and to give you a living faith in the Son of God. And "he that believeth shall be saved." Whatever doubts, whatever fears, whatever temptations, whatever exercises beset the path, "he that believeth shall be saved." He that has had given him one grain of spiritual faith in Christ's glorious person, who has had one sight of his atoning blood, one sip of divine love shed abroad in his heart, is sure to go to glory; he is saved with an everlasting salvation, in his covenant Head. The Lord that has kindled these strong desires after himself in his soul, will surely fulfil them. As we find he did in the case of the bride; he said to her, after a little time, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

July 3

"Which holdeth our soul in life." Psalm 66:9

It is indeed an unspeakable mercy for the heirs of promise that the life given them in Christ and communicated by the Holy Spirit to their souls cannot be extinguished. It may sink very low—one can hardly say how low, but so low as to sink out of sight and almost out of feeling; and yet if it has once been breathed into the soul from the mouth of God, it can never die. Still it is most desirable that this divine life should be maintained in strength and vigour, and not sink so low as to be scarcely perceptible either to ourselves or others, for if so, we have little comfort of it in our own breast, and are of little use or service to the people of God. It is a sad thing to be satisfied with a low, lean, and lifeless state of soul, or be placing our religion in external activity and zealous attention to forms and mere externals, just to preserve a clean outside, when within there is little else but darkness, bondage, and death. How the Lord seems, as it were, obliged to plunge us into trials and afflictions to bring us out of carnality and death, and to keep us from settling on our lees like Moab!

July 4

"Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good." Jeremiah 32:41

God rejoices as much in saving your soul as you can rejoice in your soul being saved. Say I "as much?" His joy is infinite, and yours is finite; his the joy of God, and yours but the joy of man. Do you believe that God rejoices to save, delights in saving? Why else should he have given his dear Son? Do the angels rejoice over repenting sinners? Is there no joy then in the bosom of God to save a sinner too? How this takes us up, as it were, into the very realms of bliss, and reveals to us the wondrous character of God in his Trinity of persons and Unity of essence, that there is a rejoicing in the salvation of the Church, so that God himself, so to speak, is filled with eternal joy in the salvation of his people. When his dear Son offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, and thus put away the transgressions and iniquities of the Church by his own blood-shedding and death, overcame death and hell, and washed us in his blood from all our filth and guilt and shame, God, so to speak; rejoiced with infinite joy in the completion of the work of his dear Son. It was the fulfilment of his eternal purposes of wisdom and grace. It was the manifestation of his glory to men and angels. It was the triumph of good over evil, of holiness over sin, of mercy over judgment, of love over enmity, of wisdom over craft, of the counsels of God over the devices of man, and, above all, of the Son of God in his weakness over Satan in his might. It was peopling heaven with an innumerable multitude of saints by whom eternal anthems of praise should be sung to God and the Lamb. Thus we may see how the God of heaven even now rejoices with holy joy over every one whom he brings to the enjoyment of a salvation so free, so great, so glorious.

July 5

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22

What are the promises? Are not all the promises suited to the Lord's poor and needy family? What are the promises of pardon, except to the guilty? What are promises of salvation, except to the lost? What are promises of consolation, except to the afflicted? What are promises of grace, except to those who feel themselves

altogether undone? Thus it is "through much tribulation" we enter into the sweetness of the promises. Then they come with power into the heart; they are manifested with life and feeling to the soul; and we begin, like Jeremiah of old, to "find God's word and eat it;" and feel it to be the very joy and rejoicing of our heart. This is the effect of passing through tribulation in providence and in grace,—of cutting trials; of severe, harassing temptations; of frowns from the world; of blows from sinners and saints; of learning the workings of a heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; to lead us "into the kingdom of God;" and into those sweet manifestations of lovingkindness and tender mercy which alone can satisfy us whose consciences God's finger has touched. And I believe you that are honest, you that are sincere, you that fear to be deceived, you that know there is a secret in vital godliness, and long to know it more deeply, and feel it more powerfully; I am sure there is an inward witness in your soul that you never entered into any one mystery of the kingdom of God set up in your heart except through tribulation. Was it not through tribulation you understood the word, and felt it applied to your conscience by the power of God? And was it not by and through tribulation, through the medium of suffering, that you were made to value more and more the manifestation of God to your soul? and feel that nothing could satisfy you, nothing content you, but a blessed discovery of dying love?

July 6

"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." 1 Peter 1:21

Observe the special mark which is here given of those for whom Christ was manifested. It is said of them that "by him they believe in God." If this be their distinctive mark, we may well inquire what is intended by it. It must surely be a very great thing to believe in God with a faith that brings salvation with it. It is easy to believe that there is a God in nature, or a God in providence, or a God in grace, according to the mere letter of the word, and this is what thousands do who have no manifested interest in redeeming love and atoning blood. In fact, it is the great delusion of the day, the religion of that religious multitude who know neither God nor themselves, neither law nor gospel, neither sin

nor salvation. All this is a believing about God, or a believing of God, such as that he exists, or that he is such a God as the Scriptures represent him to be; but this is a very different thing from believing in God. This is a special and peculiar faith, and implies a spiritual and saving knowledge of God, such as our Lord speaks of (John 17:3); and as none can thus know him unto eternal life but from some discovery of himself, some personal manifestation of his presence, some coming nigh of himself in the power of his word and the operations of his grace, so none can believe in him without a faith of divine operation. To believe, therefore, in God is not an act of the natural mind, but it is the gift and work of God, bestowed upon us through the mediation of Christ, and therefore, as the Apostle says, "given in the behalf of Christ" (Phil. 1:29).

