

Pearls From Philpot

by J.C. Philpot

J.C. Philpot's sermon explores the contrast between man's religion and God's, emphasizing the importance of humility, the struggle of the two natures, and the compassionate provision of Christ in our trials.

Scripture: John 8:32, Romans 8:26, 2 Corinthians 7:10, Galatians 2:20, 1 Peter 5:10, 1 John 2:27

Topics: "Suffering And Trials", "Holy Spirit"

Description

J.C. Philpot preaches about the importance of suffering and trials in the life of a believer, emphasizing that God uses these experiences to perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle His children. He highlights the distinction between worldly sorrow that leads to death and godly sorrow that leads to repentance and salvation. Philpot encourages seeking the truth in the Scriptures as a means of finding freedom and victory over sin through faith in Christ's sufferings and resurrection. He also underscores the necessity of experiencing the anointing of the Holy Spirit for spiritual strength and perseverance in the Christian journey.

Transcript

Man's religion & God's religion

Man's religion is to build up the creature.

God's religion is to throw the creature down in the dust of self-abasement, and to glorify Christ.

What a mystery are you!

"So I find this law at work--When I want to do good, evil is right there with me." Rom. 7:21

Are you not often a mystery to yourself?

Warm one moment--cold the next!

Abasing yourself one hour--

exalting yourself the following!

Loving the world, full of it, steeped up to
your head in it today--crying, groaning, and
sighing for a sweet manifestation of the love
of God tomorrow!

Brought down to nothingness, covered with
shame and confusion, on your knees before
you leave your room--filled with pride and self
importance before you have got down stairs!

Despising the world, and willing to give it all
up for one taste of the love of Jesus when in
solitude--trying to grasp it with both hands
when in business!

What a mystery are you!

Touched by love--and stung with hatred!

Possessing a little wisdom--and a great deal of folly!

Earthly minded--and yet having the affections in heaven!

Pressing forward--and lagging behind!

Full of sloth--and yet taking the kingdom with violence!

And thus the Spirit, by a process which we may feel
but cannot adequately describe--leads us into the
mystery of the two natures perpetually struggling
and striving against each other in the same bosom.

So that one man cannot more differ from another,
than the same man differs from himself.

But the mystery of the kingdom of heaven is this--
that our carnal mind undergoes no alteration, but

maintains a perpetual war with grace. And thus,
the deeper we sink in self abasement under a
sense of our vileness, the higher we rise in a
knowledge of Christ, and the blacker we are in
our own view--the more lovely does Jesus appear.

What stupid blockheads!

"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them.

Matthew 15:16

What lessons we need day by day to teach
us anything aright, and how it is for the most
part, "line upon line, line upon line--here a
little, and there a little." O . . .

what slow learners!

what dull, forgetful scholars!

what ignoramuses!

what stupid blockheads!

what stubborn pupils!

Surely no scholar at a school, old or young,
could learn so little of natural things as we seem
to have learned of spiritual things after . . .

so many years instruction,

so many chapters read,

so many sermons heard, so many prayers put up,

so much talking about religion.

How small, how weak is the amount of
growth--compared with all we have read
and heard and talked about!

But it is a mercy that the Lord saves whom
He will save--and that we are saved by free
grace--and free grace alone!

Take me as I am with all my sin and shame
"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed;
save me, and I shall be saved." Jer. 17:14

Here is this sin! Save me from it!

Here is this snare! Break it to pieces!

Here is this lust! Lord, subdue it!

Here is this temptation! Deliver me out of it!

Here is my proud heart! Lord, humble it!

Here is my unbelieving heart! Take it away,
and give me faith; give me submission to
Your mind and will.

Take me as I am with all my sin and
shame and work in me everything well
pleasing in Your sight.

Nothing but a huge clod of dust

"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 base and paltry.

Earth is after all, nothing but a huge clod of
dust, and as such, 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,
in the sight of Him who inhabits
eternity; but base and worthless?
Vanity is stamped on all earth's attainments.
All earthly pursuits and high accomplishments . . .
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.
But 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, calls them out of . . .
those low, groveling pursuits,
those earthly toys,
those base and sensual lusts in which other
men seek at once their happiness and their ruin.
How can they escape?

"He will keep the feet of His saints."

1 Samuel 2:9

The Lord sees His poor scattered pilgrims
traveling through a valley of tears--journeying
through a waste-howling wilderness--a path
beset with baits, traps, and snares in every
direction.

How can they escape?

Why, the Lord 'keeps their feet'. He carries them
through every rough place--as a tender parent
carries a little child. When about to fall--He
graciously lays His everlasting arms underneath
them. And when tottering and stumbling, and
their feet ready to slip--He mercifully upholds
them from falling altogether.

But do you think that He has not different ways
for different feet? The God of creation has not
made two flowers, nor two leaves upon a tree
alike--and will He cause all His people to walk
in precisely the same path? No. We have . . .
each our path,
each our troubles,
each our trials,
each peculiar traps and snares laid for our feet.

And the wisdom of the all-wise God is shown by His
eyes being in every place--marking the footsteps of
every pilgrim--suiting His remedies to meet their

individual case and necessity--appearing for them
when nobody else could do them any good--watching
so tenderly over them, as though the eyes of His
affection were bent on one individual--and carefully
noting the goings of each, as though all the powers
of the Godhead were concentrated on that one
person to keep him from harm!

God will meet all your needs

"And my God will meet all your needs according
to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19

Until we are brought into the depths of poverty,
we shall never know nor value Christ's riches.

If, then, you are a child of God, a poor and
needy soul, a tempted and tried believer in
Christ, "God will meet all your needs."

They may be very great.

It may seem to you, sometimes, as though there
were not upon all the face of the earth such a
wretch as you--as though there never could be
a child of God in your state . . .

so dark,

so stupid,

so blind and ignorant,

so proud and worldly,

so presumptuous and hypocritical,

so continually backsliding after idols,

so continually doing things that you

know are hateful in God's sight.

But whatever your need be--it is not beyond the reach of divine supply! And the deeper your need, the more is Jesus glorified in supplying it.

Do not say then, that . . .

your case is too bad,

your needs are too many,

your perplexities too great,

your temptations too powerful.

No case can be too bad!

