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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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May 1

"I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11:9

Wherever there is true prayer, there is importunity. Wherever the Lord brings trials upon the soul, he pours out upon it the spirit of grace and supplications. He thus encourages and enables the soul to be importunate with him. The blessings and benefits of perseverance and importunity in prayer the Lord has brought prominently before us in two parables—one, of the man in bed with his children, who would not get up and relieve his friend, but yet was overcome by his importunity; and the other, of the woman, who had a cause at issue, and went before the judge, who feared not God, neither regarded man; yet by her continual going to him, overcame him at last by her importunity (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-7). Thus importunity and perseverance form the very feature of true prayer. If the child of God has a burden—if he is labouring under a strong temptation—if his soul is passing through some pressing trial—he is not satisfied with merely going to a throne of grace and coming away. There is at such times and seasons, as the Lord enables, real importunity; there is a holy wrestling; there are fervent desires; there are unceasing groans; there is a labouring to enter into rest; there is a struggling after deliverance; there is a crying unto the Lord, until he appears and manifests himself in the soul.

May 2

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—Romans 8:35

Be this never forgotten, that if we have ever been brought near to the Lord Jesus Christ by the actings of living faith, there never can be any final, actual separation from him. In the darkest moments, in the dreariest hours, under the most painful exercises, the most fiery temptations, there is, as with Jonah in the belly of hell, a looking again toward the holy temple. There is sometimes a sigh, a cry, a groan, a breathing forth of the heart's desire to "know Him, and the power of his resurrection;" that he would draw us near unto himself, and make himself precious to our souls. And these very cries and sighs, groanings and breathings, all prove that whatever darkness of mind, guilt of conscience, or

unbelief we may feel, there is no real separation. It is in grace as it is in nature; the clouds do not blot out the sun; it is still in the sky, though they often intercept his bright rays. And so with the blessed Sun of righteousness; our unbelief, our ignorance, our darkness of mind, our guilt of conscience, our many temptations—these do not blot out the Sun of righteousness from the sky of grace. Though thick clouds come between him and us and make us feel as though he was blotted out, or at least as if we were blotted from his remembrance, yet, through mercy, where grace has begun the work, grace carries it on: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

May 3

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Has not our path been one of tribulation, more or less, since the Lord was first pleased to turn our feet into the narrow way? But have we found, do we ever find, peace in Jesus? Do we desire to find peace there? Do we look for peace, do we expect to enjoy peace, from any other quarter? Dare we think, for a single moment, of peace in self, peace in the world, or peace in sin? Is our heart so fixed upon Jesus, our eyes so up unto him, the desires of our soul so after the manifestations of his mercy and love, that we are sure there is no peace worth the name except what is found in him? Our seasons of peace may not have been long—they may have been transient, very transient; yet sweet while they lasted, and sufficient to shew what true peace is, sufficient to give us longings after a clearer manifestation of it, and make us desire a fuller enjoyment of it. And yet the Lord winds it all up with the solemn and blessed declaration that though our appointed path is one of tribulation in the world, yet he has overcome it; sin shall not be our master, the world shall not be our conqueror, the things of time and sense shall not gain a victory over us. May He give us a sweet assurance that he will fight our battles, and bring us off more than conquerors.

May 4

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Romans 4:20, 21

This, then, was Abraham's faith. It was a firm credence in the promise of God made to him, and yet a faith that lived under opposition, hoping against hope, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised he would perform. Our faith, then, if it be genuine, must resemble that of Abraham. It must anchor in the truth of God as made life and spirit to our soul. It must meet with every opposition from without and within; from sin, Satan, and the world; from nature and flesh and reason all combined against it. But in spite of all, it must hope against hope, and be fully persuaded that what God has promised he is able to perform; and thus by perseverance and patient waiting obtain the victory. Take another example, that of Moses: his faith was of this nature. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24, 25). The peculiar character of the faith of Moses was this, that though he was highly exalted and might have enjoyed all the treasures and pleasures of Egypt, yet he deliberately preferred to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy all that wealth could offer or carnal pleasure present; "having respect to the recompence of the reward."