July 7

"For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" Job 27:8-10

Many of God's people are at times exercised as to their hypocrisy, and sometimes they may think themselves the most consummate hypocrites that ever stood in a profession. But if you are exercised with these painful surmises, these doubts and fears, just see (and the Lord enable you to bring it to the light of his countenance) these two features of a spiritual character. Do not talk about your hope; it may be "a spider's web." Do not boast of your gifts; they may be altogether in the flesh. Do not bring forward the good opinion of men; they may be deceived in you. But just see if, with the Lord's blessing, you can feel these two tests in your soul, as written there by his own hand. If so, you are not a hypocrite; God himself, by his servant Job, has acquitted you of the charge. Did you, then, ever "delight yourself in the Almighty?" It is a solemn question. Did your heart and soul ever go out after the living God? Did affection, love, and gratitude ever flow out of your bosom into the bosom of the Lord? Did you ever feel as if you could clasp him in the arms of faith, and live and die in his embrace? Now if your soul has ever felt this, you are no hypocrite; and nothing can rise up out of your wretched heart, as an accusing devil, that can prove you to be one. Or if you cannot

fully realise this, if you are one that always calls upon God, you are no hypocrite. I do not speak of your regular prayers, or any other of your regularities; for I believe that there is often more of God's Spirit, and more craving after God and delighting in him, in your irregularities, than in all the daily regularities which hypocrites delight in. But I mean, is there a sigh or cry by night, as well as by day; a pouring out of the heart into the bosom of God from time to time, as the Lord works it in you, in trouble, in perplexity, in sorrow, and in distress? This is a test and a mark which no hypocrite ever had or ever can have.

July 8

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

There is not a more blessed declaration than this in the whole word of truth. It is the sweetest note sounded by the gospel trumpet, for it is the very crown of the whole jubilee. Is not condemnation the bitterest drop in the cup of trembling? the most thrilling, piercing note of that terrible trumpet which sounded so long and so loud from Sinai's blazing top that all the people that were in the camp trembled? (Exod. 19:13, 16.) Condemnation is the final execution of God's righteous law, and therefore carries with it all that arms death with its sting and the grave with its terror. The apprehension of this; the dread and fear of being banished for ever from the presence of God; of being lost, and that without remedy; of sinking under the blazing indignation of him who is a consuming fire, has filled thousands of hearts with horror. And it must be so as long as the law speaks in its thunders, as long as conscience re-echoes its verdict, and as long as the wrath of God burns to the lowest hell. O the blessedness, then, of that word of grace and truth, worthy to be sounded through heaven and earth by the voice of cherubim and seraphim, "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!"

July 9

"What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." Psalm 25:12

In all the multiplicity and variety of circumstances that have distressed the children of God, has the Lord ever taken a wrong step? Though he has baffled nature, though he has disconcerted reason, though he has turned our plans upside down, though perhaps he has done the thing that we most feared, and thwarted every natural purpose and inclination of our heart—can we say that he has erred? that he has made a mistake? that he has acted unwisely? that he has not done that which is for our spiritual good? Murmuring, rebellious, unbelieving heart, hold thy peace! Shall man, foolish man, a worm of the earth, a creature of a day, lift up his puny voice and say, that God can mistake? Your path is very dark, very intricate, very perplexed; you cannot see the hand of God in the trial that is now resting upon you; you cannot believe that it will work together for your good. I admit it. I have felt it. I have known it. But the time will come, when this dark path in which you are now walking, shall be seen full of radiancy and light, when you will prove the truth of these words, "He brought the blind by a way that they knew not." When we know God to be infinitely wise, that he cannot err, that all his dealings must be stamped with his own eternal wisdom, we are silenced, we hold our peace, we have nothing to say, we are where Aaron was. When Nadab and Abihu were smitten by the Lord, Aaron knew that God could not err; he held his peace (Lev. 10:3). This is our right spot. If we know anything of the folly of the creature—if we know anything of the wisdom of God—this is our spot. When our dear Nadabs and Abihus are smitten before our face, our spot is to hold our peace, to put our mouth in the dust; for God is still accomplishing his object, in the face, and in spite of nature, sense, and reason.

July 10

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." Isaiah 54:11

The Lord here compares his suffering Church to a ship at sea, under bare poles, labouring in a heavy storm, driven out of her course by contrary winds, as was Paul's case in the Adriatic, and doubtful whether she will ever reach the harbour; as the hymn says,

"Half a wreck by tempests driv'n."

