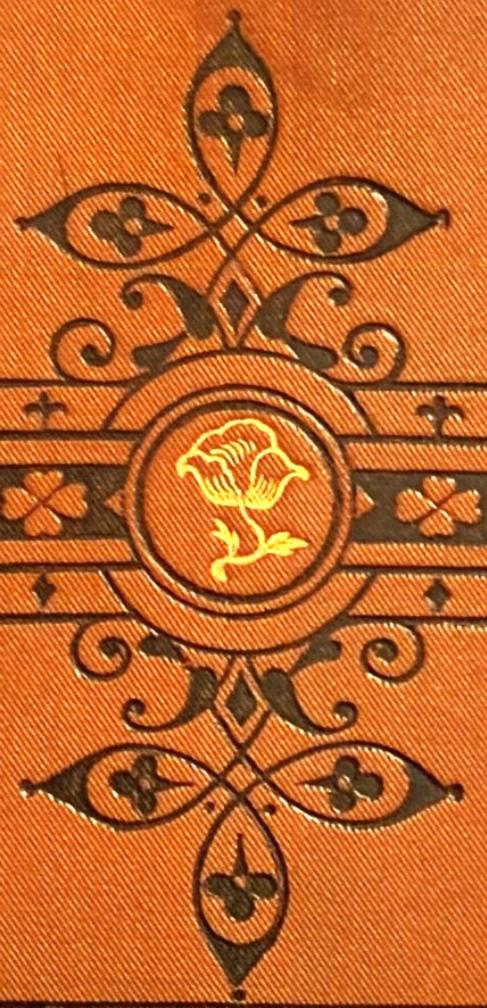




GLEANINGS  
FROM THE  
TEACHING OF G. V. W.



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# GLEANINGS.

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CHRIST'S *yesterday* was the accomplishment of redemption,—His *to-morrow* is the having His church with Himself in glory. But He is a living Christ for *to-day*.

Christ cannot light a single spark in the heart of an individual, without that little tiny spark being for God. He gives the light, and has ordained that every ray of it is to reflect something *for God*.

Nothing is more blessed than to have sympathy with Christ in His thoughts—to be able to say, “I know what Christ cares about, and that which is the care of His heart shall be the care of my heart.” He is caring about a testimony on earth *for God*; and if I am only little enough in my own eyes, He will say, “I can bring out a ray in you, and place you exactly where it can shine.” Christ has present thoughts about His sheep,—if rays of light shine on them, it is that they may shine *from* them. You may have very little light, but the glimmer of a glow-worm shines out brightly in a dark night.

We are to give a practical testimony to the lordship of Christ. Once we did not feel the *reality* of His being at God's right hand as Lord of everything and of all; now it is our very joy to think that He *is* so. God is working in you to will and to do of His good pleasure, and that

good pleasure is, that everything in heaven and earth and under the earth is to bow down to His Christ. If He has been working in you, you have seen something in Christ that has bowed down your heart and made you wish to be *His* practically. The church is the only thing that with heart and intelligence, can say "Let him be Lord; let him have all!" We are to let a practical testimony go out from us, that all *does* belong to Him, in the face of the strong current setting the other way. The desire of God's people should be, to make it apparent to all that that Jesus of Nazareth whom man rejected and despised is *Lord of all, at God's right hand*. They have set to their seal that that is the place which God has given to the Nazarene for whom man had no place but the cross, down here. God is carrying us on to a scene in which no other name will be known but the name of Jesus. Every knee shall bow to the *only One* who is Master. When one realises what that scene will be, of how little consequence (in the thought of the great recompense of reward) is all we have to pass through on the way to it! Have I to give up anything because *my Master* does not like it, even to the plucking out of an eye? Is it worth speaking of, in the thought of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory which God is carrying me on to? We do not enough cultivate the thought of that universal sway, and the nearness of it. **Are** we longing and yearning for it? There is **no** hanging back on Christ's part: He only waits for souls to be gleaned. Yet a very little while, and He shall come and will not tarry.

If you and I have taken the place of owning Christ as Lord, we shall be sure to have a little bit of suffering. If He *is* Lord over me, I must do everything to please Him, and I shall be sure to displease friends. I must give up this thing and not do the other, cost what it may, if He *is* Master.

God takes the bright light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and makes it shine in our hearts. He is the perfect answer and character of everything delightful to God. We are in Him, and His character is to flow through us. He has brought us into the light and holiness of the Father's house ; and because of having fellowship with Him, we can turn round to Him and cast every thought and every sorrow on Him.

Do all around you get, in your ways, such a reflection of Christ's life, that they could not understand you without knowing Christ? Christ's heart was always in heaven while He was on earth, and everything came forth to Him in all the savour of the Father's love. He was of one heart and one mind with the Father. I want to be like Christ ; I want the world to say, "Like Master, like servant." The present object of the Lord Jesus is to have a people down here who shall display Him in their ways, thoughts, and doings : speaking out intelligently and practically what He is.

No one was ever, on earth, so happy as Christ, because of His seeing everything in connection with God's purpose and God's will ; and the greater the sorrow, the higher its wave broke

over His heart, the more this is seen. There was always some expression of praise, some reference to the Father, shewing the joy within untouched, as a spring of water hidden for refreshment. He was straitened till the Father's will was accomplished in the death upon the cross.

Water was in the rock, but until smitten, it did not give forth water—so it was with Christ. And now He is revealed to us, in heaven, as the eternal Son of God, who was smitten for us, and we can turn to Him and say, "There is our spring of living water, he is ours. We have got eternal life in Him as a well of water springing up." All the way through the wilderness, the water flowed, to slake their thirst, to refresh them; all the way, and it spoke blessedly of Christ.

The freshness of heart in Christ was always the same. You and I get so weary in our experience of the wilderness, but Christ's heart is never wearied, it is as freshly set on the bride as when God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.

Whatever the mind is most fixed upon, and is ever turning to, gives its impress to the mind; if my feelings and thoughts are fixed on Christ, I get the impress of Christ. If I am ever turning to Him in all His heavenly measure of love, I shall get the impress of it; and if my soul then rises to Christ in that freshness of love which can say, "Come, Lord Jesus," there is His answer in all freshness, "Surely I come quickly." He does not forget us toiling through the wilderness and the sands of the desert; He is with us all the way, and all freshness is in Him. If the heart

turns to the heart of Christ, the heart of the Son of God, I find that heart immeasurably fuller than mine of love—there, there is always freshness of love. I may be a way-worn pilgrim, there I shall find freshness—a spring of *cold water* to refresh me just when fainting in the wilderness. Oh, that love in the heart of Christ, that knows no weariness, no dragging steps, no hanging down of the hands! I may always turn to Him, and say, “Come!” His heart can always answer, “Surely I come quickly.” Oh, the freshness of Christ’s love, and the brightness of that water for ever flowing in incomparable purity and freshness!

If we connect the wilderness with our great High Priest in heaven, we may still feel the bitterness of wilderness trials, but we shall have the sweetness of Christ’s sympathy with us every step of the way. All blessing, carried on and sustained, must be so by the present action of the Lord Jesus. Where has there ever been found a single blessing, save in the hand of Christ? Could you wish for any save what *He* gives?

Can you spread out no wants before Christ, the *Giver*, the *Healer*? Believers grieve the Spirit by not *using* Christ, and then God must compel them to do it. He knew how to make Paul startle up the jailor at Philippi. Do I know that Christ up there has to do with my heart individually? Has He looked into it to-day? has He seen any brightness in it towards Himself, or coldness? Well, He does not trust a bit to the feelings of the heart. He knows what it is; whether it looks bright or not; everything is

naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. He does not trust my heart, but He says, "I want to give you all that is in *my* heart of love."

I see Christ's heart yearning over poor sinners—not poor sinners' hearts yearning after Christ.

When Christ meets a sinner, and gives him peace, the only thing that He thinks of is His own blood, and anything added to that, He would turn away from and repudiate. Ah! there is no name to which Jesus of Nazareth responds more heartily than the name of Saviour—it has not become a common name to Him. He will not share it with another. He may have every glory, but above all is this name of Saviour between Him and God. He, "the Saviour God," "redemption through his blood!" Ah! there is something there that has a voice to one's soul, the thought of that Saviour God, in whom we have redemption, being the One who is to have all glory. When you get home, will your delight be in the glory of that Christ? Not only happy because you are saved, but because of seeing what *He is*—what a Saviour you have got! Being saved is *nothing* to the brightness of the glory shining out of the Saviour Christ; because He is *what He is*, we have redemption through His blood.

Will He ever lay aside His character of Redeemer? "The Lamb in the midst of the throne" points Him out as the One whose redemption-glory will still be seen, though we shall be realising a different part. Israel when in Canaan realised a different portion from Israel in the wilderness, but this was still their glory, that

they were the people of a Redeemer God. When you get into glory, every one of you will be pointed to as a spectacle shewing forth the redemption-glory of the Redeemer God. God sees in redemption one of the thoughts dearest to His own heart: it shews out His highest glory, all centred in Christ, according to His eternal purpose. Is that glory in the person of Christ the thing that fills your soul? When telling over all the glories that attach to the person of that Christ, do you say, "Ah, that is the One in whom I have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins!"

God has set us in His Son, hidden us in Him. As Moses was put into the cleft of the rock, so God has put us into Christ.

If I am hidden in Christ, there *can be* no condemnation for me. Can God condemn what is in His Son? Can God find fault with Him? Satan cannot stand against one who is in Christ: all condemnation will roll back against Satan; there is none for me. I rejoice in Christ as a life-giving Spirit, not merely as One who brought me out of Egypt, but as One with whom I am united in life: the One smitten on Calvary, raised from the dead, a life-giving Spirit in heaven. Death may be stamped on every particle of the first Adam in me, but the spirit of life in the last Adam has made me free from the law of sin and death; it makes me know that Christ is my life, the stream of life is flowing down from Him to me, leading me on in life in the Spirit because the Spirit of God dwells in me, and I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit.

Christ is the smitten rock, and the water of life is flowing from Christ through my soul, witnessing of heavenly things; and if eternal life is flowing through a body dead because of sin, yet will it give an immense power of joy in the Lord. Whither has fled the joy unspeakable of the early Christians? Why are Christians now without it, but because they have not learned to give up the first Adam for the last Adam—because they have not learned to walk as the early Christians walked? Do we not know a want of the Holy Ghost in *power*? a want of walking with the soul *full of heaven*? Is it not because we have not learnt that all that is of self is a stony rock, which all that is of Christ is to flow through, to shew how everything in self is to be set aside? Oh, do not be satisfied with ordinary Christianity: but be saying, “If nobody else is heavenly-minded, why not I? If others are not full of the Holy Ghost, why not I?” I would beseech you not to trifle with your own mercies. God has provided you with joy that might fill your souls to overflowing if you walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. There is no dimness in Christ’s joy—not a cloud rests on Him: our blessing is not short of His. Oh, that the power of the Holy Ghost may work in our hearts so that we may know the fulness of the spring of blessing in Him, looking to God to bring us into the enjoyment of the rivers of refreshing in the Son of His love!

If there was not a nail found in Peter on which to hang one single thing, there was for him the

blessedness of walking after the Lamb of God, admiring and adoring Him, seeing Him perfectly doing the Father's will, at every step a bit of the Father's mind coming out, and a bit of the beauty and glory of the only-begotten of the Father; streams of grace flowing forth from Him. And if sheltered behind Him, Peter would be able to walk through the valley of sorrow with light shining out in it the whole way. In Revelation, we find quite a different line of truth. It was not enough for John to say, "My heart is moved in wonder and adoration at the person of the Lord down here, seeing all His beauty and grace," but also, "I am left down here with girded loins, to know what is the fellowship of the sufferings of that Lord Jesus." It was not John sheltered behind that Lamb of God—not John teaching and going about like His divine Master,—but suffering, and cast into Patmos; cast, it might have appeared to him, out of all service. It is very sweet when we can connect that which leads to suffering,—with the Lord Jesus, as John could say, "I was in Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." If more testimony were borne by us that all power in heaven and earth is His, we should be counted mad; the world's anger would be stirred up, just as it was when the people saluted Him as King. We are standing, in the place where He is rejected, as servants holding forth the word of life; patience in tribulation, the quality needed; waiting to know His thoughts. Our feet are on earth where John's were, and nothing but companionship in the tribulation and in the kingdom

and patience of Jesus Christ will do for us to-day. All blessing from the Father's hand, but heart-breakings and Patmos from man's.

As one quickened by Christ, the question is, "Am I walking worthy of Himself?" Judgment is to be exercised by me as one walking with God in the light; taking my place in God's presence, not as a stranger but as a son; all the thoughts of my heart meeting His approval. Being, as I am, in the wilderness, shut in between the cross and the coming glory, I have got to bring everything into the light and judge it. I believe that nothing shews more what measure of vigour and power of spiritual life we have, than the way we bring out into the light, to be judged, not that which may appear outside, but all the hidden springs within, laying bare our thoughts and motives. How often in an action that man might praise, there has been a thought, a motive, not worthy of Christ in the light. If all coming out there be judged by us, we can be working together with God, whose purpose with our souls is to form us unto Christ. How can there be joy, if souls merely rest in the work of Christ, without entering into the thought of whether they are walking worthy of the place which that work has put them into? Suppose I lay down the reins—what would be the result? How much passes in one's soul that is not worthy, that is not in harmony and keeping with the death of Christ: am I to allow it? Impossible that God can, and if I don't judge it, God will. Ah! we who know this to be our place, know how happy and blessed a place it is—a place where we have not of

necessity to come under the discipline of God's hand, but where we may be abiding in the light, having power to judge ourselves and to pass sentence against all in us that is not worthy of Christ, as vessels to be kept clean in the light that makes manifest every spot.

For eighteen hundred years Christ has been sitting as the accepted sacrifice at the right hand of God. There is in that fact what tells of the marvellous greatness of God in condescending to accept anything from *us*. That He should keep that magnificent gift of His love ever before Him as the accepted sacrifice, and then turn to poor things like you and me, and say, "I am looking for a sacrifice from *you* (Heb. xiii. 15, 16), I want that there should come forth a little trickling stream of praise from your lips,"—ah! when I think how Christ has loved me, that He has washed me from my sins in His own blood, that I am connected with all the blessing that rests on the head of the heavenly Man, and that I am to reign with Him too—when, I say, I think of all this, have I nothing to say to His praise? Oh how hard to frame a thought of what I ought to utter! How, in that wondrous thought that I am made so perfect by the blood of Thy Son, blessed God! and that I am to reign with Him, how can I know *what to say*? It makes me turn to His word to find an expression for that which passes all comprehension. God having associated me with the Son of His love! "*He is worthy.*" One ever finds in the thought of that precious blood that has washed us, something that gives a fresh

impulse of praise to the feeblest lip. How far do we live in an atmosphere of praise? There is nothing like the inspiring power of praise to set the heart free from all the shackles and bands of the world. If you once begin upon it, you will find a thousand things to call it forth, that never struck you before, in connection with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus. Do you say: How am I to offer it? Ah, it must be the produce of His own garden; you must pluck the flowers and fruits of praise from the garden of His own delights; and if you once get there you will find that your heart never had an idea of the mass of praise that will be flowing up as a continual incense from your lips.

In 1 John iv. 7, we get the character of God. God is love; and this is the family feature of the children of God, "Every one that loveth is born of God." The righteousness and holiness of God have reference to the sphere of things created, but here we are shewn the character of God in His own sphere. How sweet the thought, as the contrast with all that man is, that *God is love*: no selfishness there—no having to turn away from Him because one cannot get anything out. As rain on the thirsty ground, the soul draws in that thought, "God is love." There you have a balm to soothe your soul under all circumstances; and not only that, but the mind is thrown into certain scenes where it finds that that love has been displayed. God, in His own glory, thought of poor sinners. *His* was the thought to send His Son to die that we might live through Him.

Who and what were those for whom He was sent? Poor things "dead in trespasses." Nothing but particles of dust, driven round by Satan, going into the vortex of destruction. God could say, "they may be dead, they may be but dust in Satan's hand, but I will send my Son to give them life." Ah! throughout eternity we shall find nothing so to rejoice in as God's thought of sending this Son of His love to give life to dead sinners. Christ given to us as eternal life, in all the death in which He found us. I should have been dead for eternity, if God had not interfered to give me life in His Son, and a nature capable of enjoying all in the glory.

When I say, "God is love," what do I mean by it? Why this, that God sent His only-begotten Son that we might have life in Him. We still carry about the old nature; but, blessed be God, many a time as Satan has caught me, he has never destroyed me; there is the propitiation,—I am inside, sheltered by the blood, and forgiven.

What should I do if I had to carry the burden of last week's failure! What, if only looking at yesterday's failure! It would be like phosphorus eating into the tenderest part of one's body; but I have got One who is able to restore my soul. One who does continually and *entirely*. You are finding how different you are from Christ, but He is the propitiation all the way till you see Him and are like Him. Love in you is very different from love in God, acting in His own eternity, shewing love by giving His Son to give you life, and power, and love. Love in God comes out with this thought of separating us from all that we are, into His own blessedness.

“No man knows the Son but the Father.” The Lord Jesus was down here as the open book to reveal the Father. There is not so much known about the Son as about the Father. In all the actions, words, and ways of the Son in dealing with man He was shewing forth the Father: “he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” And if He was the open book to reveal the Father to us, so is He the open door by which to lead us to the Father; and the Father whom He came down to declare, would point to that Son on the cross as the open door to bring many sons to glory.

In John xvii. we find the Son in communion with the Father. Turning from earth He looks up, and we hear Him giving out the thoughts common to Him and the Father, speaking of the origin, the security, and the destiny of the people who are the sharers of the Father's love. He takes them up as a people who have not anything to do with the world, begins with them as seen before the foundation of the world connected with Himself by the Father. No origin can be higher, no blessedness—nothing like that! Thus to get back to God the Father, is one of the most blessed of all thoughts. To be able to look on any individual who is one spirit with the Lord, and to think that there is one whom the Lord had given Him of the Father before the world was! Given to Him, but, before that, belonging to the Father. “Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me.” And not only *that*, the beginning of our blessing, but He tells of it in a scene where none of the evil now present with us is to be found. Our standing,

in the Father's thoughts before even the world was, is what we get here. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me. It was Thy counsel and plan, all known to Me to be my reward, that they should be sons and heirs."

What a blessed thought put forth by the Lord, that they should be made so one with Himself, that the glory given to Him could be given to them; that they should be manifested as the people of His love, in whom His glory will be displayed. The moment He lets them hear of the glory given to Him, they hear also that He proposes to act in all the largeness of His love, and share it all with them.

He does not look to their joy in the wilderness, —that is not their destiny; He looks to the future scene, to the time when all that now is shall have crumbled and passed away. He turns to the Father's house, where all the people loved of the Father will be, to be the display of His glory. Ah! dwell upon Christ's thoughts for you! that the heart of this Lord should delight in the hour of His own distress, to unfold the origin, the security, and the destiny of those given Him by the Father, for their comfort when He was to be taken from them.

The people of God will never understand what manner of people they ought to be down here, unless they have laid hold of the Lord's thoughts about them. Those three things, their origin, security, and destiny, must be brought to bear on every other truth presented. His love in letting those thoughts flow out in our hearing, ought to be very greatly marked by us. Having come

out of heaven, and going back there, leaving us *such* a record of the Father's love to those that were chosen in Him before they had a beginning.

The true Tabernacle is pitched. God has arranged it in heaven. If you have not come there right into His presence, you have not got a good and a purified conscience. We cannot draw near without these two things—"a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water." God has opened the way by something of priceless value. If I have come to God it is as one who has proved its value (in measure but truly). It is the answer to every difficulty, because it is the answer that satisfied God, even the *blood of His own Son*. Are you at ease in the presence of God, in those moments when a sense of the holiness of God is most pressing upon your soul? Have you such an answer that you are able to say, "I should be afraid *not* to be at perfect ease in His presence, because of that answer"? God Himself has opened the way into the bright light, made a path for the very chiefest of sinners. Shall I be ill at ease in treading that path, when I find that God in His holiness can turn and look on me there with perfect satisfaction, on the ground of this work done by His Son? Shall I turn to a purged conscience and say, "You are a false witness," when God Himself provided the blood, and the Holy Ghost has come down to witness to the perfect acceptancy of a poor sinner? As to this new and living way, I bow and adore as I enter, not with trembling, but with boldness, because I have the testimony that God delights in this new and living way.

A great deal of trouble comes to weak believers from the accusations of Satan: but what is the answer? Let him go where the judge is. As to the value of the charge, let him ask what is the value of the blood. What is all that Satan can say against a people sprinkled with the blood, but a direct charge against God? The people of God can say, "Let him curse whom God hath blessed." It is not a covering over of sin, not an excusing it, but a simple answering of every charge by "Yes; but Christ died, the just for the unjust:" ever bringing in this death of the Lord Jesus as the answer to it all. Will God visit a second time for guilt? No. I can say, Christ bore my sin, and I am pardoned. I am the chiefest of sinners, but I am pardoned.

Strange, incomprehensibly strange, to find that eternal Son of God under wrath, made sin! There are heights and depths in it that we never could understand. But we need also to see the living Lord now in the presence of God for us.

The courts above are a strange place for me to tread. How can I find myself at ease there? Ah! because of the accepted Sacrifice, up there everything belongs to Him. Without Him heaven would be a perfectly strange place to me, but directly my mind gets occupied with Him in heaven, I know it to be true of me before God that Christ is there as the accepted sacrifice *for* me; and faith acts on the fact of His being there, to give me perfect ease. What a thing it is to be certain that if I were out of the body to-night, I have a life bound up with Christ up there, and I have got practical peace from His being up there as my

accepted Sacrifice. How can I hesitate to draw near to God when He has told us that His whole delight is in the accepted sacrifice who has perfected me for ever! That blood has done it—that death, which has become a record in heaven of what sin is, as well as of its being put away from before God.

Oh what a light God has let shine in on me, if He has let me know what a wretched thing I am, all ruin, all misery! But ah! I have fallen to the lot of this Lord Jesus; I am not a wretched man; I am a saved man; and where all is utterly marred and ruined, just there can I say, “I thank God through Jesus Christ.” I do not thank Him for the ruin, but knowing what I get from this last Adam, I do thank Him.

Philippians iii. One sees in the life of a man like Paul, the exceeding joy given to a man in communion with God. Christ said, “If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father.” Is it ever enough for you that Christ is happy? Do you ever get rest to your heart in the thought of the One who has done and suffered everything for you, having got *His rest*? What a mark of the standing of a disciple now, during Christ’s absence, to be occupied with the thought that Christ is at home, looking at Him as one who has got back into His own joy, and who is looking down at him and telling him to rejoice with Him! Are your hearts filled with this heavenly joy, and getting their rest in the present joy of Christ?

Christ’s only purpose in everything down here was to do the will of God, and He did it most en-

tirely. He was one bright unwavering testimony to God, and nothing but God ; and the more strength there was in that purpose, the more suffering there would be in such a world as this. But whether the Lord would in obedience go down so low as the death of the cross, was the question. *He did so*, and the wrath of God broke over Him ; that was essentially *His* cross, such as ours could not be.

I have not the thought of what we shall do in glory : my thought is, *Christ will be there*. I shall be in the place where everything is ruled by the mind of Christ. Have you known down here the calming effect of realising His presence, hearing Him breathing out like oil on the waters, "It is I!" What will it be to be in a world where all is subject to Him who gives such peace even here ! What will heaven be, when all that He is, all His perfect grace, will come out to us in the Father's house ! What will it be where everything will be attuned to the name of Jesus ! The full stream of His affections will flow over and spread blessing everywhere, "His fulness" poured forth to fill every heart, and every heart perfectly filled and satisfied with it.

How could Christ be in company with such a creature as the woman of Samaria ? As a *Saviour*, beautifully, because she knew herself to be a poor worthless creature—and it was the *worthless and the lost that He came to save*.

As a Christian, I have to know the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, and to walk worthy of Him during the night, as a bird of the *day* and not of

the *night*. The light of Christ's eye is coming right down upon me; if there is one corner of my heart covered over, I am uncomfortable under it, I could not sit in the Father's house and have His eye meet one corner of my heart not brought out. I don't want one corner in it to be covered by the thinnest veil possible. It is a solemn but blessed thing to the soul, to have the eye of God coming right down into it. It is a very blessed thing that the One who has washed you in His own blood, and has undertaken to conduct you to heaven, has an eye that sees down into all the recesses of the heart; and it can detect the least budding of evil. When you have been doing what you thought good, He may have seen evil lurking, and Satan near you; and He has discovered it to you and enabled you to judge it in the light, so that it will not have to be judged hereafter. He will go through all hereafter, if we don't do it now. He will talk to His people about their walk, and the effect will be perfect blessed confidence between your soul and the Lord. If I commit any sin now, the discovery of it in the light is attended with conflict and agony: *then* He will tell me how He met me and probed me, that I might have every thought brought out.

It is a solemn and blessed thought that God expects you to walk as one in His presence. A person's life may be perfectly blameless, yet that person may have to say, "Ah, but I want more of the power of Christ's life." He is the Head—it is not the question of a spot or blemish here and there, but I want more of the volume of the life of Christ and of His affections to be displayed

in me, so that I may be practically witnessing down here for Him up there. Nothing should satisfy us but the power and testimony which *tells* that Christ, our Head, is at God's right hand. What a difference between the testimony of one who, like Paul, has Christ in his heart, and counts everything else but dung and dross, who puts his foot wherever Christ left a footprint, to follow hard after Him, and the testimony of a man who is living after this world's course; who is on the foundation, but who is building on it wood, hay, stubble, instead of gold, silver, precious stones. Immense difference between Abraham and Lot, in *this* life and in the next too—though Lot will be perfectly saved. "How beautiful!" I shall exclaim, when I see one like Paul manifested in the golden city; one who when down here could say, "To me to live is Christ." Ah, there will be a recompense for works which are the fruit of grace and faith.

Paul knew his acceptance to be so perfect that he could look right up with an eagle eye into the light of God's presence, and say to all down here, "You have seen me dwelling in the light, and have seen the light shining out of me; everything in the very bottom of my heart has been made manifest in the light."

A strange thing it must have been to angels to see the Son of God tabernacling down here as man: but all the fulness of the Godhead was in that man. Never man spake like Him. Perfectly of God's mind. Able to communicate life eternal. Working all miracles. A man, but

different from all other men. Never anything but perfection in Him. Directly we see Christ, we ought to bless God that we see Him as the One who met the mind of God from first to last.

The perfectness of Christ is my condemnation, unless I have it instead of what I am, and there all God's thoughts about me come out. He has set that Christ at His right hand, to be righteousness for me, and that changes everything in connection with what I *am*. If God has found *for me* in Christ, strength, wisdom, righteousness, everything—I can thank God that there has been such a person on earth as the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only can I say that Christ is on the Father's throne, but I can say "that is the Blessed One who has loved me and given Himself for me. He is happy in the Father's love, and my heart (set free by redemption) is happy because His heart is so. If He is the eternal life of my soul, I cannot but be happy." He says, "You are a debtor to me, and I can let you into my joy with my Father." And I can say, "I rejoice, O Lord, that thou hast thy heart's delight, resting with the Father, for I *do* love thee."

I can say, "My fellowship is with the Father and the Son." Fellowship is not a future thing, but a thing we have possession of while in these earthen vessels. It is up on the throne with Christ that we have it—it cannot vary. What a position! Christ in heaven in perfect light, and I, brought there by Him, everything in myself contrasted with what He is, to have discovered at once, all darkness in myself and all light in Him!

I do not get rid of sin till Christ changes this

vile body, but sin has no longer dominion over me. In being made a new creature in Christ, the body is not changed, but a new nature is communicated, and we are brought into the light; and while walking in the light, we have a good conscience. The root of sin is there still, but the heart occupied with Christ does not go out to see sin. But if a saint leaves that place, and gets occupied with things down here, he will lose the power which, being in the light, gives the heart to detect everything contrary to it. If I get out of that blessed place to which the Father brought me when He sought me out, I am back where evil reigns, I get where every one has *likes* and *dislikes*, then sorrow comes and chastisement.

