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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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June 1

"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Psalm 81:10

When the Lord favours your soul with sweet access at a throne of grace, make the most of it. What should we think of the master of a vessel coming up the river, if, when the wind was favourable and the tide served, he would not heave her anchor, or hoisted but her fore-sail to the breeze, and would not take full advantage of wind and tide? Now it is so sometimes with our souls; a gale blows, a gale of grace on the soul, and the tide of faith rises. Is it not our wisdom, and is it not our mercy, at such a rare season, to make the most of it? If the Lord deign to give us an ear, is it not our mercy to tell him all that our souls desire? Do you recollect what the prophet said to the king who only struck his arrows three times on the ground, and then stayed? "The man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice" (2 Kings 13:19). Sometimes it is so with us. When the Lord gives us some little access unto himself, we do not make the most of it. Satan casts in some fiery dart, some worldly circumstance distracts our mind, some filthy imagination rises up in our bosom; and instead of resisting the devil that he may flee from us, we give way to him; the opportunity is gone, the sweet moment is lost, and it may be months before we get the ear of the King again. It will, therefore, be your wisdom and your mercy, when the gale blows, and the tide rises, to spread every sail, and to get as far as you can on your course to the haven of eternal rest and joy.

June 2

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Peter 1:20

By "these last times" is meant this present dispensation, the dispensation of grace under which we live, and they are called the last times chiefly for two reasons: 1. Because Christ was manifested in the last days of the legal dispensation of the old covenant, which now, as decaying and waxing old, was ready to vanish away (Heb. 8:13), which it did when at the destruction of Jerusalem the whole of the temple service, including the sacrifices

offered there, was brought to an end. But 2. Another reason why the dispensation under which we live is called "the last days" is because it is the final revelation of God. It is "the time accepted," "the day of salvation," of which all the prophets have spoken (2 Cor. 6:2; Acts 3:24). Christ is now upon his throne of grace; the great, the glorious, the only Mediator between God and men is now at the right hand of the Father; the Intercessor who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, still lives to plead, as an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, as the great High Priest over the house of God. But he will leave the throne of grace to take his seat on the throne of judgment; and then "these last days" will close in all the glories of salvation to his friends, in all the horrors of destruction to his foes.

June 3

"Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." Jonah 2:4

When poor Jonah spake these words he uttered them in the very bitterness of his heart; he felt that he was cast out of God's gracious presence. But he must have known something experimentally of the sweetness of God's manifested presence; he must have tasted that heaven was in it, and that all his happiness centered there. He must have enjoyed this in order to know if God's presence were not felt in the soul, there was but one barren scene of gloom and death; and that to be "cast out of his sight" was the commencement of hell upon earth. Now here a living soul differs from all others, whether dead in sin, or dead in a profession. The persuasion that in God alone is true happiness; the feeling of misery and dissatisfaction with everything else but the Lord, and everything short of his manifested presence, is that which stamps the reality of the life of God in a man's soul. Mere professors of religion feel no misery, dissatisfaction, or wretchedness, if God shine not upon them. So long as the world smiles, and they have all that heart can wish, so long as they are buoyed up by the hypocrite's hope, and lulled asleep by the soft breezes of flattery, they are well satisfied to sail down the stream of a dead profession. But it is not so with the living soul; he is at times panting after the smiles of God; he is thirsting after his manifested presence; he feels dissatisfied with the world, and all

that it presents, if he cannot find the Lord, and does not enjoy the light of his countenance. Where this is experienced, it stamps a man as having the grace of God in his heart.

June 4

"I lead in the way of righteousness." Proverbs 8:20

How does the Lord Jesus—who speaks here under the name of Wisdom—lead his saints "in the way of righteousness?" By casting a mysterious light into their souls, whereby they see what the word of God has revealed, and shedding abroad a mysterious power in their hearts, whereby faith is created, to receive, lay hold of, and credit that which God has made known. We may read the word of God for ever in vain, unless that word is made life and light to our souls; but when the Lord the Spirit, whose covenant office and work it is to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them to the heart, sheds a mysterious and blessed light upon those Scriptures which speak of Jesus as the law-fulfiller, as having brought in a glorious righteousness, and at the same moment is pleased to raise up faith and power in the heart to receive, credit, embrace, and handle what he has thus revealed, then by his own persuasive power he leads the soul "in the way of righteousness." And O what a wonderful way it is! that God should ever find out such a way, as to make all his people righteous, by imputing to them another's righteousness! It will be the wonder, the song of saints through all eternity; it will exhaust all the depths of their finite wisdom to look into these secrets of wisdom, love, and power. Yea, the angels themselves, who so far exceed men in wisdom, are represented as "desiring to look into" these things, and therefore when the ark was made, and the mercy seat put over the tables which were inclosed therein, the seraphim were framed as looking down upon this golden mercy seat, representing how the height, breadth, length, and depth of these mysteries overpass even the faculties of the angels themselves.