What a picture of a tempest-tossed soul! Sun and stars beclouded, compass lost, chart useless, pilot absent, and breakers ahead! Many, very many of the Lord's dear family are thus "tossed with tempest;" some with a tempest of doubts and fears; others with a tempest of lust and corruptions; some with a tempest of rebellion and fretfulness; others with a storm of guilt and despondency, or with gloomy forebodings and dismal apprehensions. Thus they are driven from their course, their sun and stars all obscured; no clear evidences, no bright manifestations; darkness above, and a raging sea beneath; no harbour in sight, and hope of reaching the desired haven almost gone.

But it is further said of Zion, that she is "not comforted;" that is, not comforted by, nor capable of comfort from, any other than God. This I look upon as a very decisive mark of a work of grace upon the soul. When a man is so distressed in his feelings, so cast down in his mind, and so troubled in his conscience, that none but God can comfort him, we seem to be at once on the footsteps of the Spirit. We do not find hypocrites on this ground. False professors can easily take comfort; they can steal what God does not give, and appropriate what he does not apply. But Zion's special mark is that she is "not comforted," that her wounds are too deep for human balsams, her sickness too sore for creature medicines. God has reserved her comfort in his own hands; from his lips alone can consolation be spoken into her soul.

July 11

"Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours." Isaiah 54:11

By these "stones," which the Lord has promised to "lay with fair colours," I think we may understand the blessed truths of the gospel which are laid into the soul by the hand of God. The fair colours are deeply ingrained and embedded in the very substance of the stone, not artificially laid on. They are like beautiful marbles, in which every bright hue and vein penetrate into the deepest substance of the material. Such are the truths of God, beautiful throughout, penetrated with grace and glory into their inmost depths. But these colours are hidden from view till brought out and laid into the soul by the hand of God. However

fair or beautiful any word of God be in itself, it only experimentally becomes so as inlaid by his own divine hand into the soul. This brings out the fair colours. How often we read the word of God without seeing the least beauty in it! But let the very same portion come home with sweetness and power to the soul, then beauty, inexpressible beauty, is seen in it immediately; it becomes "a stone of fair colours." Salvation full and free, the pardoning love of God, the precious blood of the Lamb, justification by Christ's imputed righteousness, "wine and milk without money and without price," superabounding grace, eternal mercy, everlasting life—these are some of the precious stones with fair colours which God the Spirit with his own hand lays into the conscience.

July 12

"I will lay thy foundations with sapphires." Isaiah 54:11

Before we can stand firmly in the things of God we must have a good foundation, something solid for our faith, our hope, our love, our all, to rest upon. This God promises to lay for his afflicted Zion: "I will lay thy foundations with sapphires." "A gift," we read, "is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it." Every testimony, then, that God gives to the soul, every promise brought into the heart, every manifestation of mercy, every visit of love, or application of truth, we may call, in a spiritual sense, a sapphire; for it is indeed a precious stone, radiant with heaven's own hue. When God thus lays his sapphires in the soul, they afford a solid foundation for faith. And as they are laid by the hand of God himself, they must be firm; as they are sapphires, they must be indestructible. These sapphires, it is true, may every one of them be buried in the dust of carnality and worldly-mindedness; the filth and sewage, the mud and slush, of our fallen nature may roll over them flood after flood. But are they injured thereby? is their nature changed, their value impaired, their hue tarnished, their lustre faded and gone? They may be hidden from view, their setting be obscured, and their faces for a while be dimmed, but one ray from the Sun of righteousness will bring them again to light; one touch of the Polisher's hand will restore all their beauty. Grace has no more communion with sin than a diamond with a dunghill.

July 13

"And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." Isaiah 54:12

Upon Zion in her time-state "the Sun of righteousness" does not shine in all his brightness; the "windows of agate," whilst she is in the flesh, temper his rays. Her prospects, too, are not fully bright and clear; as the Apostle speaks, "We see through" (or in) "a glass darkly;" we have not those clear views which the saints have in glory, where they see Jesus face to face. We have prospects sometimes, I hope, in our souls, of God, and Christ, and heavenly glory; but still these views are but semi-transparent, streaked and clouded like a window of agate, not bright and clear as a pane of plate glass. But as Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem, that he might see by faith what he could not see by sight, so should we aim to look towards the heavenly Jerusalem, that by faith we may there "see him who is invisible."

But the Lord speaks of Zion's "gates." *"And thy gates of carbuncles."* The carbuncle is of a *blood-red* colour; and why should the Lord have chosen that Zion's gates should be of this peculiar hue? May we not, without wresting the figure too closely, believe that there is some mystic allusion here to the blood of the Lamb? As scarlet wool was taken by Moses, when he sprinkled the people, and as Rahab's house was marked by a scarlet thread, may there not be something here significant in the colour of the gates? But "gates," or doors, not only give exit, but admission. How does God hear prayer, and answer it too? Only through the "gate of carbuncle." Prayer ascends through Jesus, and answers descend through Jesus; groans through Jesus enter the ears of the God of Sabaoth, and through the same bleeding gate of mercy do answers drop into the soul. Our poor self-righteous hearts can hardly comprehend this; we think we must have a good frame, or bring a good deed, or something good in ourselves, to make our prayers acceptable to God. Perish the thought! It is nothing but the spawn of self-righteousness. The "gates of carbuncle," the open wounds of the Lamb, through these every prayer ascends, through these every answer comes down; and if we set up anything else, or make a gate of human merit, we do despite to the Spirit of God, and pour contempt upon the grace and blood of the Lamb.