Christ on earth was perfect light—and everything was discovered by it. “In him was life, and life was the light of men.” We are made partakers of His life. We are up there in spirit, down here in body. If the body is to be kept subject, it must be so by communion with the Father and the Son. Practical failure there will be; but never say that we *must* fail, though we do fail. Paul failed as a matter of fact. It is not “*When* any man sin,” but “*If* any man sin, there is an Advocate”—there is the fountain. I believe that the advocacy of the Lord Jesus is little thought of as it ought to be. Not the sacrifice for sin; that question is settled for ever when we believe. We have never to go to Him, as our Advocate, as to personal acceptance. It is when the accepted one sins: and there is not one single blot, one practical failure, but it has all been in the light, *His eye* has detected it.

Saints forget often that Christ is a great deal more watchful than they are. He said to Peter before he failed, "I have prayed for thee." Directly the heart of a believer recognises sin, it ought to recognise Christ praying for him. This blessed Lord is not only the restorer of our souls, but the One who continually renews the *flow* of affection between the Father and the wandering child.

The Father has *all* delight in Christ as the perfect expression of His love—of all that He is; and we enter into His delight. What a God! Not contented to be Himself light and love, in His own glory, but He has presented light and love and glory to us in His Son. Has the delight and the blessedness of fellowship with Him up there, discovered to us the poverty of all down here? Are we a heavenly people? Have we heavenly stores laid up in Christ? Why put off the joy of heaven for a future day? Why not begin *now* to live in heaven? God calls us to rejoicing and joy in Christ *now*.

Can I connect all the sorrows of the wilderness with Christ's glory? Have I set up as my banner, "To me to live is Christ?" Do I devote myself and all I have to Christ's glory, turning everything into an occasion for magnifying Him?

If my heart is breaking, what matters it, if I have Christ?—He loves a broken heart. His heart cares for me, as no mother cares for her child. Every throb of your heart is known to Him, and He beautifully knows how to shew you how *all-able* He is to give you rest and a peace

that passes all understanding. And if you are broken down bit by bit, it is only to fit you for the place He has prepared for you. There is, for the heart that is resting in Christ's love, a perfect repose, a Divine peace, that Satan cannot shake. You will be wondering at your peace, you will be able to say of things that destroy the dearest hopes of your heart, "I thank God."

In the Person with whom I have to do, I have the word of God, the blessed Lord, the glory of whose person is set forth in the revelation. And if I am in that Christ of God, in whom was never a waver in doing God's will, it will bring me down to the very bottom of self. If He does know individually everything in me, He knows it by the perfect contrast it is of all in Himself. Have you cultivated an acquaintance with the heart-searching Word, who looks down into the very bottom of your heart, who discovers the first budding of everything wrong, and puts His hand to stop it? If He has to do with a redeemed people, how far does He find each one a vessel fitted for Him to dwell in?

If there is a corner of my heart that Christ has not searched down to the very bottom, I am undone. Would I have a *blind* Christ, one whom I should not like to search out every part of my heart? Ah? I would rather have Christ pointing out everything, than friends praising. I adore God that gave Him to me. Who am I, that my Lord should so condescend to search me? And where there is evil in me, that is just where God lets His streams flow into me. He sees everything that hinders and chokes—would I stay His hand?

The reason of little growth in practical holiness and unearthliness, is that the heart is not abiding in the light of the searching eye of Christ in heaven, and making the whole value of it come right down to the very bottom of everything. There can be no power of blessing save that which begins with Christ, that which throws us (in the light) upon the heart of Jesus, upon the love that knows how to give sympathy in everything—the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, *that love* from which nothing can separate us. All the Divine glory beams down on us in the face of Jesus Christ; we are in Him, and have such fellowship with Him that what is true of the Head, as to God's delight being in Him, is true of the members. The great thing that gives liberty to the heart is the knowing its connection with a risen and ascended Lord, and so being able to stand, counting on the love of God *in Him*. There is in the heart of the Lord Jesus the full throbbing of that love, as He looks upon us as those given Him of the Father—a Divine savour and fulness in it, because of its being the love of God: a perfectly Divine love, which lays hold of each individual as one given Him of the Father; a love which never changes and from which nothing in heaven or earth can separate.

Christ tells it out in our hearts that in Him is the yea and amen to all the promises. We shall find immense strength in that thought in a cloudy day like the present when (we are like water spilt on the ground) we get clouded and troubled by

the world on every side ; but turn to Him, and all in Him is "yea and amen." He makes good all the promises. The bringing light out of a promise, the making any bit of truth come with power and freshness to the heart, all is His doing.

Why are the thoughts of many stirring with the question, "Where is the church of the living God?" It is because Christ has not forgotten it. Why is the thought of His coming thrilling in so many hearts? Because *He* has not forgotten it.

No saint ever finds true rest in the thought of glory and heaven, save as he realises that everything is centred in the person of Christ. If I walked round heaven and found no Christ there, however bright and beautiful all might be, I should say, "It won't do without Christ." The Lord Himself must have a vividness in the soul, a living place there, if the renewed affections are to be satisfied.

What! *this One*, this smitten Rock, through which the river of life flows—*this One*, who knows all the secrets of the Father's heart! do I know that He loves *me*? Did He die for *me*? I had my sins, and nothing but my sins, when He looked upon me. Was His blood competent to take out all their crimson dye? and is God satisfied? Will God find fault with that work as inadequate? Oh no! He looked upon me, the chief of sinners, and I am to be a specimen of the cleansing power of that blood. How blessed a thought! Oh what love that is of His! How aggressive, how mighty in its power against all that is contrary to it, as it flows into the heart of a saint! How it enables one to look up and say, "I know thee Lord Jesus

up there, as the One who loved me in all my misery, who didst interpose thyself between me and my sins, and hast obtained and given me a title to be a kingly priest to God and thy Father, and hast made me to know it *now*." How is it that there is so little praise? Because there is so little appreciation of Christ and of the work of Christ, of how that blood has cleansed us and given us a place in glory. Why is there not willingness in saints to strip themselves for Christ, as Jonathan did for David? Why is there not that impulsive power of love flowing out in praise, as it did in John, when His heart welled forth, "To him who loved us"? Whenever a saint gets into close connection with Christ Himself, and sees the living streams flow down, he will have no thought of self. When I think of myself in the glory, and Christ saying, "That is a man whom I washed from his sins in My own blood," I shall not want any glory for myself, but all for Him; and to be standing *now* as a testimony of His love in the world, to speak of His glory, to His praise.

Are you occupied with the person of Christ alone? You cannot have Him as the object of your life unless you are occupied with Him *Himself*. There is nothing so blessed to the heart as realising the person of Christ, *that One* who is to come and receive us to Himself—He, the centre of all the Divine glory.

We shall know nothing about beauty of walk till we come to compare our walk with the walk of Christ on earth.

I believe many Christians do not know anything about a living Christ in heaven, occupied with them

and they with Him—do not know Him as One who calls upon them to apprehend that for which He has apprehended them. How many thoughts have you had to-day, telling that you know Christ has apprehended exactly what you are to be in the glory? The heart cannot have strength to apprehend it all, but can you say that He has shewn you bits of it, and that you follow after to apprehend more of it? Is it the formative power to your heart? Do you connect it with your walk in the wilderness-down here? Oh how clear, how distinct in the mind of Christ is that for which He has apprehended you. I may follow after Him, finding more and more of the heights and depths of His love, and yet have to say, “I have not apprehended, but I press on.”

How can one walk in communion with Christ *in* heaven and not come in collision with the world? Do I walk as one who is in present, living intercourse with the heart of Christ, having my heart formed and fashioned by the constant apprehension of His glory? And *if so*, how can I be conformed to the world? Do you believe that Christ is not ashamed to confess your name to the Father, as one whom He has apprehended for glory? Oh, is there no divine fulness, nothing unsearchable, connected with the love that says, “How are you walking? is it as one who is reaching forth, and pressing on for the mark?” If I am called to give up certain things, to be separate from certain things, it is sorrow to me or joy, under the eye of Christ who is leading me on into glory with Himself.

A heavenly life will never be found save in one

who is in present communion with Christ about the place to which He is leading us. And a heart can never be abidingly in communion with the heart of Christ and be identified with the world that does not know Him. The Holy Ghost bids us keep our eye fixed on Christ, as He is conducting us on to the glory, for oh! He has apprehended us for it. Paul wanted the full manifestation of Christ in glory, his eye was up watching Him in heaven, looking for His coming. *That is what to-morrow is for Christ: what is it to us? Is His coming our to-morrow?* Paul had discarded everything that came between him and a risen Christ upon the throne. Paul was going up hill, looking straight up to heaven, living upon the hope of that Christ's coming. Do you and I live in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ's coming *at any* moment? Is that the hope that sheds light on everything? It is of immense practical comfort, as well as power. If it were always the present object of the heart, how would it be possible to be overcome by the trials and difficulties we have to pass through? He may be coming to-night, or we might have years of trial or of persecution in the wilderness, but in the thought of His coming to fetch us, and His hand under us, can we not forget this body of humiliation, and these trials until then? If I can calculate on His love all the way, I shall be able to meet every difficulty. The love that makes Him come forth to fetch me will shine forth *then*, and I can count on its shining forth *to-day*. Does any one say, "I know that Christ will come at last to fetch me, but He forgets me in my difficulties *now*"? Any

*not* walking with Him might say it. Could *we*?

The grand expression of His love is that He will come *Himself* to fetch us, to bring us to His Father's house. No other *to-morrow* is given us by the Spirit but Christ in heaven coming to take us up there.

The thoughts of God and of Christ in heaven, as they flow into us, make manifest to us an awful contrast between them and what we find in ourselves. But how sweetly, in all that reminds us of what even these bodies of ours are, we are also reminded of the love which, before we are taken up, will change and fashion them according to His own glorious body! In what *dress* am I to appear in His presence? In one fashioned like *His own*. The thought of power given, for a human body to become an immortal and incorruptible body, is feeble compared with this being fashioned like His own glorious body. He might have given incorruptibly, but not *this*, the being *like Him* when we see Him as He is. What a thought? This Christ soon coming to make me like *Himself*! Do I love Him, and am I a citizen of heaven, because of being hid in God with Him, until the time when His glory will be shewn out fully? What think you of having bodies like His? How it brings the heart to heaven where *that* body is—a human, though a glorious body. How sweet the association, “with him and like him,” when we see Him as He is. Till He comes it is a blessed thing to be able to say we have nought to think of and to seek for but heavenly things: “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with

Christ in God." All worldliness consists in some plan for self, something to see attractiveness in for self down here; but is *our* plan looking for Christ to come? The attractiveness of that Christ should make all things of the world drop off and be judged. When He comes as the man honoured of God, it will be not only to lead us into heaven, but to come with subduing power into things which cause sensible groaning. He has poured life into my soul, but this body has got death in it still, and He will change it according to the working of that power whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself. Are we walking as lovers of the cross of that Christ? When He who died on it came down from heaven, a glory shone out of Him, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, and His life was a perfect expression of what our life ought to be. Look to that Christ for power to walk, and do not be looking down here for something to lean on. Don't let forgetfulness of your wilderness portion creep into your soul. Be good soldiers of the cross.

Strange that I am not ever looking *up*, if I expect to see the door of heaven open, and the One I love coming out. Oh! what a scene, when He comes forth to change these vile bodies, fashioning them like to His own glorious body?

Don't let there be such a thought as that He who saved you out of Egypt wants you to wander in the wilderness, as if He had no proper place prepared for you. He wants you to be walking as those for whom the place is prepared. A place where He will have all His own around Him

in all His own beauty, all overflowing with all His own joy ; when He shall have put out for ever every root that troubled us in the wilderness. The pilgrims and soldiers of the cross shall be changed after such a fashion that nothing *down here* could be good enough for them ; nothing short of heaven will do. (Don't *you* be satisfied with anything less.) Christ never had a home down here, it was a wilderness to Him, it did not bear the stamp of His Father's heart. If there is a strange place to me, it ought to be the place where my Lord was crucified.

There is no joy in this life like the joy of walking with God, like the joy of picking out my footsteps after my Lord, and His eye upon me following my steps all through the wilderness.

How sad for any one to be called to go, with a quantity of things to settle ! Blessed to be able to say, "What little bit of work the Lord gave me to do, is done, and I am ready at *any moment* to go up to the Father's house." Would you like your coming Lord to take you by surprise ?

See what the Lord lets into Stephen's soul—something connected with the taste of His love, something in Himself flowing out, ministering to His servant ; not only to shew the faithfulness of that servant, but to give that which made His servant able to serve Him with all joy. All that man could do, could not prevent the expression of the *living sympathy* of Christ towards him. When they were stoning him, he could look up and say, "I have the sympathy of that One who is standing at God's right hand." It changed

everything to Stephen. Before, he had not such a flow of the affections of Christ, not such a taste of the living sympathy of Christ. Was Stephen the only martyr that had such a taste of Christ's love that his heart could not contain it, and that it set all his affections on fire? Was he the only man that ever had Christ's sympathy let into his heart? Could not each of us say "no"? and if I got into Stephen's company I could tell him that I too had tasted it all, though in much more humble circumstances it may be. Do we not know the effect of Christ's sympathy? know how we have tasted it in our hearts again and again?

Next, look at Paul: "Why persecutest thou *Me*? If you touch them, you touch *Me*." All the light of Christ's sympathy with a suffering people down here, broke into Paul's heart practically; and see him afterwards, in Acts xviii. 8-10. What a difference between having a dispensation of the gospel committed to him, and being told not to be disheartened, because he had all the living sympathy of Christ's heart. It is the intelligence Paul had of the fact that the affections of the Lord's heart were flowing out to him down here.

Paul knew that there was water from that smitten Rock—a supply always flowing out for him. He is in the presence of God, ever living to make intercession for us; but more, when He went back to heaven, He sent down another to be the Comforter and Guardian of His people; such a One as all His living sympathies could flow through, down to His people on earth.

It is a solemn thing, the Holy Ghost being present in the assembly; when He acts, what is it that He does? He realises Christ to our souls; He shews us what this Christ is: the soul rises up to Him, and we get all that can comfort us, in connection with the affections of a *Man*.

It is in that very place where all the glory comes out at the Father's right hand, that Christ has proclaimed Himself head of a body. Are our lives the expression of the communion we have with Him who is our portion up there where He is sitting, until He rises to take us to Himself: One like Paul could not understand why—if the Lord had given Himself for him—he should not give himself up for Christ, body, soul, and spirit; to him “to live was Christ.” His whole heart's desire was to lay everything down at the feet of Christ, not only his life, but all.

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by truth.” He could *set Himself apart*, but He could not *purify* Himself, because He was Divine purity itself. Leprosy fled away from Him, His touch conveyed purification to others. It is not here the question of purity, but whether there is such a thing as being set apart, separated unto God. The blood separates the people of God, because they are not their own, but bought with a price. Where the sprinkled blood is *known* as the power of separation, it is a blessed thing; but the believer *is* perfected for ever by the one offering. Its whole value goes to perfect those that are separated. What could justify a poor ruined creature in saying, “I am perfected

for ever," if that offering had not done it, and set him down as one "perfected for ever"? If Christ gave Himself as a ransom, and was accepted, it is quite enough. I could not see Christ in heaven, save as a ruined creature, and it is as a ruined creature I have to worship, and I cannot see Him without my very heart melting in adoration and worship before Him.

It changes everything, the moment I get the glory of Christ shining in on my soul.

It is exceedingly important in these days to have Christ the centre of everything to us, so as to be able to say, "to me to live is Christ;" to be walking in the light of His glory shining down upon our path, in everything that glory kept uppermost; not to be allowing *two lives* in us, the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit, but to be sinking the life of the flesh, and having only the life of Christ living in us.

One of the greatest blessings the soul can have is the power of entering into the refreshment the Lord Jesus Christ had whilst He was on the earth, and it is that which makes the scene between Himself and the dying thief so precious; not only that poor thing finding light through an open door, but the thought is so exceedingly precious, that He who saved that thief saw in him one of the fruits of the travail of His soul; *so precious*, that He should there see fruit of His travail, before he could turn and crave a blessing; and to hear Him speak of blessing to that poor thing before He cried out with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.

It is very solemn, in connection with those who are members of His body and one spirit with Him, that the Lord's eye comes in to search everything in them, and that He knows all intents and thoughts of the heart and mind. But if He did not, we could not get such a blessed thing as One ever living to make intercession for us, for if He did not, He would not know how to make it available for us. Directly He sees in us something that needs it, He pleads with God; and not only He sees it, but He makes us see it. *All* is discovered to us. He makes us see every infirmity, every mark of spiritual disease, that we may know His healing; and He makes us accord in character with the place we are in, *in Him*.

It is so blessed, the way that the Lord teaches us about Himself as a living person; and there is no place where we have Him as a living person more than in the wilderness. We are all impatient to see Him up there, but it would not be the same thing if we had not seen and known Him in the wilderness. He is the object in whom God presents His own character, and as we pass through the turmoil of life, what can strengthen us in it; what can help us, save the seeing Him, the living Christ, for us? When He takes us into the light, and shews us that all flesh is grass, what can sustain, and settle the heart, but the thought of that One, the unchangeable One, occupied with us? Sin in us, He apart from it altogether, and yet *for us*. The Lord in heaven was Paul's living book.

Faith should be energetic, active: I am not to

be merely musing about the glory ; but the certainty of Christ's having apprehended me for it, is to set me looking right forward, pressing onward to the goal. What is feeling for Christ, if it does not separate the heart from the world ? It is a different thing, saying, " I know the cross," and saying, " I have found the thing which I can go round and round the world glorying in, filled with astonishment and delight."

God saw in the cross of His Son the only door by which He could enter to give blessing to sinners.

It is very blessed to see the different thoughts the mind of Christ has, in different epistles, in connection with His coming. First, in Ephesians, He presents to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, as the bride. Second, in Philip- pians, poor things groaning in vile bodies—He will work in them, and change the body of humili- ation into a glorious body. Third, in Colossians, life hid in Him, to be manifested with Him in glory. In a little while, He who is your life shall come forth, and you with Him, Fourth, in 1 John iii., the relationship, formed by Christ, of *sons* to the Father, and He will treat them as sons, they shall behold Him and be like Him, He will shew Himself to them as He is.

Departed saints have not yet got full blessing, but an immense step onward. The position of believers is not changed by death. They were waiting when down here—they are waiting still in the separate state of glory with the Lord.

There never was such a thought in connection with the first Adam, as the soul being in one place and the body in another. In the case of Stephen, we see how the Lord takes the soul at once to be with Himself; and all beloved departed ones (if they died in Jesus) are in the experience of that state. This meets the heart when sorrowing under bereavement, and tasting the bitterness which there is in the removal of such from earth. It is a bitter thing, and death is humiliating, having all plans broken up, and all natural affections rent in twain by it; but there is something deeper, which saints could not have experienced if they had not passed from earth into the presence of the Lord—and that is the feeling all the sympathy of the Lord, when death came and carried them off.

The Lord Himself shall come to take His people up to Himself. There is something inexpressibly sweet in the Lord Himself being thus brought forward; this Jesus who left the grave putting Himself in connection with the dead in Christ; the Lord Himself, the Son of man, rising up from that place of glory in which He was before as Son of God. The glory is all infolded in Him now, but soon to be revealed. The Lord Himself shall descend with a shout; the Lord's own voice, a blessed thrilling sound, heard by all His own, whether their bodies are in the dust or in life down here.

The dead in Christ shall rise first. I would not let the word "first" be erased for worlds, because it is just what I always observe in the Lord, that is, His love specially going forth where there is

the expression of weakness. I want that special love, my heart wants it in my weakness ; but that is what my Lord is, that is just where His love flows forth.

What a thought, that *that Lord Jesus* knows where to look for, and to gather up, every one of His own from the dust of death ! Making the dust give up that which was laid in it, to make each one a body of glory, fashioned like His own, and to set each heart in His own presence and glory. The very highest point you can turn to, is the Son of man in the glory of the Father. Turn from that to the other utter extreme point, this Son of man rising up and coming down from that height, down to the dust, where Satan has been allowed to separate the component parts of the bodies of those that sleep in Him ; each one of whom is to stand up as a witness of the truth that He is the Resurrection and the Life : each one starting up from the dust of death at the first word of Him, the First-born from the dead, the First-born of many brethren, and so shall we be ever with the Lord ; *that* to my soul is so unutterably sweet, so divinely and perfectly gracious. What if God had made His Son head over everything, if He had not formed the hearts of His people for that Lord Himself ! If He had once thrown the gates of heaven open, all that is in there would not be the volumes to my soul which I find in this word "for ever with the Lord." The thought that I have to meet the Lord Himself, to be for ever with Him, touches the very quick of my heart. Ah ! does that Lord who has loved me with so patient a love, and kept me with

so holy a care, from the time He first gave me life, does He say, "You shall meet *Me*?" And more than that, that He is coming down to meet me in the air? These eyes of mine shall see Him, these ears shall hear Him (the one who loved and gave Himself for me, putting forth this last expression of His love for those whom His Father gave Him before the foundation of the world). And this no transient meeting, but caught up to dwell for ever with Him. What did the dying thief know about Paradise? but he did know it was to be with Him on whom he had heaved his soul for eternity. I don't care where I am if with Him ; everything is in that "*with Him*;" and it is just what we get in the intermediate state : absent from the body and present with the Lord. If I left the body it would be to be with Him who is the teeming fountain of all the blessing now flowing down to my soul. If in the new Jerusalem, it would be a poor place without Him. What without Him would be all the brightness of heavenly glory? To me there is only that one thing—I shall be for ever *with Him*.

Am I happy? It is because Christ *loves me* and He is happy. Who, that is made one with the Lord, shall say, I am not blest, if Christ is?

Ah! if we knew how to use Christ's experience, it would have a marvellous effect upon us. If in sorrow, we should not like to speak of it in the presence of Christ's sorrow: and so of joy too. And He has a large heart, and knows how to be the Giver of joy.

The people of God may have to taste a little of the waters of death's dark river, but Christ went to the very bottom of it, and rose again, and is alive for evermore.

If Christ is ours, He is a *living Christ*, and he sends messages and special ones by us. He may put it into the heart to go with the word of truth to some heavily burdened sinner, and the person may do it without a thought of having any power, until he finds from the effect that Christ has been using him as a connecting link between Himself and a people on earth. And so he also passes some word of comfort or truth, out of the lips of a saint, to the one who is needing it.

What a Christ He is! How He watches to bless us! Is there something which is the *one* care of your heart, and is that one care to you half as much as you are the one care of Christ? You are not to think that His eye has not been on each one of us to-day. We little know how He looks on us as those given Him of the Father, a people for whom He has so well done what He has done, a people so identified with His own heart's affections. Ah! this Christ loves to hear His people speak *of* Him and *for* Him. He cares that a people down here should have something to say for Him, that they should be practical witnesses for Him down here. He has an acting as to this, which He distinctly will reveal if any are practically His servants. John had it, and it is the same with us now. You may have been dwelling on a passage of scripture, speaking a

word for Him, and did not Christ come in? You knew not how, but it *was Christ*. Christ willing to stoop down to the lowest extremity of His servant's weakness, to give that servant power to testify for Him.

It is very blessed to see littleness like that of an infant in saints like John and Paul, to see them upheld by Christ every step of the way. To see Christ taking occasion of our littleness to shew the exquisite graciousness that is connected with His Divine glory. We think of His glory, and not of His grace in that glory; everything characterising the Lord is grace.

All hangs on Himself, whether to sustain faith or to lead forth praise.

We can turn to a man in heaven and say, "There is Jehovah, the Saviour-God." What a height of glory in that salvation connected with God manifest in flesh! He at the right hand of God is the receiver from God of all that His people want. Not only when down here as the Man of Sorrows, was He a servant, but in glory He is one, in all the offices which He is set there to fulfil. It is not only for me to know that I am a weak one and have no wisdom, but that there is a man set there in responsibility to the Father, to care for weak ones. There was no question of Paul or John going on in their own strength.

Christ has a special service for each saint. We often want to arrange things beforehand; but that is never Christ's plan; He expects us to look *to Him* to get the word which He wants us to speak, shewing by that, that we believe He is a living

person. We cannot see the hearts of those to whom we speak, but He can; He knows every thought of every heart, and we must look to Him for guidance what to say. If you are walking with Christ as a living Lord, you will find that He guides you in everything. He has all the feelings of a man, and is entering into all ours.

How little our hearts love things according to their nearness to *Christ!* How little thought we have of the preciousness of Christians because they are *dear to Christ!* We ought to love good things for Christ's sake, and not only for the dew that distils from them for our refreshment.

Not till Christ had taken the place of the smitten rock, could we speak of the Fountain as being opened in heaven. Not only is He the Fountain of living waters, but He could say, "I and my Father are one: he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He did not take the place of a fountain whence the waters flowed until seated at the right hand of the Father. And He is not only that, but in Him is the light of life. He is the light of men. The life I have, comes to me through the Son of man. He associates us with Himself in things that belong to Him as Son of man. As Son of God, He sits on the throne of God. *I* cannot do that. He has a throne given Him as Son of man. *I* can be there with Him. He cannot give me the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity, but He can say: "The glory which thou *gavest* me, I have given them." Christ can put His people into *that* glory, but not into the glory of God, in which He is the object of worship.

In the addresses to the seven churches, we find Christ laying hold of their hearts, as He does of ours now, by revealing some particular truth. And so in first quickening the soul. He revealed a particular truth and gave life to my soul.

Christ never says that my flesh can overcome the world, but what He says is, that if I have faith, it will lay hold of what He presents, and I shall be a conqueror. It is faith in the word which Christ reveals to us that gives us the victory, and nothing else can do it. In remedying anything, He always proposes to give something: "I will give you to eat of the tree of life;" "I will give thee a crown of life," &c.

In connection with His Divine glory as Son of God, He is a giver, and nothing is too great for Him to give. One of the most beautiful traits of the Lord's character is in connection with God as a giver, and all is given on the most magnificent scale, worthy of the Divine glory, blended with the most exquisite grace. He is in His own eternity; He knows the secrets of God, and He turns to me, a poor thing labouring in a very quagmire of difficulties, and says, "Look at that tree of life in the midst of God's paradise: if you overcome you shall have it." Can I slip away from that magnificent promise? Then again: "You are suffering, and called to pass through tribulation; but be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life."

Who is this Crowner who can give a crown of life, and throw all its effulgence around them, just in contrast with the shadow of death? Ah! what is the death of the body, set in contrast with that

crown of life, and with the not being touched by the second death? If I lay my head on my pillow and go up to glory, or if, like Stephen, I go up by having stones thrown on me; well, what death is that? Not the *second* death; and Christ is holding out the crown of life to me, and sheltering me from the second death. "I will give him a white stone;" Christ gives him a new name, whose meaning no one knows but Himself and he who receives it. There will be a secret between Christ and myself in glory, with which none shall intermeddle.

What are the mistakes and failures of the church, all put together, if they give occasion for the bringing out the sweetness of Christ's love? *That* Christ at God's right hand, now the Man of patience, once the Man of sorrows, and hereafter to be the Man of joy: three very different displays of Christ. In Christ down here—the Babe in the manger—despised and rejected, and acquainted with grief, we see the Man of sorrows; and yet nowhere do we get such Divine glory as at the cross. And as a sinner, what was I taken out of, and whither am I brought, by that cross? The next thought, where is the Christ *now*, whose death did it all? The answer is, "At the right hand of God; where as the Man of patience, He has been waiting nearly 2000 years for the glory and the people.—*His*, as the meed of such service. And what is He doing? Why, turning to us, and saying, "I am occupied with you in the glory, I have an entrance into all your sorrows; turn your eyes up here, open your hearts to Me,

let Me see everything ; as a shepherd, I am occupied with each sheep, binding up each wound, making right each rent and tear in the fleece." But hereafter most blessed is the thought of seeing the One who was emphatically the Man of sorrows down here, as the Man of joy, "anointed with the oil of joy above His fellows!" But it is well often to think of Him as the Man of sorrows, in connection with what we are passing through. Heap, pile up, all your sorrows, till you can heap no more ; then turn to Him whose heart brake in woe, and talk of your sorrows, and of all that has worn you down if you can, in the presence of that One who says to you, "Was there ever any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Yet shall He be the Man of joy ; and ah ! is the thought of Christ's *joy* sweet to our hearts ? Do you love to think that there will be no face so beautiful, no heart so bright and perfect in its joy as His ? Nothing like *His beauty* ! all the glory there will be but as the setting of that gem. And that new name of His shall be written on you : surely that ought to give a little patience as you pass along the wilderness, tried by the roughness of the way, as though He said, "Cheer up ; only a little while more, and I will write on you my name of joy." Christ's heart is not fed with the externals of glory, but with the joy of serving God ; it will be the joy of *all* the children being brought home whom God has given Him—the new name written on them, that will be Christ's joy.