No temptations can be too powerful!

No sin can be too black!

No perplexity can be too hard!

No state in which the soul can get, is beyond the reach of the almighty and compassionate love, that burns in the breast of the Redeemer!

That sympathizing, merciful, feeling, tender, and compassionate heart

"For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our infirmities." Hebrews 4:15

The child of God, spiritually taught and convinced, is deeply sensible of his infirmities. Yes, that he is encompassed with infirmities--that he is nothing else but infirmities. And therefore the great High Priest to whom he comes as a burdened sinner--to whom he has recourse in the depth of his extremity--and at whose feet he falls overwhelmed with a sense

of his helplessness, sin, misery, and guilt--is so
suitable to him as one able to sympathize with
his infirmities.

We would, if left to our own conceptions, naturally
imagine that Jesus is too holy to look down in
compassion on a filthy, guilty wretch like ourselves.

Surely, surely, He will spurn us from His feet. Surely,
surely, His holy eyes cannot look upon us in our . . .

blood,

guilt,

filth,

wretchedness,

misery,

and shame.

Surely, surely, He cannot bestow . . .

one heart's thought,

one moment's sympathy,

or feel one spark of love

towards those who are so unlike Him.

Nature, sense, and reason would thus argue,

"I must be holy--perfectly holy--for Jesus to love;

I must be pure--perfectly pure--spotless and

sinless, for Jesus to think of. But . . .

that I, a sinful, guilty, defiled wretch;

that I, encompassed with infirmities;

that I, whose heart is a cage of unclean birds;

that I, stained and polluted with a thousand iniquities;

that I can have any inheritance in Him--or that He can have any love or compassion towards me--nature, sense, reason, and human religion in all its shapes and forms, revolts from the idea."

It is as though Jesus specially address Himself to the poor, burdened child of God who feels his infirmities, who cannot boast of his own wisdom, strength, righteousness, and consistency--but is all weakness and helplessness. It seems as if He would address Himself to the case of such a helpless wretch--and pour a sweet cordial into his bleeding conscience.

We, the children of God--we, who each knows his own plague and his own sore--we, who carry about with us day by day a body of sin and death, that makes us lament, sigh, and groan--we, who know painfully what it is to be encompassed with infirmities--we, who come to His feet as being nothing and having nothing but sin and woe--"we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our infirmities," but One who carries in His bosom that . . .

sympathizing,

merciful,

feeling,

tender, and

compassionate heart.

Why are you cast down, O my soul?

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why so

disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for
I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God."

Psalm 42:11

Do you forget, O soul, that the way to heaven
is a very strait and narrow path--too narrow for
you to carry your sins in it with you?

God sees it good that you should be cast down.

You were getting very proud, O soul.

The world had gotten hold of your heart.

You were seeking great things for yourself.

You were secretly roving away from the Lord.

You were too much lifted up in SELF.

The Lord has sent you these trials and difficulties
and allowed these temptations to fall upon you,
to bring you down from your state of false security.

There is reason therefore, even to praise God
for being cast down, and for being so disturbed.

How this opens up parts of God's Word which
you never read before with any feeling.

How it gives you sympathy and communion
with the tried and troubled children of God.

How it weans and separates you from dead professors.

How it brings you in heart and affection,
out of the world that lies in wickedness.

And how it engages your thoughts, time after time,
upon the solemn matters of eternity--instead of being
a prey to every idle thought and imagination, and

tossed up and down upon a sea of vanity and folly.

But, above all, when there is a sweet response from the Lord, and the power of divine things is inwardly felt, in enabling us to hope in God, and to praise His blessed name--then we see the benefit of being cast down and so repeatedly and continually disturbed.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God."

Psalm 42:11

Treasure in earthen vessels

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels."

2 Corinthians 4:7

Do not be surprised if you feel that in yourself you are but an earthen vessel--if you are made deeply and daily sensible of your frail body.

Do not be surprised . . .

if your clay house is often tottering;

if sickness sometimes assails your mortal tabernacle;

if in your flesh there dwells no good thing;

if your soul often cleaves to the dust; and

if you are unable to retain a sweet sense

of God's goodness and love.

Do not be surprised nor startled . . .

at the corruptions of your depraved nature;

at the depth of sin in your carnal mind;

at the vile abominations which lurk and work

in your deceitful and desperately wicked heart.

Bear in mind that it is the will of God that this heavenly treasure which makes you rich for eternity, should be lodged in an earthen vessel.

We have ever to feel our native weakness--and that without Christ we can do nothing--that we may be clothed with humility, and feel ourselves the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints.

We thus learn to prize the heights, breadths, lengths, and depths of the love of Christ, who stooped so low to raise us up so high!

All trials, all temptations,
all strippings, all emptyings

The very trials and afflictions, and the sore temptations through which God's family pass, all eventually endear Christ to them.

And depend upon it, if you are a child of God, you will sooner or later, in your travels through this wilderness, find your need of Jesus as "able to save to the uttermost."

There will be such things in your heart, and such feelings in your mind--the temptations you will meet with will be such--that nothing short of a Savior that is able to save to the uttermost can save you out of your desperate case and felt circumstances as utterly lost and helpless.

This a great point to come to. All trials, all

temptations, all strippings, all emptyings
that do not end here are valueless--because
they lead the soul away from God.

But the convictions, the trials, the temptations,
the strippings, the emptyings, that bring us to
this spot--that we have nothing, and can do
nothing, but the Lord alone must do it all--these
have a blessed effect, because they eventually
make Jesus very near and dear unto us.

No fear!

"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Romans 3:18

Those who have every reason to fear as to
their eternal state before God, have for the
most part, no fear at all. They are secure,
and free from doubt and fear.

The depths of human hypocrisy,
the dreadful lengths to which profession may go,
the deceit of the carnal heart,
the snares spread for the unwary feet,
the fearful danger of being deceived at the last;
these traps and pitfalls are not objects of anxiety
to those dead in sin.

As long as they can pacify natural conscience,
and do something to soothe any transient
conviction--they are glad to be deceived!
God does not see fit to disturb their quiet.

He has no purpose of mercy towards them;
they are not subjects of His kingdom;
they are not objects of His love.