May 5

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16

There is a blessedness in obedience. It does not give us, but it manifests our interest in the finished work of the Son of God. There is nothing in the highest acts of faith or obedience that we can take any joy in as accomplished by us, nothing that we can boast of as our own; and yet there is a sacred blessedness in obeying the gospel by believing in the Son of God, by walking in the fear of God, and doing the things, as well as professing them,

which are pleasing in God's sight. Walk in carnality, pride, and self-righteousness; live after worldly customs and conform yourself to worldly opinions, and if there be a grain of godly fear, or one spark of the life of God in your heart, you will do the best thing you can to bring your soul into misery and bondage. Therefore, though we can take no merit from and make no boasting of any obedience we may render, yet is the path of godly obedience so safe, so blessed, so honouring to God, and so comforting to the soul thus favoured, that it should be and will be the desire of all who truly fear God to be ever found walking in it. And O the blessedness, if we are enabled in any measure to obey the will of God by believing in his dear Son and by walking in his fear, to find under every temptation and trial in life, death, health, and sickness, that we have a gracious and sympathising High Priest, "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him!"

May 6

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion." Psalm 20:1, 2

When the soul has to pass through the trying hour of temptation, it wants help from the sanctuary. And nothing but help from the sanctuary can ever stand it in any stead. All other help leaves the soul just where it found it. Now why does the Lord send help from the sanctuary, but because the soul to whom help is sent stands interested in the Father's love, the Saviour's blood, and the Spirit's teachings—interested in the eternal covenant transactions of the Three-One Jehovah. Help is sent him from the sanctuary, because his name has been from all eternity registered in the Lamb's book of life, graven upon the palms of his hands, borne on his shoulder, and worn on his heart. He was in the sanctuary when his covenant Head stood up on his behalf, and in the Lord's book all his members were written when as yet there was none of them. He was then *virtually* in the sanctuary before all time, and he will be personally in the sanctuary after all time. But he must be "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." As he is predestinated to inhabit that sanctuary, he must have a nature suited for its holy delights. Now it is receiving help from the sanctuary that fits him to inhabit it. Communications of life and grace out of it make him a new creature, and produce

spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. The breath of heaven in his soul draws his affections upward, weans him from earth, and makes him a pilgrim and a sojourner here below, "looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

May 7

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3

There can be no new thought in the mind of God. New thoughts, new feelings, new plans, new resolutions continually occur to our mind; for ours is but a poor, fallen, fickle, changeable nature. But God has no new thoughts, feelings, plans or resolutions; for if he had he would be a changeable Being, not one great, eternal, unchangeable I Am. All his thoughts, therefore, all his plans, all his ways are like himself, eternal, infinite, unchanging, and unchangeable. So it is with the love of Christ to the Church. It is eternal, unchanging, unchangeable. And why? Because he loved as God. Never let us lose sight of the glorious Deity of Jesus. He loved her in eternity as the Son of God, prior to his incarnation. That was but the fruit of his love. We can, therefore, assign no beginning to the love of Christ, for it existed when he existed, which was from eternity. Neither can we put any end to that love, for it can only end with himself; and as he had no beginning, so he has no ending. His love then is as himself, which as it knew no beginning shall know no end. O what a mercy it is for those who have any gracious, experimental knowledge of the love of Christ, to believe it is from everlasting to everlasting; that no incidents of time, no storms of sin or Satan, can ever change or alter that eternal love, but that it remains now and will remain the same to all eternity!

May 8

"The substance of a diligent man is precious." Proverbs 12:27

If the Lord has done anything for our souls by his Spirit and grace, and given us anything to taste, handle, realise, and enjoy for ourselves, we know there is a substance and reality in the things that we believe. Religion is our chief employment; our daily meditation or exercise—the main concern of our thoughts and what lies with the greatest weight upon our minds. And justly so; for it is our all. If we have religion, the religion of God's giving, it will be uppermost in our heart. It is true we are surrounded with and often hampered by a body of sin and death; we have many worldly cares and anxieties which will intrude upon our minds; and those engaged in business have many things especially to drag them down from heaven to earth. Still, religion will be for the most part uppermost in a man's soul, where God has begun and is carrying on a gracious work. Not but what he is often very cold and dead, lifeless in his prayers, and unfeeling in his affections; not but what he may be carried away by the things of time and sense and dragged down into darkness, carnality, and death; but with it all, there is something in his bosom that struggles upward—there is that in his heart which goes after the precious things of Christ, and the solemn realities of eternity.