Do you want comfort ? Nothing can give it so much as the thought of His coming. There

may be sorrow in the night, but joy enough—*fulness of joy*—in that morning when we shall see Him as He is : fulness of joy in being *like Him and with Him for evermore.*

As God, all glory is His ; but as the God-*man*, there is something else, which nothing can satisfy save the having an answer to the perfect affections of His perfect human heart. “ I will declare thy name unto *my brethren.*”

It is a blessed thing for people to be brought into living connection with Christ Himself ; if *they* sleep, He never does : if *they* fail, He never fails. He will be as tender and gracious as possible ; but whatever He sees that Divine glory requires, He will give an ear to hear on that point.

You could never tell what Christ would have you to be about, but if you go *with Him* in *everything*, there will be consistency with the ways of Christ. If you go with *self* you will find a stop.

Nothing so enables the soul to separate between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit, as having the eye single for Christ. And if occupied with Him, it will be, “ Lo, I come to do Thy will.”

When all smiles upon you, you may think there is no need to talk of such a thing as separation from the love of Christ ; but if persecution were to come, and you were to be led forth to the fire, you would feel that that *love of Christ* is a VERY PRECIOUS *thing.*

“Behold the Lamb of God.” (John i.) Who is this Lamb which takes away the sin of the world? Who is He, that Man of sorrows, coming into the world, and saying that He is able to take up the question of sin and settle it? No mere man could do that. *Who* then is this One? If we turn to the beginning of the chapter we shall find a whole string of glories as the answer, connected with that Lamb—the Lord Jesus Christ. One has often seen persons carrying a string of beads, having so many prayers to go through in connection with each bead; and one has thought, Ah! if the glories of the Lord Jesus were seen by His people as a string of pearls, so that they knew how to count over those glories, what far happier hearts and faces the people of God would have! One cannot turn from titles of highest glory to titles of humiliation without seeing a depth of moral glory coming out, *God* having to stoop *very* low because going to touch this question of sin; He alone being competent to do it: “Behold the Lamb!” The words were like a living touch to the hearts of those who turned and followed Him. Their hearts were laid hold of by this Christ, this Lamb of God, who was drawing them to Himself. He is at work just in the same way now; people cannot tell how it is, but they are drawn and constrained to go seeking this Lord. They find Him melting their hard hearts, and they are drawn on to follow Him; still a man, though now in glory instead of being down here. He has left the door of heaven open, that the glory may be seen, and we can enter in through the rent veil. We can enter by a new and living

way into the place where *He is*—can follow Him into heaven itself.

Unless the heart is on fire from having seen Jesus, how any little thing turns it aside from the glory of that Lord! How that little word “Nazareth” came between Nathanael and the Son of God! But when he *sees Jesus*, he finds that Philip has not said half enough, and falls down in worship at once. How one simple word from this Christ could unravel the deeper glory which Nathanael saw and owned!

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” Think of poor things like you and me sitting down before Christ as an open fountain, saying, “I am athirst;” and then your heart gets full of happy thoughts. You see another coming in, a poor, weary old saint—well, he gets happy too, Christ letting happy thoughts into his mind, and he begins to talk of those thoughts to a neighbour coming in. Such thoughts are a river of living water flowing out; and it is Christ in heaven who gives the water to thirsty souls. Is it not enough to make the heart leap for joy to hear Christ saying, “Come to me and drink: I am come for thirsty people”? Let your *first* thought be to drink in before giving out; not occupied with brethren, not about gifts, nor of having a place in the body, but of living waters flowing out.

Have you no truth? Whatever little bit you have, tell it out—“speaking the truth in love, that we may grow up into Christ into all things.” This is quite apart from gifts. If you have *got Christ*,

you have to tell out what He bestows to every saint as a member of the one body ; there is positive responsibility to do so. The smallest bit of truth tasted from Christ is not for yourself only, but to be handed out for others. Suppose there is a poor bedridden saint, and he were to say, "Don't pity me, I am Christ's, and he is the very gate of heaven to my soul ;" would you not like to go and talk to that poor saint, and so make your soul happy ?

Leaky vessels hold no water. · If *in Christ*, you will be full of water. A vessel with no bottom to it can be kept full of water if *in* a fountain. Out of Christ, we are broken vessels holding none. There is nothing in the vessel apart from Christ.

How wonderful, to have seen the One whom we are called to worship at the right hand of God, as man going *down* and *down*, till He had taken the cup of wrath ; and then raised up because He went so low ; *just there* God saying He was to be crowned with honour and glory

Paul had seen this Christ in glory. By faith in Him he was brought into God's presence, and could stand there in the righteousness of God. God saying, "I will show you the sort of favour with which I grace the people I love. Look at that Lord Jesus : He went down to the bottom to meet my righteousness, and now He is crowned with honour and glory at my right hand ; see if I do not bless the people that are in Him, in just the same way." They are "graced *in* the Beloved."

What a difference between a man walking in darkness, and a man standing in the broad daylight of God's presence, having been given Christ for righteousness, and being a part of the heavenly bride. Those who know Christ see such a fulness and freshness in His love that the very thought of Him sets all the affections in movement. And when it is the question of what there is in Him, I find the tenth part has not been told me.

If you do not keep your eyes very simply fixed on Christ in heaven, your ways will not be like the ways of a people who have a heavenly portion. When that portion gets a place in the heart, oh, it is very bright and attractive, not because of the glory, but because of Christ being there. If you are occupied with this Christ you will find blessing dropping from Him into your souls that will make heaven your home, heaven not far off, but near. Christ is there, your citizenship there. Has Christ been set before you an open door, a fountain unsealed? Can you look at Him and say, "All that this Christ is, and all that He has is *mine*," and not rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? Oh, if you loose your heart from things on earth, and get apart *with Christ*, you will find such a volume not only about Him but in Him! Is it joy to you when you think that Christ has apprehended you? That there is something personal towards you in His heart which He has apprehended you for? The early Christians had this joy unspeakable and full of glory. Have you it? Have I it? Does God see my heart going round and round Christ as the

one object of my life?—"To me to live is Christ."

What a thought for me, a poor vessel carrying the incorruptible seed, that Christ is watching to lift me over every difficulty, to enable me to overcome. The only way to be an overcomer is just to have faith in that Christ of God. God can trust Christ to get us over all difficulties and extremities. God is using the wilderness as the place where every step leaves traces of His mercies. The whole place recalls to God the way He led each believer on to His paradise: the very difficulties being an occasion of nearer association with His Christ.

All the beauty and loveliness that could be seen in man as God created him, is seen in Christ. We learn why such loveliness was in Him when we ask, "Who is this Man?" and the answer is given, "Before He was a babe here, Emmanuel, God with us, He was in the glory of God, He was with God, He was God." There is not a single thing a saint can have, save in connection with this Christ Jesus. Where is my life now? It is in Him. When Christ rose, He took the place of Life-giver; a fountain of living waters was unsealed, and the waters flowed; life came down to men like the Jerusalem sinners who had dipped their hands in the blood of the life-giver. Life in Christ comes in between us and everything of the flesh. It has power to separate the heart from every indulgence of the flesh. Who could have thought of God getting glory by the very falls of

a believer? How does He act in regard to the Prodigal? "Ah," He says, "he is my child after all!" What wisdom in the Father; He knows how to take care of His own glory. If Satan has done what he could in mischief, God can go beyond: He can open a way, so that the very chiefest of sinners can draw near, fitted for the Father's house. Who but *God* could have thought of such a thing!—What will it be when His blessed Son comes, and countless multitudes stand up to meet Him, made like unto Him in glory! What manner of person will *you* be in that day, when freed from your present body of pain and humiliation, and clothed with a body of glory—a human body (flesh and bones) like His!

Christ will search all the corners of the earth to gather out the dust of His saints, to raise them up in perfection and beauty, to take them home to the Father's house. How it changes one's thoughts and feelings about the sorrows and distresses of the present scene, when one thinks of the power and glory of the Life-giver that is soon to be put forth to make all new and bright! What a marvellous thought! Christ coming to wipe out every mark of Satan from the earth, and to make all beautiful.

And is this Christ the one most precious to our hearts, the fountain filling all with rivers of living waters? He is the central point *in heaven*, if not so in our hearts. Can we not rejoice that He is there? rejoice that He is out of this wilderness? Can we not as members of His body enter into His blessedness up there? Can we not be unselfishly glad that He is in the Father's house?

But there is another thought, the people whom He has called have connection with all His doings. I am in a world where not a ray of light comes save from the face of Jesus Christ, and I am one whose citizenship is with Him in heaven ; I am even now risen with Him who shall change this vile body and make it like His own ; that is the perfecting of this thought of citizenship. First then, I am to rejoice because Christ is happy, and then because He is the charter of my citizenship ; my name is written in His bosom, and He is the charter of all my blessings—but He has not changed my vile body yet. When He leaves the right hand of God, He puts forth His power to change this vile body. Is there no sweetness in the thought of seeing a further manifestation of power, which has not yet been seen ? A scene yet to be unfolded, in which the power of Christ has not hitherto been manifested ; and the unfoldings of His power are always so blessed.

We shall not wait till Christ comes down to the earth, but go up to meet Him in the air ; and afterwards we shall come down with Him. He will come and make this world the place of His power ; then we shall get another sphere for the manifestation of the mightiness of His power *down here*. Do we realise how much our joy depends on looking for the coming of the Lord ? If I am not making Him my *one object*, as He is God's one object, is my eye single ? Surely not ! surely not ! If my eye is ever on the manifestation of His Lordship, it is single.

As soon as the Holy Ghost was sent down, there was one desire stirring all hearts, that is, to see

the Lord Himself—the one thought was to wait for God's Son from heaven. But how that fervent desire and occupation about it is lost! What torpor has crept in, in contrast with that bright hope, as generation after generation has intervèned! But is not God turning hearts round again to that point! God knows none but a glorified Christ, He sees us only in that One sitting there, Head of His body, the church; and God is dealing with us now in connection with this Christ. To think of being greeted in heaven as part of that Christ, and inseparable from Him! Nothing to glory of in self—only in Him. But what a blessing to know that it is only in and through Christ that God can bless me!

God would have us live as a heavenly people, who can be so where we *are now*, because He sees us in the Christ at His right hand, in an inseparable union, raised up with Him. Oh! are we witnesses in this way? Are we a heavenly people whose souls are tasting what it is to be living above things down here? We cannot lower God's behests; while we deplore our short-comings do we crave for power, for grace, to walk as witnesses for Him, as a heavenly people? There may be dark experiences—and no doubt God brings His people round in this way, and back again and again where He began with them, as "dead, buried, and risen with Christ." He *will* bring the heart back, and back again. He *will* have *true* worshippers as a witness for Himself on earth. Oh! if there were but more intercourse between our souls and that Christ in heaven, for the greater letting down of our souls before God, in

the consciousness of what we are here in the body, and what we are as members of Christ's body. Not as to the question of acceptance—if that comes in, the process of humiliation stops in us, because there is then another question to be settled. If I know Christ, I am before God as perfectly guiltless, as certainly accepted, as Christ Himself is.

The believer is passing through the wilderness into glory, his soul in communion with Christ in the light, he has got the key to all blessing in Christ; but when it comes to the question of *Satan* or the *world*, the word is "fret not thyself." May God enable us to see why He is using the furnace, and that it is to shew us what we are. It is very humbling—but if God is using the flesh (because we have been walking in the flesh) to humble us, and to discover to us what we are, shall we not say with Job, "I am vile, and I abhor myself"? But, oh God! continue to make me feel it, let me see what I am, but let it be with Thee, in Thy presence.

Do you think we shall want to talk about self when we get to heaven? I am sure that when the glory shines into our hearts, we can talk of nothing but Christ. If in sorrow, and any one comes in and talks about the world, does it cheer the heart? No: but if he talks of Christ and all His glory, the heart gets comfort directly. Why talk so much about self *now*? Why so vexed about self, so troubled in spirit? And why is there so little to be heard of this Christ, who has brought us where we get all the mind of God and of

heaven. I should like to get the thought of the living Christ in heaven to be the *only object* before the soul, so that when we meet one another we may be occupied only with Christ—perfectly satisfied with Him. Can there be any lack of joy? Oh no; Christ died for me. Any lack of glory? Oh no; I am one with Him at the right hand of God.

But often, even when a large place is given to Christ, people forget that it must be *only* Christ, and not self. If occupied with Christ, where are my own thoughts, my own plannings? We may give a large place to Christ and to God's plan, but forget that energies of our own run counter to Christ. If you are quickened, you must expect to die daily, to let all your own plans and energies die. What has my energy to do with Christ? Human energy connects me with things round me down here, but never drives me to Christ.

Directly you know Christ you must follow Him. He traces out a path for us that does not allow of retreat in any way; He gets people directly, through faith, into present association with Himself. If you and I were to go forth this week full of faith in the power of the Holy Ghost, occupied with Christ, really as seeing Him, what single thing of our own would stand? Following Him as a little vessel towed along by a large one; and not only that, but our fellowship, joy, and glory, being all in Him, because we are His blest people. Oh! for grace now to serve and follow Him. Oh! for grace openly to confess Him, who has enabled us to say that we are accepted in

Him, that all His glory is our glory. Oh! to walk down here according to the place of blessing we are in.

There is nothing in man that can ever get to the truth of what the anointed Man is, until death and resurrection are known ; the first draws men to Him, the last gathers them in association with Himself.

Matthew xi. 27. Christ had the perfect consciousness of His solitariness, in connection with divine glory. "No one knows me but the Father." "I know who I am." A certain solitude belongs to Him, and most blessed that it is so. There is only one Messiah, only one Son, and He knew it. He never forgets who He is, nor ever acts short of what He is, as the Only-begotten of the Father. Again He says, "Neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Who *could* reveal the Father save the Son ; Part of the glory of Christ is seen in the use He would make of this power, and the blessedness of His knowledge which gives Him the exclusive power and right to reveal the Father. He would teach whom He would, to know Him ; that is His prerogative.

"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." What was Christ's thought in connection with this universal power? "I have got the secret of the Father, I have power to reveal Him, I will look out for some to whom the Father can be revealed." That is the thought of Christ's heart—and does not this tell out a whole volume of His character? What a contrast to ourselves :

if we had all things in our power, what should we do with them all? Should we not want some fragment for self? With Christ, it is only "My Father:" all is in connection *with Him*.

There was one Man, whom men would not have; that Man was standing as Son of the Father, in the light, with the consciousness of the Father's eye brightly beaming on Him, and that Man said, "Come unto Me, ye weary and heavy laden ones, and I will give you rest." He alone had the secret of *rest*, and if there *was* that divine inexhaustible fulness in Him, all the divine glory being in Him, and we having it revealed to us (for He says, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"), to whom could He not, and to whom would He not give rest? It is not the question, how much you have to bear, but of the Lord's eye upon individuals. When He looks on any one, even if it be a little child who does not yet feel its burden, He sees it and knows all that is connected with conflict. He sees a burden within each—sees everything that is against us. I may be like a ship wrecked between two seas; well, He says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." How can you get away from that word? Is anything beyond His power? It is just there that we get the very essence of the gospel. He goes on: "Take my yoke upon you, learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." How was it that Christ found such perfect rest in the midst of all that was against Him? Ever quiet and at home in the midst of it all: and He says, "Learn of me."

It is one thing to own Christ as the One who *can* give rest, and another thing to walk with Christ under the yoke, so that we find rest ourselves when all is against us; to walk *with Him* in everything, saying, I have got nothing to do, save to please my Master; and I have to walk so that, whatever turns up, I can say, "I thank thee, O Father." This is not the case with us. We have ways and plans of our own, and we don't like Christ to pass us through them under His yoke. He would have His light so to shine in us as to bring out all that is in us, and that we should so walk according to the light that the world should reject us even as it rejected Him. The more closely I am bound up with Him, the more I shall feel the contrast between His ways and my own. If I am under His yoke, do you suppose He will allow self-will—"I like, and I don't like"? If Christ has given me rest, and yoked me up with Himself, He does not let me go my own way, but His way. Christ set Himself in service, as the perfect servant of God: He could see in every step of the way something that called His heart to the Father. It was sweet to His heart to prove what a perfect servant He was, His rejection marking His oneness with the Father. It was not only Him they hated, but the Father also. He would not, as a servant, get away from association with God; and He tasted the rest that flowed from that in all its perfection. That which is the most bitter sorrow to us, the breaking of our will, the Lord never got, for He had no will but the Father's. We have a will that must be constantly broken, because it won't

bend. It is very solemn to think that we don't know how to bend our will to the will of God. With Christ it was always "not my will, but thine:" as He passed from one sorrow into another, it was always, "God and my Father."

The thing which through life has caused the most intense bitterness to the heart, has been this self-will thwarted: "I don't want to do that, and I don't like to do this; I must go hither, and I would rather go thither." Ah! I have got to learn what my will is, by this very breaking. If you take a bullock, and bind a weaker animal under the same yoke with it, the weaker must go the same way and pace with the stronger. Elijah, Peter, and Paul, found it of no use trying to avoid the sorrows of the yoke. They were bound up with Christ in it, and must walk where He walked; and Peter was brought up in the end to receive a crown of martyrdom. If we walk willingly where Christ leads, and seek to learn of Him—seeing in everything that turns up "God and our Father"—all will be easy. "I am meek and lowly in heart." Where do we learn this meekness and lowliness of Christ more than when under the yoke with Him? Oh, how gentle He has been! He won't turn aside from His purpose, but with what patience has He borne our manners! Cannot you recall times without number when the dearest friend you have would have shaken you off, and have done with you *for ever*? whilst that Christ in heaven quietly acted out His purposes of love for you? If you were left in the hand of the brightest saint on earth, what a contrast there would

he (you can feel it) with this Christ, who could lift up His face to heaven and say, "No one knows me but the Father," and then could turn to a feeble thing like you or me, and say, "Take my yoke and learn of me."

If we could put down self in every way and entirely, we should find rest in all circumstances. If we walked as Christ did, we should see God and our Father in everything. Privations, temptations, difficulties—God and our Father in all. Subjection to His word in everything—saying, "It is written," makes the bitterest thing sweet. Christ has pledged Himself that I shall have rest, He reveals the Father to me, *that* is the blessing He has shut me into. All blessing comes from Christ teaching every day to find rest by seeing God and my father in everything.

Where are our hearts, Oh! where are they? Are they occupied with this world, or are we quietly passing on to heaven, taken up with that which love cannot lose sight of—a living Christ in heaven?

What wealth have you if you have not got Christ? If Christ is the object before you, will all the things that fret you take Christ from you? All the things you long for, will they give you more of Christ?

Our springs, all the way from beginning to end, are in Christ; you cannot find anything apart from Christ. It won't do to stand on any ground apart from an ascended Christ. He who spake as never

man spake, is the One whose word is to stand throughout eternity.

Ah! blessed Lord! I have got nothing but thy love—a love that takes me right home to the Father's house, to be with Thee where the full expression of that love is to be manifested. Such love is a powerful thing when it gets into the heart, to lead the feet into a walk quite different from that of a man who has not got it. I can turn to that Christ and say, Nothing can disturb me, that glorified Christ in God's presence is the very ground of my peace. I know Him as the One who bore my sins on the cross, as the One who revealed the glory of God to me, and I am in connection with Him as the man of sorrows, with Him who went down to the grave, with Him risen and alive for evermore at God's right hand. And there we find, in Him so presented, our place before God.

As we go on for years, we find that these things keep their value ; but what estimate can a poor sinner form of the inestimable value of that blood? What will it be when we get home, and find that we have got *within*, brought by that blood into the fellowship of what God is? And as we walk through the Father's house and enter into the fullness of joy reserved for us, we shall find it all connected with the very same elements wherewith He conferred on us our joy down here, as He carried us through the wilderness.

What is the first sweet word we shall hear as we enter heaven? The worthiness of the Lamb, and the blood of the Lamb. And we there because cleansed by the blood of that Lamb. — What must sin be,

to need the blood of God's own Son! Up there, in the presence of God, I learn something of the *infinitude* of sin, and nothing can fetch out its stain but the blood of God's own Son, and that has done it entirely.

Strange thought for the heart of man, that none but the very highest could go down low enough! None so high as He, but none other could stoop so low. None save that One could measure out what sin is in the creature, bear its penalty and settle our account with God. The believer is brought before God in a way altogether peculiar. A way, the peculiarity of which—learnt at His hand—turns out to be the most blessed way that could possibly have been conceived.

There is something in that word of the Lord's, John xvii. 2, that ought to bow the heart in adoring love. Turn to the circumstances in which He was who spake it—and what is He there thirsting for? A certain position in which He can communicate something to us, in order that the Father might be glorified.

Does Christ look upon you with the thought, "I have glorified the Father in *that one*, I have communicated to *that one* eternal life!"

When He was going down to the cross, did He long to find rest from suffering? No. He wanted to glorify God, to communicate eternal life. And He not only counts it His glory, but the glory of the Father, to give it; and He is the only One who can give it. He prayed the Father that He might glorify Him by giving eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. What

a sweet word! power being given Him over all flesh that He should be the quickener, the giver of eternal life to us ; that He might give us a place *with Himself*.

God can never forget one particle of what His Son suffered to bring us into that place ; and Christ can never forget *one* of those whom the Father has given Him : not one will be wanting. Our life is in Him, and whatever we may have to pass through down here, *that life* is incorruptible and unchanged. The vessel may be marred, but the life is preserved, it is eternal. And this eternal life is something that Christ has given you, to be the power of union between yourself and the Father and the Son.

Think of the angels who witnessed the creation, and the flowing out of the Creator's power in the perfection and beauty of Eden, having the thought that the One putting forth all this beauty and goodness would be the One to be nailed to the cross as a malefactor, and put into a cave in the earth, and nothing too bad for man to say of Him! Again, could there have been such a thought in heaven as that one treated like a malefactor, would not only be raised up and be in heaven, but be seated on the throne of God—God's delight? No! Never! And it is one of the most difficult things for me to get the thought that according to what I was in nature, it was as unlikely for God to work in me, and out of such materials to fashion a perfect vessel, as for His Son to come down and die.

There is no light like the cross to shew out the

real character of human nature ; no act man ever did of which God could say, "That is what *man is*," till His Son was put to death, and the light of heaven shone down upon a city of murderers. That cross just shewed what we are in nature : but God looked into the pit of nature, and He came there because He is rich in mercy. Who can say anything if God chooses to take up such, and give them a new nature, a new life ?

Adam's life in Eden was not a life beyond the grave—not that life in which the second Man, the Lord from heaven, ascended up where He was before. As Son of man, Christ could and did die : but He gave up His life and took His life again ; and that is the life which a man taken out of nature gets. The first Adam could not have had such a life unless imparted by the last Adam : He communicates life—eternal life. There was no living fountain of water flowing down until Christ left the grave and ascended. Eighteen hundred years ago a fountain was opened in heaven.

What is the great difference between the works of man and Christ's works ? Christ's were all connected with the Father. He always looked up to the Father with a heart attuned to the mind of God. The works we want as the people of God are works that take in the mind of God. If you want to know what is *not* "worthy of God," you should ask, "Would the Son of God, if He were in the world, do it?" Are works connected in your mind with the thought, "I ought to do this *because I belong to God*" ? One

who has life in Christ cannot bring forth fruit without its being received by God. It is most important to judge our works—to see whether they are works that are worthy of Christ; good works, not according to man's thoughts but according to the mind and thoughts of God, of such a character that we can say, "to me to live is Christ."

What can be more blessed than God's having unveiled the face of Christ to the heart, and the bright light of that face shining down and filling it! The Holy Ghost given to bring it always there. But, bright as it is, the treasure is in an earthen vessel, and we are still in the wilderness.

God knows nothing so beautiful as Christ: He would have us ever looking on Him, in whose all-perfect beauty the Almighty heart finds all delight. That God has unveiled that face and let all its light shine down into our hearts is indeed most blessed; but from that very thing responsibility comes in doubly. We have to walk as light-bearers. That Christ with uncovered face is a Christ whose light shines down in order to shine *out through* His people. All the light which they ought to give out is in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If you looked at responsibility as connected only with self, you would murmur and be miserable.

Whenever we look at responsibility, it makes us feel the need of just such sweetness as we find in the thought, that we are left down here as witnesses for the Lord. As soon as He comes, He will fill the whole earth with glory; we must wait

for that. Our present position is as a "flock for the slaughter" passing over the earth, letting light shine out. When He comes He will give the higher glory. What sweetness there is in the thought of being used by the Lord down here to give out light—serving His purpose ; for He *will* have a light on the earth while He is away. When He comes, it will not be only the joys of His kingdom, but you will have the thought that you have served His turn in the wilderness, letting light (His light) shine out. And when He put you there, did He not know what the earthen vessel was ? The weaker, the more feeble a people, the more will be their sense of His power.

Soon we shall be up there with Christ. God did not mean us to be happy without Him ; but God would first have us to be witnesses for Him down here, to hold out as much light as we can.

Not only have I seen the face of Jesus Christ (see John xiv. 21), and, oh, what a sight beyond all sights ! but I have a connection with Christ in the light. I have not only to look away from things present and see that bright light up there, but I have to reflect it down here. I may be a very bad reflector ; "never mind (Christ says) go on, I give the power ; I know you are nothing in yourself, and that you are in the place where it is night ; but go on giving out light ; soon you will be in God's day." That morning without clouds will usher us into the light where Christ now is. He is the bright and morning Star. For eighteen hundred years He has been dealing with a people down here ; the night may be very dark, but the darkness does not reach up to the bright and

morning Star. No cloud can cover Him: soon He will shine out. We are only on sufferance here, on our way to what lies farther on. He is *our* bright and morning Star; we shall *see* Him. He will take us up and guide us to the Father's house, before the sun shines out. It is that hope which gives one courage to go on in the midst of failure. To be sure, I have failed. Have I been a good light reflector? No! but I am to go on as I can till He comes, till I see Him as the bright and morning Star. It is not the looking for bright light reflectors at His coming (though we ought to be such), nor the expecting to see candlesticks filled with oil; but the Holy Ghost in the bride wanting Him to come. Does He hear you cry, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Are your hearts so going forth as to be ever saying, "Come, Lord Jesus"? You need not look round and wait for another, *you* may say it to Him. Ah! cultivate communion with Christ in connection with that word "Come!" I know nothing so fitted to raise one up out of the world as having the soul in communion with Christ about that; looking at ourselves as part of the bride still on earth, and the spirit in her saying "Come!"

There may be failure and ruin of the church, but there is the fact that I am part of a company which God has given to His Son, and because of that (not because of anything in me) I can be doing nothing but saying the live-long night, "Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

As soon as we are in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ we have got *God*; God has intro-

duced Himself as a living person to the soul, and all our associations are connected with God.

When He separates any one to Himself, He plants the blood of Christ right behind them.

Christ's beauty will be displayed to us before He comes forth and takes His great power into His hand to smite the things of the world. He will come forth then to perfect victory. He is now sitting in heaven with all power about Him and in Him, but He does not exercise it now.