"And all thy borders of pleasant stones." God's providential dealings, which often form the outer setting of his inward mercies, are of pleasant stones. North, south, east, west, all Zion's borders are of precious materials. The daily events of life, the circumstances of family, station, employment, success, or the contrary, the ties of domestic affection, with all those varied circumstances which seem rather the borders and outer courts than the inner sanctuary of gracious experience—yet all these are of divine material and workmanship. Viewed by faith, every event and circumstance of life, however apparently grievous, is a pleasant stone; for Zion is a king's daughter, and the meanest of all her courts is made of pleasant stones. For of wisdom, that is, vital godliness, we read, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

July 14

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22

Till in soul feeling, we are at "the ends of the earth," we have no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no hearts to feel what a glorious Mediator there is at the right hand of the Father. And the more we feel to be at "the ends of the earth," the deeper is our need of him; and as the Spirit unfolds the mystery of the glorious Person of Christ, and reveals his beauty, the more does he become the object of the soul's admiration and adoration. And O what a Mediator is held out in the word of truth to living faith! What a subject for spiritual faith to look to, for a lively hope to anchor in, and for divine love to embrace! That the Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the second Person in the glorious Trinity, should condescend to take upon him our nature, that he might groan, suffer, bleed, and die for guilty wretches, who, if permitted, would have ruined their souls a thousand times a day—what a wonder of wonders! But we cannot enter into, nor feel the power of this mystery till we are reduced to such circumstances, that none but such a Saviour can save our souls. Can we do anything to save ourselves? Then we want not help from that mighty One on whom God has laid help; and we secretly reject him. Can we heal ourselves? Then we want not the good Physician. But when

our eyes are opened to see our own thorough ruin and helplessness, and to view the glorious Person of the Son of God, faith is drawn out to flee to and rest upon that glorious Object.

July 15

"But we see Jesus." Hebrews 2:9

Did your eyes ever see him? Do look into conscience—did your eyes ever see Jesus? I do not mean your natural, your bodily eyes; but the eye of faith, the eye of the soul. I will tell you what you have felt, if you ever saw Jesus. Your heart was softened and melted, your affections drawn heavenward, your soul penetrated with thankfulness and praise, your conscience sprinkled with atoning blood, your mind lifted up above all earthly things to dwell and centre in the bosom of the blessed Immanuel. Do you think, then, you have seen Jesus by the eye of faith? Then you have seen the perfection of beauty, the consummation of pure loveliness; you have seen the image of the invisible God; you have seen all the perfections and glorious character of the Godhead shining forth in him that was nailed to Calvary's tree. I am sure such a sight as that must melt the most obdurate heart, and draw tears from the most flinty eyes; such a sight by faith of the beauty and glory of the only-begotten Son of God must kindle the warmest, holiest stream of tender affection. It might not have lasted long. These feelings are often very transitory. The world, sin, temptation, and unbelief soon work; infidelity soon assails all; the things of time and sense soon draw aside; but whilst it lasted, such, in a greater or less degree, were the sensations produced. Now, if you have ever seen Jesus by the eye of faith, and ever had a tender affection going out toward him, you will see him in glory. But you will never see him in glory, if you have not seen him in grace; you will never see him eye to eye in the open vision of eternal bliss, unless you have seen him now upon earth by the faith of God's elect in your heart.

July 16

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5

That *he is God*, is the very foundation of his salvation; for it is his eternal Godhead that gives virtue, efficacy, and dignity to all that as man he did and suffered for his chosen people. If he were not God, God and man in one glorious Person, what hope would there be for our guilty souls? Could his blood atone for our sins, unless Deity gave it efficacy? Could his righteousness justify our persons, unless Deity imparted merit and value to all the doings and sufferings of his humanity? Could his loving heart sympathise with and deliver us, unless "as God over all," he saw and knew all that passes within us, and had all power, as well as all compassion, to exert on our behalf? We are continually in circumstances where no man can do us the least good, and where we cannot help or deliver ourselves; we are in snares, and cannot break them; we are in temptations, and cannot deliver ourselves out of them; we are in trouble, and cannot comfort ourselves; are wandering sheep, and cannot find the way back to the fold; we are continually roving after idols, and hewing out "broken cisterns," and cannot return to "the fountain of living waters." How suitable, then, and sweet it is, to those who are thus exercised, to see that there is a gracious Immanuel at the right hand of the Father, whose heart is filled with love, and whose bowels move with compassion; who has shed his own precious blood that they might live; who has wrought out a glorious righteousness, and "is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him."