May 9

"Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst." Nehemiah 9:20

When we are thoroughly emptied of ourselves—when our knowledge is shewn to be ignorance, our wisdom folly, our righteousness filthy rags, and our strength weakness—then we begin to long after the teachings of the blessed Spirit. We must be purged and tried before we can value and receive the treasures of grace. When we are well exercised and tried in our souls, then we begin to long after the teachings of the Holy Spirit, that he would shed abroad the love of God in our soul, visit and guide us, overshadow us with his holy presence, and drop into our hearts his secret unction. Before we are brought here, we know not the personality of the Holy Ghost. We have no evidence in our conscience that he is God; we cannot worship and adore him as the Third Person in the blessed Godhead. But when we are brought to this spot, that we know nothing without his teaching, feel nothing without his giving, and are nothing without his

making—this makes us pant and sigh after his teachings and leadings; and we are brought to wait in the posture of holy adoration and still quietness for the dew and unction of the Spirit to fall upon our conscience.

May 10

"Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." 1 John 5:1

Where there is love to Jesus, there will be love to those who are his by redemption, his by regeneration, and his by personal possession. The more, too, that we see and the more that we know of the beauty and blessedness of the Lord of life and glory, the more we shall love his image as we behold it visibly marked in his dear people, and the more we shall cleave to them as being Christ's with tender affection. It is our dim, scanty, and imperfect knowledge of God the Father in his eternal love, and of the Lord Jesus Christ in his grace and glory, which leaves us so often cold, lifeless, and dead in our affections towards him; and with the declension of love towards the Head comes on decay of love towards his members. If there were more blessed revelations to our soul of the Person and work, grace and glory, beauty and blessedness of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is impossible but that we should more and more warmly and tenderly fall in love with him; for he is the most glorious object that the eyes of faith can see. He fills heaven with the resplendent beams of his glorious majesty; and has ravished the hearts of thousands of his dear family upon earth by the manifestations of his bleeding, dying love. So that if we love him not, it is because we know him not. If, then, to those who know him he makes himself precious, it is evident that just in proportion to our personal, spiritual, experimental knowledge of him will be our love to him.

May 11

"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Genesis 32:26

It is encouraging to the Lord's people as they are from time to time placed in similar circumstances of trial, exercise, perplexity,

sorrow or distress with Jacob, to see the blessed result of his wrestling with the angel. He crosses the ford of Jabbok all weakness; he recrosses it all strength. He leaves his family, and wrestles alone, a fainting Jacob; he returns to them a prevailing Israel. He goes to the Lord in an agony of doubt and alarm, fearing every moment lest he and all that was dear to him should be swept off from the face of the earth; he returns with the Lord's blessing in his soul, with the light of the Lord's countenance lifted up upon him. And is not this instance recorded for the instruction and consolation of the Lord's living family? Are they not from time to time in circumstances experimentally which resemble Jacob's circumstances literally? Have they not similar difficulties and similar necessities? And does not the Lord from time to time raise up in their heart the same faith to lay hold? the same importunity to keep hold? And shall He who gave Jacob such a merciful deliverance—shall He who has recorded in his holy word this remarkable event in Jacob's life for the edification and instruction of his people in all times—hear Jacob, and not hear them? It is derogatory to the sympathising "Man of Sorrows;" it is treason against the Majesty of heaven to believe, that a child of God in similar circumstances can go to the Lord in a similar way and not get a similar blessing.

May 12

"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Psalm 40:17

Are there not solemn seasons in your soul, when you think upon the Lord? When you lie awake, perhaps at midnight, thinking upon God, upon his truth, his love, his word, his dealings with your soul, and your desires, prayers, and breathings all flow forth to his sacred Majesty—is not this some evidence that you are thinking upon his name? And be assured that if you think upon him, he has thought upon you. Look at the giddy multitude. Do they think upon God? Is Jesus ever felt to be precious to their souls? Do they pant after him as the hart after the water brooks? No; their language is, "There is no God." It is not their spoken language, but it is their inward language. But through mercy you can say, that you think upon God; and thus there is some evidence, though you cannot rise up to the assurance of it, that he thinketh upon you. And if he thinks upon you, his thoughts are

thoughts of good, thoughts of peace, and not of evil. Does he not read your heart? Does not his holy eye look into the very secret recesses of your soul? And if he thinks upon you, will he leave you, give you up, abandon you in the hour when you need him most? No; he who thought upon you in eternity, will think on you in time, in every trial, every temptation, every sickness, and in the solemn hour when soul and body part. Through life and death he will still think on you; and will bring you at last to that heavenly abode where these two things will be blessedly combined—the Lord's ever thinking upon his Zion, and his Zion ever thinking upon him.