June 5

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:7

This "day of trouble" is when sin is laid as a heavy burden upon a man's conscience; when guilt presses him down into the dust of death, when his iniquities stare him in the face, and seem more in number than the hairs of his head; when he fears he shall be cast for ever into the bottomless pit of hell, and have his portion with the hypocrites. This "day of trouble" is not literally a day, a portion of time meted out by the rising or setting sun, a space of twenty-four hours. The hands of a clock, or the shadow of a dial, cannot regulate spiritual troubles. A day here means a season, be it long or short; be it a day, week, month, or year. And as the season cannot be measured in length, so the trouble cannot be measured in depth. The only wise God deals out various measures of affliction to his people. All do not sink to the same depth, as all do not rise to the same height. All do not drink equally deep of the cup; yet all, each in their measure, pass through this day of trouble, wherein their fleshly religion is pulled to pieces, their self-righteousness marred, their presumptuous hopes crushed, and they brought into the state of the leper, to cry, "Unclean, unclean." Until a man has passed through this day of trouble, until he has experienced more or less of these exercises of soul, and known guilt and condemnation in his conscience; until he has struggled in this narrow pass, and had his rags of creature righteousness torn away from him, he can know nothing experimentally of the efficacy of Jesus' atoning blood, nor feel the power of Christ's resurrection.

June 6

***"Though I be nothing."* 2 Corinthians 12:11**

Paul did not mean to say that he had no religion, but none in himself. 'What! could not Paul stand against temptation?' Not more than you or I, unassisted by the grace of God. 'Could not Paul pray more than I can?' No, not at all, except so far as the spirit of grace and supplications was given to him. 'Could not Paul love more than I do?' Not a bit more, nor think a spiritual thought more, as far as self was concerned. I do not mean to say that Paul did not pray, believe, and love more than any of us do; but he did not perform these actions in himself one whit more than we can. He says, expressly, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good

thing;" and therefore not the good thing of faith, or love, or divine communion.

Now when the Lord has brought a soul down to be nothing, he then makes his strength perfect in that nothingness; he communicates strength to pray, strength to believe, strength to hope, to love, to receive the gospel. Just like the poor man with the withered hand, to whom Jesus said, "Stretch forth thine hand." It was withered, he could not do it of himself. But Christ's strength was made perfect in weakness: when he spake the word, the withered hand was stretched forth, and became whole as the other. So with the dead Lazarus—he was asleep in death; but when the voice of love and power penetrated into the tomb, "Lazarus, come forth," life was made perfect in the dead corpse. So with the Old Testament worthies, who "out of weakness were made strong" (Heb. 11:34). And so, each in our measure, it is with us; our weakness, helplessness, and inability are the very things which draw forth the power, the strength, and the grace of Jesus.

June 7

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1

To believe in God is to believe in him as he has manifested himself in his dear Son in all the fulness of his love, in all the riches of his grace, and in all the depth of his mercy. God must be seen, not in the terrors of a holy law, but in the mercy and truth of the glorious gospel of the Son of God, and thus be approached and believed in as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him. How few see and realise this, and yet how sorely exercised are many of the living family upon this point! To believe in God in such a way as to bring pardon and peace into their conscience; to believe in God so as to find manifest acceptance with him; to believe in God so as to call him Abba, Father, and feel that the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are his children; to believe in God so as to find him a very present help in trouble; to receive answers to prayer, to walk in the light of his countenance, to have his love shed abroad in the heart, to be manifestly reconciled to him, and feel a sense of his manifested goodness and mercy—this is to believe in God through Jesus Christ. And O how different is this from merely believing about God from what we see in nature that he is the

Creator of all things, or from what we may have realised of his footsteps in providence that he watches over us as regards the things that perish, or from seeing in the letter of the word that he is the God of all grace to those who fear his name!