He therefore leaves them carnally secure, as
in a dream--from which they will not awake
until the day of judgment.

These difficulties . . .

"From all your idols will I cleanse you." Ezekiel 36:25

When there are no crosses, temptations, or trials,
a man is sure to go out after and cleave to idols.

It matters not what experience he has had. If once he
ceases to be plagued and tried, he will be setting up
his household gods in the secret chambers of his heart.

Profit or pleasure, self-indulgence or self-gratification,
will surely, in one form or another, engross his thoughts,
and steal away his heart.

Nor is there anything too trifling or insignificant to
become an idol. Whatever is meditated on preferably
to God--whatever is desired more than He--whatever
more interests us, pleases us, occupies our waking
hours, or is more constantly in our mind--becomes
an idol, and a source of sin.

It is not the magnitude of the idol, but its existence
as an object of worship--that constitutes idolatry. I have
seen some 'Burmese idols' not much larger than my hand;
and I have seen some 'Egyptian idols' weighing many tons.
But both were equally idols--and the comparative size had

nothing to do with the question.

So spiritually, an idol is not to be measured by its size, or its relative importance or non-importance. A flower may be as much an idol to one man, as a chest full of gold to another.

If you watch your heart, you will see idols rising and setting all day long, nearly as thickly as the stars by night.

But God sends . . .

trials,

difficulties,

temptations,

besetments,

losses,

afflictions,

to pull down these idols--or rather

to pull away our hearts from them.

These difficulties . . .

pull us out of fleshly ease,

make us cry for mercy,

pull down all rotten props,

hunt us out of false refuges, and

strip us of vain hopes and delusive expectations.

Idolatry!

"They tell how you turned to God from idols

to serve the living and true God." 1 Thes. 1:9

Nothing is too small or too insignificant

which, at times, may not be an idol.

What is an idol?

Something my carnal mind loves.

How may I know whether my carnal mind loves it?

When we think of it, and are very much pleased with it. We pet it, love and fondle it, dallying and playing with it, like a mother with her babe. See how she takes the little thing and gazes at it. Her eyes are fixed on it--she dotes upon it because she loves it. Thus we may know an idol if we examine our own hearts--by what our imagination, desires and secret thoughts are going out after.

Instead of being spiritually minded, having his heart and affections in heaven, he has something in his mind which it is going out after--something or other laying hold of the affections.

The child of God has, more or less, all these evil propensities working within. There is idolatry in every man's heart. How deep this idolatry is rooted in a man's heart! How it steals upon his soul! Whatever is indulged in--how it creeps over him, until it gets such power that it becomes master.

A man does not know himself--if he does not know what power this idolatry has over him.

None but God can make the man know it--and when the Lord delivers him, he then turns to God and says, "What a vile wretch I have been! What a monster to go after these idols, loving

this thing, and that. A wretch--a monster of iniquity, the vilest wretch that ever crawled on the face of God's earth--for my wicked heart to go out after these idols!"

When the soul is brought down to a sense of its vileness and loathsomeness--and God's patience and forbearance--it turns to God from idols, to serve the only living and true God, who pardons the idolater.

Through the inward conflicts,
secret workings

Through the inward conflicts, secret workings,
mysterious changes, and ever-varying exercises
of his soul, the true Christian becomes established
in a deep experience of . . .

his own folly and God's wisdom,
his own weakness and Christ's strength,
his own sinfulness and the Lord's goodness,
his own backslidings and the Spirit's recoveries,
his own base ingratitude and Jehovah's patience,
the aboundings of sin and the super-aboundings of grace.

He thus becomes daily more and more confirmed in . . .

the vanity of the creature,
the utter helplessness of man,
the deceitfulness and hypocrisy of the human heart,
the sovereignty of distinguishing grace,
the fewness of heaven-taught ministers,

the scanty number of living souls,
and the great rareness of true religion.
Wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores
"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there
is no soundness in it--but only wounds, and bruises,
and putrefying sores. They have not been closed,
neither bound up, neither soothed with ointment."

Isaiah 1:5-6

Every thought, word, and action is polluted by sin.

Every mental faculty is depraved.

The will chooses evil.

The affections cleave to earthly things.

The memory, like a broken sieve,
retains the bad and lets fall the good.

The judgment, like a bribed or drunken judge,
pronounces mindless or wrong decisions.

The conscience, like an opium eater, lies
asleep and drugged in stupefied silence.

When all these 'master faculties of the mind' are
so drunken and disorderly--need we wonder that
the bodily members are a godless, rebellious crew?

Lusts call out for gratification.

Unbelief and infidelity murmur.

Tempers growl and mutter.

Every bad passion strives hard for the mastery.

O the evils of the human heart, which, let loose,

have filled earth with misery, and hell with victims;
which deluged the world with the flood--burnt
Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven--and
are ripening the world for the final conflagration!
Every sin which . . .
has made this fair earth a 'present hell';
has filled the air with groans; and
has drenched the ground with blood;
dwells in your heart and mine!
Now, as this is opened up to the conscience by the
Spirit of God--we feel indeed to be of all men most
sinful and miserable--and of all most guilty, polluted,
and vile. But it is this--and nothing but this--which
cuts to pieces our 'fleshly righteousness, wisdom, and
strength'--which slays our delusive hopes--and lays us
low at the footstool of mercy--without one good thought,
word, or action to propitiate an angry Judge.
It is this which brings the soul to this point--
that if saved, it can only be saved by the
free grace, sovereign mercy, and tender
compassion of Almighty God.

The wilderness wanderer

"They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary
way; they found no city to dwell in." Psalm 107:4

The true Christian finds this world to be a wilderness.

There is no change in the world itself.

The change is in the man's heart.

The wilderness wanderer thinks it altered--a
different world from what he has hitherto known . . .
his friends,
his own family,
the employment in which he is daily engaged,
the general pursuits of men--
their cares and anxieties,
their hopes and prospects,
their amusements and pleasures, and
what I may call 'the general din and whirl of life',
all seem to him different to what they were--and
for a time perhaps he can scarcely tell whether the
change is in them, or in himself.

This however is the prominent and uppermost feeling
in his mind--that he finds himself, to his surprise--a
wanderer in a world which has changed altogether its
appearance to him. The fair, beautiful world, in which was
all his happiness and all his home--has become to him
a dreary wilderness.