May 13

"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Psalm 35:3

To keep water sweet, it must be perpetually running; and to keep the life of God up in the soul, there must be continual exercises. This is the reason why the Lord's people have so many conflicts, trials, painful exercises, sharp sorrows, and deep temptations,—to keep them alive unto God; to bring them out of, and to keep them out of that slothful, sluggish, wretched state of carnal security and dead assurance in which so many seem to have fallen asleep—fallen asleep like the sailor upon the top of the mast, not knowing what a fearful gulf is boiling up below. The Lord, therefore, "trieth the righteous." He will not suffer his people to be at ease in Zion; to be settled on their lees, and get into a wretched Moabitish state. He therefore sends afflictions upon them, tribulations, and trials, and allows Satan to tempt and harass them. And under these feelings the blessed Spirit, from time to time, raises up in them this sigh and cry, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." None but thyself, Lord, can save me; nothing short of thy voice can whisper peace to my conscience; nothing short of thy blood can speak away guilt from lying as a heavy burden upon my heart; nothing short of thy love shed abroad by the Holy Ghost can make my soul happy in thyself.

May 14

"Ye are not your own." 1 Corinthians 6:19

There is a blessed sense in these words, "Ye are not your own." Remember you must be some one's. If God be not your master, the devil will be; if grace do not rule, sin will reign; if Christ is not your all in all, the world will be. It is not as though we could roam abroad in perfect liberty. Some one will have us. We must have a master of one kind or another; and which is best, a bounteous benevolent Benefactor such as God has ever shewn himself to be; a merciful, loving, and tender Parent; a kind, forgiving Father and Friend; and a tender-hearted, compassionate Redeemer, able to save us to the uttermost; or a cruel devil, a miserable world, and a wicked, vile, abominable heart? Which is better, to live under the sweet constraints of the dying love of a dear Redeemer; under gospel influences, gospel principles, gospel promises, and gospel encouragements; or to walk in fancied liberty, with sin in our heart, exercising dominion and mastery there; and binding us in iron chains to the judgment of the great day? Even taking the present life, there is more real pleasure, satisfaction, and happiness in half an hour with God, in sweet union and communion with the Lord of life and glory, in reading his word with a believing heart, in finding access to his sacred presence, in knowing something of the droppings in of his favour and mercy,—there is more solid happiness in half an hour thus spent in the real service of God, than in all the delights of sin, all the lusts of the flesh, all the pride of life, and all the amusements that the world has ever devised to kill time and cheat self, thinking, by a death-bed repentance, at last to cheat the devil.

May 15

"Ye are bought with a price." 1 Corinthians 6:20

How deep, how dreadful, of what awful magnitude, of how black a dye, of how ingrained a stamp must sin be, to need such an atonement—no less than the blood of him who was the Son of God—to put it away. What a slave to sin and Satan, what a captive to the power of lust, how deeply sunk, how awfully degraded, how utterly lost and undone must guilty man be to need a sacrifice like this. "Ye are bought with a price." Have you ever felt your bondage to sin, Satan, and the world? Have you ever groaned, cried, grieved, sorrowed, and lamented under your

miserable captivity to the power of sin? Has the iron ever entered into your soul? Have you ever clanked your fetters, and as you did so, and tried to burst them, they seemed to bind round about you with a weight scarcely endurable? But have you ever found any liberty from them, any enlargement of heart, any sweet going forth from the prison-house, any dropping of the manacles from your hands, and the fetters from your feet, so as to walk in some measure of gospel liberty? "Ye are bought with a price." Ye were slaves of sin and Satan; ye were shut up in the dark cell, where all was gloom and despondency; there was little hope in your soul of ever being saved. But there was an entrance of gospel light into your dungeon; there was a coming out of the house of bondage; there was a being brought into the light of God's countenance, shining forth in his dear Son. Now, this is not only being bought with a price, but experiencing the blessed effects of it.

May 16

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Isaiah 32:2

Who is this man? Need I ask the question? Is there not a response in every God-fearing breast? It is the man Christ Jesus—the man who is God's fellow. How blessed it is to have a scriptural and spiritual view of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, to see him not merely as God, truly essential God, one in essence, glory, and power with the Father and the blessed Spirit, but also man, made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. And what a suitability there is in the humanity of the Lord Jesus, when we view it in union with this glorious Deity! As man he suffered, as man he bled, as man he died, as man he stands a Mediator for his fellow men between God and man; as man, he has for human distress an affectionate, compassionate, sympathising heart; as man, he obeyed the law in every particular; as man, he bore all the sufferings of humanity, and thus became the Brother born for adversity, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; yet perfectly pure, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and now exalted higher than the heavens. But what beauty, grace, glory, and suitability do we see in the man Christ Jesus, till he is revealed to the soul by the blessed Spirit? None. It is he who takes the humanity of Christ Jesus and shews it to the eye of faith. And this humanity he shews not as mere humanity, but as in union with,

though distinct from, his eternal Deity. O this blessed man!—this man of sorrows; this suffering, agonizing, crucified man. View him on the cross, bleeding for thy sins; and then lift up thine eyes and see him as the same man at the right hand of God. This was Stephen's dying sight just before he passed into his presence: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).

