

INTRODUCTION

Since 1678 when it was first published *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been read by and influenced millions of Christians as well as others. For many years, if a family had any books in the household, they probably included a well-worn copy of the *Authorized Version* of the *Bible* and a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Some may have even read Bunyan's personal testimony of salvation found in: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners: A Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to His Poor Servant*.

This editor had three special emphases in mind when he accepted, with a great deal of joy and excitement, the offer to bring forth such a volume from Bunyan's writings:

1. That Bunyan's writings would be a spiritual blessing to all who had not read anything beyond the above two named volumes.
2. That this devotional could expose the readers to a broader knowledge of Bunyan's sixty some other works that are largely unknown to evangelical audiences.
3. That it would be a worthy addition to the *Daily Readings* series put forth by the good folk at Christian Focus Press.

Here we furnish a monthly index of each volume consulted from where the daily excerpts were drawn:

January: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners: A Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to His Poor Servant*.

February: *My Confession of Faith (or A Confession of My Faith and a Reason of My Practice, or, With Who, and Who Not, I can Hold Church-fellowship, or the Communion of Saints)*.

March: *Paul's Departure and Crown (or An Exposition Upon 2 Timothy 4:6-8)*.

April: *Saved by Grace (or a Discourse of the Grace of God).*

May: *The Strait Gate (or Great Difficulty of Going to Heaven).*

June: *Justification by an Imputed Righteousness (or No Way to Heaven but by Jesus Christ), Part 1.*

July: *Justification by an Imputed Righteousness (or No Way to Heaven but by Jesus Christ), Part 2.*

August: *The Desire of the Righteous Granted: (or A Discourse of the Righteous Man's Desires), Part 1.*

September: *The Desire of the Righteous Granted: (or A Discourse of the Righteous Man's Desires), Part 2.*

October: *Christ a Complete Saviour (or The Intercession of Christ and Who Are Privileged In).*

November: *A Treatise of the Fear of God (or Showing What It Is and How Distinguished from that Which Is Not So).*

December: Was excerpted from three Bunyan sources:

1. *Bunyan's Dying Sayings.*
2. *Bunyan's Last Sermon*, Preached July 1688, taken from the Gospel of John 1:13, "Which were born, not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (KJV).
3. *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ.*

It is the editor and publisher's hope that your Christian life will be edified as you read this humble offering.

Roger D. Duke
June, 2024

JANUARY 1

A Child of Disobedience

... [And] they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

2 TIMOTHY 2:26

As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was indeed according to the course of this world, and “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). It was my delight to be “taken captive by the devil at his will” (2 Tim. 2:26).

So settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me; the which, as I also have with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and frighten me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions; for often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin.

I was greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the day of judgment, and that both night and day, and should tremble at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last amongst those devils and hellish fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of eternal darkness, “unto the judgment of the great day.”

In these days, the thoughts of religion were very grievous to me; I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other one should; so that, when I have seen some read in those books that concerned Christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me. Then I said unto God, “Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways” (Job 21:14). I was now void of all good consideration, heaven and hell were both out of sight and mind; and as for saving and damning, they were least in my thoughts.

JANUARY 2

Rain on the Just and the Unjust

The toil of the fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city.

ECCLESIASTES 10:15

But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet such as were mixed with mercy. For once I fell into a creek of the sea, and hardly escaped drowning. Another time I fell out of a boat into Bedford river, but mercy yet preserved me alive. Another time, being in the field with one of my companions, it chanced that a poisonous snake passed over the highway; so I, having a stick in my hand, struck her over the back; and having stunned her, I forced open her mouth with my stick, and plucked her sting out with my fingers; by which act, had not God been merciful unto me, I might, by my desperateness, have brought myself to mine end.

This also have I taken notice of with thanksgiving; when I was a soldier, I, with others, were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it; but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room; to which, when I had consented, he took my place; and coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot into the head with a musket bullet, and died.

Here, as I said, were judgments and mercy, but neither of them did awaken my soul to righteousness; wherefore I sinned still, and grew more and more rebellious against God, and careless of my own salvation.

[I thought in my lost condition.] Thus man, while blind, doth wander, but wearies himself with vanity, for he knows not the way to the city of God (Eccles. 10:15).

JANUARY 3

The Log and the Speck

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

MATTHEW 7:5

JANUARY

Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I also did strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again, “for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England.”

Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbours did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners; and, indeed, so it was, though yet I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope; and, truly, as I have well seen since, had then died, my state had been most fearful; well, this, I say, continued about a twelvemonth or more.

Now, therefore, they began to praise, to commend, and to speak well of me, both to my face, and behind my back. Now, I was, as they said, become godly; now, I was become a right honest man. But, oh! When I understood that these were their words and opinions of men, it pleased me mighty well. Yet, I was nothing but a poor, painted hypocrite, yet I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and, indeed, I did all I did, either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by man. And thus, I continued for about a twelvemonth or more.