June 8

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Corinthians 4:17

O ye suffering saints of God! ye tried and afflicted children of the most High! raise up your thoughts as God may enable you—lift up your eyes, and see what awaits you. Are you tried, tempted, exercised, afflicted? It is your mercy. God does not deal so with every one. It is because you are his children, that he lays on you his chastening hand. He means to conform you to the image of his Son in glory, and therefore he now conforms you to the image of his Son in suffering. 'O but,' you say, 'I cannot believe it is so!' No; if you could, it would not be much of a trial. This is the trial of faith—to go groaning on, struggling on, sorrowing on, sighing on; believing against unbelief, hoping against hope; and still looking to the Lord, though there is everything in nature to damp the hopes and expectations of your waiting souls. Yet all will end well with the people of God. Their life here is a life of temptation, of suffering and trial; but heaven will make amends for all. And if our faith is now tried as "with fire," it will one day "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In that day when the secrets of all hearts will be brought to light, the faith of thousands will be found to be little else than presumption; but the faith of God's dear family will then be crowned with "praise and honour and glory;" and they shall see the Lamb as he is face to face, when all tears are wiped away from all faces.

June 9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

Has the Lord made sin your burden? Has he ever made you feel guilty before him? Has he ever pressed down your conscience with a sight and sense of your iniquities, your sins, your backslidings? And does the Lord draw, from time to time, honest, sincere, unreserved confession of those sins out of your lips? What does the Holy Ghost say to *you*? What has the blessed Spirit recorded for your instruction, and for your consolation? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Not merely on a footing of mercy; still less because you confess them. It is not your confessing them, but it is thus—your confessing them is a mark of divine light; your confessing them springs from the work of grace upon your heart. If, then, you possess divine life, if you have grace in your soul, you are a child of God, Jesus obeyed for you—Jesus suffered for you—Jesus died for you—Jesus has put away your sin. And, therefore, you being a child of God, and Jesus having done all these things for you, God is now "faithful" to his promise that he will receive a confessing sinner; and "just" to his own immutable and veracious character. And thus, from justice as well as mercy, from faithfulness as well as compassion, he can, he will, and he does pardon, forgive, and sweetly blot out every iniquity and every transgression of a confessing penitent.

June 10

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Psalm 62:5

I believe that the Lord, before ever he communicates a real blessing to the souls of his poor and needy children, not merely convinces them by the Spirit of the depth of their poverty, of their truly ruined and lost state by nature, of the destitution of everything good in them; but he opens their eyes in a mysterious manner to see certain blessings which are stored up in Christ; for instance, righteousness to cover their nakedness, blood to atone for their transgressions, grace to superabound over all the aboundings of sin, faith to be the evidence of things not seen, hope to anchor within the veil, and love to be a foretaste of eternal bliss. These and similar blessings the Lord presents before their eyes, and gives them a spiritual understanding that these mercies are stored up in Christ; and as he gives them this perception of what the blessing is, and shews them that these blessings are not in the creature, but in Christ, he draws forth the desires and sighs and

ardent affections of their souls after these blessings, so that nothing but these special mercies can really satisfy them, ease their minds, assuage their troubles, bind up their wounds, and pour oil and wine into their conscience. And thus he brings them to be suppliants, he lays them at his feet as beggars. Yet, base though they feel themselves to be, black though they know they are, there is that mysterious attraction of the Spirit, as well as that mysterious fitting together of their poverty and Christ's righteousness, their nakedness and Christ's justifying robe, their helplessness and his almighty strength, that they never can be satisfied, unless an experienced and enjoyed union of the two takes place in their conscience.

June 11

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:22

These words will apply both to the whole body of Christ viewed collectively, and to each separate member of that body viewed individually; and what the Church of God is in its completeness in Christ, as it will be in heaven above, and what it is in its visible and militant state on earth now, so is every individual member of that Church in this time state; and it is this solemn truth which makes the words before us to have such a forcible application to every individual believer. As we shall all have to answer for ourselves, "to die," as one said, "alone," and as religion is a personal matter, how careful should it make each individual believer so to walk before God and man that he may have both an inward and outward evidence that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19), and that he is a habitation of God by the Spirit. If he realise this, and live under its solemn weight and influence, how careful he will be not to defile that body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost; how desirous and anxious not to defile his eyes by wandering lusts, nor his ears by listening to worldly and carnal conversation, nor his lips by speaking guile, or indulging in light and frothy talk, nor his hands by putting them to anything that is evil, nor his feet by running on errands of vanity and folly; but to view his body as a member of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15), and therefore sanctified to his service and to his glory.

June 12

"Follow after righteousness." 1 Timothy 6:11

We may understand two things by this expression. First, the discovery to the conscience of Christ's imputed righteousness, in the way of justification; and secondly, the communication to the soul of a divine or righteous nature, whereby it brings forth the fruits of sincerity and uprightness before God. Both are to be followed after. But it may be asked, Why the first, if a man has a knowledge of his justification, and a sense of his acceptance with God? But may not a sense of interest in Jesus' glorious righteousness, and the inward testimony of the Spirit be lost in the enjoyment of them, or at least considerably diminished, for a time? We read (Luke 15:8) of the woman who lost a piece of silver. Was there not a lighting of the candle, a sweeping of the house, and a diligent search into every corner till it was found again? The woman's piece of money was not really lost; it was still in the house; but as to her feelings, it was as much lost as though she were never to receive it again into her possession. So a sense of acceptance and justification by Christ's righteousness, this precious coin from heaven's mint may be lost for a time in feeling, though not really lost out of the heart. And what will the soul do that has lost it but diligently search the house in every corner, by the candle of the Spirit, till it find the piece of money again?