May 17

"We are saved by hope." Romans 8:24

What is the meaning of being saved by hope? It does not mean saved actually, but instrumentally; not saved as regards our eternal security, but as regards our experience of salvation. By hope we are instrumentally saved from despair, saved from turning our backs upon Christ and the gospel, saved from looking to any other Saviour, or any other salvation; and especially saved from making this world and this life our happiness and home, as "waiting patiently for what we see not," even "the redemption of our body." Now it is by hope that we hang upon and cleave to the Lord Jesus, and thus by this grace we abide in him. It is therefore spoken of as an "anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil." What holds the ship firm in the storm, and prevents it falling upon the rocks? The anchor. The ship abides firm as long as the anchor holds. So by hope the soul abides in Christ. He is within the veil; we are without, and, it may be, tossed up and down on a sea of doubt and fear, distress and anxiety, and yet there is a bond of union between him and us firmer than the Atlantic Cable.

May 18

"I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jeremiah 32:40

As the fear of God springs up in a believing soul, and is maintained and kept alive by the influences which come out of Christ as a covenant Head, it produces, as its effects, an abiding in him. We cannot depart from him through the fear of God. It is

therefore called "a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death." If a fountain of life, it must be fed out of him who is the life; and as it departs from the snares of death, it cleaves more fully and closely to him as these snares are broken to pieces and left behind. If we examine the movements of godly fear in our hearts, we shall see that all its tendencies are toward life and the Source of life; toward hatred of sin and love of holiness; toward a desire after the enjoyment of heavenly realities, and a deadness to the things of time and sense; toward a knowledge of Christ in the manifestation of himself, and a longing to live more to his praise, to walk more in his footsteps, and to be more conformed to his suffering image. Now, as none of these things can be produced but by union with Christ and abiding in him, we see how the fear of God helps forward and is needful to this abiding. For directly that the fear of God burns low in the soul, there is a gradual withdrawing from, and a sensible declining of this abiding in Christ.

May 19

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."
Colossians 3:16

This surely means something more than merely reading the word in a careless, formal manner. It is "to dwell in us," that is, take up its firm and lasting abode in our heart, and that "richly;" not poorly and niggardly, but copiously and abundantly, unfolding to us and putting us into possession of the wealth of its treasures; and that in "all wisdom," making us wise to salvation, opening up to us the manifold wisdom of God, and how it displays itself in the great mystery of godliness. Now we shall not attain to this rich and heavenly wisdom unless we search and study the Scriptures with prayer and supplication to understand what the Holy Ghost has revealed therein, and what he is pleased to unfold therefrom of the will and way of God for our own personal instruction and consolation. We very easily fall off from abiding in Christ; nor can we expect to keep up sensible union and communion with the Lord Jesus if we neglect those means of grace which the Holy Ghost has provided for the sustentation of the life of God in the soul. When we get cold, sluggish, and dead, to read the word of God is a task and a burden; but not so, when the life of God is warm and gushing in the soul. Then, to read his holy word with

prayer and supplication, entering by faith into its hidden treasures, and drinking into the mind of Christ as revealed therein, is a blessed means of maintaining the life of God in the heart, and keeping up union and communion with Christ.

May 20

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19

When God takes all our iniquities with his own hand, and casts them with his own arm into the depths of the sea, they will never come out of those depths to witness against the family of God in the great and terrible day. Your sins now may seem to be all alive in your breast, and every one of them to bring accusation upon accusation against you. This sin is crying out for vengeance, and that for punishment. This slip, this fall, this backsliding, this foolish word, this wrong action, are all testifying against you in the court of conscience. Do what you may, be where you may, live how you may, watch and pray how you may, keep silent and separate from the world or even from your own family how you may, sin still moves, lives, acts, works, and often brings you into guilt and bondage. But if God has had mercy upon us he has cast all our sins with his own hands into the depths of the sea, and those sins have no more eyes to look at us with angry indignation, have no more tongues to speak against us in voices of accusation, have no more life in them to rise up and testify that they have been committed by us, that God's law has been broken by them, and that therefore we are under its condemnation and curse. And there is no truth in God's word more certain than the complete forgiveness of sins, and the presentation of the Church of Christ at the great day faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