Sin has been fastened in its conviction on his conscience.

The Holy Spirit has taken the veil of unbelief and ignorance
off his heart. He now sees the world in a wholly different
light--and instead of a paradise it has become a wilderness--
for sin, dreadful sin, has marred all its beauty and happiness.

It is not because the world itself has changed that the Christian
feels it to be a wilderness--but because he himself has changed.

There is nothing in this world which can really gratify or satisfy

the true Christian. What once was to him a happy and joyous world has now become a barren wilderness.

The scene of his former . . .

pursuits,

pleasures,

habits,

delights,

prospects,

hopes,

anticipations of profit or happiness--

is now turned into a barren wasteland.

He cannot perhaps tell how or why the change has

taken place, but he feels it--deeply feels it. He may

try to shake off his trouble and be a little cheerful

and happy as he was before--but if he gets a little

imaginary relief, all his guilty pangs come back upon

him with renewed strength and increased violence.

God means to make the world a wilderness to every

child of His, that he may not find his happiness in it,

but be a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth.

Temptation

"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly

out of temptations." 2 Peter 2:9

Few will sincerely and spiritually go to the Lord,

and cry from their hearts to be delivered from the

power of a temptation--until it presses so weightily

upon their conscience, and lies so heavy a burden

upon their soul, that none but God can remove it.
But when we really feel the burden of a temptation;
when, though our flesh may love it, our spirit hates
it--when, though there may be in our carnal mind a
cleaving to it, our conscience bleeds under it, and
we are brought spiritually to loathe it and to loathe
ourselves for it--when we are enabled to go to the
Lord in real sincerity of soul and honesty of heart,
beseeching Him to deliver us from it--I believe, that
the Lord will, sooner or later, either remove that
temptation entirely in His providence or by His grace,
or so weaken its power that it shall cease to be what
it was before, drawing our feet into paths of darkness
and evil.

As long, however, as we are in that state of which
the prophet speaks, "Their heart is divided--now
shall they be found faulty" (Hosea 10:2)--as long
as we are in that carnal, wavering mind, which James
describes--"A double minded man is unstable in all
his ways;" as long as we are hankering after the
temptation, casting longing, lingering side glances
after it, rolling it as a sweet morsel under our tongue;
and though conscience may testify against it, yet not
willing to have it taken away, there is . . .

no hearty cry,

nor sigh,

nor spiritual breathing of our soul,

that God would remove it from us.

But when we are brought, as in the presence of a heart-searching God, to hate the evil to which we are tempted; and cry to Him that He would--for His honor and for our soul's good--take the temptation away, or dull and deaden its power--sooner or later the Lord will hear the cry of those who groan to be delivered from those temptations, which are so powerfully pressing them down to the dust.

Idling life away like an idiot or a madman

When one is spiritually reborn, he

sees at one and the same moment . . .

God and self,

justice and guilt,

power and helplessness,

a holy law and a broken commandment,

eternity and time,

the purity of the Creator, and

the filthiness of the creature.

And these things he sees--not merely as declared in the Bible--but as revealed in himself as personal realities, involving all his happiness or all his misery in time and in eternity. Thus it is with him as though a new existence had been communicated, and as if for the first time he had found there was a God!

It is as though all his days he had been asleep,
and were now awakened--asleep upon the top of
a mast, with the raging waves beneath--as if all
his past life were a dream, and the dream were
now at an end. He has been . . .

hunting butterflies,

blowing soap bubbles,

fishing for minnows,

picking daisies,

building houses of cards, and

idling life away like an idiot or a madman.

He had been perhaps wrapped up in a religious
profession--advanced even to the office of a deacon,
or mounted in a pulpit. He had learned to talk about
Christ, and election, and grace, and fill his mouth
with the language of Zion.

But what did he experimentally know of these
things? Nothing, absolutely nothing!

Ignorant of his own ignorance (of all kinds of
ignorance the worst)--he thought himself rich,
and increased with goods, and to have need of
nothing--and knew not that he was wretched,
and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

This wily devil!

What a foe to one's peace is one's own spirit!

What shall I call it? It is often an infernal spirit.

Why? Because it bears the mark of Satan upon it.

The pride of our spirit,
the presumption of our spirit,
the hypocrisy of our spirit,
the intense selfishness of our spirit,
are often hidden from us.

This wily devil, SELF, can wear such
masks and assume such forms!

This serpent, SELF, can so creep and crawl,
can so twist and turn, and can disguise itself
under such false appearances--that it is often
hidden from ourselves.

Who is the greatest enemy we have to fear? We all
have our enemies. But who is our greatest enemy?
He whom you carry in your own bosom--your daily,
hourly, and unmovable companion, who entwines
himself in nearly every thought of your heart--who . . .

sometimes puffs up with pride,
sometimes inflames with lust,
sometimes inflates with presumption, and
sometimes works under pretend humility and fleshly holiness.

God is determined to stain the pride of human glory.
He will never let SELF, (which is but another word for
the creature,) wear the crown of victory. It must be
crucified, denied, and mortified.

To bathe in the ocean of endless bliss!

"Blessed are those whose strength is in You,
who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

As they pass through the Valley of Baca, ("weeping")
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.
They go from strength to strength,
until each appears before God in Zion."

Psalm 84:5-7

Every living soul that has been experimentally taught
his lost condition--that has known something of a resting
place in Christ--that has turned his back upon both the
world and the professing church--and gone weeping
Zionward, that he may . . .

live in Jesus

feel His power,

taste His love,

know His blood,

rejoice in His grace;

every such soul shall, like Israel of old, be borne safely
through this waste howling wilderness--shall be carried
through this valley of tears--and taken to enjoy eternal
bliss and glory in the presence of Jesus--to bathe in the
ocean of endless bliss!

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty!

"Your eyes will see the King in His beauty!"

Isaiah 33:17

Where in heaven or on earth can there be found such
a lovely Object as the Son of God? If you have never
seen any beauty in Jesus . . .

you have never seen Jesus,
He has never revealed Himself to you,
you never had a glimpse of His lovely face,
nor a sense of His presence,
nor a word from His lips,
nor a touch from His hand.