June 13

"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself." Jeremiah 31:18

The spiritual feeling of sin is indispensable to the feeling of salvation. A sense of the malady must ever precede, and prepare the soul for, a believing reception and due apprehension of the remedy. Wherever God intends to reveal his Son with power, wherever he intends to make the gospel "a joyful sound" indeed, he makes the conscience feel and groan under the burden of sin. And sure am I that when a man is labouring under the burden of sin, he will be full of complaint. The Bible records hundreds of the complaints of God's people under the burden of sin. "My wounds stink and are corrupt," cries one, "because of my foolishness. I am troubled: I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day

long" (Psalm 38:5, 6). "My soul," cries another, is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave" (Psalm 88:3). "He hath led me," groans out a third, "and brought me into darkness, but not into light" (Lam. 3:2). A living man needs must cry under such circumstances. He cannot carry the burden without complaining of its weight. He cannot feel the arrow sticking in his conscience without groaning under the pain. He cannot have the worm gnawing his vitals without complaining of its venomous tooth. He cannot feel that God is incensed against him without bitterly complaining that the Lord is his enemy. Spiritual complaint then is a mark of spiritual life, and is one which God recognises as such. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself." It shews that he has something to mourn over, something to make him groan being burdened; that sin has been opened up to him in its hateful malignancy; that it is a trouble and distress to his soul; that he cannot roll it like a sweet morsel under his tongue, but that it is found out by the penetrating eye, and punished by the chastening hand of God.

June 14

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
Philippians 2:12

None but God's people under the teachings of the Spirit know what it is to "work out their own salvation." And all who work out their own salvation will work it out "with fear and trembling." For when a man is taught by God to know what he is; when he feels what a deceitful heart he carries in his bosom; when the various snares, temptations, and corruptions by which he is daily encompassed are opened up to him; when he knows and feels what a ruined wretch he is in self, then he begins to fear and tremble lest he should be damned at the last. He cannot go recklessly and carelessly on without "making straight paths for his feet," without "examining himself whether he be in the faith." And whenever a man's dreadfully deceitful heart is opened up to him; whenever the hollowness of an empty profession is unmasked; whenever he feels how strait is the path, how narrow the way, and how few there are that find it; whenever he is brought to see how easily a man is deceived, and how certainly he must be deceived unless God teach him in a special manner;— whenever a man is brought to this point, to see what a rare thing,

what a sacred thing, and what a spiritual thing religion is, that God himself is the author and finisher of it in the conscience, and that a man has no more religion than God is pleased to give him, and cannot work a single grain of it in his own soul; when he stands on this solemn ground, and begins to work out that which God works in, it will always be "with fear and trembling;" with some "fear" lest he be deceived, until God assures him by his own blessed lips that he is not deluded; and "with trembling," as knowing that he stands in the immediate presence of God, and under his heart-searching eye.

June 15

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philipians 2:13

When God has worked in a man "to will," and not only worked in him "to will," but also worked in him "to do;" when he has made him willing to flee from the wrath to come; willing to be saved by the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Jesus; willing to be saved by sovereign grace as a sinner undone without hope, and glad to be saved in whatever way God is pleased to save him; willing to pass through the fire, to undergo affliction, and to walk in the strait and narrow path, willing to take up the cross and follow Jesus, willing to bear all the troubles which may come upon him, and all the slanders which may be heaped upon his name; when God has made him willing to be nothing, and to have nothing but as God makes him the one, and gives him the other: and besides working in him "to will," has worked in him "to do," worked in him faith to believe, hope whereby he anchors in the finished work of Christ, and love whereby he cleaves to him with purpose of heart; when all this has been "with fear and trembling," not rushing heedlessly on in daring presumption, not buoyed up by the good opinion of others, not taking up his religion from ministers and books; but by a real genuine work of the Holy Ghost in the conscience; when he has thus worked out with fear and trembling what God has worked in, he has got at salvation; at salvation from wrath to come, from the power of sin, from an empty profession; at salvation from the flesh, from the delusions of Satan, from the blindness and ignorance of his own heart; he has got at a salvation which is God's salvation, because God has worked in him to will and to do of his good pleasure.