July 17

***"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."* Hebrews 5:8**

Our gracious Lord had to learn obedience to the will of God by a personal experience of suffering, and especially by an implicit submission to his heavenly Father's will. And what was this will? That he should take upon himself the huge debt which his bride had incurred by original and actual transgression; that he should offer himself as a ransom price to discharge and put it away; that he should bear our sins in his own body on the tree, with everything which was involved in being made a curse for us; that he should by death overcome Satan, who had the power of death, and deliver them who all their life, through fear of death, were subject to bondage; and that, whatever sorrows and sufferings

should lie in his path, he should bear them all, and learn, in and by them, implicit submission to the will of God. This was the will of God, for he was determined that his law should be magnified, his justice glorified, his infinite purity and holiness revealed and established; and yet, amidst all and through all his displeasure against sin, that his infinite wisdom, tender pity, everlasting love, and sovereign grace might shine and reign in the happiness of millions through a glorious eternity. This, too, was the joy that was set before Christ, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

July 18

"Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shall become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Zechariah 4:7

If the literal temple had been built up without any trouble whatever; if all had gone on smooth and easy, there would not have been any shouting of "Grace, grace," when it was finished. But when it was seen how the Lord had brought a few feeble exiles from Babylon; how he had supported them amidst and carried them through all their troubles; and how he that laid the foundation had brought forth the head-stone, all that stood by could say, "Grace, grace unto it." It was these very perplexities and trials that made them join so cheerily in the shout, and made the heart and soul to leap with the lips, when they burst forth with "Grace, grace unto it." And who will shout the loudest hereafter? He that has known and felt the most of the aboundings of sin to sink his soul down into grief and sorrow, and most of the superaboundings of grace over sin to make him triumph and rejoice. Who will have most reason to sing, "Grace, grace?" The lost and ruined wretch, who has feared that he should go to hell a thousand times over, and yet has been delivered thence by sovereign grace, and brought to the glory and joy of heaven. No other person is fit to join in that song; and I am sure no other will join in it but he who has known painfully and experimentally the bitterness of sin and the evil of a depraved heart; and yet has seen and felt that grace has triumphed over all, in spite of the devil, in spite of the world, and in spite of himself, and brought him to that

blessed place where many times he was afraid he should never come.

July 19

"The poor have the gospel preached to them." Matthew 11:5

What is the gospel? Is not the gospel a proclamation of pure mercy, of superabounding grace? Does it not declare the lovingkindness of God in sending his only-begotten Son to bleed and die, and, by his obedience, blood, and merit, to bring in a salvation without money and without price? Is not this the gospel? Not clogged by conditions, nor crippled by anything that the creature has to perform; but flowing freely forth as the air in the skies? The poor to whom the gospel is preached, value it; it is suitable to them; it is sweet and precious when the heart is brought down. But if I stand up in religious pride, if I rest upon my own righteousness, if I am not stripped of everything in the creature, what is the gospel to me? I have no heart to receive it; there is no place in my soul for a gospel without money and without price. But when I sink into the depth of creature poverty, when I am nothing and have nothing but a mass of sin and guilt, then the blessed gospel, pardoning my sins, covering my naked soul, shedding abroad the love of God, guiding me into everything good, and leading me up into enjoyment with a Three-One God, becomes prized. When such a pure, such a blessed gospel comes into my heart and conscience, has not my previous poverty of spirit prepared me for it? Has not my previous beggary and necessity made a way for it, made it suitable to me, and when it comes, makes it precious to me? We must, then, sink into poverty of spirit, that painful place, in order to feel the preciousness, and drink into the sweetness and blessedness of the gospel of the grace of God.

July 20

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:10

What a fearful spot it is to be in—to feel and fear oneself an enemy to God! I think it is one of the most painful feelings that ever passed through my breast, to fear I was an enemy to God. For what must be the consequence, if a man live and die having God for his enemy? In that warfare he must perish. If God be his enemy, who can be his friend? Such sensations in the bosom are well-nigh akin to despair. Let a man fully feel that he is God's enemy, where can he hide his head? Hell itself seems to afford him no refuge. But he must be exercised with something of this before he can prize reconciliation. He must see himself to be an enemy of God by birth—that he was born in what our Reformers called "birth sin;" and that his carnal mind is enmity against God. O the painful sensations of the carnal mind being enmity against God! It is bad enough to be God's enemy; but that every fibre of our nature should be steeped in enmity against God, that holy and blessed Being to whom we owe so much, and to whom we desire to owe everything; that our carnal heart in all its constitution, in its very blood, should be one unmitigated mass of enmity to God, O it is an awful thought! If you are made to experience that enmity in your bosom, and to feel more or less of its upheavings and risings—that will cut to pieces all the sinews of creature righteousness; that will mar all your comeliness, and turn it into corruption.

Now, when a man is thus exercised, it will make him look out, if he has any root of spiritual feeling, for a remedy. God has provided such in the sacrifice of his dear Son, in the blood of the Lamb; in the sufferings, obedience, death, and resurrection of the blessed Jesus. Now when this is opened up in our soul by the Spirit of God; when faith is given to receive it; when the Holy Ghost applies it; when it is received into the heart (for the Apostle says, "We have received the atonement"), then a felt reconciliation takes place; we are then reconciled to God; love takes the place of enmity, praise of sighing, and blessing his name instead of writing bitter things against ourselves.