But if you have seen Him by the eye of faith--and
He has revealed Himself to you even in a small
measure--you have seen a beauty in Him beyond
all other beauties, for it is . . .

a holy beauty,
a divine beauty,
the beauty of His heavenly grace,
the beauty of His uncreated and eternal glory.

How beautiful and glorious does He show Himself to be
in His atoning blood and dying love. Even as sweating
great drops of blood in Gethsemane's gloomy garden,
and as hanging in torture and agony upon Calvary's
cross--faith can see a beauty in the glorious Redeemer,
even in the lowest depths of ignominy and shame!

"How is your Beloved better than others?"

"My Beloved is dark and dazzling, better
than ten thousand others!" Song 5:9-10

Can the Ethiopian change his skin?

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the
leopard its spots? Neither can you do good
who are accustomed to doing evil."

Jeremiah 13:23

Before the soul can know anything about salvation,
it must learn deeply and experimentally the nature of
sin--and of itself, as stained and polluted by sin.

The soul is proud--and needs to be humbled.

The soul is careless--and needs to be awakened.

The soul is alive--and needs to be killed.

The soul is full--and requires to be emptied.

The soul is whole--and needs to be wounded.

The soul is clothed--and requires to be stripped.

The soul is, by nature . . .

self-righteous,

self-seeking,

buried deep in worldliness and carnality,

utterly blind and ignorant,

filled with . . .

presumption,

arrogance,

conceit,

and enmity.

It hates all that is heavenly and spiritual.

Sin, in all its various forms, is its natural element.

To make man the direct opposite of what he originally is . . .

to make him love God--instead of hating Him;

to make him fear God--instead of mocking Him;

to make him obey God--instead of rebelling against Him;

to make him to tremble at His dreadful majesty--

instead of defiantly charging against Him;
to do this mighty work, and to effect this wonderful
change--requires the implantation of a new nature by
the immediate hand of God Himself!

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the
leopard its spots? Neither can you do good
who are accustomed to doing evil."

Jeremiah 13:23

That Heavenly Teacher

We do not learn that we are sinners merely
by reading it in the Bible. It must be wrought--
I might say, burnt into us.

Nor will anyone sincerely and spiritually cry for
mercy--until sin is spiritually felt and known . . .

in its misery,

in its dominion,

in its guilt,

in its entanglements,

in its wiles and allurements,

in its filth and pollution, and

in its condemnation.

Where the Holy Spirit works, He kindles . . .

sighs,

groans,

supplications,

wrestlings, and pleadings

to know Christ, feel His love, taste the efficacy

of His atoning blood, and embrace Him as all our salvation and all our desire.

And though there may, and doubtless will be, much barrenness, hardness, deadness, and apparent carelessness often felt--still that heavenly Teacher will revive His work--though often by painful methods--nor will He let the quickened soul rest short of a personal and experimental enjoyment of Christ and His glorious salvation.

Preserving grace before regeneration

"To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ."

Jude 1

What a mercy it is for God's people that before they have a 'vital union' with Christ--before they are grafted into Him experimentally--they have an 'eternal, immanent union' with Him before all worlds.

It is by virtue of this eternal union that they come into the world . . .

at such a time,

at such a place,

from such parents,

under such circumstances,

as God has appointed.

It is by virtue of this eternal union that the circumstances

of their lives are ordained. By virtue of this eternal union they are preserved in Christ before they are effectually called.

They cannot die until God has brought about a vital union with Christ!

Whatever sickness they may pass through--whatever injuries they may be exposed to--whatever perils assault them on sea or land--die they will not, die they cannot; until God's purposes are executed in bringing them into a vital union with the Son of His love.

Thus, this eternal union watched over every circumstance of their birth, watched over their childhood, watched over their manhood, watched over them until the appointed time and spot, when "the God of all grace," according to His eternal purpose, was pleased to quicken their souls, and thus bring about an experimental union with the Lord of life and glory.

Free!

"If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

John 8:36

To be made free implies a liberty from the WORLD and the spirit of covetousness in the heart. If we were to follow into their shops some who talk much of 'gospel liberty', we might find that the world's fetter had not been struck off their heart--that they had a 'golden' chain, though invisible to their own eyes, very closely wrapped round their heart.

And there is a being made free from the power of SIN.

I greatly fear, if we could follow into their holes and corners, and secret chambers, many who prattle about gospel liberty, we would find that sin had not yet lost its hold upon them, that there was some secret or open sin that entangled them, that there was . . .

some lust,

some passion,

some evil temper,

some wretched pride or other,

that wound its fetters very close round their heart.

And also there is a being made free from SELF . . .

proud self,

presumptuous self,

self-exalting self, flesh-pleasing self,

hypocritical self,

self in all its various shapes and turns,

self in all its crooked hypocrisy and windings.

"If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

These fugitive, transitory things

"The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." 1 John 2:17

There is a reality in true religion, and indeed, rightly viewed, a reality in nothing else. For every other thing passes away like a dream of the night, and comes to an end like a tale that is told. Now you cannot say of a thing that passes away and

comes to an end--that it is real. It may have the appearance of reality--when in fact it is but a shadow.

Money, jewels, pictures, books, furniture, securities, are transitory. Money may be spent, jewels be lost, books be burnt, furniture decay, pictures vanish by time and age, securities be stolen.

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, no enduring substance in them. They are for time, and are useful for a time. Like our daily food and clothing, 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.

"The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." 1 John 2:17

A sad motley mixture

(The following is an excerpt from Philpot's letter to a church which desired him to come as their pastor)

"I am less than the least of all God's people."

Ephesians 3:8

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the worst." 1 Timothy 1:15

Many are foolishly apt to think that a minister is more spiritual than anyone else. But I am daily more and more sensible of the desperate wickedness of my deceitful heart, and my miserable ruined state as a sinner by nature and by practice. I feel utterly unworthy of the name of a Christian, and to be ranked among the followers of the Lamb.

I have no desire to palm myself off on any church, as though I were anything. I am willing to take a low place.

The more you see of me, you will be sure to find out more of my infirmities, failings, waywardness, selfishness, obstinacy, and evil temper. I am carnal, very proud, very foolish in imagination, very slothful, very worldly, dark, stupid, blind, unbelieving and ignorant.