June 16

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." 1 Peter 1:6

As everything by nature in us is contrary to the life of God, there is a needs-be for manifold trials and temptations to bring us out of those things which are opposed to the grace of God, and to conform us to the image of his dear Son. Thus we need trial after trial, and temptation upon temptation, to cure us of that worldly spirit, that carnality and carelessness, that light, trifling, and empty profession, that outside form of godliness, that spirit of pride and self-righteousness, that resting short of divine teachings, heavenly blessings, and spiritual manifestations, that settling on our lees and being at ease in Zion, that being mixed up with all sorts of professors, that ignorance of the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him—all which marks of death we see so visibly stamped upon the profession of the day. There is a needs-be to be brought out of all this false, deceptive, hypocritical, and presumptuous profession, whether high or low, sound in doctrine or unsound, so as to be made simple and sincere, honest and upright, tender and teachable, and to know something experimentally of that broken and contrite spirit in which the Lord himself condescends to dwell. And as the Lord works this spirit of humility and love for the most part through trials and temptations, there is a needs-be for every one, of whatever nature it may be, or from whatever quarter it may come.

June 17

"For we which have believed do enter into rest." Hebrews 4:3

We enter into rest by ceasing from our own works, and resting on Christ's; according to the words, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Now when you can fully rest upon the finished work of the Son of God, and believe by a living faith that your sins were laid upon his head; that he bore them in his body on the tree; that he has washed you in his precious blood, clothed you with his

righteousness, and is sanctifying you by his Spirit and grace, then you can rest. There is something here firm and solid for the conscience to rest on. Whilst the law thunders, whilst Satan accuses, whilst conscience condemns there is no rest. But you can rest where God rests. God rests in his love; in the finished work of his dear Son; in the perfection of Christ's humanity; in his fulfilment of all his covenant engagements; in the glorification of his holy law; in the satisfaction rendered to his justice; in the harmonising of all his attributes; in the revelation of his grace and his glory to the children of men; for he is his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. The tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterwards the temple on Mount Zion, was a type of the pure and sacred humanity of the Lord Jesus. There God rested in a visible manner by a cloud upon the mercy seat, called by the Jewish writers the Shekinah. This, therefore, was the place of his rest, as he speaks, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:13, 14).

June 18

"Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion."
Jeremiah 31:12

Until the redeemed know something of the efficacy of atoning blood and have their consciences purged from guilt and filth by its application, they cannot come and sing in the height of Zion. But when they are redeemed from the hand of him who is stronger than they; when atoning blood is applied to their consciences to purge away guilt and filth; when Christ is revealed and made experimentally known; when his gospel in the hands of the Spirit becomes a word of power, and a view of the King in his beauty is granted to the believing heart, then, drawn by the cords of love and the bands of a man, they come to Zion, where the King sits enthroned in glory. It is called "the height of Zion," not only because Zion was high literally, but because the Lord of life and glory is exalted to the highest place of dignity and power. God's ancient promise was, "Behold, my servant shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high" (Isaiah 52:13); and the Apostle says, "therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9); and again, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and

every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21). But why do they come? It is to commune with him, to worship him in the beauty of holiness, to get words from his lips, smiles from his face, touches from his hand, and whispers from his lips. And when he is graciously pleased to speak a word to them as Prince of peace, to reveal himself to their souls in the glory of his divine Person as God-man, and to shed abroad his love in their hearts, then they can sing, and in them is the promise fulfilled, "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion."

June 19

"For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." Psalm 109:31

How cheering, how comforting it is, to have a friend to stand by us when we are in trouble. Such a friend is Jesus. In the hour of necessity, he comes as a friend to stand by the right hand of the poor creature, whose soul is condemned by guilt and accusations. But he stands in a far higher relation than that of a friend; he stands too as a *Surety and a Deliverer*. He goes, as it were, into the court; and when the prisoner stands at the bar, he comes forward and stands at his right hand as his surety and bondsman; he brings out of his own bosom the acquittance of the debt signed and sealed with his own blood, he produces it before the eyes of the court, and claims and demands the acquittal and absolution of the prisoner at whose right hand he stands. He stands there, then, that the prisoner may be freely pardoned, and completely justified from those accusations that "condemn his soul." O sweet standing!—O blessed appearance! Unbelief, the workings of a desperately wicked heart, and the fearful suggestions of the enemy, come forward to condemn us; but Christ Jesus, this Mediator betwixt God and man, "stands at the right hand of the poor," and produces his own glorious righteousness. Are we pressed down with unbelief? He communicates faith. Is our mind sinking into despair? He breathes into it hope. Is the soul bowed down with guilt, at a distance from God, unable to approach him on account of its heavy temptations? He puts his own arm under this poor dejected soul and lifts up his bowed-down head, and then the soul looks upwards, and instead of wrath sees the

countenance of the Father beaming mercy and love, because the Surety is "standing at the right hand of the poor."