He has put us in the place He stood in on the earth—as sheep for the slaughter. What a place to be in, kept by Him! We have a risen, ascended Lord who has made good His word, so that we can have a place; and He has so kept things on earth that, in spite of men and Satan, He has ever enabled a people to confess His name and to stand a few together in testimony, whilst He directs their service. He took Paul's especially into His own hands. In regard to the candlesticks also, He took all into His own hands. And so now He maintains communion with His people, and sets them moving in service. The limbs cannot move except the head acts in them. Satan himself cannot move a tongue without God's permission—God, as ruler of everything. If God be for us, who then can be against us? Immense comfort is in that thought. It is no lack of power that keeps Christ back. He can come if He will before Satan is cast down, and set up His kingdom. Israel's not being ready would not prevent His rising up from the Father's throne and coming forth. He is the One for

whom God has planned everything, and we ought to connect everything with this blessed One. He is the Adonai. He can say, "The time will come when I shall deal with Satan." But now He waits, and says to one and to another, "I have set you in testimony—let the waters flow out where all is against you, and I will help you." I can look up and say, "I am one spirit with Him." If He was the Lamb, I must be a sheep. I can look up to Him to shelter me all the way through.

The One who comes in mighty power with all the angels, comes as One who was a pilgrim and a stranger. He can turn to Israel in the latter days and say, "I went through all that you are going through." And to us He says, "I have a heart to sympathise with all your sorrow." That is just what one knows of Christ as One who looks down, saying, "If you are a member, I am the Head; do not think of your weakness, but of my strength."

Who understood the wilderness as He did? Who was ever such a thorough pilgrim, drinking of the brook in the way? "The Man of sorrows" knows well how to lift up your head. How the power of His sympathy in our hearts lifts up His people's heads! He won't forget His backsliding people on earth either.

The heart of God is, with Christ, occupied with a people down here, having all power in heaven and earth to keep them standing in His strength. The Holy Ghost is down here; we have access to His heart; He has associated us with Himself and with what He is going to do in a way immeasurably deeper than Israel.

If you take the world *with Christ*, it will not destroy the foundation, but it will be the destruction of all your joy and service. You will be "saved as by fire."

Human religion never gives to the cross the place which God gives it. How many go on year after year without ever having turned to Calvary, saying, "I know nothing connected with this world that I could possibly boast in, save the cross of that Nazarene who died on it at Calvary." Yes; and the only thing I have in the world to glory in, is that cross. What is there in that cross which enables me to glory in it? It is the cross of the *Lord Jesus Christ*. The mind shrinks from the thought of death as a penalty; what was there to make this less startling in connection with that death on the cross? There is One now seated at the right hand of God, One who has the most absolute power, *all* power, and it is His cross: He is Lord of all, *our* Lord Jesus Christ, His second title, "Jehovah," His third, "the anointed Son of man," and it is *His cross*. And when I turn to that cross, why do I boast in it? Why? but because I should have been eternally lost if He had not died on it. Why do I boast, why am I proud of that scene? but because I believe that He died there *for me*, and I am saved by it. Ah! if I see that dark scene with such bright light shining behind it, and know that but for *that death* I should have been eternally lost, is there not good reason why I should glory in it; why I should think that there are no two pieces of wood in all the world like that cross!

Ah, what is it that sets the heart free to glory in the cross? Can you say that Calvary is the scene which shews God has punished sin? Can you say that there all your sin was put away? Then you can glory with me.

God has presented His wisdom and His power in the cross. How does His power come out, not only in the effect of the cross, but in the cross itself! It never shone out so bright. Not the creation of a new heaven and earth could be such an expression of His power as that cross. That the *infinite God*, He who is the Almighty God, should have been down here on that cross! That no one *less than the God who created all things*, who had but to speak and it was done,—that *that Almighty God* should become a man! What had Almighty God to do there upon that cross between two thieves, tied and bound to it, *not* by circumstances—the nails could not keep Him there—but by something stronger than all fetters, something that He cannot break through: “Lo, I come to do thy will; O God.” The Son of God had become the servant of God. He, the very One by whom God had created all things, there was He, with power to put everything down, fettered, absolutely fettered as servant to the will of God, whose servant He had pledged Himself to be. Where did God’s power ever shine out as it did there? Not only—I repeat it—the expression of divine power in the fruits of the cross, but in the cross itself, that cross where He leaves Himself and everything in God’s hands, to turn everything to His own glory. I know nothing like the moral glory shining out in connection with the

cross. We hear of moral glory in the actions of different individuals. In Christ it was perfect. Because the power of God brought Him down to weakness, He gives up His spirit in perfect obedience ; but God alone could do it. A *man's* life is not his own to *give* ; but the Lord could *give* His life.

God alone has a right to act as He pleases. He had an only Son, of whom He could say, "He is all my delight ;" and if He would make that Son the One on whom all His wrath should fall, who could *dare* to say to God, "What doest thou?" He is *God*, and He alone had a right to do what He liked and do it how He liked. If He had a plan in connection with that Son, He must have the co-operation of that Son to carry out His plan, *and He had it*. Christ came to the cross to die there.

Satan has the power of death—God put it into his hand—but God used His Son to nullify it entirely. Satan might let his scythe come in, and one is not to be surprised if the whole world is mowed down. But how was God to stop the executioner, to whom He had Himself given the power, so that he should be unable to cut *us* down with any taste of death? "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord," being all the believer knows death to be. Satan does the work of destroying the body : but Satan could not accomplish it in connection with Christ. He was the *Prince of Life*. He gave up His own life, Satan could not take it. He had power to give it up and power to take it again. If He had not

died, the power of death would not have been taken from Satan. The marvellous wisdom of God was shewn out there, and I can turn to the enemy and say, "Ah! Satan, there you are conquered. You have found more than a match in Him who died there."

I see in the cross the power which meets everything in me. If I turn to the cross, saying, "How horribly unlike I am to that Christ who died there!" the answer is, it is because you *are* so that He died there. Was not the death of Christ the perfect expression of God's holiness? All the perfect attributes of God shine out through the cross of Christ. If Satan had got man into a position in which it was impossible for God to bless him, and all was broken up in connection with the first Adam, it was only that it might all drop into the hands of the last Adam. All was accomplished at the cross.

Ah! that cross is a low place, a thing that strains all the pride of man. Have you ever known what it is to be brought down to death's door from conflict? I have known what it is—passing week after week and never closing the eyes, simply because *I* wanted to do something, and Christ had done it all. Peace came to me in that cross, God saying, "My Son bore all your sin in His own body on that tree." What a thought! that the anointed Saviour, eighteen hundred years ago, suffered everything for me, and that it was only my own horrid self-will, wanting to do something, which kept me from getting peace *in Him*. It was not the suffering earth gave Him, not the nails, the spear—but

something deeper far ; the wrath of God was borne by Him, nailed to that cross, when He cried out, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " You cannot find the cross itself on earth now, but the record of it is in heaven. God is constantly reminded of it, by the presence of the Lamb that was slain, at His right hand.

We shall go into heaven with faces radiant with glory, able to look right up, because of the cross. God forbid we should ever find anything in this world worth thinking of and glorying in, any standard on which our souls can rest, save that cross !

The most awful point of view in which the world's religion is seen, is, as connecting itself with the cross. Could you take ecclesiastical systems, and plant the cross there, and say that all the lust of the eye and of the flesh and of the world which is in them, harmonises with the cross ? The real character of the cross becomes especially manifest in connection with what is ecclesiastical. In regard to Nonconformists, it is only a degree of difference : they are equally under the sanction of the world for their existence. Equally so in regard to government ; I cannot separate between it and the beast (that is part of the statute in Daniel) ; the cross cannot be connected with it, cannot sanction that which all governments form a part of. That which marks off the people of God is the cross, and it behoves them to keep themselves apart from all civil governments.

That cross has separated me from the world that crucified my Lord, just as much as if His

body were now on the cross, marred and wounded by the world.

It can never be true that we are crucified to the world unless the heart is in constant communion with the cross of Christ, with Christ crucified. The cross comes in, in everything, as a matter of daily experience. How is one to pass into the old age of a Christian? How find one's self left aside, no longer with any energy? Surely only by the Cross. How can one meet difficulties with a word, and be kept in perfect quietness? Only by the cross. How can we keep under such flesh as ours? Does the "old man" ever get to be better? Not a bit! but you must learn to be able to carry the cross, saying of everything that is evil, "I can have nothing to do with that, because my Lord was crucified on account of it."

Many and various causes of sorrow are presented in the life of the blessed Lord on earth; one coming on another, and sorrow becoming more and more intense, up to the closing scene on Mount Calvary. Suffering, connected with testimony for God; whoever is for God, will be sure to suffer in such a world. Suffering, too, connected with grace—pain in having to tell the devils to go into the swine, because of destruction of life. Sorrow at the grave of Lazarus. And at the end, suffering, because of grace. He cannot save Himself, He might have had legions of angels, but how then would grace have had its course? He keeps silence, and prays for His murderers. Then there was the peculiarity of

sorrow, as being the One to solve that problem which seemed so impossible to solve—how God and a sinner could go together. How could God find any one to shew the bearing of divine glory in connection with mercy towards one covered with sin, one who did not own Him? He *did* find One who was to be the perfect measure of what sin was in His presence. That One takes the cup of wrath from God's hand; and in that hour, God cannot look at the One in whom was all His delight, the *only One* whom He could eye and watch through the world. That hour of forsaking, when the "sword" was to awake, only came out at the cross. There was but the anticipation of its unsheathing at Gethsemane. Only when on the cross is the expression, never heard at any other time, shewing the sense of the hiding of God's face, because He was unable to look at One who was bearing sin.

I see there God's estimate of sin when it comes into His presence. That Son of His love had to be treated as if the whole mass of sin was His, and the whole weight of wrath for that sin came upon Him. He had to bear it all there, alone. He may be a Man of sorrows all through His life. but He has God with Him in it. Never till the cross, do we find the sense of God's distance from Him—expressed in that cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He never *could* taste that before, for only then was He bearing sin in His own body, in God's presence. Not one ray of light came from Him whilst the Son of His love was there, suffering, the Just for the unjust. Man tries to keep sin far away, out of

God's presence, but Christ carried it right into His presence.

I can measure a creature's sorrow, but when I came to that cross—none can measure that sorrow. Everything was torn and rent within Him nailed there. Have I ever felt I could grasp Christ's mind? What a thought I get of it when I come to the cross! Say, can I understand what that mind was there? How span the infiniteness of that mind of "God manifest in flesh" in such a position? Utterly impossible that I ever could understand what He suffered there. Not one ray of light, not one smile, on the Sin-bearer—for even the least sin is right against God. Superlatively perfect all through His life, yet never more perfect than at the cross, where He could say, "If God forsakes me, I will not forsake Him—my God."

What could have been in the mind and heart of God when He had to turn away from that *only perfect. One?*

If I understand what Christ was for me on the cross, there is no sin for me before God. If God had treated me as He did His Son, it would have been the withering up of me and the casting of body and soul into hell—but I am standing in the presence of God, as one who has had the measure of my sin laid on Christ, and He has brought His own divine thoughts into my being, lifting my heart up to Himself.

When our future in the wilderness is closed, there is Christ's future; and in the thought of that, hearts ought to be extremely bright. To be able to say, "I am the Saviour's prize, I have

fallen to His lot," makes everything bright, for He is Lord of all.

Do you find a great deal in yourself which you cannot find in Christ? The answer is, "He is Lord of all." If when in the world, Christ never had such a care as this or that, why then have you got it? Lay aside everything that Christ could not be troubled with. Have we any plans of our own? we shall be sure to have trouble. His people should have the mind and thoughts of Him who is going before them in the wilderness; He is, and will be, Lord of all, but there must be a more simple faith in Him as a *living Person* for *to-day*. It won't do to know only of the love of Christ yesterday, to-morrow, and for ever: but we need to know it as the love of the living Christ *to-day*, who is sitting, at *this very time*, at the right hand of God in heaven, bearing all His people on His heart, making all our cares through the wilderness His. Unless you realise this, all will be too much for you. He may take from you a great many things which you cannot carry into the glory. How is it that people can leave their souls and their eternity with Christ, but not the things of time? It is from their not realising Christ as a *living Person*, occupied with all that concerns them.

Is there not light enough in heaven to cast down brightness on the little bit of wilderness I am passing over, and to light up all that remains of the threescore years and ten down here? Yes, the light *does* shine down; the eternal life I have is a present thing: glory is future, but the life of Christ in me connects me with the light above.

Eternal life flows through our souls, and as we go through the wilderness, the Holy Ghost ministers to us all that God and Christ are.

In connection with Christ as our Substitute, what a thought is His divine glory! What! the Man before whom every knee shall bow—the Man before whom all shall stand in the day of judgment—*that Man* my Substitute! There is no place in the dust low enough, no word adequate to express what I feel, that *such a Man* should have taken my place and borne my judgment! He, as the Substitute, is my well-spring of life, and I am an adopted son in Him. I am also His servant, and I may share His sufferings as the Servant. Ours may seem a very insignificant path of service, but He may have the thought of its being just the path in which we may share His sufferings.

If you go through the world as a child of God, and mark the sorrows of Christ with the thought of sharing them in some small measure, you will see if they do not in this aspect also become very precious to you, shewing that what His life was down here, yours is to be. Are we to expect better fare, a smoother path, than our blessed Lord? If the thousandth part of His sorrows came on one of us, we could not bear it, it would destroy us; but we can, in *our little measure*, follow after and taste of His cup of sorrow.

Is it not enough to wring my heart when I see Christ the Son of God becoming Son of man to bear all that He bore down here? And then He went back to God. Can I see Him *here* and see

Him *there*, and not fall down and worship? Oh, what a revelation of God in that Nazarene! Can I know Christ and not know God? Impossible! And that Christ is my life, and the keeper of it. He is my anointed Saviour. I belong to Him. Is it in the sheep to keep itself? No, but in the Shepherd.

Mark the inseparability of believers and Christ in the mind of God; when He leaves His Father's throne, His people are to be set with Him on His throne, and they are to be owned as He Himself is. God's thought is to express His delight in that Christ who has bought a people with His own blood; the Father's house is prepared for them and they are welcome there, even as Christ is. On earth the disciples went wherever Christ went. When He comes to take us home we shall be for ever with Him; and it will be as the saved ones brought near to God by His own blood.

When I see a Christ come out of glory, bearing my sin in His own body, and going back again to glory, and going on for eighteen hundred years waiting and gathering poor sinners into the Father's house, there is something exquisitely beautiful! My heart is stolen away by everything Christ does. Is there no beauty in the walk of Him who did all for you? Don't you want to be like Him? Have you not a model before you that attracts the whole heart? How we should *long* to resemble this Christ and to have *His mind*! I have got a Christ in heaven, and I desire to meet that Christ's thoughts in *everything*, and to be one with Him in the world where He was rejected and crucified.

I can have intercourse with Christ at the *present* time, He lets the light of Himself, as a living person, into my heart. Are there not many who have never realised in their hearts the thought of Christ as a present living person? Ah, it makes a wonderful difference when we see Him as a living person with His eye upon us. I know there is a day appointed in the which He will come, and then I shall be with Him for ever; but I *want*, and I *have*, a living intercourse with Him *now*. He knows me and I know Him *now*.

There is no way of shewing that I love Christ save by keeping His word, having His word indwelling, and shewing subjection to His word in everything, ever saying, "The Lord said so and so." How good it is of Him to have told me *how* to shew my love! The Lord wants us to treasure up His word. The great end of my being is that I am to be a trophy of the power of the blood of Jesus Christ; but there is another thing: if I am in Christ and He in me, there is to be the treasuring up of His word, the keeping of His commandments. He says, "My Father and I can separate a heart that is treasuring up my words, and we can come and make our abode there, and give the sense of our love and presence there." But all will not have it.

"If any man love me," etc. (John xiv. 21-23.) Here the Lord speaks of His love in a connection quite different from the love that all who believe "share even unto the end." Here it is a love manifested only to one who is walking in communion with Christ, treasuring up His word.

John was one who loved the Lord and treasured up His word, and he had the consciousness given him of the Father's and the Son's love, so that He might have communion with the heart of God. Is there this intercourse between our hearts and the heart of the Lord Jesus? Are we treasuring up His word? Is it dwelling richly in us? If the word of Christ governs the heart, it will push out all other things. Christ not only loved me when I was dead, so as to die for me, but He loves me as a disciple, and this love should make one's heart bright going through the wilderness,—love leading us on with the present blessed consciousness of a living Christ occupied with us here in the wilderness. As soon as I realise the thought that Christ is not so absorbed up there as not to have a heart occupied with His people down here, I can say, "I may be toiling through many a wave below, but if His word is treasured up by me I am loved and prayed for, and the Father loves me, and Christ looks down on me in all brightness of love; as though He said, 'You began with my love, and are going on with it to the end, over every wave.'"

If the life of Christ is sustained down here by us, nothing can minister to it so much as the thought of the living feelings and affections that are in Christ, "If I do so and so, what will Christ feel?"

I have got something that gives me power to live, not according to the flesh, but the Spirit. In everything, from the greatest to the least, there is nothing out of which we cannot get an occasion to glorify God. Some one once said he wanted a

larger sphere of service, because he had so few opportunities where he was. My answer was, "Your *life* is an opportunity." The apostle Paul said to Timothy, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." If full of Christ, grace would be sure to flow forth in all circumstances, but whether it be the youngest or the most mature Christian, it can only flow forth as the eye is fixed on Jesus. Where was all to meet Timothy's need? In Christ; and is not the heart of Christ as fresh as ever to the people of His love? If the eye is fixed on Him, looking for grace, we shall be full of the joy of the Holy Ghost.

If you knew practically the blessed free giving of Christ (there is no end of the stream of grace flowing from Him), nothing down here would affect you unduly; you could not say, "This or that looks very black;" it would not be black, looked at on Christ's side. There is a Christ's side of everything down here.

As one connected with Christ Himself, you will find plenty of affliction. Do you say that your path is so full of difficulty and trial? Well, thank God for it, saying, "As Christ's path was strewn with thorns and briars, so would I have mine to be." Are there none? Where are you? What! going by a short cut of your own into Canaan? I am often cheered when told that my path as a Christian is a hopeless path. Well, I say, then my path is like Paul's. Enough for me to find affliction in connection with a living Christ. How can I use anything of the world? How gather for myself one flower fit to carry into God's

presence, save as standing in communion with a living Christ? Satan may give me a stigma, but that will only mark whose I am and where I am.

Oh, what a difference it makes in the sorrows of this life, if, instead of looking at them as something against us, we have fellowship with Christ in them! Would you like to be snatched up with dying embers clinging to your feet, saved so as by fire, rather than make up your mind to suffer with Christ? All who are laid on the foundation will be saved, but if walking inconsistently, it will be "so as by fire." If walking consistently, receiving the reward.

The Christian may say, "I have power to reject Satan, the world, and self, because I have got eternal life. I am standing in a strength that is just the same for me that it was for Paul. The evil may be increased, the days darker, but God is the same, and eternal life in Christ is what I have got; and if I walk in separation from evil, as one who possesses that, I have the sweetness of this thought cheering me—the Lord knows me as His own."

How is it in the present time that we don't find Christians satisfied with what God reveals in His word? Just think of the difference between the early Christians and Christians now! Then they began with Christ as having borne their sin, being raised from the dead, and in the glory, where He had a place prepared for them. And whatever they might be, He knew no change—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. That was where the early Christians were, and it gave

them a spring of joy all the way, and enabled them to bring that glory into all their circumstances as pilgrims and strangers. That glory never left Paul's mind, and in all that he had to pass through, his soul was always delighting in it. It led him captive all the way.

Have our hearts ever been up there with that Christ in glory? Have we known a risen Christ as the starting-point of blessing? Is that Son of God taken up to heaven (earth-rejected), claiming us as those wanted as witnesses for Himself, and in connection with His work and service to be carried on? One may have all sorts of experiences of one's own feebleness, but nothing will keep the soul save really knowing the Lord Jesus in heaven as the One who has separated us unto Himself. There is then the sense of His claim over us—we His and Himself ours.

When God has given me salvation in Christ, it is no longer the question of what God thinks of me as a person, but what He thinks of the fruits of the work of the Son of His love. I must have both parts, first as to what I *was*, then as to what I *am*. As to what I was, the blood shed on the cross is my measure; as to what I am, God has so connected me with Christ that I am become the righteousness of God in Him. Am I to say, I may live as I like? What! with the Christ who died for me claiming every thought of my heart, that living Christ, looking at me all the day long! Oh, what a change it is when I know the yearning of Christ's love as He looks on me, saying, "You are espoused to Me." Christ wanting to have me all to Himself! Paul could say, "the

love of Christ constraineth me? not an outside restraint, as when he was bound with fetters to a soldier, but a constant hold of Christ on the heart. Led captive by that Christ, the anointed Man, Paul could say, "Christ not only looked out of heaven on me and took away the thick veil on my heart, and let the light shine in, but He is the One who loves me, and that love of His binds me as a fetter and makes me go whither He would." He says, "I died for you individually, that you individually may know you are mine, and you are to live in me." Here I get the love of Christ to myself, so as to be able to say, I must not live to myself, but to Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

If a new Gospel were found, saving that Christ had ceased to care how His people walked, would it be a sorrow to you? Or if any one were to discover a new Epistle to unfold beyond what we already have, the way to live more to Christ, would it not be joy? It ought to be joy to meet with brethren able to shew you the force of passages of scripture which teach you that Christ wants everything to be done by you according to the power of the life given you in Him.

Paul was not as a vessel broken, and another formed by the potter out of the same clay. No; it was a new thing altogether. He was a new creature in Christ; old things had passed away. Nothing as regards the flesh was changed in Paul, but the mastery of the flesh was. The law of sin and death is not taken out of the flesh, but I am delivered from it, brought out of the position where all is death into that where all is life. I have

eternal life in me to give me power to live unto Christ. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" is not that a blessed truth? Are you walking in the power of that life, in the light of eternity?

Life down here is to most people a life of vexation, of trial; the heart wears out under it, or else there is a sort of stoicism, and as troubles come like the sparks that fly upward, people say, "We have got to endure it, and we must." But how different this experience from that of the Christian who can say, "Show me any sharp flint scorched by the sun, and I can turn it over and find moisture underneath." How different when all things are seen to be of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by giving us His Son! A person gets the heaven-side of things who finds God in everything. It is a blessed thing that as there is not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a flower that blossoms, without the Father, so, as sorrows turn up, and thorns and briers come in our path, to know that the Father is in it all; to be able to say in everything, "There is my Father," and so, passing on quietly without care, knowing that every detail of life is watched by a Father's eye.

And when He comes to unroll our whole life since we believed, will it grieve us for Him to know it all? When you have failed in any way, and God has brought the sense of it to your soul, do you want not to settle it till a future time? or is it not a positive relief not to cover it up, but to feel that the thing has been judged? Nothing will do but making a clean conscience before God,

not letting a spot remain, but confessing and taking the whole blame ; rejecting the thing and condemning it in yourself first.

The Lord Jesus has given me eternal life. I am in the light, and it discovers sin in me ; but that does not touch the life, because it is in the Lord Jesus that I have it. My blessing is in the person of Christ ; in my own person I am a poor sinner, and if I had not got Christ as mine to the end, I could have no confidence whatever.

Can God raise any question as to the entire contrast that I am to the beauty and exquisite perfection of Him who is my life ? In His whole course there was the flowing out of a moral character perfectly beautiful. Ever going about doing good—the *will of God* the only thing He did, or cared to do—and man seeking to put Him to death all the time He was here. Am I like Him ? No ; but ah ! if I have eternal life in Him I shall get that character. He has power to form a hidden man in the soul—the new man in Christ, and He has power to make this vile body fit for the presence of God.

I am sure if your soul is calmly in the habit of looking at the Lord Jesus as your eternal life, you must have the throbbing of joy in your heart, saying, “ I have got something too large for my heart to hold, the thought of that Christ up there, and my eternal life being in Him.” Ah ! if we get to the sphere in which that eternal life is to be displayed, we find a range of glory beyond what the heart *can* take in. Do you see that Lord Jesus at God’s right hand, as the Rock smitten for you ?

Is it that one who bare God's wrath for your sin, in whom your life is? What perfect rest that gives! Oh, let your heart be in communion with that One in whom your life is, and you will find that you have a portion, a fulness of joy, in Him, that no circumstances down here can interfere with.

It is not the question of the life of the body. When Christ has given eternal life, the body may drop off; the life, the soul, goes to Him: it is better to depart and be with Christ. If I look round I see everything down here fitted for the body; but the life of the body and the life Christ gives are entirely distinct. When Christ was on the earth, what could He lay hold of and say, "That will do for Me"? *Only poor sinners.* If He looked at Herod's crown, He could turn from it, saying, "*That is not the thing for Me.*" He walked here as a pilgrim with the mind of God. He had the Father's will as the clue to guide, and nothing else. And if people are connected with Him, they will find this world a place strange to them. I shall have to realise that this is not my rest, that it is polluted. I *have* my portion, but it is not down here. Christ enables the disciple to know the place where He is, and to have all his pleasure in walking there, separated unto Himself. Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son.

It is only as the soul is in communion with God, that it gets a taste of the glory, and it becomes brighter and brighter as the night grows darker down here. If the Lord's people make up their minds to have the same sort of life here that He had, they will be content to be like persons on

a journey, who will find excuses to leave a case here and another there by the way, in order not to be hindered in passing quickly on ; and to be like Jonathan, who only stopped to dip his spear in the honey, to get refreshed for the work he had to do. It is only by keeping the eye fixed up there where Christ is, that we get a taste of glory.

The world won't follow Christ as the crucified One. At the death of Christ, the whole orderly system down here got stamped by God as under judgment, and responsible for the death of Christ. By the cross, the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Nothing is so important as for Christians to take the place they ought to be in, of entire separation from what God, in the scripture, calls "the world." As to our bodies, we are to take care of them in order to serve the Lord more ; but there is such a thing as the lust of the flesh and of the mind, to be watched against.

I got all my blessing by the cross ; but, to enjoy it, everything must be viewed in the light of the cross, so as to have God's thoughts about it. I have to walk as a witness that nothing is worth thinking of but the crucified One. I know the world as a judged thing, and how can I seek anything in it? Once I was in it like a child seeking pleasure, following a butterfly. What an astonishing thing for an immortal creature to be chasing a butterfly! But when God came in, saying, "I have quickened you and given you Christ, and now you are to be occupied only with the cross of my Son, and you and I can both be

occupied with the same thing,"—how wonderful the change!

What soul in nature ever thought it worth while to sit down and muse over the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? But a quickened soul knows that face to be covered with glory. Oh, when one turns and sees the radiancy of the light of the glory of God in the face of that Lord Jesus, one must have something of the divine mind, or one could not enter into it. It is God who has given the power to the believer to see the glory of God in that face.

The apostle Paul felt it was a great thing to keep saints in occupation with that glory, beholding it with open face. Are *you* occupied with it? Surely Christians have got their world as well as the men of the earth—a world in which is that face of Jesus Christ seen unveiled, and there is no disappointment connected with it as the heart's object. That face entirely satisfied the heart of Paul. He was one of all others who had the greatest sight of that unveiled face. The light of the glory of that face never passes away. Having had it unveiled, it leaves something in the soul as a deposit. It shines into the heart that we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory. A certain assimilating power is put forth, so that the soul—as He unfolds and develops it—passes from glory to glory. A seed will germinate after two thousand years, and we may see the plant unfolding, and the glory of the plant is quite a different thing from the seed. What is given to the believer is the incorruptible seed, which, after

it is received, gives perfect rest for eternity to the soul ; but it has to work, and it goes on gradually unfolding in the believer what was received from Christ, changing him into the same image from glory to glory. Not by his own faithfulness, but the faithfulness of that Christ, watching the seed of His own planting, and gradually unfolding that which He had communicated, to make the expression of what he had given the rule of the life.