I cannot but confess that I am a strange compound--a sad motley mixture of all the most hateful and abominable vices that rise up within me, and face me at every turn.

When You shall enlarge my heart.

"I will run the way of Your commandments, when
You shall enlarge my heart." Psalm 119:32

The Word of God is full of precepts--but we are totally
unable to perform them in our own strength. We cannot,
without divine assistance, perform the precept . . .
with a single eye to the glory of God,
from heavenly motives, and
in a way acceptable to the Lord,
without special power from on high.

We need an extraordinary power to be put forth in our
hearts--a special work of the Spirit upon the conscience,
in order to spiritually fulfill in the slightest degree, the
least of God's commandments.

None but the Lord Himself can enlarge the heart
of His people. None but the Lord can expand their
hearts Godwards, and remove that narrowedness
and contractedness in divine things--which is the
plague and burden of a God-fearing soul.

When the Lord is absent,
when He hides His lovely face,
when He does not draw near to visit and bless,
the heart contracts in its own narrow compass.

But when the Lord is pleased to favor the soul with His
own gracious presence, and bring Himself near to the
heart, His felt presence opens, enlarges, and expands
the soul--so as to receive Him in all His love and grace.

Our refuge!

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation--my stronghold." Psalm 18:2

On every side are hosts of enemies ever invading our souls--trampling down every good thing in our hearts--accompanied by a flying troop of temptations, doubts, fears, guilt and bondage sweeping over our soul.

And we, as regards our own strength, are helpless against them.

But there is a refuge set before us in the gospel of the grace of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, as King in Zion, is there held up before our eyes as . . .

the Rock of our refuge,

our strong Tower,

our impregnable Fortress;

and we are encouraged by every precious promise

and every gospel invitation when we are overrun

and distressed by these wandering, ravaging,

plundering tribes--to flee unto and find a safe

refuge in Him.

"Keep me safe, O God, for in You I take refuge."

Psalm 16:1

"O Lord my God, I take refuge in You; save

and deliver me from all who pursue me."

Psalm 7:1

Supernatural light

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6

Until, then, this supernatural light of God enters into the soul, a man has no saving knowledge of Jehovah. He may . . .

say his prayers,

read his Bible, attend preaching,

observe ordinances,

bestow all his goods to feed the poor,

or give his body to be burned;

but he is as ignorant of God as

the cattle that graze in the fields!

He may--call himself a Christian, and be

thought such by others--talk much about

Jesus Christ, hold a sound creed--maintain

a consistent profession--pray at a prayer

meeting with fluency and apparent feeling,

stand up in a pulpit and contend earnestly

for the doctrines of grace--excel hundreds

of God's children in zeal, knowledge and

conversation.

And yet, if this ray of supernatural light has

never shone into his soul--he is only twofold

more the child of hell than those who make
no profession!

Little heathen?

(from Philpot's biography, written by his son)

There was nothing my father mistrusted more
than 'childhood piety.' He insisted that children
should never be taught or allowed to use the
language of 'personal possession' in reference
to God. To sing, for instance, "Rock of Ages,
cleft for ME" or, "MY Jesus".

Herein he was most logical. For by early influence
and example you can train up a child to be . . .

a little patriot,

a little Catholic,

a little Calvinist, or

a little Bolshevist.

But no power on earth can make him a child of God.

He took great care that we, his children, attended
the means of grace, and never missed chapel or
family prayers. But he never expected us to be
anything but little heathen. We had, it is true,
to be well behaved little heathen. If not, we got
"the stick", or its equivalent.

"Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the
flesh, nor of the will of man--but of God." John 1:13

My desire is . . .

to exalt the grace of God;

to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ alone;
to declare the sinfulness, helplessness and
hopelessness of man in a state of nature;
to describe the living experience of the
children of God in their . . .

trials,

temptations,

sorrows,

consolations

and blessings.

And how is he lost?

"O visit me with Your salvation." Psalm 106:4

Salvation only suits the condemned--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.

Wearied, torn, and half expiring

The poor sheep has gone astray; and having
once left the fold, it is pretty sure to have gotten

into some strange place or other. It has fallen
down a rock--or has rolled into a ditch--or is
hidden beneath a bush--or has crept into a
cave--or is lying in some deep, distant ravine,
where none but an experienced eye and hand
can find it out.

Just so with the Lord's lost sheep. They
get into strange places. They . . .
fall off rocks,
slip into holes,
hide among the bushes, and
sometimes creep off to die in caverns.

When the sheep has gone astray, the shepherd
goes after it to find it. Here he sees a footprint;
there a little lock of wool torn off by the thorns.

Every nook he searches--into every corner he looks--
until at last he finds the poor sheep wearied, torn,
and half expiring, with scarcely strength enough to
groan forth its misery. The shepherd does not beat
it home, nor thrust the goad into its back--but he
gently takes it up, lays it upon his shoulder, and
brings it home rejoicing.

I am weak and ignorant, full of sin

I am weak and ignorant, full of sin and
compassed with infirmity. But I bless God
that He has in some measure shown me
the power of eternal things, and by free

and sovereign grace stopped me in that career of vanity and sin in which, to all outward appearance, I was fast hurrying down to the chambers of death.

By the grace of God

"By the grace of God I am what I am."

1 Cor. 15:10

What but sovereign grace--rich, free and super-abounding grace--has made the difference between you and the world who cannot receive Him?

But for His divine operations upon your soul, you would still be of the world, hardening your heart against everything good and godlike, walking on in the pride and ignorance of unbelief and self-righteousness, until you sank down into the chambers of death!

The outpouring of the everlasting wrath of God

"The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 53:6

What heart can conceive, what tongue express what the holy soul of Christ endured when "the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all?"

In the garden of Gethsemane . . .

what a load of guilt,

what a weight of sin,

what an intolerable burden of the wrath of God,

did that sacred humanity endure, until the pressure
of sorrow and woe forced the drops of blood to fall
as sweat from His brow!

When the blessed Lord was made sin (or a sin offering)
for us, He endured in His holy soul all the pangs of . . .

distress,

horror,

alarm,

misery, and

guilt that all the elect would have felt in hell forever
as they would have experienced under the outpouring
of the everlasting wrath of God . . .

the anguish,

the distress,

the darkness,

the condemnation,

the shame,

the guilt,

the unutterable horror.