JANUARY 4

God Visits the Soul

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [who] ... hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of the Jesus Christ from the dead.

I PETER 1:3 KJV

But upon a day, the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work on my calling; and in one of the streets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, and talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said, for I was now a brisk talker also myself in the matters of religion, but now I may say, I heard, but I understood not; for they were far above, out of my reach; for their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts, also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature; they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted, and supported against the temptations of the devil. Moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular; and told to each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, of their unbelief; and did contemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness, as filthy and insufficient to do them any good.

And I thought they spoke as if joy did make them speak; they spoke with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me, as if they had found a new world, as if they were people that dwelt alone and were not to be reckoned among their neighbours.

JANUARY 5

The Folly of the Froward

A perverse heart shall be far from me, I will know nothing of evil.

PSALM 101:4

O Lord, I am a fool, and not able to know the truth from error: Lord, leave me not to my own blindness, either to approve of, or condemn this doctrine [of Christ]; if it be of God, let me not despise it; if it be of the devil, let me not embrace it. Lord, I lay my soul, in this matter, only at thy foot; let me not be deceived, I humbly beseech thee.

One thing I may not omit: There was a young man in our town, to whom my heart before was knit more than to any other, but he being a most wicked creature for cursing, and swearing, and whoring, I now shook him off, and forsook his company; but about a quarter of a year after I had left him, I met him in a certain lane, and asked him how he did? He, after his old swearing and mad way, answered, I am well. But why do you swear and curse like this Harry? What will become of you if you die in this condition? He answered me annoyed! What would the devil do for company if it were not for men like me?

But God, who had, as I hope, designed me for better things, kept me in the fear of his name, and did not suffer me to accept such cursed principles. And blessed be God, who put it into my heart to cry to him to be kept and directed, still distrusting my own wisdom; for I have since seen even the effect of that prayer, in his preserving me not only from ranting errors, but from those also that have sprung up since. The Bible was precious to me in those days.

JANUARY 6

God Shows His Mercy

So, then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

ROMANS 9:16

So ... I tried at first to look over the business of faith, yet in a little time, I better consider the matter, was willing to put myself upon ... trial, whether I had faith or not. But, in my grief, poor wretch, so ignorant and brutish was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I know how to begin and accomplish ... [a] rare and curious piece of art, which I never yet saw nor considered.

Neither yet could I attain to any comfortable persuasion that I had faith in Christ; but instead of having satisfaction, here I began to find my soul to be assaulted with fresh doubts about my future happiness; especially with such as these, whether I was elected? But how if the day of grace should now be past and gone?

By these ... temptations I was very much afflicted and disquieted; sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other of them. And first, to speak of that about my questioning my election, I found at this time, that though I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and though nothing could beat me off from this, yet this question did so offend and discourage me! I was, especially at some times, as if the very strength of my body also had been taken away by the force and power [of these thoughts]. This Scripture did also seem to me to trample upon all my desires, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16).

JANUARY 7

The Beginnings of a Peaceful Mind

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you.*

ISAIAH 26:3

By these things I was driven to my wits' end, not knowing what to say, or how to answer these temptations. Indeed, I little thought that Satan had thus assaulted me, but that rather it was my own prudence. Thus, to start the question: that the elect only attained eternal life, that I, without scruple, did heartily close with Christ. But that I was one of them—there lay all the questions.

Therefore, for several days, I was greatly assaulted and perplexed. Often, when I was walking, ready to sink [in despair] where I went, with faintness in my mind. But one day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down, I was now quite ready to give up the ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit, "Look at the generations of old and see; did ever any trust in the Lord, and was so unnerved?"

Thus I continued for over a year, and could not find the place; but at last, casting my eye into the Apocrypha books I found it in Ecclesiasticus 2:10. This, at first, did somewhat daunt me. Because, by this time, I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered, that though it was not in those texts that we call holy and canonical, yet forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it; and I bless God for that Word, for it was of God to me: that Word doth still, at times, shine before my face.

JANUARY 8

H A S C H R I S T C A L L E D M E ?

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. ...

2 PETER 1:10, KJV

How lovely now was everyone in my eyes that I thought to be converted [both] men and women! They looked like and walked like a people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them. Oh! I saw the lot had fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage (Ps. 16:6). But that which made me sick was that of Christ, in Mark, He went up into a mountain and called to him whom he would, and they came unto him (Mark 3:13).

This Scripture made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this—that Christ should have no liking to me, for he called “whom he would.” But oh! the glory that I saw in that condition did still so engage my heart that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call. But I presently wished: Would I had been in their clothes; would I had been born Peter; would I had been born John; or would I had been by and had heard him when he called them, how would I have cried, O Lord, call me also. But oh! I feared he would not call me!

And truly the Lord let me go thus many months together and showed me nothing. Neither that I was already nor should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time spent, and many groans to God, that I might be made partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that Word came in upon me—“I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion” (Joel 3:21).