May 21

"O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Psalm 90:14

Many of the dear children of God are tossed up and down on a sea of great uncertainty, doubt and fear, because they have not had

sensible manifestations of Christ to their soul. He has not come into them in the power of his love; still they often say, "When wilt thou come unto me? O visit me with thy salvation; speak a word to my soul; it is thyself, and thyself alone, I want to hear, to see, and to know!" Now these are drawings of the gracious Lord, the secret beginnings of his coming, the heralds of his approach, the dawning of the day before the morning star arises and the sun follows upon his track. But when the Lord does come in any sweet manifestation of his presence or of his power, then he will abide where he has come, for he never leaves or forsakes a soul which he has once visited. He may seem to do so; he may withdraw himself; and then who can behold him? But he never really leaves the temple which he has once adorned and sanctified with his presence. Christ is formed in the hearts of his people the hope of glory; their body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and Christ dwells in them by faith. Though we often mourn over his absence and do not feel his gracious presence as we would, still he is there, if he has once come.

May 22

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4

If we are to be saved our faith must gain the day; we must have a faith that shall triumph over death and hell and gain a glorious conquest over every internal and external and infernal foe. This is just the state, then, in which the matter stands: we must either conquer or be conquered; we must either gain the day and be crowned with an immortal crown of glory, or else sink in the strife, defeated by sin and Satan. But none of God's people will be defeated in the fight; and yet they often seem, as it were, to escape defeat by the very skin of their teeth; yet faith will sooner or later gain the day, for Jesus is its finisher as well as its author. He will crown the faith of his own gift with eternal glory. He will never suffer his dear family to be overcome in the good fight of faith, for he will give strength to every weak arm and power to every feeble knee, and has engaged to bring them off more than conquerors. Thus as the Lord the Spirit is pleased to work in the soul by his living energy, he strengthens faith more and more to believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, to receive more continual supplies out of his fulness, to wrestle more earnestly with God for

a spiritual blessing, to stand more firmly in the evil day against every assaulting foe, to fight more strenuously the good fight of faith, and never cry quarter until faith gains its glorious end, which is to see Jesus as he is in the realms of eternal day.

May 23

"Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him." Psalm 62:8

Have we not sometimes been enabled to pour out our hearts at a throne of grace, and tell the Lord what we really wanted, what we really asked for, and tell him that nothing but that which he alone could give would satisfy our souls? There have been such times of access to the God of grace. And afterwards perhaps we have forgotten the things we told him of; we have been heedless of the prayers we laid at his feet; and though very earnest at the time in seeking after certain blessings, we left them at the Lord's feet and forgot them all. But the Lord does not forget them; they are treasured up in his heart and memory; and in his own time he brings them to light, and gives the fulfilment of them. But before he does it, he will bring us into the spot where we want them again; and then we have to tell him, and supplicate and ask him again, ashamed of ourselves perhaps that we should have asked the Lord for these blessings and been as heedless of them as though we did not care to receive them at his hand; but still, under trouble, under soul necessity, under grief, we go and tell him again. And then the Lord, in his own time and way, brings about the very things we desired of him; opens up ways, lifts out of trials, removes burdens, makes a way in the deep, which no eye but his could see, and no hand but his could open,—leads the soul into it, brings the soul through it,—and then hides all glory from the creature, by making us fall down before his feet, and ascribe glory and honour and power and thanksgiving and salvation unto God and the Lamb.

May 24

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Colossians 3:2

Everything upon earth, as viewed by the eyes of the Majesty of heaven, is low and paltry. Earth is after all but a huge clod of dust, and as such, apart from its having been once the place of the Redeemer's sufferings and sacrifice, being now the habitation of his suffering people, and to be hereafter the scene of his glory, as insignificant in the eyes of its Maker as the small dust of the balance or the drop of the bucket. What, then, are its highest objects, its loftiest aims, its grandest pursuits, its noblest employments, short of the grace of the gospel, in the sight of him who inhabits eternity, but mean and worthless? Nay, even in our eyes is there not one consideration that when felt stamps vanity upon them all?—that all earth's pursuits, whatever high attainments men may reach in this life, be it of wealth, rank, learning, power, or pleasure, end in death? The breath of God's displeasure soon lays low in the grave all that is rich and mighty, high and proud; for "the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low" (Isaiah 2:12). Thus that effectual work of grace on the heart, whereby the chosen vessels of mercy are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, may well be termed a "high calling," for it calls them out of those low, grovelling pursuits, those earthly toys, those base and sensual lusts in which the children of men seek at once their happiness and their ruin, unto the knowledge and enjoyment of those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