July 21

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Zechariah 13:7

Would we see, feel, and realise the exceeding sinfulness of sin, it is not by viewing the lightnings and hearing the thunders of Sinai's fiery top, but in seeing the agony and bloody sweat, and hearing the groans and cries of the suffering Son of God, as made sin for us, in the garden and upon the cross. To look upon him whom we have pierced will fill heart and eyes with godly sorrow for sin, and a holy mourning for and over a martyred, injured Lord. To see, by the eye of faith, as revealed to the soul by the power of God, the darling Son of God bound, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, mocked, and then, as the climax of cruel scorn and infernal cruelty, crucified between two thieves,—this believing sight, this fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, will melt the hardest heart into contrition and compunction. But when we see, by the eye of faith, that this was the smallest part of his sufferings, that there were depths of soul trouble and of intolerable distress and agony from the hand of God as a consuming fire, as of inflexible justice and righteous indignation against sin wherever and in whomever found, and that our blessed Lord had to endure the wrath of God till he was poured out like water, and his soft, tender heart in the flames of indignation became like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels (Psalm 22:14),—then we can in some measure conceive what he undertook in becoming a sin offering. For as all the sins of his people were put upon him, the wrath of God due to them fell upon him. Separation from God, under a sense of his terrible displeasure, and that on account of sin, that abominable thing which his holy soul hates,—is not this *hell*? This, then, was the hell experienced by the suffering Redeemer when the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

July 22

"Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." Psalm 22:4, 5

O what a blessed thing it is to have in one's own bosom a secret trust in Jesus—that whilst so many are looking to something in themselves or in one another, resting their eternal salvation on works that really are but the sports of a child, the saint of God is reposing upon the Lord of life and glory! On him he hangs his hope, and in him he puts his trust. These the Lord will honour; nor will he ever disappoint their hope or put their confidence to

shame. Whoever trusted in the Lord and was confounded? If you are enabled to trust in him, to believe his faithful word, to discard all creature confidence and to hang the weight of your soul—and O what a weight is that!—upon a faithful, covenant-keeping God, he will never leave, fail, or forsake you. You may find it hard to trust in him at all times or indeed at any time. You may feel a want of something sensible—something to see or hear, distinct from faith. Look not for this. We walk by faith, not by sight. It must be a naked trust in an invisible God. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." And if you are enabled so to trust, he will make it manifest sooner or later in your own conscience that you are one of the righteous; light will beam upon your path; glory will dawn upon your heart, and you will have the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul.

July 23

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Ephesians 1:17

Revelation means literally an uncovering or unveiling of a concealed or covered-up object. It is used, therefore, sometimes in the sense of manifesting, making known, or bringing to light, what had before been hidden in darkness and obscurity. This revelation is, therefore, either outward in the word, or inward in the soul, and the two strictly correspond to and are counterparts of each other. Immediately that, by the power of divine grace, a poor Gentile sinner turns to the Lord, the Spirit of revelation removes the veil off the Scriptures, and off his heart. Have we not found it so? What a sealed book was the word of God once to us! How we read or heard it without one real ray of light to illuminate the dark page; and what a thick veil was there of ignorance, unbelief, prejudice, self-righteousness, and impenitence on our heart. But the gracious Spirit of revelation took this double veil away, and by giving us the light of life, made the word of God a new book, and gave us a new heart; and ever since the day when the entrance of his word gave us light, God's word has been a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. But the Spirit of revelation is chiefly given to lead us into a spiritual, experimental, and saving knowledge of Christ. Without this blessed Spirit of revelation

Christ cannot be effectually or savingly known. When, therefore, Peter made that noble confession of his faith in Christ as "the Son of the living God," our Lord said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

July 24

"Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Psalm 89:33, 34

We live in a changeable, ever-changing world. All without us is stamped with mutation, death, and decay; and as regards ourselves everything within us tells us how frail, weak, and mutable we are. Thus, as viewed by the eye of sense and reason, uncertainty and changeability are ever seen to be deeply stamped, not only on every event of time, but on all we are and have in body and soul; and this experience of what we feel in ourselves and see in all around us often wonderfully tries both our faith and hope, for we are apt to measure God by ourselves, and judge of our state before him, not according to his word, but according to the varying thoughts and exercises of our mind. But when we can look by faith through all these mists and fogs which, as resting on the lower grounds of our soul, so often obscure our view of divine realities, to the fixed purposes of God as manifested in an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and have at the same time some testimony of our interest therein, ground is thus afforded both for faith and hope as resting, not on our ever-changing feelings, but on the word and promise of him that cannot lie. It was thus David was comforted on his bed of languishing when the cold damps of death sat upon his brow (2 Samuel 23:5). It was then in this "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure," that even before the world was formed, man made, or sin committed, a Saviour was provided, a Redeemer set up, and the persons of the redeemed chosen in him and given to him. How can we think, then, that any changing and changeable events in time can alter and frustrate what was thus absolutely fixed by firm and sovereign decree, or that any mutable circumstances in ourselves or others can defeat and disannul the eternal purposes of God?