June 20

"Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies."
Psalm 103:4

The coronation of a king puts the last and highest seal upon his reigning authority. This made the spouse say, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (Song Sol. 3:11). And what a day will that be when the anti-typical Solomon is crowned Lord of all. Thus there is a crown put upon the soul which is healed of all its diseases, and whose life is redeemed from destruction. It is as if God could not be satisfied till he had put the crown of his lovingkindness upon the soul, until he had himself crowned the heart with his own love. And what is the effect? The soul puts a crown of glory upon his head. So the soul has the crown of grace, and God has the crown of glory. This is being crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies. And O what a crown it is! How it crowns all our iniquities, hides them from God's sight as a crown covers a monarch's brow. How it crowns all our trials that we have had to pass through, severe and cutting as they were at the time to the flesh. How it crowns all our bereavements by putting upon the bereaved heart the crown of God's lovingkindness. How it crowns all our prayers by enabling us to see their gracious answer. How it crowns all God's dealings with us in providence and in grace, and stamps lovingkindness upon them all; for the crown includes everything in it. As the Queen's crown includes her royalty, her dignity, her power—for all are symbolled thereby—so God's lovingkindness, put upon the heart as a crown, includes and secures every blessing for time and eternity.

June 21

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a

lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was God's grand attestation to the truth of his divine mission and Sonship, for by it he was "declared to be the Son of God with power." It therefore set a divine stamp upon his sacrifice, bloodshedding, and death, shewed God's acceptance of his offering, and that sin was thus for ever put away. Now, just think what would have been the dreadful consequences if Christ had not been raised from the dead, or if we had no infallible proofs (Acts 1:3) of his resurrection. There would have been, there could have been no forgiveness of sin (1 Cor. 15:17); and therefore, when the conscience became awakened to a sense of guilt and condemnation, there could have been nothing before it but black and gloomy despair. But Christ being raised from the dead and having gone up on high to be the High Priest over the house of God, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness of this both in the word and through the word to the soul, a door of hope is opened even in the very valley of Achor. The Holy Ghost, who would not have been given had not Christ risen from the dead and gone to the Father, now comes and testifies of him to the soul, takes of the things which are his, reveals them to the heart, and raises up faith to look unto and believe in him as the Son of God, and thus, according to the measure of the revelation, it abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15:13).

June 22

"Jesus saith, Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." John 20:17

Why your Father? Because my Father. Why your God? Because my God. As his only-begotten Son from all eternity, God was the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; as the Father's messenger and servant, doing his will upon earth, even in his lowest humiliation, God was his God; and now that he is risen from the dead and gone up on high to be the great High Priest over the house of God, now that he is entered into his glory and ever lives to make intercession for us, God is still his God. This view of Jesus is most strengthening and encouraging to faith. The great and glorious

God, the great self-existent I AM, the God in whom we live and move and have our being, the God before whom we stand with all we are and have, the God against and before whom we have so deeply and dreadfully sinned—this great and glorious God is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." We may, therefore, draw near unto him with all holy boldness, present our supplications before him, call upon his holy name, and worship him with all reverence and godly fear as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God in him. A believing view of God, as revealing himself in the person of his dear Son, as reconciling us to himself by his precious blood, as accepting us in the Beloved, and not imputing our trespasses unto us, disarms God of all his terrors, removes the bondage of the law out of our hearts and the guilt of sin from our consciences, enlarges, comforts, and solaces the soul, soothes the troubled spirit, and casts out that fear which hath torment.

June 23

"The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17

A life of faith in Christ is as necessary to our present and experimental salvation as his death upon the cross was to our past and actual salvation. If you are alive to what you are as a poor fallen sinner, you see yourself surrounded by enemies, temptations, sins, and snares; and you feel yourself utterly defenceless, as weak as water, without any strength to stand against them. Pressed down by the weight of unbelief, you see a mountain of difficulty before your eyes, sometimes in providence and sometimes in grace. You find, too, that your heart is a cage of unclean birds, and that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwelleth no good thing; neither will nor power have you in yourself to fight or flee. How then shall this mountain become a plain? How shall you escape the snares and temptations spread in your path? How shall you get the better of all your enemies, external, internal, infernal, and reach heaven's gate safe at last? If you say, "By the salvation already accomplished," are you sure that that salvation belongs to you? Where is the evidence of it if you have no present faith in Christ? How can that past salvation profit you for present troubles unless there be an application of it? It is this application and manifestation of salvation which is being saved by his life (Rom. 5:10). See how it works; and what a suitability is in it. You are all weakness, and he is and has all

strength, which he makes perfect in your weakness. You are all helplessness against sin, temptation, and a thousand foes. But help is laid upon Christ as one that is mighty; he therefore sends you help from the sanctuary and strengthens you out of Zion (Psalm 20:2), that these sins and enemies may not get the better of you.