He was the One to fill the woman of Samaria's heart—but it is He who must supply the water springing up unto eternal life. That is His present work among His people ; and the certainty that they have Him working with them is one of their greatest securities as they go through the world. To be able to say, "I have received of Him the incorruptible seed, which nothing can destroy or pluck out, and He Himself is watching over it day and night." What a thought, that there is One at God's right hand dealing with poor things down here, because He has pledged His word that all who believe in Him have eternal life, and that none shall pluck them out of His hand. "They shall not come into judgment." Can the head judge the members? My feet may get soiled by my careless walk down here, and they *ought not* to be so ; Christ will wash them again and again, but He does not judge me. I have been quickened and raised up together with Him, and that identifies me with heaven and the centre of heaven itself, for it makes me a part of His body.

We want something to link our hearts up there with the Lord—the constraining power which Paul

felt: the love of Christ should be the constraint upon us as to our walk, and this is the simple doctrine of being co-planted with Christ.

The mark of a new creature in Christ is not the having a better heart, for that remains the same as ever, but the looking at everything as having God for the centre, and not judging of things as though man were the centre; seeing where God is; looking down deeper to the springs of love in God, flowing to us through Christ the fountain; all one spirit with the Lord. How different are God's thoughts from man's as to walk! God looking at the One He raised up, and saying: "I have not a word against those who believe in Him; their guilt has been all rolled away, they are one spirit with Him whom I love up here; He is the head, those poor things down there are as His hands and feet: I love them, and have given them one spirit with my Son." Are these God's thoughts about us? Yes; and if we did but make them our thoughts too, we should have bright faces and happy hearts passing through this wilderness. What then were all my adverse circumstances? What all that tries me? If God be for me, what is all that is against me? The primitive Christians when spoiled of their goods, took it joyfully; they lost everything, gave up everything, and had power to go forth with happy hearts, rejoicing in the Lord. Every necessity in us is only something for God to find grace in Christ to meet it.

Have you weighed that expression, "Heirs of God"? What! are you heirs of God—joint-heirs with Christ? Your names linked up with

Christ's name in one lot or inheritance, as in the promised inheritance of the Jews? Each lot had a name attached to it. God has a lot, and from it Christ comes forth, your name is linked with His, and you are to share whatsoever is in that lot. Oh, *what* a lot it is! One lot has fallen to us—to suffer with Him here and partake with Him of His glory hereafter.

Your sorrow ought not to be the world's sorrow, but Christ's; singing for joy in the midst of it, because identified with Him. There is no sorrow we can suffer in association with Christ that has not sweetness in it.

Is Christ looking on you or me, saying, "There is a poor thing as unlike me as Saul of Tarsus was, but through grace he has learnt to cast away his own righteousness as filthy rags, and become a debtor to God, to have all his sins washed away in my blood; and he is identified with me by the Spirit of life flowing down to him, and I shall soon come down to change and conform him to my own glorious body." It is not enough to the Lord Jesus that His blood has freed our conscience from guilt and saved us, but He must have us with Himself, our bodies fashioned like His own.

Whose counsel and plan was to give power, that a poor sinner, kept here for a time in continual weakness, should come forth in the end, having a glorious body, conformed to the image of God's dear Son? Oh, it is a plan altogether above man! There is an answer in Christ's body, for all the weakness in ours.

Nothing so sets the heart at liberty as seeing

the Lord, in resurrection, our **Fore-runner** in heaven. How could He take us up there if He had not washed and quickened us?

If there is a portion so blessed for me, it is because I am to bring glory to Christ: He is to have ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of mirrors to reflect His glory. When He appears, all will be told out that was shut up and hid with Him in God.

He knows where every separate little heap of dust rests—the dust of a Peter and of a Paul—all to be raised in a moment and made glorious bodies like unto His own. Then it will come out in a volume, the whole sum and substance of the gospel of the glory shut up in Him.

Do you understand that the Lord Jesus has certain things belonging to Himself connected with the heavens—a portion peculiar to Himself, which He shares with the church in the heavenlies—of which He has made *us* partakers? Do you know your title? Has your soul tasted what a place the Father's house is? Have you got to wait your actual entrance there for this? Oh do; grace has made you a fellow-heir (one lot), grace has linked your life up with the Lord Jesus—hid now in God with Him, sitting on the Father's throne. This is not a *hope*, but a *certain* thing; His leaving the Father's throne to come and take us up, *that* is the hope which presses warmly on His heart. Does it so on yours? Does that hope enter into your present portion? Does it press on your heart daily and hourly that

in a *little while* you are to enter into the inheritance, and to be a fellow-heir with Him ?

With regard to conscience, how do I stand ? I know that looking at myself I could not have a hope. How could a person have it without *peculiar* views of God's grace ! What ! has God chosen me ? What a God He must be to have a thought about a thing like me ! not looking at what I was, but at what He has made me ; that heavenly inheritance prepared, and the Father giving me a title to enter in. Oh what riches of grace ! What blessed hopes He puts before me, amid the ruins of this wilderness ! What a God ! How impossible to stand on that ground without knowing something of the wonders of God's grace, a little of the length, and depth, and breadth, and height of that love that passeth knowledge ! What a happy people these fellow-heirs will be when they get home ! More touching still to one's poor heart—so narrow, so hard—to hear God saying, " You are not only to find rest up here with my Son, but all that He has shall be yours ! further still, all that He is—you are now one body with Him, accepted in Him ; He in you and you in Him." Do you think that God looks on you poor feeble ones, as you look on yourselves and on one another, with all your shortcomings and slips and falls ? No ; He looks at us in the body of Christ. What makes saints go on so pertinaciously looking at themselves as individuals instead of at the body ? The reason is that the heart does not like the idea of being nothing—lost and merged in the body : God's grace having made us one with Him, that

as He is we are, His grace flowing down, building us together for an habitation of God: but we don't like to go for nothing. It is sin, positive sin, the sin of unbelief, to look at ourselves *merely* as separate individuals, and not as in the body, as we are up there with Him. What would not be the effect if such a thought were received in simplicity? What would it not be to our hearts, so narrow and so occupied with our own individual experiences, to realise ourselves in such a position? The eye of God coming down upon me as I am, individually, makes me cry, "Unclean! unclean!" makes me loathe myself in dust and ashes: but to know that that eye turns to the heavenly places, fixed on *one body*, and sees not me in myself, but me in the body, as I am in Christ—how blessed!

The very smallest space between the head and the members would destroy life; how close then must be the union!

What becomes of all our guilt when Christ is looking into our hearts, saying, "I have separated you from guilt; I was crucified, I have died, and you have died with me unto sin, and are alive unto God, raised up with me, and sitting in heavenly places in me"?

Do you know Christ? If you do, it will make you loathe and detest yourself; and the better you know Him, the greater will be your self-loathing. But if you *do* know Christ, your conscience is a purged conscience, it has to do with the blood of the Lamb slain. God has deeper thoughts of that blood than man has. The mercy in the bosom of God none can tell or know but

the Christ who Himself carried out that mercy in His own body on the tree to its utmost extent. O God! Thy Son, bleeding and dying on the cross, could alone understand what that mercy is.

A thousand affections flow from Christ's heart to His members, not from fellowship with any more particularly, although down here He might have felt it more with John than with James or Peter; but up there every member of His body can comprehend by individual experience the surpassing love ever occupied in nourishing and cherishing its object. It is only the power of Christ in His own living person that can keep, sustain, and nourish, and at the end present it to Himself a glorious body without spot or wrinkle. When it comes to risen life and our being up there in heavenly places, we must needs have One to care and act for us there—a Master, every moment occupied and dealing with us.

We are apprehended of the Lord Jesus distinctly, not for what we are, but for what we shall be. It is impossible when we come to know Christ, to stand still; we pass on from childhood to manhood and to fatherhood. Every separate saint is being prepared for a prepared place in the Father's house. Seeing this, it becomes impossible to settle *down here* the question of self and all connected with it as dung and dross—the question of work—the setting Christ before you, pressing on towards the mark of the high calling of God in Him; these questions can only be settled in view of our heavenly position, our

life up there. Are you saying: "Christ loves me, and I must press on till I see Him; nothing can satisfy me till I can get to Him"?

Christ has seen exactly where I shall be in the glory; the jewel will not be lost which is to be put into His crown. The believer can walk in this world as one who is apprehended of Christ for glory. Are your hearts occupied with Him in the glory? It will be as a stream of heavenly blessing in all troubles. Is it the thought of my soul that I am up there with the Son of God in the glory which He has apprehended me for? My citizenship is there amid all the wretched shortcomings of my own heart. Up there the child of God may have present rest and peace. If I have a consciousness of my fellowship with Him in life up there, there will be a throbbing of joy in my heart, flowing from its living communion with the Christ in heaven, which is to flow on for ever and for ever; and which I date back to the quickening in His grave, His life then flowing to us.

If I love God, I want to be holy as He is holy; the desire of sanctification has no limit at all. Is it a wonderful thing that the effect of God letting me know His plan of associating me with Himself hereafter, should be the desire for association with Him now? Has that Christ who has brought His love to you piecemeal, as you could bear it,—has He no jealousy, think you? No desire to see your heart's affection linking itself around the God who has associated you with Himself? Does He see the pulse of thought through you beating

for God? You cannot hide yourself from Him. He, the Good Shepherd, leading and watching every individual sheep; not one lock of wool taken from a single sheep that He does not see. Does He see rolling through your minds unceasing thoughts of Himself and the glory awaiting you? your heart dwelling up there and your walk corresponding; or, like Jacob, halting on the thigh because the flesh needs crippling?

God has spread an expanse of glory—all wrapt up in Christ for us: are our hearts there? God has described and told us of the golden city; Christ the light and the joy of all there: He would have us occupied with that which is the centre of His thoughts, and that is Christ. Are we following in His wake? Is His Christ the centre of our thoughts, and the hope of His coming connected with every motive and act? There may be failure—there may be something which cannot cling to me in the presence of Christ, but He won't let me off that hope. What is your hope for to-morrow? Is the future of your mind at all like His? A poor feeble reflection it may be, but it must be a hope having its spring from that which is the centre of God's thoughts, and that is Christ.

Has it ever come into your mind what sort of a thrill the delight of God in Christ must cause in heaven? And is it indeed true that we are accepted in the Beloved, and that God loves us as He loves Christ, because we are in Him and He is in us? What in *you* can interfere with the delight of God in His Son? His delight in believers is not in themselves, but in connection

with Christ and redemption. His blood has washed all my sin away, my soul is in Him—one with Him; all my guilt and misery judged on the cross. Oh, it makes one feel very little; it sinks one into insignificance as being nothing and Christ everything; God looking on His Son with ever the same delight, seeing His members and loving them as such! It is pure grace from first to last.

I may see what appears very attractive down here; but, looking up there, I see Christ, and I feel that till He comes down, earth cannot be blessed. This world to me without Him is only a wilderness; there is no rest here. All blessing—even for the earth—is shut up in Christ; all happiness, all true joy, hid in the person of the Lord. You cannot get anything like real happiness without Him. Oh, how much happier a way of learning that our rest is not here, is that thought that nothing can make us happy till He comes, than to be vainly seeking rest while He is absent, filling our mouths with sand and gravel!

“I am the bright and morning Star.” Does *God* desire to see the Lord Jesus as the bright and morning Star? When the hour is come, God will give the word, and Christ will leave His throne, to bring up His bride. But the morning star is not for *God*—it is a hope for a people in the dark night. This title does not come in once in the Old Testament; there we find the Sun of righteousness. But this bright and morning Star comes to usher in the morning without clouds,

The Lord knows what the hearts of His people want here—it is Himself, His own blessed person. Ah! is the Lord Jesus looked for by us as the bright and morning Star? It is not the glory, but *Himself* that is set forth. “*I am the bright and morning star;*” and, oh, it is Himself that I want. What would glory be to me without my Lord?

Just observe the sort of glory here. What is this bright and morning Star as to glory compared with the Sun of righteousness? Oh, but they who love Christ know the sweetness of this title; all their heart’s affections are bound up in His person, that it is which their hearts are set upon. How sweet it is, in the midst of all the evil of this wilderness scene, to connect the hope of His coming with “*I am the bright and morning Star,*” and the Spirit and the bride say “*Come!*”

In 2 Corinthians xi. 2, we get just the true idea of the bride. Do you know anything of such a thing as a body, a people, affianced to Christ?

If the marriage of the bride, the Lamb’s wife, is to be, and you and I are a part of that affianced body, where can creature title come in?

How that name of bride supposes all affections on the part of Christ! If He looks down and sees one here and there, poor feeble things in themselves indeed, but all they are part of that body and He has washed them in His blood, what can He see in them but failure! but He has given them the Spirit and made them one with Himself, He will have a bride fit for God’s own dwelling-place. If you do not know the

personal love of Christ to His bride you cannot invite Him to come.

God did not stop when He had taken the bone out of Adam, but builded a woman; and so He not only calls and washes poor prodigals, but builds out of poor prodigals a bride for His Son: making them the members, the flesh and bones, of His Son. It will be a part of His glory to have a bride formed out of poor prodigals.

The bride may have all sorts of precious things—but she herself is for the Lord.

What! I, a poor thing, a leaf in the wilderness carried here and there, can I say, “Come, Lord!” Ah, but if God has given me the Spirit and made me one with my Lord, I can. If He had merely *shewn* me all the glory, it would have had no effect, but the Spirit of God brought the truth to bear on my *heart*: the Spirit of the living God always bringing a fresh taste of the love of Christ to my heart.

Oh, how the Spirit is straitened by us as He goes through the wilderness with us and finds so little answer in our hearts, and cannot get the waters to flow! Do not speak of self, failure, or circumstances, though we have deeply to humble ourselves: Satan would always try to put these between us and Christ; but we may set everything round the cross, in the light of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and if there were but one believer alone in the world, the Spirit in the bride is sufficient to enable that one to say “Come.” It is not the bride only, but the Spirit, knowing all the affections in the heart of Christ, says, “Come!” How sweet

to have Christ wanting you to say "Come." Have you known the sweetness when in solitude, when none have been near, of that thought in your heart, hardly breathed in words, "Come, Lord, come"? Shall the thought, "I may be caught up to-night," alarm my heart? No! I am as sure of being His, as Rebecca was of being Isaac's, and surer: and so are all believers who can say, "Come."

We are in the wilderness now, and we count by weeks and days, and the time seems long; but One up there looks upon you, and says to you, "Surely I come quickly." To you it may seem long, but to Him it is but a little while.

"Having loved his own, he loved them to the end," is a truth not only known by faith to every believer in Him, but also from their own experience of that love. And oh, how sweet this experience of Christ's love in this cold world! When the heart is chilled, and yearning for a little warmth, how sweet to turn to the Lord Jesus and feel this warmth of His love! Ah! looking up to Him, the heart is always warmed. And what is it that feeds His love to His church? From what source flowed the springs of that love? In the Epistle to the Ephesians we have the setting forth of that which would feed the love of the Lord Jesus in regard to His church. In the first chapter, we have the scene laid before time was: verse 4. When the Lord Jesus looks at me, He looks as at one who was chosen by the Father before time was, to shew forth the glory of that grace which could accept me in the Beloved. He sees

the chosen of the Father in me, the Father having bound me up with the Son before the foundation of the world. Not only the poor sheep and prodigal brought into the Father's house, but more—a secret purpose, He and the Father one in that purpose, and the poor sinner chosen and accepted in Him before the foundation of the world. And can God have aught against you when He has thus sat in council about you? Must not the Son love you, seeing your association with the Father, in Himself, before the world was? Oh, this feeds His love again, His love is fed by the complete association with Himself of the church; not only as one with Him, but as that for whom He left all, and has done all. He gave *Himself* for me; at the cross bearing our own sins in His own body on the tree: God laying on Him your iniquity and mine; we dying with Him, buried with Him by baptism into death, and raised up in Him. Can we look up there and not feel the exceeding riches of the grace of that God, who, in raising Him up from among the dead, raised us up in Him, and seated us in heavenly places in Him? Impossible! When the Lord Jesus looks in the face of a believer, He says, “I do and must love thee, but I love thee for my Father's sake. I loved thee before the foundation of the world, because he chose thee in me, and I must love thee to the end for his sake.”

As a child of God, wandering in the world's wilderness, it is very sweet to have comfort poured down to me from the heart of God, but it is still sweeter the thought that I have sympathy with the heart of the Father as to His thoughts about His

only begotten Son, and His affections towards Him. Oh! there is nothing like the entering thus into the revelation of God, the Father's affection for the Son of His love.

“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” If you are a believer, He has sent the Spirit of His Son into your heart, whereby you cry Abba, Father. The heart gets its blessed rest in sonship simply by believing in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of His Son in the heart enables its happy throbbings to be expressed, crying this wondrous new name, unknown to the Jews, of Abba, Father. God has set me in His presence as a son, and life flows down to me, so that I can look up and contemplate there the delight which the Father has in His Son; I can have communion and sympathy with the joy of the Father's heart in that Son: and it is this which gives the church its highest point of glory.

Does the thought ever steal over your heart,  
Well, there the Father's heart is fully satisfied—  
there the Son is—and there I have my portion,  
for I can say *My Father*; and in that sense alone  
the Lord calls us brethren, thus alone can we be  
in-association with Himself on the throne of the  
Father?

The Spirit feeds and administers to our hearts all the thoughts of the Father and Son. Blessed truth! that Son—the Lord Jesus—having been a man and wearing man's form up there, and we as men with Him for ever. Does it ever strike you—let us say it reverently—how happy God must be to have such a Son, and how happy Christ must be?

As man, that Son brought out the character of the Father, so that I, as man, can understand it. Oh, how one ought to admire and adore the way Christ brought out the character of God on earth as love, in the poor prodigal !

God could look upon the anointed man, and say, " I can have Him up here, for He is God as well as man." And we can look up and realise the Lord's joy, who could say, " If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father."

No person can be of the bride save a child of the Father. The bride will be shewn out before the world, that the world may see the glory He has given her. The Father gave this glory to the Son, but He cannot keep it for Himself, He wills to share it with those dear to Him. The world will be forced to admire the church in glory ; and she ought to be admired, for the Father's delight is in the Son who bought His bride with His own blood. The church will be where the sense of being loved by the Father, even as the Son is loved, will surpass all understanding. That One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, causing all the love of the Father to flow forth to us ; and the consciousness of that love will give our hearts all their joy in glory. There He is—claiming all glory and giving it to the bride ; but I do not find my deepest joy in this. Above and beyond all the church's glory, I have deep in my heart the thought that I know the Lamb under another title. His blessed *self* is deep hidden in my heart ; I can say, " I know thee as the Son who hast revealed the Father to me. All, all,

would be nothing to me if I did not know thee in this other name, the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. That name of Son has brought me near to the Father; He bore it deep down here, He bears it high up above. He may be the Son of man, and is, but merely as having taken our flesh. If He were to enter this place now as Son of man--why should we fall down at His feet to worship Him, but because we know Him as the *only begotten Son of God*?—Before all creation—in the beginning—there was the Son in the bosom of the Father.

The Father's house, the Father's bosom, was to be the resting-place of the church: nothing could satisfy that Son, but her being there where He had rested from all eternity. But we have this place of rest now—we shall never be more sons than we are now; else, where were the force of that word: "*now* are we the sons of God"? I have got the best part now, He has made me a son, has given me to see and enter in the communion of the Father and the Son, to take the delight of the Father over His Son, as a fresh taste of heavenly joy in my soul every day. If I am in trial down here, I know the Father is in perfect rest up there, and my fellowship is with Him and with His Son.

Very little is said in scripture about the Father's house, save what we find in John xiv. One is never weary of those verses, because they tell of the personal love of the Lord Jesus to His church; but locality is not defined, nor the thought of heaven introduced as meaning any particular

locality. Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven. Many found their ideas of heaven on some early association in their mind of a place of glory beyond the clouds, and connect it with all that the word of God has made familiar to them. Breaking down all this, would leave them with this blessed thought of the Son upon the Father's throne, and the Father setting them there together with Him.

Whenever my faith goes up there, what does it find realised? The thought of One there who was once in all my circumstances of sorrow down here; the thought of home up there *with Him*. Oh, what a warm happy feeling the heart experiences at that thought—not the circumstances of that home, but the being there *with Him*. A man's heart is in his home, not because of its circumstances, but because the object of his affection is there. The same with regard to heaven; I find uncommonly little of detail as to circumstances there, but I find unfading reality in one or two simple verses: for instance *this*, "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go to my Father." What a volume in that! Christ wanting us to enter into the joy of His heart at the thought of the Father's home, saying, "I want to share with you this thought of my joy; I want you to rejoice with me, because in a little while I shall be with my Father; and not only that, but you also shall soon be there with me." If we could see all the glory of heaven, it would be poor in comparison with the thought of seeing that Son sitting on the throne of His Father, and ourselves seated together with Him in those

heavenly places. What perfect rest of heart there is in that expression, "made us to sit together in the heavenly places," thus bringing us into the blessed taste of the glory He has got!

The character of our rest, and our power to walk as risen men, is laid down in Colossians iii. When God's eye looks upon you, what does He see? Why, that you are one who has a place up there; and when His eye rests on Christ, it rests as not expecting to find a blot. How impossible, as the eye of God turns on us, that He should find anything but imperfection! But He turns round to see us hid in Christ, and to meet in those who are hid in Christ, Christ's perfection.

The strayed sheep would not let itself be caught by the shepherd who would lift it into his bosom. And here we get what I call the aggressive character of God's love. I won't have Him; but He says, "I will and must have you, struggle as you may to escape from my arms. I have prepared a place for you up there, and I must have you there with me for ever."

It is the heart God wants. He has done all that love could do in the cross of Christ to lead the heart of poor sinners to Himself. He has thrown Himself open to your hearts to draw you into joy and blessing—the whole door wide opened to receive you.

Oh, the rich unfolding of grace in John xiv.! Grace laying open in prospect the rich glories of the Father's house, for those who were ready to forsake Him. What a contrast we are to Him! and yet He is ever occupied in caring for us, pro

paring joy for us. His eye ever following us—those eyes resting on us. He sees every beat of my heart—every thought of my mind. And His sympathy is unfailing. Can I dare to say that Christ seems more sympathising to-day, because I appreciate it to-day, and yesterday I did not? Is not the sympathy of Christ like lifting one stone and water flows, and lifting another and water flows still? And that is the way it is for ever flowing.

Ought I to mind being left down here in the wilderness, in the midst of all that tries me in every way, when I can taste His love here equally in it all? It would certainly be a much happier thing to be present with Him and absent from this poor body: but if it is the will of Him who loves me with a love that wills I should stay down here, the sweetness of doing His will is enough.

“If persecution lighted its fires again, the power of the flesh might make some desire to escape by martyrdom to the Lord; but there is no selfishness mixed with the cry, ‘Come, Lord, come!’” Do you never say, Come, Lord Jesus? Have you never felt that nothing could satisfy you save seeing Him, and being with Him? Why not always rejoicing in this hope? Why cast down? Why standing still, gazing up with tearful eyes, instead of pressing forward full of joy? It is because this world sways the hearts, the thoughts are taken up with this care or that trouble.

A fixed time is coming—we cannot say how soon—when the Father will say to the Son, “Rise up, and bring the bride up hither.” Is

your heart full as you think of it? Only friends are to be in the Father's house, and it is Jesus who will lead us there. If we were to rise up and come to-night, would He find many waiting for Him? I believe He would, and bless God for it. It is distinctly manifest that God is moving. He never came of old without giving a testimony beforehand.

The Lord Jesus, amid all the glory of God, has a heart large enough to think of coming to meet even me. "There is a poor thing, stumbling through his duties, often going wrong. I shall go and fetch him, and make him partaker of all I have." It is His love, not mine. Having loved us before the foundation of the world, His love changes not because of what we are. He, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

"For we are his workmanship, created of God in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Does God set a value on these works? It is because they are prepared by Himself. Are they only as things done down here in the wilderness? No; they are to be carried on into glory. Things wrought in the soul, the will subdued, the affections set right. God is dealing with us now, and He would have us go forward with Him; but this is only the beginning—not what we shall be when we shall see the Lord Jesus, and be fashioned like unto His glorious body—every limb made glorious.

Is it nothing to have God working in us now, to will and to do of His good pleasure? Nothing

that He should want to see the expression of the life of Christ in us, so as to have fellowship with the life of Christ down here? Think what it will be to have the life of Christ filling the body, in a scene where the whole will harmonise! We begin it in the wilderness, to end in glory.

The energy of God given to the soul enables us to walk in works which are the expression of that energy, and of our vital union with Christ. God sets each one in his course, and there is a speciality of Providence in connection with every individual. God is great enough to number the hairs of our head; you and I are too little. God is so great that He can count cups of cold water; we are too little, too tiny, to do so; we can only lay hold of general features. I must be holy—that is quite true; but who marked out the path for a Daniel or a Paul in their day, and for the early Christians in theirs? Who fixed the time of your birth, all your path in life, your trials, your sicknesses? It was God, the living God! God comes in everywhere, in every thought, and step, and act of life—even in turning to speak to any one in the street.

The thought that there are works prepared of God, that we should walk in them, will give importance to many a thing little in itself; it will give sweetness to many a bitter cross, and stop many an act where self-will would have come in. If you look back, you will see much failure and going after your own will, but God was there to turn the page, and to mark out your walk with Him in the path prepared for you.

What a difference whether we look at ourselves

as separate individuals or as a part of the temple builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit! As part of this temple, we are precious stones, God's own workmanship in Christ Jesus, and lain as living stones on that foundation, there to rest, shining in all the beauty of another, even of His own Son, the Lord Jesus,—all the weight of the building resting on Him the eternal foundation.

Can you say, "I am a called one—one with Christ?" And what is the hope of such? Nothing less than reaching the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? It is a *real* thing that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God in all His beauty and glory, and our expectation is the seeing Him as He is, and being like Him. The Father of glory, who looked at you in all your weakness and failure, will not cease working till, one by one, millions of vases shall be made like that pattern vase at His right hand. He is moulding all to the likeness of that One, and when we shall see Him as he is, these bodies of humiliation shall be like unto His glorious body. What a thought! each believer being a vase full of glory; thousands of thousands of vases all to be filled with His glory. God will make you—will make me—to be one of them.

There are two things: the first, God dealing with every individual heart; the other, His taking you as part of a building, a city, where every stone is bright and polished, and each one reflecting the glory of Christ. There every saint will show forth to the eye of God, the Lord Jesus, because they will all reflect His glory.

Shall we find that we have experienced all Christ's love *here*, when we meet Him in heaven?

Must I carry the world in my heart because I am down here in a body of sin and death? No; blessed be His name! I have got the river of life flowing down from Christ above, and filling my heart, helping my soul to bear fruit unto Him from whom it flows.

The old Christian can say to a young Christian, "You may try, but you cannot satisfy your heart with the world, for I have never found a thing in it to satisfy mine." But he could not say, "I have walked so far down the hill of life, and I cannot fail." Yet we can say, "Let all that can be brought against me, yet God will be faithful to His word, and Christ will present me faultless and without spot or blemish before Him at His appearing."

If I could say I am a better man than when I began life in Christ, it would be only because I see more of my own vileness now than I did years ago.

What is my place and my power to walk? God has raised me up together with His Son, and given me the Spirit, and because of that I go on, and everything that is not of Him I have to judge. The walk of the Spirit is one of separation from all that is not of the Father. Believers ought to walk as being dead, buried, and risen with Christ, as those that are espoused to their Heavenly Bridegroom, saying, "We cannot do what *He* would not like." Nature may say, I should like that, or wish this; but the answer is, "No; you

belong to Christ ; and if Christ's wish is contrary to yours, you are not to have yours." By His blood He has brought you into the place where He is now, and you can say, " I will give it up ; I will count that dead for which He died. It has death upon it ; I will give it up."

You are in a place of power—the power of the communicator of life ; and, wherever life has been communicated, that power works to change those who have it into His image, from glory to glory.