What heart can conceive--what tongue express--the
bitter anguish which must have wrung the soul of our
suffering Substitute under this agonizing experience?

Struggling against the power of sin?

How many poor souls are struggling against the
power of sin, and yet never get any victory over it!

How many are daily led captive by . . .

the lusts of the flesh,

the love of the world,
and the pride of life,
and never get any victory over them!

How many fight and grapple with tears, vows,
and strong resolutions against their besetting
sins, who are still entangled and overcome by
them again and again! Now, why is this?

Because they do not know the secret of spiritual
strength against, and spiritual victory over them.

It is only by virtue of a living union with the
Lord Jesus Christ--drinking into His sufferings
and death--and receiving out of His fullness,
that we can gain any victory over . . .

the world,
sin,
death,
or hell.

Sin is never really or effectually subdued in any other way.

It is not by legalistic strivings and earnest resolutions,
vows, and tears--the vain struggle of 'religious flesh'
to subdue 'sinful flesh'--that can overcome sin.

But it is by a believing acquaintance with, and a
spiritual entrance into the sufferings and sorrows
of the Son of God--having a living faith in Him,
and receiving out of His fullness supplies of grace
and strength.

The anointing

"But the anointing which you have received from
Him abides in you." 1 John 2:27

All the powers of earth and hell are combined against
this holy anointing, with which the children of God are
so highly favored. But if God has locked up in the bosom
of a saint one drop of this divine unction, that one drop
is armor against . . .

all the assaults of sin,

all the attacks of Satan,

all the enmity of self, and

all the charms, pleasures, and amusements of the world.

Waves and billows of affliction may roll over the soul--

but they cannot wash away this holy drop of anointing oil.

Satan may shoot a thousand fiery darts to inflame all
the combustible material of our carnal mind--but all his
fiery darts cannot burn up that one drop of oil which
God has laid up in the depths of a broken spirit.

The world, with all its charms and pleasures, and its
deadly opposition to the truth of God, may stir up waves
of ungodliness against this holy anointing--but all the
powers of earth combined can never extinguish that
one drop which God has Himself lodged in the depths
of a believer's heart.

And so it has been with all the dear saints of God.

Not all their . . .

sorrows,

backslidings,

slips,
falls,
miseries, and
wretchedness,
have ever--all combined, drunk up the anointing that
God has bestowed upon them. If sin could have done
it--we would have sinned ourselves into hell long ago;
and if the world or Satan could have destroyed it or
us--they would long ago have destroyed both. If our
carnal mind could have done it--it would have swept
us away into floods of destruction.

But the anointing abides sure, and cannot be destroyed;
and where once lodged in the soul, it is secure against
all the assaults of earth, sin, and hell.

"But the anointing which you have received from
Him abides in you." 1 John 2:27

Can I be a child of God, and be thus?

Perhaps you are a poor, tempted creature--and
your daily sorrow, your continual trouble is that
you are so soon overcome--that . . .

your temper,

your lusts,

your pride,

your worldliness, and

your carnal, corrupt heart

are perpetually getting the mastery.

And from this you sometimes draw bitter conclusions.

You say, in the depth of your heart, "Can I be a child of God, and be thus? What mark have I of being in favor with God when I am so easily--so continually overcome?"

But the Spirit reveals Christ--taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto us--applying the word with power to our hearts, and bringing the sweetness, reality, and blessedness of divine things into our soul.

It is only in this way that He overcomes all unbelief and infidelity, doubt and fear, and sweetly assures us that all is well between God and the soul.

Faith keeps eyeing the atonement--faith looks not so much to sin, as to salvation from sin--at the way whereby sin is pardoned, overcome, and subdued.

The truth shall make you free!

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!" John 8:32

To a spiritual mind, sweet and self-rewarding is the task, if task it can be called, of searching the Word as for hidden treasure. No sweeter, no better employment can engage heart and hands than, in the spirit of prayer and meditation, of separation from the world, of holy fear, of a desire to know the will of God and do it, of humility, simplicity, and godly sincerity--to seek to enter into those heavenly mysteries which are stored up in the Scriptures--and this, not to furnish the head with notions, but to feed the soul with the bread of life.

Truth, received in the love and power of it . . .
informs and establishes the judgment,
softens and melts the heart,
warms and draws upward the affections,
makes and keeps the conscience alive and tender;
is the food of faith,
is the strength of hope,
is the main-spring of love.

To know the truth is to be made blessedly free . . .
free from error;
free from the vile heresies which everywhere abound;
free from presumption;
free from self-righteousness;
free from the curse and bondage of the law;
free from the condemnation of a guilty conscience;
free from a slavish fear of the opinion of men;
free from the contempt of the world;
free from the scorn of worldly professors;
free from following a multitude to do evil;
free from companionship with those who
have a name to live, but are dead.

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall
make you free!" John 8:32

Sin cannot be subdued in any other way.

"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by
faith in the Son of God." Galatians 2:20

There is no way except by being spiritually immersed

into Christ's death and life--that we can ever get a victory over our besetting sins. If, on the one hand, we have a view of a suffering Christ, and thus become immersed into His sufferings and death--the feeling, while it lasts, will subdue the power of sin.

Or, on the other hand, if we get a believing view of a risen Christ, and receive supplies of grace out of His fullness--that will lift us above sin's dominion.

If sin is powerfully working in us, we need one of these two things to subdue it.

When there is a view of the sufferings and sorrows, agonies and death of the Son of God--power comes down to the soul in its struggles against sin--and gives it a measure of holy resistance and subduing strength against it.

So, when there is a coming in of the grace and love of Christ--it lifts up the soul from the love and power of sin into a purer and holier atmosphere. Sin cannot be subdued in any other way. You must either be immersed into Christ's sufferings and death--or you must be immersed into Christ's resurrection and life.

A sight of Him as a suffering God--or a view of Him as a risen Jesus--must be connected with every successful attempt to get the victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave.

You may strive, vow, and repent--and what does it all amount to? You sink deeper and deeper into sin

than before. Pride, lust, and covetousness come in like a flood--and you are swamped and carried away almost before you are aware!

