

**EARS OF CORN FROM
VARIOUS SHEAVES: BEING
THOUGHTS FOR THE
CLOSET. SECOND EDITION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649567041

Ears of Corn from Various Sheaves: Being Thoughts for the Closet. Second Edition by Sarah Lettis

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SARAH LETTIS

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SECOND EDITION.

"Behold, that I have not laboured for myself only, but for all them that seek wisdom."—ECCLES. xxiv. 34.

"Watching without prayer were but an impious homage to ourselves. Prayer without watching were but an impious and absurd homage to God."—FOSTER.

LONDON:

E. T. WHITFIELD, 2, ESSEX STREET, STRAND.

MANCHESTER:

JOHNSON AND RAWSON;

YARMOUTH:

W. D. BURTON, BOOKSELLER, KING STREET.

MDCCLXII.

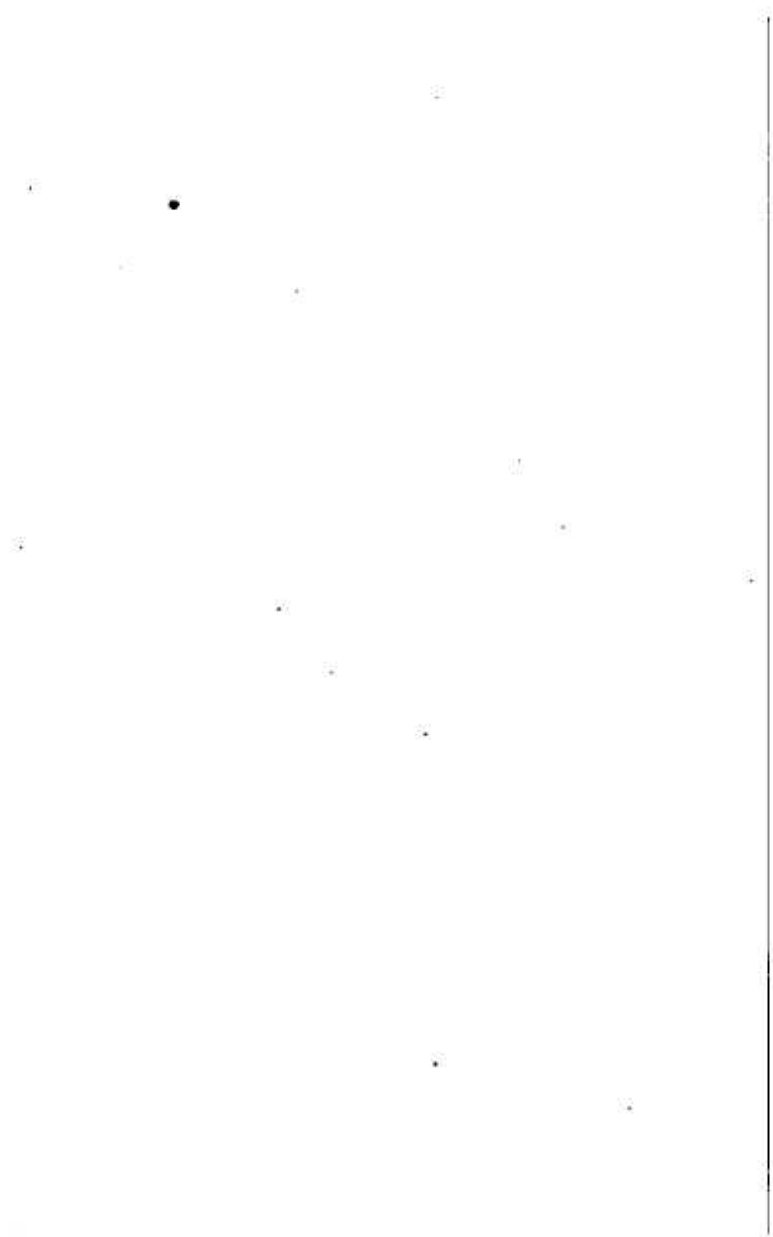
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TO THE
SECOND EDITION.

The first edition of this book has been exhausted for some years, and I should not have ventured on publishing a second, had not repeated applications for copies induced me to think that it might be acceptable. Selections from "Christian Aspects of Faith and Duty," and the "Lectures" of the Rev. J. Foster, have taken the place of some extracts which appeared to me less suitable. The addition of a few passages from other Authors, also eminent for their practical piety, the annexation of an index, and a slight alteration in the arrangement of the subjects, may, perhaps, be regarded as improvements.