July 25

"He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." John 3:33

We can only set to our seal that God is true in any one point of doctrine, experience, or precept when we feel an inward witness that God indeed has declared it. Thus, upon every manifestation of God's goodness to the soul, every application of Christ's blood to the conscience, and every revelation of God's distinguishing grace, it is only as we receive Christ's testimony, experience the inward approbation of it, and feel its sweetness and blessedness that we can set to our seal that God is true. This, we may be well assured, is the only way to know the power and reality of true religion, to understand the Scriptures, and enjoy a convincing testimony that God is our God, Christ our Saviour, the Holy Ghost our Teacher, heaven our eternal home, and that our soul is saved in the Lord Jesus Christ with an everlasting salvation.

And with what divine certainty can such a soul sometimes speak. Sometimes, indeed, we cannot believe anything; it seems as if there were nothing in God's word that we could set our seal to. All seems a mass of confusion, and our ignorance appears so great that we cannot set our seal to any vital truth. But when the blessed Spirit is pleased to testify of the things of God, and we, receiving the testimony of Jesus Christ, walk in the light of that testimony, then there is a holy certainty of and heavenly acquiescence with God's truth. This divine faith will bring us through all our trials and sorrows, and though we may be dragged through a very hell of temptation, yet shall we know God is true. Here, then, is the grand trial of faith; first to receive Christ's testimony, and then to hang upon that testimony, in spite of all opposition from within and without, from feeling its weight, power, and sweetness.

July 26

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Zechariah 13:9

It is a mercy to be in the furnace, and it is a mercy to be brought through it. The Lord's promise to the third part is, that he will bring them through the fire. They must therefore, according to his own word, be put into it, and yet not left in it. It is "through the fire"—right through it from beginning to end, whether it be a long and slow one or short and fierce one. The Lord knows exactly what we can bear, and it is not always the hottest fire which produces the most softening effects. Some metals indeed are so stubborn, and the dross is so deeply engrained into them, that they seem to require a hotter fire than others. But after the law has done its work, and the dross and tin have been purged away, the Lord does not usually bring again so hot a furnace. It is rather one of trial, temptation, sickness, family affliction, straits in providence, persecution, deep and daily discoveries of the body of sin and death, the hidings of the Lord's face, and denials of his presence which seem to make up that trial which tries every man's faith of what sort it is. By these trials and exercises there is a gradual weaning from the world, a humility, meekness, and brokenness of spirit before the Lord, a greater simplicity and godly sincerity, more willing obedience to the precepts of the gospel, and a greater desire to know the will of God and do it. O that these fruits of the Spirit might abound in us and all the saints and servants of God!

July 27

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 5:21

This is the mercy for mourning saints who are sighing and groaning under a body of sin and death, that God has decreed that grace not only *may* reign, but that it *must* reign. Were it left to us, we could no more rescue ourselves from the dominion of sin than the children of Israel could deliver themselves from the house of Egyptian bondage. But they sighed and groaned by reason of the bondage, and their cry came up unto God. He had respect unto his covenant, and looked upon them and delivered them (Exodus 2:23-25). So God has determined on behalf of his people that sin shall not be their eternal ruin; that it shall not plunge them into crime after crime, until it casts them at last into the gulf of endless woe, but that grace "shall reign through

righteousness unto eternal life." But it must reign here as well as hereafter, for by its reign here its eternal triumph is secured. It must then subdue our proud hearts, and never cease to sway its peaceful sceptre over them until it has secured in them absolute and unconditional victory. Now this is what every sincere child of God most earnestly longs to feel and realise. He longs to embrace Jesus and be embraced by him in the arms of love and affection. As the hymn says,

"But now subdued by sovereign grace,
My spirit longs for thy embrace."

He hates sin, though it daily, hourly, momentarily works in him, and is ever seeking to regain its former mastery; he abhors that cruel tyrant who set him to do his vilest drudgery, deceived and deluded him by a thousand lying promises, dragged him again and again into captivity, and but for sovereign grace would have sealed his eternal destruction. Subdued by the sceptre of mercy, he longs for the dominion of grace over every faculty of his soul and every member of his body. "O," he says, "let grace reign and rule in my breast; let it not suffer any sin to have dominion over me; let it tame every unruly desire, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!" Thus, he who truly fears God looks to grace, and to grace only, not merely to save, but to sanctify; not only to pardon sin, but to subdue it; not only to secure him an inheritance among the saints in light, but to make him meet for it.