What has a believer to do with getting eternal life? No man ever would have had the thought of God saying, " There is a living man up here, like you, outwardly. *That One* who was despised and put to death, is now at My right hand—the One to whom I have given everything in the wide universe, and through a boundless eternity, and in token of it I give life to you." It is God who is the Giver. What have I done to get it? I know that I have it ; faith gives me the certainty of it far beyond feelings that say it is not true. God says it is ; and it is so entirely a substance in God's mind, that I can resign everything as to eternity, saying, " I don't want to speak for myself ; *Thou* hast spoken for me." The life I have is a life of communion with the Father and Son. I know and realise it with certainty and vividness, so that when flesh and heart fail I can rest *there*.

Often I can only comfort myself with the thought, " Thou God seest Christ as He is, and as thou comprehendest Him. Not *I*, but *Thou* knowest what that Son of Thy love meant when

He said, 'I go to my God and your God, to My Father and your Father.' I cannot take it in; the divine mind alone can trace the perfect comprehension of it."

What was the mind of those few gathered round their Lord down here? They were quickened men, and they knew by the instinct of that given life, how precious He who had given it was to their hearts. It is the secret of love to lead the heart captive: the affections lay hold of an object, and just go where that object goes. Devotedness has more to do with the affections than with the intelligence. They saw Him go up to heaven, and He did not come back. Did they *love* Him? Where then were their hearts? Heaven became a new place to them; that living Man who loved them was there. *That One* who had stolen their hearts and carried them off to heaven. This is the first element of the heavenly calling, namely, attachment to a divine person, the lover of our souls, and there He is in heaven, and we look for Him there where He is. The want of understanding this explains the low estate of many Christians: they are not heavenly Christians, as the early Christians were the whole way. But they are responsible to be so. Christ has a right to have a heavenly people; to have, as Lord of all, a people who walk in the same steps that He did. Yes; He has a right to look for heavenly minds in a people whose hearts He has led captive and carried off into heaven. Do your first thoughts in everything turn intuitively to the heart of Christ in heaven, saying, "He has a right to be first in this"?

Are you one of those who are practically saying

“ Even so, come, Lord Jesus ”? Does He say of you : “ There is one in whom I have so crippled the flesh and all the delights of the old Adam, that he can only think of that one thing, that is, that I am coming ? Is there such a thing as a people so waiting as that no thought of rest ever comes to the heart save with Him in heaven ? Are hearts *seeing Him* and saying “ I am living to Him ” ?

In connection with the stoning of Stephen, Christ said, “ I am in the glory watching the whole scene.” He is presented standing up in the place of glory where He is, letting the glory down into the soul of a man. As knowing Christ in heaven, my life should, as it were, wrap itself round Him, but in this scene I learn how His affections are wrapt round me ; how, up there, His thoughts are occupied about me, not merely blessing me, but all His sympathy flowing down to me, as it did to the man who was being stoned.

If you take your place with a rejected Christ, you will have bright light on your path, and all that sympathy that flowed down to Stephen. Are you walking according to the vision of Christ in the glory up there, and as the reflector of Christ down here ? Stephen passed through all the circumstances men and Satan brought him into, in the power of the *vision of this glory of God*. Why cannot I pass through all mine in the power of that glory ? Is my mind, are my heart’s affections, up there ? Is it markedly seen that I *am* walking here in the light of heaven ? If so, whatever my place of service may be, I shall find myself just where the light is streaming down. As a rule I know that I shall find a strong current against

me ; a crowd may be going their way, and if impeded by it, I must cross over. If conscious that the light of heaven is streaming down, it puts us in contrast with the whole scene here.

Every page in our heart is laid open under His eye. *Does* He read you, and occupy Himself with every thought and intent of your heart? Does He see all in you that is of the flesh judged? or does He see things germinating for self, and for time? Ah ! if He does read in us what is contrary to His mind, will He turn from us? No ; but He will have us know what sort of a people we are ; He knows all our weakness, and we must know it too. If John is lying at His feet, it is indeed that He may say, " I shall touch you and make you feel what my strength is ; but you *must* feel your own weakness." All who know Christ have a deeper and deeper sense of that as they go on. But all the way through the wilderness we have Him for us, saying, " You cannot take a step without me, and I am going before you."

Oh, if the whole way, in all our circumstances down here, you and I were ever turning up to heaven, knowing that we might have all the sympathy of the heart of that living Christ there ! He, a *living man* there, with a heart and mind that lead Him to go into all His people's circumstances. Each individual believer, each in his own circumstances, commands all His thoughts. He is able to be occupied with Stephen, Saul, Peter, and James, all at the same moment. Can you say, " I *do* know the sympathy of the heart of Christ. I know how He picked me up, and has floated me ever since" ?

The only thing to keep us in the sense of our own entire failure, is to have the light of the eye of this blessed One shining into the heart, and shewing out all that is contrary to His mind.

Never does the peace He gives so shine out as amid the tempestuous waters down here. He, as my Peace, comes in between me and all that gives me trouble, saying, "Soon you shall come with me to another place; you are not for earth, but for me." He will call me by name, and take me into glory.

Has God said of your flesh, "Let it wither"? What matters *that* if He has brought you to the place where you can glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you?

People often talk of the heavenly calling as if it were a piece of knowledge or a theory. Was it such to Enoch when he walked with God, or with Moses when he endured as seeing Him who is invisible? Don't let our minds take it up as a piece of knowledge instead of realising a living Christ in heaven. It is that living Man on the throne of God who has distinctly called me by name, and not only that, but He bears my name before God, as one for whom He has done a great deal, and for whom He means to do a great deal more. Why does my soul go up and find its anchorage up there? Why? Oh, that living Man who has stolen my heart is up there. He who, as Son of God, thought it worth while to come off the throne to go to the cross as my substitute, to take the cup of wrath due to me. And God has put His Amen upon this love which is stronger

than death. And is it not a reasonable thing for me to say that if the Son of God loved me and gave His life for me, I must love Him in the place where He is? How blessed, as God's eye rests on Him and then comes down to look on me, to have the certainty that, weak and foolish though I be, I shall never find Him against me; that I am *so one* with that risen Head, that God can say, What is true of the Head is true of the members! How unutterably blessed to be able to say that *that One* crowned with glory and honour on the throne of God, is the One round whom my heart's affections should centre more and more! And that this risen Son of man up there, is occupied with a suffering people down here, in all the circumstances they may have to pass through.

Looking at past failure, you will constantly find that it arose from settling things according to circumstances. I cannot settle anything myself; if I am in His presence, I get my guidance from the Lord in *His* circumstances—from the Son of God up there. It is a blessed fact that there *is* a Man in heaven, in the highest possible glory on the throne of God, and that Man has a heart to enter into everything, where His people would not be able to move for themselves. Is His heart less occupied, His eye less fixed on me than it was on Stephen? No; the curtain was drawn back for him, and I never expect that, but it is equally true to faith.

What would it have been for me if the Shepherd had carried up scores of other sheep, but not me?

It would not have satisfied *me*. No; I am taken up as an individual, to be a teller forth of that wonder of all wonders, the eternal God, the almighty God, crucified through weakness!—this eternal God having chosen to go down into the place of weakness.

The Lord Jesus was the reader of all hearts when down here, and He is doing the same in heaven. He does it in connection with His own people, and often they shrink from it. He is the searcher-out of all things in us, but if it makes us know what *we are*, it is only to make us cling more to Him. He brings us into the light, makes it shine into us, in order to shew out and make us see the things that are wanting in us: and we never learn what there is in Him, contrasted with self, without its making us loathe our vessel.

Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and Christ took up what He saw was in him, and a thorn in the flesh discovered it to Paul.

In the bright light of the transfiguration, it was not the glory but Jesus who was the chief object. There was a Person on the mount—one who was altogether beautiful, chief among ten thousand; and that Person puts on robes of glory for a moment, to shew what the glory of His kingdom would be. What was *that* in comparison with the Person?

There are two things, as to believers, connected together: the earthen vessel, and the eternal life. The result of the earthen vessel being connected

with the eternal life, is the consciousness of weakness inside and of difficulty outside. We see both brought out in Paul's experience, 2 Corinthians xii. 7-12. The Lord was anticipating certain evils—results connected with the earthen vessel which would impede the work of the treasure, the eternal life, contained in it; and what was the thorn in the end to Paul? How was he (a potsherd of the earth, picked by Christ to be a servant) to know what he was to do? Was he to be driven hither and thither like a slave? No; but to be a vessel in the hand of the Potter, saying; "I want the God who gave me life to direct me in everything; not only do I want to find stepping-stones to shew me where to walk, but I want the spirit of obedience to fulfil His word, to take it up in obedience." The Lord would have Paul as His servant to have the same mind that He had: and the way He took to make this man a follower in His own footsteps was by bringing this cripplement inside and out. The Lord could say, "My mind and will never went forwards but by my Father's will, but yours does; and if I take away that thorn, you will go forward without perfect and realised dependence on me." Not that Christ was in anything the same as Paul; He who was God incarnate, Son of the Highest.

Was there ever a will so perfect in strength as the will in Christ? But what was so remarkable in it was that it was never exercised on any object but the will of God: "Lo, I come to do *Thy* will, O God." His will was ever in perfect intelligent subjection to the will of God—a life of communion with the Father. Paul could not say he was per-

fect as regarded the vessel. No ; Paul had a will of his own which did not like entire dependence on God. Christ used the thorn to make him know fully that the eternal life He had given him could be guided by Himself alone, and He had to hinder anything in the earthen vessel that would impede it. Before Paul takes his place as a heavenly man, the Lord gives him what would bring his own energy to a close.

There is something exceedingly beautiful in Christ's first putting the life into the vessel, and then taking care of it ; saying, "That eternal life is a thing you cannot keep yourself. I must give power to spend it and guide it in a way to make you feel that the eternal life you have is as dependent on Christ as your life was dependent on God." This new life cannot make a day's journey without the sense of the two things—"My strength made perfect in weakness." The eternal life flowing into the vessel is one thing, and power to let it flow out of the vessel is another thing. Life flows from us only as it is under the guardianship of Christ. The believer has it sentiently because it takes in every thought and feeling to be occupied with Him who gave it. Paul might say, "Was there ever such a cripplement ! ah, but the hand of Christ is under me." The earthen vessel was carrying the life which Christ had put into it, and Christ said, "I must carry the vessel in my hand to give right guidance to the life."

You and I do not like the wilderness : there are so many troubles—so much deep sand to get through—such pitfalls, and the hearts of people getting so tired. Oh, but it is with a God of resur-

rection you have to do, in a place where He lets you stay to give you the opportunity of learning what self is. It is not by taking the natural side, where sharp flints cut the feet, but by taking the side where God is, that pilgrims carry a happy heart all through the wilderness. He never means you to get through a single day without being able to say, "Ah, I found His strength more perfected in my weakness than I ever did before." (Not His strength stronger, but my sense of weakness stronger.)

"This do in remembrance of Me." Think of all the variety of glories attached to *Him* who brings a people to *Himself* thus! *Whom* do I do it in remembrance of? *Whom*? What human mind could frame an answer? Who could speak of a glory so all-surpassing, when it comes to *who* and to all that He was and is! First, eternal life in Himself before all worlds, He the only-begotten in the bosom of the Father; and then turn to look at what He was down here. In the gospel of John, the glory of His person is first spoken of, then all the different offices blending in His person, and then of eternal life brought by Him to bear on a thankless world. But that which carries to our souls the earnest of the living affections of the Lord Jesus towards His people is not the thought only of *who* and *what* He is—unspeakably blessed as that is in itself; but a fount was unsealed and flowing forth from His heart, shewing the fulness and the divine unselfishness of His love. See Him, just before going into the depths of His own sufferings

turning to them and saying, "Now my love can flow out." He knew that His people needed to have what would enable them to carry constantly in their hearts the thought of His love; therefore "Do this in remembrance of me." And now, above in the glory, He is looking upon us, caring for our love; thinking of poor things down here and caring to be remembered by them, all these eighteen hundred years here past; and in all freshness at God's right hand, He cares for our love to-day. The real living affection in Him is not satisfied without the thought of His people being occupied with Himself.

Does Christ find your thoughts in unison with the word put forth by "The Spirit and the bride," because you really want Him to come? Not only, as like Stephen, wanting to get away from the stoning into His presence; but the bride wanting the Bridegroom—passing through a dark night, keeping her affections fixed on Him; not by saying, "When thou comest there will be no more sorrow, no dark shades of night; Thou wilt come to take us home to the Father's house: it is true, but it is thyself I want: I am the bride and thou the Bridegroom."

Are you wanting Him to come according to that character of love—not from mere selfishness, but as having such a taste of His glory as the bright and morning Star, and because of being the complement of His joy in the Father's house?

Do you ever yearn for ability to enter into His fuller glory? Is He saying, "I cannot take my glory without you to sit down with me"? Ah! am

I saying, "It is not the crown, not the glory, it is Thyself, Lord, whom I want"?

The bright and morning Star is an entirely new glory. There were hearts bound to Him when down here, which traced Him up into heaven, and ever since then a people's eyes have looked up, and their hearts have been expecting Him. It is a title of glory connected with the hearts of His people. How blessed for any to say, "I have watched through the night to get the first glimpse of Him; - my heart is so attached to that Lord, and all my blessedness so connected with Him, that I cannot help being constantly on the lookout for the first glimpse of Him as He descends from heaven into the air."

If there are people down here, waiting, knowing that Christ is coming to take up the Church, they must be longing for Him to come, otherwise they don't know the position of the bride and the Spirit saying, "Come!" The bride is the vessel in which the closest relationship of the Lord Jesus is formed. The child of God has the affections of Christ in his soul, and can only turn from being occupied with Christ in heaven to be occupied with whatever the Lord is occupied with down here. We get our rest amid all things in knowing that He is coming. The Spirit reveals Christ, and speaks of the glory to come. He is the great power for everything in the assembly.

When the light of a returning Lord breaks in upon the soul, how many a want is felt that the heart never knew before! If you could know that the Lord were coming to-morrow, would there not be a thousand thoughts of need in your

mind; a looking to see also if there were withal to meet the need of the thirsty. "He that is athirst let him come." This word brings before the soul the thought of need, of *parchedness*, before that need is felt. It tells thirsty ones that they can come to this Rock which was smitten that the waters might flow for ever in order to meet every need. This gushing stream tells of the readiness of Him from whom it flows to fill the thirsting soul.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" There is exquisite beauty in His word, "Surely I come quickly," being thus immediately taken up by the Spirit and the bride, and answered in language known to faith. (See Rev. xxii. 17.) Often the very duties of the servant may be allowed to interfere with the bright burning of this hope in a heart where yet it *is* burning. It ever burns brightly in the heart of Christ: and as soon as the last members of His body are gathered in, that promise will be fulfilled. If the light only burns with a flickering gleam in my heart, there is ever, in all brightness, in *His*, the thought of coming quickly. The heart of the individual believer gets its power in the hope of His coming being *ever present*. We have to judge our ways, our whole course, in the light of it. This (Rev. xxii. 17) is the only passage in which the Spirit is presented with the bride—very touching it is, connected with wilderness circumstances; the Spirit in that character speaking thus: saying, "Come!" What has the bride to do with the wilderness, save as Rebecca passing through it?

It will be a marvellous scene when Christ

presents the church to Himself—when the last Adam takes that bride of His to share His glory. Ah! not only that; but it is oneness with Himself that characterises us. What the heart feels is the being looked at as belonging to Himself; formed out of Himself, as Eve out of Adam. That the Father sees us not only in a relationship that links us up with the Son of His love in the glory, but in such a relationship that the Lord Jesus could not do without us. The Bridegroom must have the bride up there.

If you follow Him in His course down here, from the babe in the manger to the cross, and see Him in resurrection on the throne of God, the circumstances are very different, but ah! it is the same Lord Jesus. It is *Himself*, *He Himself* is the object of love, and we know that we are for His own self in the glory. What is the distinctest thing on which the heart rests? It may be the earth-side now which one may see, but when we behold Christ Himself it will be the heaven-side in the full unhindered energy of the Holy Ghost: having hearts responsive to that blessed grace which brought us there.

Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only object before our souls? He not only says, "I am the bright and morning Star," but, "Surely I come quickly;" presenting Himself with all the savour, all the attractiveness, of what He is. Have none of us known Him for years, and have we not found the attractiveness, of His beauty deepening in us? What is all we have learnt of Him here compared with what it will be to behold Himself, to look on His face—the One

who died for us, the One who loved and watched over us from our infancy—oh, with what *tender gentleness* watched over us? Is there not the consciousness in each of our hearts, *how often* He has given the grace we felt we were standing in need of? But besides that we are to have with His mind in all that meets us in the wilderness, there is another sort of communion—communion with the desire of His heart going forth in “Even so, come Lord Jesus!” At times our hearts are drooping, we are hardly bestead; but what is all we can pass through here, if we are consciously able to respond to Him, “Even so, come!” having really communion with that heart of His, whose every thought is the Father’s will, and who has been waiting eighteen hundred years to come and take up the people given Him by the Father; He the Bridegroom, they the bride? How blessed to be able to enter into the desire of His heart to the utmost, responding in communion with it, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

The Lord, in all His dealings now, is forming a vessel in which His glory is to be displayed hereafter. Is He able to turn a Saul of Tarsus into a vessel to display His glory? Do I know Him as the One who has picked up me also to mould and fashion me, not for the scene I am now in, but for that scene to which all is now leading us on; for that time when all the saints will be gathered up to form part of that scene in which the glory of God and of the Lamb will be displayed: gathered up there by Christ Himself and put into full association with God! If asked, what am I wanted for in that scene of glory: the answer is,

to be a medium through which that glory is to be displayed.

Will there be any fitness for it in you or me! Yes, surely, but all if Him, who if leading a people there, is leading them as overcomers.

When Christ had gone into heaven, the way of approach for us was made through the rent veil of His flesh, and He made His throne a throne of mercy. If free to approach boldly, is it anything in *self* that gives you liberty? No; it comes forth from Him, through the blood sprinkled there. You could not have right to say, even, "God be merciful to me a sinner," unless you knew the blood to be there. In no other way could you have got into a place where the light is never eclipsed, having always boldness there, in virtue of the rent veil.

As Paul walked, the light shone. He was the reflector of his Lord in his walk. There was that cheeriness which is the result of always finding *God's side* of everything. Whatever the failure or sorrow, his heart just turned up to Christ. What a blessed tone he must have given to any company he was in, just seeing the lack, and bringing what would meet it in the power of enjoyed communion with the Lord; and so making other hearts bright. Don't we see this in some? no cloud over the heart—ever bright and cheery, because they look simply to Christ, seeking to reflect Christ. Who can look into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ and not find all their hearts' desire? Beholding with unveiled

face the glory of the Lord—changed into the same image from glory to glory.

Do you see by faith *that* Christ up there? Do you know a Person in heaven with all the feelings and thoughts of a man, with all the glory and beauty of God? And in that beaming forth on you of that face of glory and beauty, is there nothing that addresses itself to your heart? Who can look on the face of that Lord Jesus and not see in Him the fount of eternal life? Will the beauty of that Person not win your adoring love? Will you ever find that you can look on Him as He is, and not trust Him?

Are we not only knowing what we have in that ascended Christ as the One who has put away every spot of sin, the One who is going to take us into the Father's house, but are we letting it be seen, as we pass through the wilderness, in all we do, as Paul did? He died for us, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him. Oh, what a position! not only what we are saved from and put into, but, even now, eternal life to be shewn out: even now, present communion with the mind of Christ to be enjoyed; never as we pass through this world, seeking anything save to shew out that mind, even as He never sheweth out anything but the Father's mind.

One thought pressed on me thirty-five years ago, and that was the thought of *reality*. Let it be a reality—don't let me follow a meteor! Is it, I asked, a *real fact*, that God's Christ is mine, and that He is now sitting at God's right hand as

my accepted sacrifice, and all God's delight is in Him?

Your heart may have to be brought into all sorts of difficulties to find out what it has in Christ—what it is to be connected with the eternal Lover of the soul. Is He known to you as the One who is occupied with all your concerns? Do you realise it daily? The thought of His being occupied about us would prevent our being tried with difficulties that spring up. It would make us say, "What! is Christ on the throne of God *mine*? I, such a poor feeble thing—is He given to *me*?" Paul found the love of Christ a personal thing—it is so. It was a personal love that gave John a place on His bosom; a personal love that drew to Him the poor woman that washed His feet with her tears; and poor things down here understand the power of that love as they go on.

When we see saints like Peter and Paul failing, we feel what a poor thing man is at his best estate; but oh what an unexpected blessing to have to do with a God who cannot fail! And I know that when I pass from earth, I have a God who means to take me up and make of this poor body, a body of glory like that risen Man at His right hand. Come what may, this God has His everlasting hand underneath us.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Love is of God, there one comes to the fountain of all the love that supplies the trickling stream of love down here: but what we want is to have our

hearts opened to the fountain for more love. It is a very trickling stream now, though very blessed to find ever so little. Yet why are we to be straitened in our own selves? There is no straitness in the fountain. If God is love, and He fills His Christ with all this love, do not you and I want it to flow as rivers of refreshment through our souls? Oh that we might taste more and more what that love is! Does God's love dwell in us? Yes: because God says so; but the waters are choked up. Is there that eternal fulness flowing into the soul, the fulness of that matchless love that picked up the vilest sinners as channels for it to flow in? love that settles the competency of people by the Holy Ghost in them, to understand what this love is that flows out from God and through Christ to them? Can you say individually that that love, flowing from God, is filling your soul to all fulness, and is as a river flowing from you?

Paul had Christ in the power of the eternal life so ruling every desire and thought, that with a chain on his foot and hand, all he thinks of is that Christ should be magnified by it. It was Christ for whom he was suffering, he knew that he was borne on the heart of Christ, he felt His love, he had *tasted* it; he could say, "Did not He come and tell me that He would go with me to Rome? Did not He give me a word, when all were in despair, to make the people in the ship know that my God was everything to me?"

Is there in us that singleness of eye, that earnest desire to live Christ, saying, "till He

comes I want Him to be shining out from me"? Some say it more than others. The Lord will some day have to put many into the furnace to destroy what is of the world in them. How blessed if any were so walking that persons could say, "In looking at the walk of that individual I see more of Christ than I ever before knew." But if conscious of being under the eye of Christ, we know that He is taking notice of everything. Paul knew the eye of One to be upon Him whose love would not let a single circumstance pass unnoticed. If I realise that, it becomes the moulding-process of His love on me.

Sorrows and trials are not only like the sand and grit that polish a stone, but I shall be made to taste, through the trouble, what Christ is to me.

If an angel from heaven were to come to my bedside, and tell me that Christ was occupied with me, as a member of His body, should I be more certain of that love than I am? It is no delusion but a fact, that Christ loves me, and will love me right on to the end; and He will not cease making me know it till He gets me into the Father's house to be eternally in the full fruition of it.

What a happy people we should be if we were mirrors reflecting Christ, in the perfect consciousness of our weakness, but looking at Christ in heaven, bearing up amidst all the evil that is coming in like a flood, because He is up there!

We can turn to Christ and say, "There is One

whom we can trace from the manger to the cross and never find, save on two occasions, the expression of His own will, and each time that expression was perfect. The first was when anticipating the cup which the Father had given Him to drink, and it would not have been perfect otherwise. Was it nothing to that holy undefiled One to think of being a sin-bearer, and of bearing all the wrath of God for sin? He would not take the cup from man's hand, but from the Father. The second expression of His will is in John xvii., "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." What a blessed expression of perfect satisfaction in these poor things! He wouldn't be alone in glory, He would have them sharers of it. You and I have wills that are constantly working. We must have our wills judged by the contrast between them and Christ, yet the beauty of His coming down without any will, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Paul had a will: he would go to Jerusalem, and had to go to Rome. But Christ said, "I shall go with you." No one *will-less* save *Him* whose only will was to be the perfect servant of God, and nothing else. And there He is in the glory now, still in the same character. How little our hearts think of it!

Paul thought a great deal of Him. Where could he get water enough to turn that wheel? Water enough to keep his heart fresher and fresher as he went on? Ah, it was from the fountain. It was Christ revealing Himself to him. *That* and that *only*, kept Paul's heart fresh.

What a thought that He is the eternal lover of souls! All that I have is in Him, and all given me by the Father, and He will keep it. The Holy Ghost sent down by Him seals it upon our hearts. God would have a people with all the freshness of the heart of Christ for them.

If God is working, there is no distance between the potter and the vessel; it is in the potter's hand fashioning it, and his hand is very close to the clay. It is very blessed to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, but we must take care to remember that it is *God* who is moulding us and working in us, as He did in Paul.

There is nothing I may be doing that is bright to me now, which will continue to look bright in heaven unless Christ be the object of it. It is the expression of the life of Christ that you have to make manifest. One believer may be in bed sick, another may be running over the earth preaching: another in prison; each will be, no matter where, or in what circumstances, just where the life of Christ is to break forth in him, and shine the most brightly. If a believer had to take to his bed for six weeks, and came to Jesus saying, "Lord, fill this chamber with *Thyself*," what brightness there would be! Unhappily we don't find with many now that Christ is *first*, Christ *second*, and Christ *third*: that He is the Rock whence *all* supplies are drawn. *All* is not handed up to Him as the One who is teaching His children to read. You don't find likeness to Christ coming out. Let Christ be inside (in the affections) and Christ will

shine out. You will know that joy is when He can shine out.

If you see any beauty in Christ, and say, "I desire to have that," God will work it in you.

We are so horribly selfish—it is always, Where am *I*? What have *I* got? "*I*" starts up first, and that is the "old man." In the Father's house will it be "*I*"? What! is there nothing for the heart to be interested in, save things connected with self? Or will you there find Christ so completely the centre of that scene, He so completely filling it up, and His love so precious, that you cannot have the least thought about self, being so wrapt up in that Lord Christ Jesus, in the very light of His presence, that you can find no place for the *I*, the *self*, that fills up so much of the thoughts now?

Have you the thought of that sinless unspotted One which carries the mind off from every thought of self, as its utter contrast? Oh what a blessed mercy for me is the thought of that sinless One! Do I prize it? Oh, I could not do without it. I prize it unutterably as the contrast to me, every imagination of whose heart is only evil continually. How, then, do I prize Him whom faith sees up there as the One who from that eternal glory was the giver of life to me a poor sinner! It is a precious thing to feel that one could not do without Him.

There is no place where a wearied creature can find a bit of light save in Christ, looking up and finding it *nowhere else*.

When we come to look at the work of Christ it is the person who did it that gives it all its

value. He in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead alone could have done it.

The Lord Jesus Christ at God's right hand is the rest of our hearts now. Can you say, just where you are, "Christ is to be magnified in my body, whether by life or death"? Can you spread out all the details of your life, day by day, shewing in everything that the present desire of Christ's heart is that which guides you?

If you have only a little ray of light, show out *distinctly* that you are for Him.



# GLEANINGS

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## GLEANINGS.

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IF I read scripture, faith sees and adores that One in whom is all perfection; from whose life given to me I derive all adoration and all power for living to Him. It is not only that life gushes from Him the smitten One, but I can look up and adore Him as the *display* of that life.

When the whole work which He has undertaken is finished, and His people are taken up in bodies of glory, then will it be seen that all the springs of God are in Him; and all the fresh eternal fullness of the life that was with the Father will be manifested. But it *has been* manifested on this earth. There was the display of that life in the whole history of Christ as man down here—He, the only holy, undefiled One, the One in whom was no spot, but spiritual divine purity.

I find that people's minds slide over the thought of that life having been a thing displayed in the Son of God on earth. In every part of that life here He won adoration and worship.

People often overlook that the effect of having the *life of Christ* is, that everything contrary to it must come into judgment, and faith casts the burden of this on Him, as He is the only One who, having given that life, can carry it on in our souls. He alone can carry us through the wilderness, the time-state, to the hour when "this mortal shall put on immortality."

When God had brought Israel over the Red Sea, and said to them, "You are my chosen people, do you choose and are you prepared to walk with me?" *they did not do it.* It is too often just the same with people now.