S. L.

YARMOUTH, December 10th, 1861.



P R E F A C E .

THERE are some, who, in early life, when the heart is tender and the affections are pliant, have been led to fix their thoughts and hopes on God so firmly, that they pass uninjured through the temptations and trials of their lot. Placing themselves habitually under His guidance in child-like faith, they know nothing of the scepticism which sees Him in the great, but not in the small events of life; in the cataract, but not in the drop of dew. They are truly the elect of God. He is their buckler and shield of defence. They need no help, but that of His works and word, for a knowledge of Him or of themselves.

But there are many of us differently constituted, or more culpably dependent on our own strength, who in the midst of occupations either of a frivolous or useful kind, have given but hasty glances at our own hearts, and have entered into most imperfect communion with God. A consciousness of some hidden evil, affecting our happiness, is not met by an earnest resolution to examine it,

until, perhaps, an unexpected circumstance, a heavy trial, or a long continued indisposition, reveals to us our secret sins, and we learn in deep humiliation that our religion is a sentiment rather than a living principle, and that self-love, entering by unsuspected channels, has drawn a thick veil between us and our Heavenly Father. No peace can now be attained except by a rigorous examination into the inmost recesses of our hearts; and though the revelations made to us may, and in some instances must, throw a sadness over life, it is a sadness that will be sanctified, if, under its influence, we learn to be more watchful and humble, more candid and forbearing in our judgment of others, and more grateful for undeserved blessings.

It is not unfrequently the case, however, that when we feel the greatest need of Divine assistance, and the most anxious desire to amend our lives, we are sensible of a listlessness which renders our prayers and meditations vague, and produces a disheartening sense of estrangement from God. It is then that the thought of another will sometimes awaken thought in ourselves, and hint to us the existence of an unwatched weakness, or an unrepented sin. With the hope of affording some little assistance to those who may feel the need of it, the following Selections have been made. They are mostly taken from the works of

those Divines who wrote in the early part of the seventeenth century,* and who, like Robert Hall and the saint-like Channing, formed their exalted characters by watchfulness and prayer, and spent their holy lives in "ascending to fetch blessings from above, to scatter them among mortals."

The selections from the works of living writers, have been made from the Rev. James Martineau's "Endeavours after the Christian Life;" the Sermons of the Rev. Orville Dewey; "The Great Atonement," by the Rev. Henry Solly; "Christian Thought on Life," and a Sermon on the "Christian View of Future Retribution," by the Rev. Henry Giles. These are the only modern

* Their peculiarities of style easily distinguish them from modern writers. Hooker was born in 1504; Bishop Hall in 1574; Sir Thomas Browne, the learned physician, in 1606; Fuller in 1608, the birth year of Milton; Archbishop Leighton died in 1684; Jeremy Taylor was born in 1613; and Dr. Barrow, who was South's junior by three years, in 1630; Lucas, an admired preacher of the Established Church, died in 1716: as I only know his "Enquiry after Happiness," I have taken the Extract on Death, signed by his name, from "A Manual of Golden Sentences," edited by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, to which I am also indebted for that of Fuller on Forgiveness. "The Art of Contentment" is a treatise supposed to be written by the author of the "Whole Duty of Man." The sentences from Wasse and Thomas à Kempis are intentionally not arranged in exact order: the former are to be found in a book entitled "Hours of Sadness," where it is said that they were copied from a rare volume, of "Reformed Devotions," published in 1719, by the Rev. Joseph Wasse, rector of Aynho-on-the-Hill, in Northamptonshire. Abraham Tucker, author of "The Light of Nature Pursued," was born in 1706.

Authors whose stores have been laid under contribution, with the exception of the late Rev. B. Hall, Dr. Greenwood, Channing, and the Rev. C. Wolfe, better known by his "Lines on the Death of Sir John Moore," than by his prose productions.

The omissions are carefully marked. They have been made when the extract would have been too long, or when there was an allusion to matters unconnected with the subject of the chapter in which it is placed. From such portions of the writers' works as refer to the points of doctrine on which christians differ, there are no extracts; and those that have been chosen may, perhaps, serve to bear testimony to the fact, that the great and good of every creed agree in their views on the most important subjects, proving that there is but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

In conclusion, I can only hope, that what has been to me a source of pleasure, may, in a slight degree, prove useful to the readers who may regard this little book as a fit companion for their hours of solitude.

S. L.