But if you get a view of a suffering Christ, or of a risen Christ--if you get a taste of His dying love--a drop of His atoning blood--or any manifestation of His beauty and blessedness--there comes from this spiritual immersion into His death or His life a subduing power--and this gives a victory over temptation and sin which nothing else can or will give.

Yet I believe we are often many years learning this divine secret--striving to repent and reform, and cannot; until at last by divine teaching we come to learn a little of what the Apostle meant when he said, "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God." And when we can get into this life of faith--this hidden life, then our affections are set on things above.

There is no use setting to work by 'legal strivings'--they only plunge you deeper in the ditch. You must get Christ into your soul by the power of God--and then He will subdue--by His smiles, blood, love, and presence--every internal foe.

Two kinds of repentance

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret--but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Cor. 7:10

There are two kinds of repentance which need to be

carefully distinguished from each other, though they are often sadly confounded--evangelical repentance, and legal repentance.

Cain, Esau, Saul, Ahab, Judas, all repented--but their repentance was the remorse of natural conscience--not the godly sorrow of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

They trembled before God as an angry judge--but were not melted into contrition before Him as a forgiving Father.

They neither hated their sins nor forsook them--they neither loved holiness nor sought it.

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord;

Esau plotted Jacob's death;

Saul consulted the witch of Endor;

Ahab put honest Micaiah into prison;

and Judas hanged himself.

How different from this forced and false repentance of a reprobate, is the repentance of a child of God--that true repentance for sin, that godly sorrow, that holy mourning which flows from the Spirit's gracious operations.

This repentance does not spring from a sense of the wrath of God in a broken law--but from His mercy in a blessed gospel--from a view by faith of the sufferings of Christ in the garden and on the cross--from a manifestation of pardoning love; and is always attended with self-loathing and self-abhorrence, with deep and unreserved confession of sin and forsaking it, with most hearty, sincere, and earnest petitions to be kept from all evil, and a holy longing to live to the praise and

glory of God.

Have we nothing to give to Christ?

Yes!

Our sins,

our sorrows,

our burdens,

our trials, and above all,

the salvation and sanctification of our souls.

And what has He to give us? What? Why . . .

everything worth having, everything worth a moment's anxious thought,

everything for time and eternity!

After you have suffered a while

"But the God of all grace, who has called us unto

His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have

suffered a while--make you perfect, establish,

strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter 5:10

There is no divine establishment, no spiritual

strength, no solid settlement--except by suffering.

But after the soul has suffered, after it has felt

God's chastising hand, the effect is . . .

to perfect,

to establish,

to strengthen,

and to settle it.

By suffering, a man becomes settled into a solemn

conviction of the character of Jehovah as revealed

in the Scripture, and in a measure made experimentally

manifest in his conscience. He is settled in the persuasion that "all things work together for good to those who love God, and are the called according to His purpose"--in the firm conviction that everything comes to pass according to God's eternal purpose--and are all tending to the good of the Church, and to God's eternal glory.

His soul, too, is settled down into a deep persuasion of the misery, wretchedness, and emptiness of the creature; into the conviction that the world is but a shadow--and that the things of time and sense are but bubbles that burst the moment they are grasped--that of all things sin is most to be dreaded--and the favor of God above all things most to be coveted--that nothing is really worth knowing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified--that all things are passing away--and that he himself is rapidly hurrying down the stream of life, and into the boundless ocean of eternity.

Thus he becomes settled in a knowledge of the truth, and his soul remains at anchor, looking to the Lord to preserve him here, and bring him in peace and safety to his eternal home.

In this scene of confusion and distraction

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

We do not know what we ought to pray for--but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." Romans 8:26

"We do not know what we ought to pray for." How

often do we find and feel this to be our case . . .
darkness covers our mind;
ignorance pervades our soul;
unbelief vexes our spirit;
guilt troubles our conscience;
a crowd of evil imaginations, or foolish or worse
than foolish wanderings distract our thoughts;
Satan hurls in thick and fast his fiery darts;
a dense cloud is spread over the mercy-seat;
infidelity whispers its vile suggestions,
until, amid all this rabble throng, such confusion
and bondage prevail that words seem idle breath,
and prayer to the God of heaven but empty mockery.
In this scene of confusion and distraction, when
all seems going to the wreck--how kind, how gracious
is it in the blessed Spirit to come, as it were, to the
rescue of the poor bewildered saint, and to teach
him how to pray and what to pray for.
He is therefore said "to help our weaknesses," for
these evils of which we have been speaking are not
willful, deliberate sins, but wretched infirmities of
the flesh. He helps, then, our infirmities--by subduing
the power and prevalence of unbelief--by commanding
in the mind a solemn calm--by rebuking and chasing
away Satan and his fiery darts--by awing the soul with
a reverential sense of the power and presence of God--
by presenting Jesus before our eyes as the Mediator at

the right hand of the Father--by raising up and drawing
forth faith upon His Person and work, blood and
righteousness--and, above all, by Himself interceding
for us and in us "with groans that words cannot express."

His own sore and his own afflictions

"When a prayer or plea is made by any of Your people
Israel--each one aware of his own sore and his own
afflictions, and spreading out his hands toward this
Temple--then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place.
Forgive, and deal with each man according to all he
does, since You know his heart, for You alone know
the hearts of men." 2 Chronicles 6:29-30

The man for whom Solomon prays is he who
knows and feels, painfully feels, his "own sore"
and his "own afflictions"--whose heart is indeed
a grief to him--whose sins do indeed trouble him.

How painful this sore often is!

How it runs night and day!

How full of ulcerous matter!

How it shrinks from the probe!

Most of the Lord's family have a "sore"--each
some tender spot--something perhaps known
to himself and to God alone--the cause of his
greatest grief. It may be . . .

some secret slip he has made,

some sin he has committed,

some word he has spoken, or

some evil thing he has done.

He has been entangled, and entrapped, and cast down--and this is his grief and his sore which he feels--and that at times deeply before God.

For such Solomon prays, "then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place. Forgive, and deal with each man according to all he does, since You know his heart, for You alone know the hearts of men."

Yes--God alone knows the heart--He knows it completely--and sees to its very bottom.

What are we, when we have no trials?

The Lord h

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