His plans for us are surpassingly wonderful—and if Christ says, "I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you," and if this is a fact, how can one who believes it turn to anything of the flesh, and bring in a thought of the creature? If I did so, I could not walk as one who realized oneness with Christ. While I am realizing that I am *in* Christ, and am *living* Christ, all the affections of my heart will be set on Him, and I shall have competency to do things which I should not be able even to think of apart from Him. Oh! He has given me His own life, He tells me that I am in Him and He in me. And if any one really *knows* something about the love of God, it is because of having a right view of the place into which it has brought us.

God could never forget what is due to His holiness and glory. A ruined sinner could never have appeared in the light in His presence, if that living Man, the Lord Jesus Christ were not on the throne of God—*that One* who, before He took that place, went to the cross and bore the whole ruin which sin brought. And now a stream of life flows down from that risen Man to me; I am brought into fellowship with the Father, and can stand in the light in God's presence, rejoicing with ever fresh delight at the blessedness of His having given that Son to bear all my ruin.

The revelation of *Father* goes far beyond that of *God*. As a son, I am brought where I can have fellowship with the thoughts of the Father and of the Son—"I in them, and thou in me:" Is that true of you individually? *you*, in your littleness, put into Christ; all that *Christ is*, giving you value before God. It makes one feel one's exceeding littleness—a zero, a thing utterly valueless, made by the figure put before it, to be of exceeding value.

I should like to see in saints a *larger* sense of the grace of God in having taken them up; so that they should be more bowed down in the thought of it. It is one thing to be crippled in the sense of what poor creatures we are, and quite another thing to be bowed down in the thought of that grace which met us *where we were*, and put us *where we are*. We were dead in trespasses and sins, when He picked us up and gave us life and fellowship with the body of Christ: and I should like to see that thought bowing down your hearts.

In Revelation v., I see the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as the connecting link between that throne and a poor feeble disciple; and I say, if I have got that Lamb as my connecting link with the throne of God in heaven, how can there be a thought of anything but an acceptance as perfect as that of Christ? But there is another thing: What sort of walk ought mine to be? Do I begin where God begins? Are God and His Christ the two first thoughts in my mind? If walking with God and the Lamb in heaven, what sort of person

shall I be, doing everything in the light of God and the Lamb?

If I *know* the love of God, it gives day by day a certain strength to lift one's feet out of the sand of the desert; it is something I rest in. There is no rest in looking within or around, it must be upwards and onwards. Take many Christians of the present day, and you will find them always looking within or around: it must be upwards and onwards.

John, the beloved disciple, first delivers his thread of messages to the seven churches; but the moment he gets to Jesus Christ, that name causes a vibration in his heart (Rev. i. 2); and we cannot hear that name without a movement in our souls, the result of God's having shewn us that we have in that Lord Jesus Christ an answer to everything in Himself and in man. If Adam's rest was broken up, there was a place belonging to Christ, and John knew that place of rest, and joy, and peace, as his own; and the name of this Christ vibrated in the springs of John's heart as being all his own. Just where he was, Christ had stepped in as Redeemer, and John could not utter His name without there being a thrill in his heart—a burst of praise on his lips.

Oh to know that the only answer to the deceitfulness of these hearts of ours and the hypocrisy of human nature, is, that we have got *that One*, that faithful and unchangeable One who is with His people all the way through the wilderness till He gets them into the Father's house.

Have you tasted the sweetness of the cry, "Abba, Father," in your heart, and the blessedness of Christ in heaven being in you, and you in Him? And is it, think you, strange that He should take notice of your walk, and want you to walk as a child of the Father? Is it a strange thing that He should be the One to watch over you? No! and it is a blessed thing to know that he *does* do it. He never supposed that we could get through this life and get into glory without His leading and watching over us Himself; no such thought was ever in His mind.

We want *reality*; not a name, but the eternal life in the soul so practically our own, that it is seen by the way it works in us, and the things that flow forth from it. Wonderful is the effect of "*doing truth*"! Look at Paul—what were all those sufferings and all that self-denial of his, but an immensely strong argument for all that people heard from his lips? seeing him act out the truth gave immense power to it. People might challenge him, but if they did he could say, "whether I have done it well or ill, I have been trying all my life to carry out practically the life that Christ has put in me. I may have failed, but my sole desire and aim has been to live Christ."

My whole view of anything depends on my stand-point; if in a high place I get the whole compass. Paul could say, "My stand-point is Christ in heaven." From being in Christ, he had the power of Christ causing him to let the whole stream of life flow out in service. The result was a very different thing from gleaning a straw here and there.

It was quite right, John, Peter, Paul, that when the world looked on you and saw you were like your Master—it rejected you as it rejected Him ; and could not know you because it did not know Him. I ask believers now, Are you walking so like Christ that the same world which did not know Christ, or John, or Paul, does not know you? Even an infidel will tell you the points of difference between you and Christ. In Paul the world saw a man who, in everything he did, had Christ's glory as the end in view. Could any who had been watching me the last 30 years, say the same of me? Not like Paul indeed ; but whether it were the bell-bearer of the flock, or the feeblest lamb in it, the life ought to have the same character. If it is true that I have that life, am I walking in accordance with it? Are you? Do you say that I want to put you in bondage? I wish I *could* put you into bondage by binding your heart so close to Christ that all which is in Him should flow out of you. Let each one ask himself, "Can I say I am a member of Christ and He looks down on me and sees the life I have in Him flowing out through me? Is all the responsibility I am under that of pleasing the Christ who has loved me, and who, notwithstanding all that I am, is not ashamed to confess me?" If you do not find that answer to His love which you long to find in yourself, go to the Father and tell Him you do not, and see what He will do. Calling sons, was *His* thought. Go to the great Physician, and you will find plenty of balm in Gilead.

If you do not walk as a son and as a child with God, you will find that you will not have strength to withstand all that is fast coming on the world :

but if walking with Him you will find Him for you, and the deeper the trial, the more your joy will be.

If we look at the millennium, we see on one side the glory of Zechariah viii. 3, and on the other side the bride: but there is something higher in the title of *sons of God*, Christ taking them into the Father's house, bringing many sons to glory; *that* is the highest glory—being sons with Christ, the only-begotten Son in heaven, in whom the Father has all delight, and having life *in Him*, the Father's love shines down on them freely. If I know that love of the Father to Him who is the centre of this new system, and am conscious that through Christ I have that love shed abroad in my heart, will it drive out all of the flesh in me? No; but the outgoings of the life of Christ in me will be *seen*. The flesh is indeed still in me, but I have power to reckon myself dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ; and all who are blessed in Christ ought to be using this power.

Take John and Paul—the power of life in them was not according to their thought of it, but according to the Father's measure of it in Christ. When battling with circumstances, saying, “*I must, and I must not,*” do you find that you have the victory over self and the world? No; but if you get a happy train of thought about what Christ is, then just where you found all was failure, it becomes the scene into which He comes. He meets all the failure of His people, and all His grace comes in to meet me just where I fail.

If God's grace acts in you as a ruined creature, He says, “Christ is your hiding-place, you are ac-

cepted in Him, and I delight in all who are in *Him*," and if so, everything that is unlike that Blessed One will be what you will hate, and you will like to take up all things that are according to His mind—purifying yourself even as He is pure.

Can we understand God's book? With the Holy Ghost we can—He will teach us. Have I found in it that if I am a son, I have life in Christ—life that connects me with the very being of the Son of God! He has given me the Spirit, and brought life home to me, not like Paul in the forefront of the battle, but in my own little corner. I get all the glory of Christ there. Ah, it is in our own littleness that all the divine glory comes out; we look for something great and majestic, but God takes little things to shew it out; "base things and things that are not."

God claims those who are Christ's as His children, His dwelling place, and that makes the responsibility of a child's walk. Many there are who do not choose to recognize their responsibility to walk with God in their practical ways. Do you believe that God dwells in you? and if He does how are you walking?

Do you find a single occasion in which Christ ever acted independently of God? If you walk in the same path it will be sweet to you to feel your *entire* dependency, finding in all difficulties the everlasting arms underneath.

We have to see what the large-heartedness of Christ is, and what the blessed grace of God is, desiring to have His children walking with Him,

and of His word coming to them as a word of rebuke if they are not separate from the world—settled down in Sodom perhaps : and God, in order to shew His grace towards you, may have to send you sorrow and trouble to teach you where you are. God does not want you to say that you have become *religious*, He wants you to know that you are one with that Nazarene whom men spit upon, and to confess Him as the One in whom He delights, the One who is set on high as the giver of eternal life. He wants you to be able to say, “That eternal life is mine.” Is He in you, and are you in Him ? then there is power to make manifest the mind of Christ.

I would press two things, there is a difference between them—the manifestation of life in the soul, on our part ; and, on His part, the light always streaming down from Christ : if Paul deviated in his course, no shadow was cast on the heart of Christ, but Paul would have to be corrected for it.

Do you know the glory of God to be your portion, rejoicing in the hope of it ? Do you see the bright light shining in the distance ? The things we meet with on the road may be trying : Jacob’s head lay on a stone pillow whilst he was enjoying the heavenly vision. The deep sands and sharp stones may make the wilderness road very uncomfortable to walk along, but God uses it for the breaking away of all that will not do for the glory ; and by it is teaching me the patience of Christ, and putting that part of God’s character before my soul. Is it *long*, this waiting-time ? but will any who are weary now make a murmur when standing in the

glory, at the length of the way they had to pass? We should even glory in tribulation because it works patience. (Rom. v. 3.) *Patience* is not *indifference*. A patient man takes all that tries him and bears it in the presence of God; and in the presence of God he finds the Spirit of God shedding abroad in his heart the love of God. (Rom. v. 5.)

“Now is the Son of Man glorified.” (John xiii.) There is a difference between this and the glory of the Son of Man in Daniel: there it is visible, outward glory, here it is the moral glory of a person whom every one was despising: One whom man did not think worthy of a *slave's* price—and why? Because He was so entirely God's servant, and had so entirely the mind of God. Such a mind was out of fashion amongst a people who all had wills of their own, whilst *He* said, “Lo I come to do *thy* will, O God.” He the only one perfectly able to meet Satan, able to meet powers of every kind, because He came in this will-less way, obedient even unto death in doing the will of God, taking everything from the hand of God.

What we want is the character of a little child. What do I know? *Nothing*: but I believe and am *sure*, because God has told me, that I have eternal life. Does *God* say it? Yes! “This is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life” (1 John ii. 25); and all who believe possess it. *He* says it, whose judgment is alone worth hearing, He who alone has a right to speak, says it; and I bless Him that He is able to speak such

*large* words about me. It is the simplicity of a child believing just what God says, that is lacking; and that is the reason why Christians do not walk (as they ought) as children of the Father. How can they, if they do not believe that they are children!

Put yourselves among the Jerusalem saints after Pentecost, and ask yourselves if you are walking as they did. Have we that Nazarite position outside everything connected with the world? And "all that is of the world is not of the Father." Can we say of any when going into their house, "That person brings me Christ?" If one had paid a visit to Paul, would one not have come away with a fresh taste of Christ? I have often come out of the house of a poor bed-ridden creature, feeling, Oh how I wish my soul were like that!—Oh, that that pulse of Christ were throbbing in every part of the body. How I want, how I long, to see it so in all who are His!

We do not live in heaven and then we complain of earth. If walking as men on earth, we shall have bitter experience. As it is, we get a quantity of experience for which we have to thank self. Enoch, in a day when there was no scripture, walked with God. 300 years he walked according to the mind of God. Such a walk as that is a little thing as to making a noise in the world. What would be the world's judgment of any one of whom God could say, "That man and I know each other, and he walks with me." It was a very quiet, very unostentatious, walk. It was simply saying at every step, "Whereabouts is *God* in this step?" Did the people of that day before they

put their foot to take a step, ask first, "Is God in it?" No: it appears that Enoch walked alone with God. He had a set of thoughts and ways peculiar to himself, but the same as God's; and he must have known himself as one who could boldly say, "I am walking *with God*." I would ask as in the presence of God, with the measure of light given to us, can we say, not to man, nor to one another, but to God, "Father, Thou knowest I walk so with Thee, that as the end was to Enoch, so will be my end?" What is true of faith at one time, is true at all times. These things that came out in Enoch are as a touchstone for the people of God from those days to the present time, by which to test themselves. Can you say, "I know God's judgment is coming on that which professes to be His church on earth, but where faith calls me there will I be found in separation with God Himself. The wide world may have gone aside and left me standing *alone*, but there I am with God?"

"Except a corn of wheat die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It was a *strange* way of not abiding alone—Christ dying, by death to bring many sons to glory! And what does it tell a person now? that this man, God's chosen One, was of the world or not of the world? Let us see where this Casket, the holder of all grace and blessing, *is now*, and *who* He is; it is Christ, at the right hand of God. If Enoch could have seen a man in heaven in the central place—the throne of God—and had known himself to be connected with Him (as we can say we are) would he not have said, "Ah, that is a man who has done with the world, so done with it that He is up there

clean out of it ; and I, being quickened, and raised up with Him, have done with it too?" People may say they hardly know how to walk with God—but quietly take up the details of your walk, and see how far God is in everything in it, begin by looking for Him in *every step* you take. It is a matter of progress ; if any have not yet learnt to walk with Him, they will make many mistakes, but they must not be discouraged : it will be the blessedness of seeking to walk with God in a worse day than Enoch's, which you will enjoy.

We never find that the mere thought of the glory to come enables the mind to look forward to it ; we want something *more*. When it came to John at Patmos, he felt, "I am an outcast now:" but the thought his *heart* laid hold of was, "He has loved me and washed me from my sins in his own blood."

What so sweet as the thought of the worship that will be rendered to God and to the Lamb in presence of the glory ! Christ will be the guide of it, and its object too : that is the sweetest thought of all. (God and the Lamb are the light of the holy city.) If I take Christ as the light, the rays of light that stream forth from Him will shine through the city and the golden street : we being the medium through which the light shines down upon the earth ; not seeing it stained as now with sin, but the people looking up to the glory which shines down through the city—but never mistaking the bride for the light. As you may see a cloud bearing light, coloured by the sun, so we see the city lighted by God and the Lamb. If Christ were not *God*, the light could not shine

out. We shall be brought into the closest association with God. Most blessed to find a Man on the throne of God, all the universe owning Him as God, but we shall reign with Him; He has a throne of His own, on which we shall sit with Him and reign with Him. The bride will see Him as God, having the glory of God, in a place of which God and the Lamb are the light, and it shines through her. But there is something else, much lower down, connected with the human heart; the first Adam in Paradise had all blessing. Ah! but if he had had no help-meet for him, no one with whom to share his thoughts, and feelings, would he have been happy? And Christ, the last Adam, is in heaven as Son of God connected with worship and government; but as *Son of Man*, as the One on whose bosom John lay, the One who wept at the grave of Lazarus, has He no need of human affections? Yes, all will be as perfect on the human as on the divine side. Yes, He will have the human family gathered round Him. Eve, sitting in the garden of Eden, shared all with Adam, she was the complement of Adam's happiness, set there for him by God.

It is not government, not the throne, not the giving of light, that the last chapter of Revelation ends with:—it ends with a sort of converse, in which the heart's affections are seen. The heart of Christ responds, as one man might speak to another, when He is invited to come. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" and the Lord Jesus answers, "Behold I come quickly!" And again the heart of the bride replies, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" How blessed all this! If God has set you apart for Christ, you are *His*.

As Solomon sent down into Egypt for a stranger to make her his wife, so God has chosen me, the believer may say, taken me out of the world, and set me apart as part of the bride; and the moment Christ takes the glory, I shall meet Himself.

The heart God has formed for the Lord Jesus, can never speak to another, but can turn to Him only asking Him to come. Could God propose to you heart anything more blessed than the being set apart for Him who is the object of His own delight? Has He formed your heart for that Son in whom is all His own heart's delight?

It is blessed to be in the wilderness, if there is any little thing Christ can give us to do, but more blessed still to have something put into our hearts that enables us to say to Christ, "Come, Lord Jesus!" It is too so sweet that in reference to this hope and those who know it, nothing can come in between the heart and it; whilst you judge your practical inconsistency, you can allow nothing to come between. The Lord says, in the midst of all failure and inconsistency, "I come quickly; surely I come quickly," and the heart answers in the midst of it all, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Does that Lord see many a one, here and there, whose heart is *formed* by the thought of His coming, as a thought that has power to form and fashion it entirely anew? Are *His* thoughts first about the deep sands and difficulties we are in down here? No! His first thought is that there is a response to His own heart in the hearts of a people here, that they desire what He desires, that they are waiting *with* Himself. Take this thought simply: suppose a mother were told that her son had been walking up and down the street

for an hour expecting to see her; what a stir it would cause in the heart of that mother, all her feelings would be stirred up and occupied with the thought of this child *waiting for her*. Just so with the Lord, in the blessed way He has formed the hearts of His people to wait for Him till He comes. I might bring the report to a mother of her child waiting for her, but I need not report it to our Lord; He has so formed my heart that I feel I *must* see Him. *He* needs no report, *He sees* the waking up of my heart morning by morning—sees that its first thought is that I am waiting for Him; that it is not with my perplexities and difficulties that I am occupied, but with *His coming*.

I believe that if I get near the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall find in His heart a speciality of affection about a people down here who are waiting for Him; not waiting for glory, but for *Him*, which is quite a different thing. Do I love Him? Do I not know He was my Substitute? and do I not *want* to see Him? Has He not taken from my mind everything that harassed and perplexed me? and do not I want to see Him? Do I know that for eighteen hundred years He has been sitting at the right hand of God, with everything His own, but with a craving in His heart that will never be satisfied till He has got us—till He has got me—home with Himself; do I know this? and can *I* be satisfied till I see Him face to face in the glory of all divine uncreated light?

I do not so much think of the glory we shall enter into, but what my heart recognizes is the sweet truth that it is *the Lord* and *myself* that are to be in companionship together. Our going and

His coming, though different things, are both connected with the deep consciousness formed in the heart that we are to be in Christ's own individual presence—not till then, not till there—satisfied.

There is fixity of purpose in Christ's heart, to come, but there is the patience of hope in Him, and I am to have it. The to-morrow of the believer is formed on the yesterday of the believer; and to-day, where does the heart get its rest? By going inside the veil where the Lord is—perfected for ever in Him. Because of your connection by faith with what He did who is at the right hand of God, you are before God without sin, accepted in Him, that is our anchoring ground: not only brought inside the veil, but in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as He is in heaven, you are accepted, even in the Lamb upon the throne. That is the yesterday of faith. We have the *entrée* of the house with no veil on the light; and the love that brought us there tells its tale out in all that we pass through in the wilderness. Suppose that I have not learnt this love as I ought down here, yet I can look up and say that that Lamb on the throne is not only the measure of what my guiltlessness is before God, but that that Lamb on the throne has also undertaken to come and fetch home the children whom God has given Him.

What does my faith begin with? the belief that God took me from Satan and gave me fitness to be in His presence by being washed in the blood of His dear Son; and He will keep me to the end. Yesterday and to-day I have had the continual

proof of His faithfulness—to-morrow and for ever it will be the same Christ.

1 Thessalonians i. 9; 10. There are two marks of faith: first, serving the living and true God; second, watching for His Son from heaven. There can be nothing more important than *works* to a believer. If you are the Lord's children, what are you to be but channels for that living water? Is God to dig a channel, and no water flow through it after all? What are we if not channels for that water to flow through? Bought at such a price, can we think it of no importance to serve the living and true God? *He does not*—and high as He is, with everything in His hand—He is not too great to look into the little attic where I am, to see if I am serving Him. How the greatness of the living God comes out in this! Everything concerning the soul is, in the greatness of His love, settled for eternity, yet He can come down quietly to a poor thing in the wilderness, saying, "I am looking at your works"—a poor bed-ridden cripple, one obliged to be kept in a dark room, and the living God coming to see how one so feeble as to be hardly up to the smallest quota of service, is serving Him! How wonderful a God to accept it! saying, "I know what every child is about; I am expecting service because I have given you my Son, and when I say 'Give me something,' I am endearing you to that Son, for *He* must give you grace and intelligence that you may have power to give." Is it not wondrous grace for the living God to say to poor things like you and me, "Give?" Do you say "What can I give?" Ah, He will accept even a cup of cold water. There

are a number of *little* things in which the heart can go out to the living God in service to Him.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians begins with the church of God, endowed and enriched with all blessings in Jesus Christ; the Second, with God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, conducting through sorrow, trial, and trouble, hearts that are close to Himself, knowing Him as the God of the wilderness; they can have one ceaseless flow of comfort and consolation all through their course. God saying to them, "My bosom is the fountain teeming with mercies; I want my people to hear my voice ever speaking to them, and their hearts to hang on me throughout all their course."

Mary came and anointed the feet of the Lord, in the power of love, and the house was filled with the sweet savour of the ointment. There was something very peculiar about the time and hour of her doing it. Her habit had been to sit at His feet, Martha's to be full of active bustling service. Mary takes her wonted place, and anoints His feet. Judas thinks "What a quantity of money has slipped through my hands!" The disciples too are thinking about the bag. But Jesus turns to them, saying, "Let her alone, against the day of my burying hath she kept this. She is in the current of my Father's mind and knows my Father's secrets."

The two leading thoughts of the mind of God are the humiliation and the glory of Christ. Yes: they are the only two points—the two pillars on

which the whole of Christianity rests. Can you say they are the only key of all your thoughts?

1 John iv. 17. We want love of such a kind as to give us boldness in the day of judgment. How could you like everything about you to be brought out before the judgment-seat of Christ if your foot was on a bit of sandy ground? But if on the Rock, with Christ your only dependence, you can say, "The Judge is the Person who bore my sins. I was thoroughly ruined, and found that that love had given the Son of His love to become Son of man, in order to bear my sins in His own body on the cross, and that is the love which gives me boldness in the day of judgment."

We must all appear in the light which makes manifest. People now may wrap up things, and cover over where there is a bit of themselves mixed up with that which is of Christ, but all must come out in that light; still, you can say, "If I have got Christ, He cannot fail me; He, the propitiation for my sins, the accepted sacrifice in the presence of God, cannot fail me." There is no time when the confidence in His love will be stronger than then.

"Behold the Lamb of God!" Man would account a lamb to be but a very weak thing, but what a contrast here in this *Lamb of God!* In John's thought, This one without form or comeliness to the eye of man, is the One who is to be the bringer-in of the new earth, the remover of every spot and mark of sin. *Who* is the bringer-in of this? *Who?* That *lowly Man*—that Jesus, unknown in His own universe, save to the eye of faith!

As soon as John gets a view of Him, the adoration and affection of his heart are so kindled that he drops out a few broken words, and those who heard them have their hearts set on fire ; they feel the attractive power of the Person of that Lamb, and immediately go after Him.

Where is that Lamb now? and what have you and I to do with Him? The throne of God became the mercyseat when He ascended: "In the midst of the throne is the Lamb"—still in the servant character, hymned, praised, and worshipped, by the elders and angels, but in action as the Servant, opening the book. In the end of the book of Revelation, He is presented as the One in whom all the glory of God is displayed, and Himself displaying His glory in the church. Verses 22, 23, of chapter xxi. are unspeakably blessed in connection with this: "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." God and the Lamb are its temple; everything connected with worship will find its full expression in God and the Lamb; as even now we can adore and wonder and worship, just as we have God and the Lamb as our power of worship.

In that city there is no need of the sun or moon, "the glory of God and of the Lamb is the light thereof." What will it be to be in a scene where there will be the *whole* outshining of the Lamb, a scene where everything will be seen through Him, as the medium! To see things down here *now* through Him, is nothing but anguish to the heart that loves Him, but *then* to see a world in

which nothing will be out of order, nothing but what is divine—all the glory of God displayed through Him. Oh, what will it be to have Him as the medium through which to see everything.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Is there no thought of blessing in that? The Lord told the woman of Samaria that if she had asked, He would have given her living water. Had this woman ever so little an eyelet of that water, heaven was on its surface, for Christ was there. And again, the Lord says, “he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” How hindered here by the flesh, but up there with full unhindered joy in Christ, the pouring out of the gushing streams, the welling over of the waters that come forth from God and the Lamb, and *everyone* eternally filled, when

“By the Spirit all pervading,  
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,  
Crowned with light and joy unfading,  
Hail Him as the great ‘I AM.’”

What will it be to dwell in a sphere where all that God delights in will be expressed in the gushing forth of that flowing well of water in every heart!

Is there nothing to delight the heart now in the thought, “*Whose* will be the glory?” God and the Lamb. Whose the plan? God and the Lamb. Who the light and the temple? Ah, that God and the Lamb! Whence flows the river of life? From God and the Lamb. O the blessedness of finding that the glory of God and the Lamb is to be there fully displayed; that then and there all the yearnings of the redeemed nature will be fully met and

satisfied. Are you on your way to that scene of glory, to that city built by God Himself; on your way there as a stone that He has dug from the quarry and fitted for it? You will find in each part, that which fits a ruined sinner for the glory. And in that which puts him there it is God and the Lamb all through.

If you and I are to meet Christ with *joy* when He comes, we must make quite sure that our consciences are up to the mark with Him where He is in God's presence; able to be in identification with Him up there in the light: if not, you will not be able to meet His face with *joy*.

What a difference between poor cowardly Lot, afraid of destruction after having been dragged out of Sodom, and Abraham on the mount with God!

Practically, God sees nothing you could not give up for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake; and, depend upon it, He will not be in your debt; it will all be brought out in bright daylight when Christ comes, and meantime, rays from His face will be playing on your hearts the whole way.

God does not see His people apart from Christ. You are in Christ and in God.

Everything in the Levitical service shewed the danger of a creature in his sins approaching God. Now, through the cross, the veil is rent, all is open, and the creature is brought into God's presence, and can look up and say nothing else than "I am *perfected for ever* by the blood of thy Son, O God!"

How is it as to the inward convictions of your state before God? Is the thing that satisfies God, the thing that satisfies you, and that enables you to draw nigh to Him in perfect peace? God saying "There is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, I cannot bring any charge against *Him*. To bring a charge against a believer, would be to bring a charge against my Son."

To one I said, "Suppose you were going home to-night?" "I should tremble," he answered. To another, who said that to know the forgiveness of his sins was the indefeasible birthright of the believer, "Suppose, I said, you were to fall off that chair dead *this moment*"—"God forbid," cried he, in alarm. If not ready *at any moment* to be called into His presence, you are not on the ground that God is on, as to the perfect justification of a sinner. It is the blood of His Son that fits you to be in His presence. Are you satisfied with it?

Christ is in heaven as the accepted sacrifice; everything in the eternal mind is rolling round Him. God will not allow of any low thoughts about that blood, He will not allow His children to have a slight estimate of its value. You must get by yourself with God, to test whether the value which you set on that blood corresponds with His.

I believe that many of God's children would hesitate to say of themselves what God can say, that is, that they have a perfect conscience, a conscience that cannot be improved. (They do not clearly distinguish between conscience, and consciousness, of sin.) But a purged conscience is a conscience which Christ has washed in His own blood, and *He did it perfectly*. If any know that they have *that* conscience, it is because they know

the *value* of the blood of the Lamb on the throne, that blood making them as white as snow, and because it is ever in their mind as that which makes them perfectly fit for the presence of God.

I believe there are many Christians whose intelligence does not enable them to realize that they are in the position of Ephesians ii. 5, "quickened and raised up together with Christ." When the people of Israel were brought through the Red Sea there would have been no difficulty in finding borderers, trying to blend the two things, Egypt and Canaan, together. If you do not believe that God sees you dead, buried, and risen with Christ, it is no wonder if you are a borderer; but if through God's grace you see your standing before God as identified with the death and resurrection of Christ, I defy you to be a borderer.

When Moses came down from the mount, it was not only the ten words on the two tables of stone which the people saw, but the face of Moses which shone with such brightness with the reflection of the glory, that man could not look on it, and Moses put a veil over it. God uses that as a type of the veil on the hearts of people until taken away by Christ; then all the thoughts of God flow out to us, and we "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." Paul looking up sees Christ in glory with unveiled face, and as he walked the light shone; he was the reflector of his Lord in his walk; in bodily presence weak, yet he could say "to me to live is Christ."