June 24

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18, 19

O the unspeakable depths of the goodness and mercy of God! O the riches of his superabounding grace! When there was no other way of redemption, God sent his only-begotten Son, that by his precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, we might be redeemed from all the consequences of our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers; and not only from all its consequences, but from its power and practice. It is a knowledge, a personal, experimental knowledge of this redemption, which lays us under a spiritual obligation to walk worthy of our high calling. And it acts in this way. A view by faith of the bleeding, dying Lamb of God, a seeing and feeling what he suffered in the garden and on the cross to redeem us from hell, will ever make sin hateful in our eyes, and holiness longed after as the soul's happiest element. If ever sin is mourned over, hated, confessed, and forsaken; if ever there be ardent desires after a conformity to Christ's image; if there ever be a longing after union and communion with him, it is at the foot of his cross. By it and it alone is the world crucified unto us, and we unto the world; and well may we say that our highest attainment in grace is to have the experience of the Apostle: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

June 25

"At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 17:7

In the very name "the Holy One of Israel," there is something the sweetness of which melts the heart of a poor sensible sinner. For what is he in himself as a fallen child of Adam? A filthy, defiled, polluted wretch, unfit for the presence of God. And what can fit such an unclean, unworthy, deformed sinner for the eternal presence and enjoyment of the Triune Jehovah, but such a Saviour as the Holy One of Israel, whose blood, as a holy fountain, cleanseth from all sin? The soul that stands in him, stands complete, without spot or blemish. And must not his heart leap and dance when with a measure of faith he is able to lay hold of this Holy One of Israel? But this living faith in and spiritual reception of the only Mediator between God and man cannot exist until a man is brought into circumstances in which he needs the Holy One of Israel. Until he is emptied and stripped of all creature strength he cannot truly understand how, nor really desire that the strength of Christ may be made perfect in his weakness. So with Christ's wisdom; his righteousness; his blood; so with his love; his gracious presence;—all are mere words, loose and floating ideas, dim, dreamy conceptions, until poverty and need lie hard upon the soul, and the blessed Spirit makes known "the unsearchable riches of Christ," as so many experimental realities. It is this gracious discovery which endears to him the Holy One of Israel. There is no divine faith, no going out of hope, no flowing of affection toward the Holy One of Israel, till "that day," when he has no one else to look to, no hope in the creature; till all his righteousness fails him, and he feels that he must be saved by free grace, or eternally perish.

June 26

"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:10

The Spirit of God which dwelleth in a man, making his body his temple, searcheth the deep things of God; for there is in these deep things a most heavenly treasure, which is to be searched into that it may be found. What depths do we sometimes see in a single text of Scripture as opened to the understanding, or applied to the heart; what a depth in the blood of Christ: how it "cleanseth from

all sin," and if from all sin it must cleanse away millions of millions of the foulest sins of the foulest sinners. What a depth in his bleeding, dying love that could stoop so low to lift us so high! What a depth in his pity and compassion to extend itself to such guilty, vile transgressors as we are! What depth in the eternal counsels and unspeakable wisdom of God to contrive such a plan as was accomplished and brought to light in the incarnation and death of his dear Son, that thus mercy and justice might meet together without jar or discord, every attribute of God be fully honoured, and yet that those who deserved hell should be lifted up into the enjoyment of heaven. What depths, too, there are in our own heart, not merely of sin but of grace, for true religion has its depths which the Spirit searches and brings to view. Thus if we have any faith, it lies very deep, for it is hidden in the heart, and sometimes so hidden as to be almost, if not altogether, out of sight. The Spirit then searches for it, and brings it out and up. So if we have any love, it strikes its root into the inmost recesses of our affections, and therefore needs to be searched into; or any hope, it lies like the anchor at the bottom of the sea. It therefore has to be searched into that it may be made manifest that it is sure and steadfast and enters within the veil.