May 25

"As dying, and, behold, we live." 2 Corinthians 6:9

Though we die, and die daily, yet, behold, we live; and in a sense, the more we die, the more we live. The more we die to self, the more we die to sin; the more we die to pride and self-righteousness, the more we die to creature strength; and the more we die to nature, the more we live to grace. And this runs all the way through the life and experience of a Christian. Nature must die, that grace may live. The weeds must be plucked up, that the crop may grow; the flesh be starved, that the spirit may be fed; the old man put off, that the new man may be put on; the deeds of the body be mortified, that the soul may live unto God. As then we

die, we live. The more we die to our own strength, the more we live to Christ's strength; the more we die to creature hope, the more we live to a good hope through grace; the more we die to our own righteousness, the more we live to Christ's righteousness; and the more we die to the world, the more we live to and for heaven. This is the grand mystery, that the Christian is always dying, yet always living; and the more he dies, the more he lives. The death of the flesh is the life of the spirit; the death of sin is the life of righteousness; and the death of the creature is the very life of God in the soul.

May 26

"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." Ezekiel 21:27

Are there not seasons in our experience when we can lay down our souls before God, and say, "Let Christ be precious to my soul, let him come with power to my heart, let him set up his throne as Lord and King, and let self be nothing before him?" Well, we utter these prayers in sincerity and simplicity, we desire their fulfilment; but oh, the struggle! the conflict! when God answers these petitions. When our plans are frustrated, what a rebellion works up in the carnal mind! When self is cast down, what a rising up of the fretful, peevish impatience of the creature! When the Lord does answer our prayers, and strips off all false confidence; when he does remove our rotten props, and dash to pieces our broken cisterns, what a storm—what a conflict takes place in the soul! Angry with the Lord for doing the very work we have asked him to do, rebelling against him for being so kind as to answer those petitions that we have offered up, and ready to fume and fret against the very teaching for which we have supplicated him. But he is not to be moved; he will take his own way. "I will overturn," let the creature say, let it think what it will. Down it shall go to ruin, it shall become a wreck, it shall be overthrown. My purpose shall be accomplished, and I will fulfil all my pleasure. But I will overturn, not to destroy, not to cast into eternal perdition, but I will overturn the whole building to erect a far more goodly edifice. Self is a rebel, who has set up an idolatrous temple, and I will overturn and bring the temple to ruin, for the purpose of manifesting my glory and my salvation, that I may be your Lord and your God."

May 27

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:26, 27

There is no middle path to heaven—there is no intermediate state between hell and heaven; no purgatory for that numerous class who think themselves hardly good enough for heaven, yet hardly bad enough for hell. No; there is no intermediate road nor state. We must win Christ as our own most blessed Jesus, and with him enjoy the happiness and glory of heaven, or sink down to hell with all our sins upon our head beneath his most terrible frown. The soul then that has been charmed with the beauty and blessedness of Jesus longs to win him, and that not for a day, month, or year, but for eternity; for in obtaining him, it obtains all that God can give the soul of man to enjoy as created immortal and for immortality. Under the influence of his grace, it feels at times, even here below, all its immortal powers springing forth into active, heavenly life, and looks forward in faith and hope to a glorious eternity, where it will be put into possession of the highest enjoyment which God can give to man, even union with himself by virtue of union with his dear Son, according to those wonderful words of the Redeemer himself—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21).

May 28

"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation." Psalm 106:4

How is a man brought and taught to want to be "visited with" God's salvation? He must know something first of condemnation. Salvation only suits the condemned. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost;" and therefore salvation only suits the lost. A man must be lost—utterly lost—before he can prize God's salvation. And how is he lost? By losing all his

religion, losing all his righteousness, losing all his strength, losing all his confidence, losing all his hopes, losing all that is of the flesh; losing it by its being taken from him, and stripped away by the hand of God. A man who is brought into this state of utter beggary and complete bankruptcy—to be nothing, to have nothing, to know nothing—he is the man, who in the midnight watches, in his lonely hours, by his fireside, and at times, well-nigh night and day, is crying, groaning, begging, suing, seeking, and praying after the manifestation of God's salvation to his soul. "O visit me with thy salvation." He wants a visit from God; he wants God to come and dwell with him, take up his abode in his heart, discover himself to him, manifest and reveal himself, sit down with him, eat with him, walk with him, and dwell in him as his God. And a living soul can be satisfied with nothing short of this. He must have a visit. It profits him little to read in the word of God what God did to his saints of old; he wants something *for himself*, something that shall do *his* soul good; he wants something that shall cheer, refresh, comfort, bless, and profit him, remove his burdens, and settle his soul into peace. And therefore he wants a visitation—that the presence and power, the mercy and the love of God should visit his soul.