July 28

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." John 16:13

There are two grand lessons to be learnt in the school of Christ, and all divine teaching is comprehended and summed up in them. One is, to learn, by the Spirit's teaching, what we are by nature; so as to see and feel the utter ruin and thorough wreck of self, and the complete beggary, weakness, and helplessness of the creature in the things of God. This is the first grand branch of divine teaching. And we have to learn this lesson day by day, "line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Through this

branch of divine teaching we have almost daily to wade, and sometimes to sink into very painful depths under a sense of our depraved nature. And the other grand branch of divine teaching is, "To know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." To know who Jesus is, and to know what he is; to know the efficacy of his atoning blood to purge the guilty conscience, the power of his justifying righteousness to acquit and absolve from all sin; the mystery of his dying love to break down the hardness of heart, and raise up a measure of love towards him; and to see, by the eye of faith, his holy walk and suffering image, so as to be in some measure conformed to him, and have his likeness in some measure stamped upon our souls.

July 29

"And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."
Judges 6:39, 40

Many of the Lord's people labour under doubts and fears, questionings and suspicions as to the reality of the work of grace upon their hearts; whether their convictions were not merely convictions of natural conscience, and whether their joys have been anything else but the joys of the hypocrite. "O," they say, "what would I not give to have a divine testimony that the blessed Spirit was leading me in the right path!" It is through these very doubts that the evidence is obtained. Doubts lead to cries and groans after a divine testimony; and in answer to these cries the heavenly witness is given. A man without doubts is without testimonies. Doubts are to testimonies what the mortise is to the tenon, the lock to the key, the enigma to the solution. Testimonies are Ebenezers, "stones of help" (1 Sam. 7:12, *marg.*); but the stone must have a hole dug for it to stand in, and that hole is *doubt*. Doubts of salvation are to manifestations of salvation what hunger is to food, nakedness to clothing, a thunderstorm to a shelter, a gallows to a reprieve, and death to a resurrection. The one of these things precedes, prepares, and opens a way for the other. The first is nothing without the last, nor the last without the first. Thus, next to testimonies, the best thing is spiritual doubts.

To know we are right is the best thing; to fear we are wrong is the second best. To enjoy the witness of the Spirit is the most blessed thing this side of the grave; to pant after that enjoyment is the next greatest blessing. I am speaking, mind, only of spiritual doubts; that is, doubts in a spiritual man, for natural doubts are as far from salvation as natural hopes. The path through the valley of Baca is "from strength to strength," that is, according to the eastern mode of travelling, from one halting-place to another, where wells are dug, and "the rain filleth the pools" (Ps. 84:6, 7). We do not learn either God or ourselves, sin or salvation, in a day. The question is not so much whether you have *much* faith, but whether you have any. It is not quantity, but quality; not whether you have a very great religion, but whether you have any at all. A grain of true faith will save the soul; and I have known many, many seasons when I should have been glad to feel certain that I had the thousandth part of a grain. A grain of mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds; and even faith as small as that can move mountains. Happy is he that has one divine testimony to his eternal interest in the electing love of the Father, in the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of the Son, and in the divine teachings of the Holy Spirit.

July 30

"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."
Acts 5:31

Jesus is "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins." The two go together. Whenever he gives repentance, he gives remission; wherever he grants remission, he bestows repentance. It will not do to let repentance go. Every child of God is brought to repent of his sins, and by repentance to forsake them. "But," you say, "have I repented? Considering the nature and magnitude of my sins, were I a repenting sinner, surely I should be mourning and sorrowing over them all the day long." What, then, creates that doubt in your mind? Because you are often hard, dark, dead, cold. Here, then, again, we must distinguish between that godly sorrow for sin which is felt in the spiritual mind, and that hardness and darkness of our carnal mind which is still enmity against God, nor is there faith or love, repentance, or any one good thing in it. But there have been times

and seasons when, under a peculiar influence, your heart was softened and melted before God; when sin was truly repented of; when you felt that it was indeed an evil and a bitter thing to sin against so good, so holy, and so great and glorious a God; when the rock melted, the hard heart gave way, the eyes flowed down with tears, and the swelling breast was almost ready to burst with penitential grief for your sins and over the sufferings and sorrows of the Son and Lamb of God, and you could only loathe yourself in dust and ashes before his holy, heart-searching eye.

July 31

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1

Wherever there is faith, there is desire; and as faith embraces heavenly realities, desire embraces that of which faith testifies. Now as the soul is wrought upon by a divine power, and faith is drawn forth into blessed exercise upon the promises of which it is persuaded and which it embraces, desire is kindled for their enjoyment. Religion is not a burdensome, painful, melancholy, wearisome, and toilsome task or employment as many think. It has indeed its trials, temptations, afflictions, cutting griefs, and depressing sorrows; but it has its sweetness, its peace, its delights, and its enjoyments. And it is the sweetness that we feel, the enjoyment that we have, and the delighting ourselves in the things of God, which hold our head up and encourage us still to persevere and travel on through the wilderness. It is not all bondage, nor distress of mind, nor sorrow of heart, nor perplexity of soul which the heirs of promise feel. There are sips and tastes, drops and crumbs, and momentary enjoyments, if not long nor lasting, yet sweet when they come, sweet while they last, and sweet in the recollection when they are gone. The Lord gives that which encourages, strengthens, comforts, and delights, and enables us to see that there is that beauty, blessedness, and glory in him which we have tasted, felt, and handled, and which we would not part with for a thousand worlds.