June 27

"And they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." 1 Corinthians 7:31

Nothing is real but that which has an abiding substance. Health decays, strength diminishes, beauty flees the cheek, sight and hearing grow dim, the mind itself gets feeble, riches make to themselves wings and flee away, children die, friends depart, old age creeps on, and life itself comes to a close. These fugitive, transitory things are then mere shadows; there is no substance, enduring substance in them. Like our daily food and raiment, house and home, they support and solace us in our journey through life. But there they stop; when life ends, they end with it. But real religion—and by this I understand the work of God upon the soul—abides in death and after death, goes with us through the dark valley, and lands us safe in a blessed eternity. It is, therefore, the only thing in this world of which we can say that it is real. Is not this John's testimony? "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is

not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:16, 17). And who is that man, that blessed man, who lives when all dies, who abideth for ever when all others pass away into the outer darkness? It is he who doeth the will of God. But how and when do we the will of God? "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). If, then, you have seen the Son, and believed in him, you have now everlasting life, and Jesus will raise you up at the last day.

June 28

"God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light." Psalm 118:27

If God the Lord hath shewed us light, he hath shewed us light both with respect to himself and with respect to ourselves. He hath shewed us with respect to himself who he is; he hath stamped something of himself upon our consciences; he hath discovered something of his glorious character to our souls; and brought us, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, into his presence, there to receive communications of life out of Christ's inexhaustible fulness. Thus in this light we see and feel that we have to do with a heart-searching God; in this light we see and feel that we have to do with a sin-hating God; with a God who will not be mocked nor trifled with; in this light we see and feel that every secret of our heart, every working of our mind is open before him; and in this light, so far as he is pleased to manifest it, we see what we are in his holy and pure eyes—a mass of sin, filth, and corruption, without help, without strength, wisdom, or righteousness, without creature comeliness, without anything of which we can say that it is spiritually good. Again, God the Lord, shewing us light, hath shewed us more or less of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. He has not only showed us what we are by nature, but he has in a measure condescended to shew us what we are by grace; not merely brought into our hearts some acquaintance with himself as a God of perfect justice, but he has also brought, more or less, into our souls some acquaintance with him as a God of mercy; and has thus brought us, in some solemn measure, to know him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath

sent; and, thus, to have the springing up of spiritual life more or less, each according to his measure, in our souls.

June 29

"O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." Jeremiah 10:24

"Fury is not in me," saith the Lord. No; there is no wrath in the bosom of God against the persons of his people. They are for ever "accepted in the Beloved," and stand in him before the throne of God without spot or wrinkle; but there is displeasure against their sins; and this displeasure their kind and gracious Father makes them feel when he withdraws from them the light of his countenance, and sends his keen reproofs and sharp rebukes into their conscience. But these very "judgments" help them (Ps. 119:175), for they lead to deep searchings of heart; and as the same blessed Spirit who sets home the reproof communicates therewith repentance, they sorrow after a godly manner, and this godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of (2 Cor. 7:10). If, then, our afflictions, crosses, losses, bereavements, family troubles, church trials, and more especially if the rebukes and reproofs of God in our own conscience have been a means of humbling our proud hearts, bringing us to honest confession of, and godly sorrow for our sins and backslidings, if they have instrumentally separated us more effectually from the world, its company, its ways, its maxims, and its spirit; if they have, in the good hand of God, stirred up prayer and supplication in our hearts, led us into portions of the word of truth before hidden from view, laid us more feelingly and continually at the footstool of mercy, given us a deeper insight into the way of salvation, made mercy more dear and grace more sweet, have these trials and afflictions been either unprofitable or unseasonable?

June 30

"The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." 2 Samuel 23:2

We read that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation;" that is to say, it is the public property of the whole family of Jehovah; and "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" the Holy Ghost so influencing and working upon their minds as to make them bring forth out of their hearts that which should be suitable to the whole family of God. For instance, we read in Psalm 51, David's confession of sin; but David's confession of sin applies to every soul that is condemned on account of sin. When Job, too, poured out his piteous complaints, he was speaking; though he might know it not, for the children of God to the remotest time. So when the Lord said to Joshua, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," it was a promise specially given to Joshua; it seemed to be confined to that individual; it appeared to be of private interpretation, as though Joshua, and Joshua alone, was entitled to that promise. But we find the apostle Paul bringing forward this promise as the general property of the whole Church of God: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). "He hath said?" to whom? To Joshua; but in saying it to Joshua, he said it to the Church of God; in giving Joshua the promise, he gave that promise to every soul that needed with Joshua his help, that feared with Joshua to be forsaken, that wanted with Joshua his sustaining hand; and therefore this private promise to Joshua was not of private interpretation, but, when applied by the blessed Spirit, suits every living soul that is placed in similar circumstances with the individual to whom that promise was addressed.