May 29

"That I may see the good of thy chosen." Psalm 106:5

Did you ever see any good in God's chosen? Oh! "how goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" Did you ever see what good God has blessed his people with, and how good it is to be one of them? All God's people see that there is a "good" in God's chosen family, peculiar to them, and *that* they sigh and long for. But some will say, Had David never seen it when he penned this psalm? Aye, surely; he had seen it. But did he not want to see it again? Yes; he had lost the sight of it, the sweet vision of it had retired, the old veil had come back, his eyes were dim, he wanted fresh "eye-salve." So with us; we have seen, we trust, at times "the good of God's chosen," have felt our affections drawn towards them, and drawn up towards God, and have said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." That was to enjoy the sweet foretastes of heaven. But all these sweet foretastes became clouded; fogs and mists rested upon them, and hid them from our eye. Fresh sin

brought fresh guilt, and darkness and deadness and doubts and temptations and fears and besetments came on of various kinds; and all these beclouded our sight. But we cannot forget the past; we cannot forget the solemn moments when we walked with God and talked with God, nor the sweet feelings that his presence enkindled. However dark, however dead, however disconsolate, however tried, harassed, and tempted, we cannot forget that. And having "seen the good of God's chosen," we want to see again the good sight, to taste again that heavenly banquet. "That I may see the good of thy chosen."

May 30

"That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation." Psalm 106:5

What is *"the gladness of God's nation?"* To be saved "without money and without price;" to be saved by grace—free, rich, sovereign, distinguishing grace, without one atom of works, without one grain of creature merit, without anything of the flesh. This is "the gladness of God's nation;" to rejoice in free grace, grace superabounding over the aboundings of sin, grace reigning triumphant over the dreadful evils of our heart. It is grace that "gladdens" a man's heart. Oh! sweet grace, blessed grace! when it meets our case and reaches our souls. Oh! what a help, what a strength, what a rest for a poor toiling, striving, labouring soul, to find that grace has done all the work, to feel that grace has triumphed in the cross of Christ, to find that nothing is required, nothing is wanted, nothing is to be done. It is a full and perfect, complete and finished work. Oh! sweet sound, when it reaches the heart and touches the conscience, and is shed blessedly abroad in the soul.

This is "the gladness of God's nation;" this makes their heart glad, that the work is finished, that the warfare is accomplished, that the Church of God "hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins;" this is the comforting sound wherewith God "comforts his people;" this makes the nation glad, and their heart to leap and dance for joy. Has your heart never leaped at the sound?—only for a moment? Has grace never sounded sweetly in your soul, and made your very heart dance within you? If it has, you know what is "the gladness of God's nation."

May 31

"That I may glory with thine inheritance." Psalm 106:5

The Church is Christ's *inheritance*. He purchased it by his own blood. He went into captivity for it, and he redeemed it by pouring out his precious blood for it. Now this inheritance *glories*: "That I may glory with thine inheritance." And in whom does it glory? It glories in its covenant Head. It does not glory in itself—in its pious self, righteous self, strong self, religious self; "let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." The glory of the Church is to glory in her covenant Head—to glory in Christ and in Christ alone; to glory in his strength, love, blood, grace, and righteousness; and to glory in it, herself being covered with shame. None can glory in Christ, until he is stripped of his own glory. There is no putting the crown of glory on the head of self and on the head of the Mediator. There is no saying, "I have procured this by my own strength," and putting the crown upon that head. There is no saying, "I obtained this by my own exertions," and putting the crown upon those exertions. No; a man to glory in Christ must be covered with shame and confusion. He must be abased in his feelings; he must have his mouth in the dust; he must loathe himself in dust and ashes before God; he must see and feel himself to be the chief of sinners, and "less than the least of all saints;" he must know and feel himself to be a wretch indeed. And then when he lies in the dust of abasement, if a sight of the dear Redeemer's glory catches his eye and inflames his heart, he glories in him, and in him alone. And all the "inheritance" of God glory in him; they can glory in nothing else, and their highest attainment is to place all the glory of salvation from first to last simply upon his head, to whom that glory belongs.