How much of the world creeps in, even in what is called devotedness, and people find on a death-bed that they have been occupied with things in the world, and have not been walking as heavenly men with Christ.

What will it be to be in heaven, clothed in white, not a spot, the whole of me fit for Christ's own presence; all so pure, so transparent, as to be fit only for heaven! There is rest and refreshment in the thought.

Think of a soul being there, and Christ saying to the Father, "This is one whose name I can confess as an overcomer." Ah, one feels, if Christ said that of me or of you, we must say, "It was not of *us*, Lord, it was through the faith *thou* gavest us in thyself that we overcame; it was thou who didst it, thyself who gavest the power to get the victory." How the difference between Christ and ourselves comes out; He loves to praise us, and not to gather praise for Himself. How unlike us! We love to gather up a good report, to get praise for ourselves. Christ will give it all to the overcomers, although it is entirely His. He is the One who helped them and set their feet right on the Rock, and over and over again restored their souls. Do you believe in Him? Then you *must* be an overcomer, "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Take to-day: How many thoughts of Christ have you found in your soul? I shall never walk apart from the world save as Christ is in my soul. Has your walk to-day flowed out of your consciousness of Christ as a living Person in heaven?

If the God of heaven is occupied with us, how many thoughts ought not we to have of that God? It is only as occupied with God and with Christ that we can be unworldly.

When Christ went up to heaven, was He not competent not only to claim, but to keep a people separate from the world down here, in spite of all that Satan would do? How are they kept? By what is earthly? No, but by the Spirit of God using truth connected with Christ in heaven. It is heavenly truth that keeps a people up.

Has God a right to speak? Does He know how to use human language, and drive it right home to souls? To be sure He does, and He says, "who-soever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

The Lord Jesus declares about His sheep, that they have eternal life, and that no one can pluck them out of His hand or out of the Father's hand; but human nature says, "How can I know that to be true?" How can *you* know it? a pretty word for a *creature* to put forth! Far better for the creature to say, "Let God be true and every man a liar."

Have you ever thought of God dealing with you not as to what you are in yourself, but as to where He has set you in Christ? Have you ever thought that it is the affections of the Father's heart which flow down to us where we are, seeing us in Christ, not in our poor wretched selves? What we are in self is not the thing to scan, but what we are, and where we are, *in Christ*; and what there is in the living affections of the God of glory, who has raised us up together with His Son, and has given us all heavenly blessings in Him.

It is not the Father's house, nor the millennial glory, but it is *Christ* that I want. Where I find the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, it is something for me to rest upon. Everything connected with the One we love, interests and touches the heart ; but the more we love, the more we long for the presence of that One. Whenever I find the Lord in Person present, I find something beyond the scene : in the sermon on the mount, I do not see the Jews, the time or the dispensation—to me there is but the presence of the Lord.

When I get into the Father's house, what thought will be sweeter to my heart than the Lord washing the disciples' feet? What a thing to be in glory with *such* a Lord.

Many saints find it a great effort to get the heart into occupation with God and the Lord Jesus Christ in that exalted place ; but it is much more a question of relationship than of place. When the heart rises up there, what is its thought? Is there nothing there to strike the chord of its deepest affections? Is there no answer? Yes! the Son of man is on the Father's throne, not ashamed to call us "brethren."

Whenever faith goes up, what does it find realized there? The thought of One once in all my circumstances of sorrow down here, now at home with the Father. "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said I go to the Father."

I suppose the great blessing in connection with the glory we shall have there with Christ, is not that our glory is greater, but our *nearness to Him*,

enabling us to taste that which man on earth will never taste.

We were in Christ before the foundation of the world, and shall be in Him when the heavens and earth shall have passed away ; what can touch this eternal union ? “ The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

“ If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.” If anyone serves Christ, he will be specially under the eye and notice of the Father ; when He sees any following Christ, the preciousness of that Son of His love casts its light upon them.

I do not know if any of you ever groan ; there is much to make you do so, much to knock at the door of your heart, if Christ is not there. There is the sand of the wilderness, and Christ alone can keep it out. Yes, there is much to make the people of God groan, much to shew them, as things pass on, what a worthless thing human nature is (Peter could curse and deny his Lord) ; and what is the Lord’s answer to it all ? “ Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

God reads everything in us ; sees the flesh and the Spirit both striving for the mastery in our hearts ; but God’s way is to cripple the flesh, yet with the most amazing gentleness ; cutting off a limb, yet full of love. God’s thought is not to nourish and cheer the flesh, but to deliver us from it. He is dealing with you to deliver you from the flesh and to build you up in the Spirit. You can-

not say to God "Thou hast given me life, leave me alone;" He will not do so. No father would leave his children without chastening if needed for their profit. How He cripples the flesh, as we see in Paul!

If Christ were always in the heart, we should not let the sand of the wilderness in, not that we should never have any, but if we have the *oil* of His presence, the sand cannot stick and clog our feet.

I have gone through a bit of the wilderness, and many have more, and what is the answer to that which is before us? There may be the bitterness of sorrow and trial to taste on to the end; but what is the answer to everything? "Let not your heart be troubled—believe in me." As much as to say "Let *me* be the answer to it all." He had been telling them that He was going away, and it was to stay away two thousand years, but He says "If I go away I shall come back again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." He could not forget to come, He never forgets His promise, it is ever fresh in His mind.

How many are there in trial and difficulty, who, in contrast to it all, find great brightness in the thought that all will soon end in the presence of the Lord! Others there are, vexed with self and trying to carry the cross, seeing such failures that they hardly like to give a testimony, yet who in the midst of it are looking up with the thought that when with Christ, all will be unbroken light.

As one looks at Christ in the glory, and then at ourselves, one thinks, "there will not be beautiful garments found for God after such a course; but

there will be the discovery that all through it He was shewing His love.”

It is *true* that that living Christ is where He is, in the Father's house; it is *true* that He will have us there as witnesses of His faithfulness. And we shall find *there* everything in contrast with what we have passed through down here. Not only there the all-pervading power of the Spirit working everywhere; not only the brightness of unsullied glory and of everything that the heart could desire in the presence of the Lord, being like Christ and the reflectors of His glory. But besides all this, we shall have the sweet consciousness of ever learning in Him the love of the Father that brought us there. The little realization there is of that love is a mark of the low state of believers in the present time.

That which puts before the heart the *manner* of the love of Christ is, to see Him up there wanting to share with us what is dear to Himself, desiring to have us partakers with Him in the brightness of that glory given Him by the Father. Seeing a guilty conscience, having washed and cleansed it in His own blood, He must have the poor sinner with Himself. Oh, this Christ does love! and of *His* love alone could it be said “*there* is a love which passes knowledge.” Which is most worthy to occupy our thoughts, the littleness of our love, or the fulness of that love which passes knowledge?

Death is not the king of terrors to believers. He that had the power of death is nullified now to those who believe in Jesus. Through carelessness of walk some may say that they do fear death;

they accredit the power of the enemy so as to sanction in themselves a certain degree of fear of it. If I look back before I was converted it was not the thought of death but of the great white throne, the judgment after death, that I shrank from. There is such a thing as a physical fear of death. It may be given of God for the protection of the body, to make people take care of themselves ; but believers on their death-bed have no fear ; the Lord has been with them, and they have desired earnestly to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. I have never known anyone who walked closely with the Lord Jesus who feared death. I have known some who have said " If I were to meet death in my present strength I am not able to bear it." But will not Christ be faithful to His promise, "when thou passest through the valley of the shadow of death, I will be with thee, my rod and my staff they shall comfort thee?"

I do not know what others think of heavenly-mindedness, but I groan at finding so little of it in myself. At the end of a day or week, am I conscious of having been walking as a heavenly-minded man? I do not mean in regard to anything outward ; it is of little consequence whether I stand or fall in the sight of others, of fellow saints. The solemn thought is, What am I in *God's sight*? What passes in my soul? Have I the mind of heaven? In all trials and troubles, is it the thought of my heart "I am up there with the Son of God?" His life is my life ; am I letting it flow forth?

We have to make the discovery that the Lord of

heaven and earth looks down and sees every believer as identified with Himself. Saul felt this when the Lord said, "Why persecutest thou *me*?" Yes, the Lord Christ looks down on His people as being vitally united to Himself. What is sweeter than the name of Jesus to the Father! and that Jesus was with the Father in heaven when Paul heard the words "Why persecutest thou me?"

Think of the delight of angels at seeing that One who had humbled Himself, that Nazarene, that rejected Man, take His place on the throne of God! And is it true that if we are accepted in Him, "in the Beloved," the Father loves us as He loves Him, and that because we are one with Him, in Him, and He in us? Yes, you are beheld of God as a member of that Christ at His right hand; and what is there in you that can interfere with the delight of God in His own Son?

Ephesians iii. No wonder if Paul felt burdened by the difficulty of putting simply and clearly before believers such a wondrous subject as that secret thought of God, hid from all eternity! When men said, "We will not have this man to reign over us," God was saying "I will bring out a secret thing wrapped up in my heart; I will have that One, whom you have put to death, with me on my throne, and I will gather out a people to whom He shall be the Head and they the members, joined to Him by living faith and sitting with Him in heavenly places." No wonder that Paul's heart laboured to bring it out in simplicity. Fellow-heirs! Fellow-heirs with whom? *Who* was heir to the inheritance? *Who* could point up

to it and say, "In my Father's house are many mansions?" Only *One* could. That *One* who could re-arrange the whole heaven if He would. Only Christ the Beloved of the Father's bosom. The lot had fallen to Him. All belongs to Him, and He shares it with His body—co-heirs with Him.

Where is my comfort, think you, when I look at the people of God? Is it in anything I see in you or about you? No. I think not of what you are, but of the purpose of Christ concerning you. He has to break down many a thing in us, and it may be very painful to us; but what a difference between a person tasting all he can of ease down here, with eternal woe hereafter, and one with the name of Christ on his forehead in the midst of sorrow and pain, Christ dealing with him, and making thoroughly manifest what His purpose is concerning him.

He says to His own, "I have separated you to bear my name in the wilderness, let all around you see it." The deeper the trouble, the higher the service; the nearer to God, the greater the prostration of the flesh. Paul could say, "Examine my life:" was there ever such a long list of sorrows, and yet such a spring of joy in the heart that nothing could bow it down? Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; in deep poverty, yet making many rich.

No Christian should be standing for himself; in every company and in every place, we must make manifest another—even Christ. The saints are to be an epistle of Christ, read by all; to be the living

expression of what was in the mind of Christ. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." Take this word and apply it to yourself in its power. Are you leaving the savour of Christ behind you in every place? as perfume is left behind by those who carry it—so sweet as to be unmistakable wherever left. If you are doing this, it is because you are bearing about in your body the death of Jesus, so that His life is manifested in your life. We cannot begin to live with Jesus until we have died with Him.

In the present time things viewed morally and spiritually are like things after an earthquake; all is out of order and disjointed. We cannot now turn round and view the church as it once was—a body of heavenly-minded men keeping themselves unspotted from the world, manifesting the presence of Christ by their holy walk, shining as lights in the world's thick darkness. We must each one feel his own individual weakness and failure.

The heart is very apt to take counsel of self, and droop under the circumstances around, but instead of being cast down, the question should come in, "What is the spring, what the source, of the sustaining strength on which we lean?" It is in *Christ Himself* and in *His* power. If two or three desire now to meet in His name, and to walk unspotted in the midst of evil and failure, it is in the mighty power that never yet failed and never will, that they can do so. The church is loved and cherished by Him who is to present it to Himself. Nothing in earthen vessels can do this. Christ's

own living power alone can sustain, nourish, and at the end present it to Himself without spot or wrinkle. How precious to be able to turn from our weakness and failure, and see this power up there in the living Person of that One who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," to see Him sustaining and nourishing me because I am bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh, risen with Him, one with Him.

Looking at the divine side of the gospel, I get in it God's direct appeal to my mind and heart. God says, "My Son is at my right hand, and if you are a believer in Him I see you according to what *He is*." The One who took the place of being my life, is the One who, before He took that place, had borne on the cross everything that God had against me.

It is a most marvellously blessed thing the relationship I am in with God, and marvellously blessed to be conscious of it by having received the truth that He looks on me and the Son of His love *as one*. What! I? a poor pitiful thing down here getting my feet soiled and entangled—what! am *I* looked upon by God as being one with Christ up there, with *that One* to whom you could not add a thing to make a ray of His glory shine out more brightly? What! *one with Him!*

*Angels* cannot say, "Abba, Father;" it marks to the Father's mind *our* association with the Son of His love.

What an immeasurable blessing that ours is a life with Christ in God! I often ask myself whether I *really* believe it. On the other hand I

know it to be an indisputable fact, and yet I ask, "How is it, if I have it, that I can live so below it, as though my life were down here?" And again, "If I have a natural life bringing me down to things so low, how can I be occupied with things so high?" *Really* to believe that I am one with Christ would make a thousand cares drop off. In the morning one wakes up in astonishment—realizing it, but why cannot one act all day on the reality of it before God? One rises saying, *It is* a fact that He is my life, and I will act it out, letting it be seen in all I do that Christ's life is my life; and yet perhaps before one leaves the room something comes in between, so that one ceases to substantiate the fact of it in the soul.

Ah! that thought, "I am one with Christ," is the great power in the mind, giving to the heart a living warmth. The realization of having one life with that One up there—the Nazarene—would turn a *London fog* into the bright light of the glory He is in above.

If the life of Christ is flowing through us, the water from the Rock turning the wheel, as it flows into the heart, it will fill us with joy; and if so, we cannot contain it, it must flow out.

If taken up with my broken, aching body, I am forgetting that I am one with Christ above. This body does beautifully for a *light-house*, but we are not to be looking at little trials down here. You can say to everything this world can offer, "I have *this* which you have not; I am in Christ, and everything He has, belongs to me." As soon as you get to this side of life with Christ, the death of Christ closes over everything here.

We are brought out of the scene in which every-

thing circles round man, into that in which everything is the expression of God.

It is Christ Himself who is our life—we are related to the Christ of God in the most vital way, having one life with Him; when He appears, we shall appear with Him, and all that characterises His manifestation in glory, will characterise us.

What a volume there is in that expression, “The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!” A *man* sitting at the right hand of God with God’s glory in His face, and no covering over it. Ah! the fact of His being a man and *such* a man, up there, is the discovery of everything one’s heart dreads to bring into the presence of God. I may have been carried away by my heart and so got out of communion, but when my soul comes in contact with that One seated there as the accepted sacrifice, I know that before God it is all right for me. If I ask, Who is *that Lamb* upon the throne? the answer comes, “It is the Nazarene,” the One who came down to be my substitute, the One who washed me in His blood; and *that One* is the man in whose face God sees all His glory.

Have you living intercourse with that Christ? He who looks down and reads your heart, sees everything in you, any leaven not yet purged. He looks down as the One who as Son of man bore all the curse for you; and you may look up and say, “Oh Lord, Thou didst take the lust of this world out of my heart, Thou didst find me a wandering sheep and didst bring me nigh by Thy blood; and is there not affection now and thought in Thy heart for the poor thing Thou didst pick up? Thou didst care enough for me to bear the curse

due to me, and now shall I say I cannot be *sure* whether Thou lovest me?" What! shall this heart entertain such a thought of treason against Him? Shall I be calling out against Him because things do not go as *I like*, and things are not made smooth? Where is my soul if I do not know that the person who has spoken to me *loves* me? Oh if you knew how the watchers in heaven have seen thousands of the proofs of His love in His dealings with you! Do you think they could have had a doubt of His love to the poor woman at the well of Samaria? Can the watchers doubt His love to poor things down here now? *You* may, because of your evil heart of unbelief, but *they* do not.

If love and affection were not in the heart of the Lord, how could He come forth to gather His people up to be with Himself for ever in glory? When He comes to call His people, He will not leave *one* behind. His faithfulness comes out there, as well as His love.

"The light of the glory of God" where? In the face of Jesus Christ. God, pointing to that face, says, "If you want to know all my glory, there it is." Unsearchable glory—glory past finding out—there it is in the person of my Son!

What a blessed thing it is to get the light so connected with our souls that nothing we find in ourselves can take us by surprise! No light can shine into my heart save what is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; if I do not know it there, I do not know God. Can you say not only that you know Christ is light, but that the light is shining into your heart? It is the *probe* by which

God shews us what self is. There has been little but failure ever since the day of Pentecost, and the failure is greater now than it ever was before. Ah but when that light shines in, it shews out everything, and nips every budding of the flesh, everything that cannot stand in the presence of God.

When Christ began to attract you to Himself, saying, "Now I want to draw you after a new Master," did you not know it? And do you not know it now, as Christians? Did He not know all your condition and all your circumstances when He picked you up as poor sheep, torn and weary? And, I ask, did He not act in a Lordly way when He picked you up?

When God calls a soul, the first feeling is, "I must be up and after the God who has called me." All who were called by the Lord when on earth followed the Lord, attracted and drawn by Him.

When Christ shined into my soul, did *I* look up into heaven first? or did Christ first look down upon me? Did I find Christ out by my own wisdom? I am sure that I did not. And if God had not caused His glory in the face of Christ to shine into my soul (some forty years ago), I should never have known the God who revealed Himself to me and not to others of my kindred. In the case of Saul, God revealed His Christ in glory to him, that He might lead him captive. God caused the light to shine round about him, to reveal Christ. He has shined into *our* hearts, and we are running after Christ because He drew us to Himself.

What is the stay of heart to an aged pilgrim? Can one find any comfort in thinking that for forty years one has tried to follow the Lord? Oh no! but it is that the Lord—that my Master, in His perfect beauty, has been down here; and it is that He who let His beauty shine draws me after Him. It was like a hook put into my heart, it might have been in the form of terror or of grace, but it was something that like a hook drew me after Him. Ah! it was the call of that Lord which linked me to Him, it was the effectual power of that Lord, used for drawing me after Him; and He did not mean me to follow as a servant only, but as a fellow-worker with Him: it is the privilege, in one way or other, of every believer.

How marvellous! being in a body of sin and death, with the consciousness of all sorts of different evils, to be exhorted to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus. (Phil. ii. 5.) Yes, and the Lord says, “Be ye perfect, as my Father in heaven is perfect.” Nothing short of that will do—nothing to rule my life but the same principles the Lord Jesus acted on—to be a *display* down here of the very same mind, the very same principles of action, as Christ the Son of God had. The complete and entire surrender of everything to God the Father marked Him who in obedience came from the very height of glory down to the very lowest depths of humiliation; and in us there is to be the same principle.

It is not the fragments of obedience which we can render to God, that give peace to the soul; but it is the thought of Christ exalted as a Saviour;

and that God has joy in seeing Him there as a Saviour, and commands us to believe in Him for salvation to our souls. And what is the master-feeling of my soul in thinking of it? Ah! I say, *What a Father! what a Son!* How unutterably blessed that the presence of Christ as *Son of man* up there, is real joy of heart to God! heaven being made a place that witnesses the delight of God in the mercy provided by this Son of man who is seated at His right hand.

A young Christian thinks that he has fully tasted at first that which is in himself and that which is in Christ; but an old Christian can say, "Every day I see more of my own evil and of Christ's love; but in spite of all my waywardness, He never changes. If I am where I am, it is because the Lord Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. I look not at my own experience, but my faith is in God whose Son, at His right hand, never changes." Yes, clouds may roll around us down here, but we ought to have a happy face and a bright heart, always able to rejoice in the Lord.

I may slip out of my body, but what of that? I shall find Christ on the throne, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If it comes to the thought that He is up in heaven and I down here; well! there can be no separation. I am one spirit with Him, one life with Him. I might give Him up, but He will not let me go; because He is there, I must be there, for He has made me obedient to faith.

When Peter cursed and denied his Lord, there

was not a waver in the affection of Christ, not a cloud on that brow as he turned round and looked on Peter, and Peter went out with a heart broken under the power of it.

How can that God of love be ever satisfied unless we walk like Christ? unless, in everything we do, the same principle is in us which was in the One who, being the highest, went down to the lowest, and took upon Him the form of a servant? Let the light of that principle displayed in Him, come right into your soul, so as to shine out in the world. You may have need of patience, there may be pressure and heaviness of spirit, but if God has shewn you the very delight of His heart, Christ in heaven, it is in order that you may forget your sorrows down here, saying, "Ah, there He is! and if the waves are breaking over me, none can break into the port where He is!" His people forget to look up, and get looking down and around at everything that is coming against them. Instead of looking for Him who is coming, you sink into the sand of the desert, and get your mouths and eyes full of it.

How blessed is the word, "Yet a little while (how *little* a while!), and he that shall come will come and will not tarry." It is sweet to be able to single out any face that tells out "In a little while He will come." In early times any that had houses and lands sold them, looking up full of joy because the Lord was coming. The question now is whether the thought of Christ's coming is strong enough to make our hearts bright under every trial.

I fear that there are very few of God's people of whom it can be said, "There is one whose *whole* heart is full of Christ—a man with this one thought ruling him, 'whether I live, I live unto the Lord, and whether I die, I die unto the Lord; living or dying, I am the Lord's.'"

The crown of which the Apostle speaks is not to be given for being a Christian, but for a faithful walk. Poor Lot will not have it, nor Demas. It ought to be a solemn thought to hearts, that the Lord means to notice how people have stood as witnesses for Him, and what sort of walk theirs was. All are to be in glory on the ground of free grace; but Christ watches to see if we run well, and will bestow a reward if there has been faithfulness, and a crown of righteousness if we have loved His appearing.

If there were no difficulties, you could not say that you know what it is to have Christ with you in them. You would not experience the tenderness of this Shepherd all the way that He carries the poor sheep from the far-off common where He picked it up, right into heaven. Oh will you not try—not in nature, but in the power of divine life—to realize the love of this Lord? and that if He has got His hand strongly upon you, it is to bear you up, that you may be looking for His appearing. I want bearing up until the time when He comes to take me to Himself; I want His strength made perfect in my weakness, the whole way through the wilderness.

We find sonship so blessedly brought out in John's Gospel. I find the Father's heart so near mine: as one lately departed said, "Not only has

He given me eternal life, but the Father enters into all my smallest wants; the least things about me are remembered, the Father's love and grace streaming round me."

Sonship is *relationship*. The Only-begotten came out of the divine glory, and every one who received Him became a son. If I am a son, then God is my Father, I can say, "Abba, Father." I get my rest there.

While in the Apocalypse, the church is represented as the vessel through which the glory of God and the Lamb will be displayed, yet there is a nearer place in the Father's house, and our being associated with Christ as *sons* will be our right and title to be there. All the saved will be in glory, but for the children given by the Father to the Son, it is the Father's house.

God takes all the blessing Christ won, and shares it all with us. There is a spring in the heart of God, flowing forth for us as sons, individually, for you and for me, for His name's sake. Not only the new and living way opened, but beloved in Him as sons. Not merely light streaming down, but a relationship established between us and God the Father.

We can follow and adore the Lord in all His course on earth, but not till He ascends into heaven can our fellowship with the Father and the Son be understood. Christ in heaven, and the Father looking on that Son of His love, and seeing all the people He has given Him as one with that Christ, the Lord quietly waiting till all who are given Him are presented there. Ah! I say, what a Christ this is! I can understand, seeing Him up

there, all the Father's delight in those who believe in Him, and all streams of heavenly blessing flowing down to them, because He is there. But not only is the living water flowing to the children of God, but there is another thing, that is, the wonderful communion of the Father and of that Son of His love, with the people who have received Him down here.

The power to walk in the eternal life given us is divine. There is not a struggle to give a thing up for Christ, without a power of joy flowing into the soul in *letting it go* for His sake; because you have got into communion with the divine nature. We do not expect to find a bag of gold in God's presence, but we look for the appearing and the kingdom, and if meantime we are accounted as the off-scouring of all things, we have the joy of communion with the divine nature. We have strength given us to break through everything: we are brought into an entirely new world by it.

I want to see saints with that steadfastness of soul, with that power of joy; not like Timothy with tears rolling down because of wilderness sorrow, but like Paul, putting everything right down, in the power of joy.

It is a solemn thought, as one stands on the earth, that He who, earth-rejected, sat down at the right hand of God in heaven—He in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—He who was the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person; seeing too our position, seated with Him in the heavenly places, it is, I repeat, a solemn thought that He has to claim the

heavenlies, and this earth where Satan has usurped the dominion.

It is not persecution that the people of God find now, but a slippery day, in which it is difficult to keep the feet. The hot blast of persecution is not so bad as the clear frost which, after a shower of rain, makes the ground slippery as glass; and that is the character of the day we live in. Little snares of Satan are on every side, the feet slip and slide, and you get discouraged—but why? God says, “Is not eternal life yours? Have I not pledged myself that it is? If you fail, Christ will not fail. If you slip, get up again and go on, you have eternal life in Him.” What! is your heart drooping when Christ in heaven is yours? Because you are going through the sea and cannot steer, are you drooping? Take hold of that little word (the promise of eternal life) and never let it go; and if others are inclined to be discouraged, saying, “We cannot go on, we see no way whatever to turn,” do you bring that word and see if they will not be ashamed. It is not only that Christ in heaven is ours, that Christ the very delight of the Father is ours, but there is in Christ our answer to everything.

The eternal life pledged to me in Thy Son, my God! *that* is what I have got; and that eternal life entirely changes death and the grave to me. The life of the body is corruptible, every day tending to corruption. What grace it is on Christ's part to sever the soul from it! But I have a life which is altogether new, a life born of incorruptible seed, which nothing has power to corrupt. It

is not only like pure water gushing out of a rock, but water of *such purity* and brightness, that you can neither colour nor corrupt it. But let us ask ourselves, "Has this eternal life been marking the life we are leading?" To-day, for instance, have we been passing *with it* through every duty? A saint has no business to do anything unless he can recognize Christ in it. If to-day you have been living a life in the body, indulging its lusts, wishing for this thing and that, you have not been walking as one who possesses the eternal life.

Redemption was no after-thought of God's. Eternal life was promised before the world began. (Titus i. 4.) Here we are in a system where everything turns on fallen man as the main object, but that which separates me from it is that I am in Christ's system in heaven; chosen in Him before this earthly system had a beginning, "before the foundation of the world." This thought gives great steadiness to the mind in all that we may be passing through. *His*, and kept by Him in every thing, and waiting on Him to see what He will do. If I left my body to-night, I should go straight to Him; and when He leaves the throne to come and take His people home, my body will go there too; the dead raised, the living changed, all made like Himself, all to stand around Him. He the centre, and they covered with all His beauty.

When God displayed His Son in the world it was as the One of whom He could say "He is the resurrection and the life." He abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. It was an eternal life that had light in it. It burst through the grave and made death an entirely different

thing to what it was before. By passing through death Christ destroyed death. He bore judgment to destroy judgment. God gave Him to it, and He willingly gave Himself. To nature, death is a dreadful thing; there is corruption, and that is all that remains of those we love best. A curtain across the path, and we cannot look through it; it is a dreadful thing. But the death of Christ has entirely neutralized death and destroyed its power, that is to say, to a saint. What is it in fact? When your work is done, you lay your head on your pillow, and go into the presence of the Lord, "absent from the body and present with the Lord."

You may be called to pass through a stronger trial of principle than any you have yet had. Suppose you were in prison, with none to love you, to comfort you, left all alone. But if so, there is the eternal life. I have to walk on earth as one who possesses it, and if so, have I to care what my circumstances may be? Sorrow, and nothing but sorrow, there may be for a time; but if I have the eternal life, I am soon to be up and above it all.

Works have their place; fruit has its place, but it is found at the end of the branches, it grows on a living tree. Not one work of ours can help to obtain life. God never says, "Give me anything," to an unconverted person; and there is all the difference in the world between coming to Him as a lost, ruined creature, and coming to Him as bringing something. There was not one work of mine. I am a ruined sinner saved by grace, "not according to works."

There can be no question of doing *till* there is life in Christ. But, when converted, not only is the believer "ordained to good works," but to particular works. The Jew was to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as Himself; but in the Epistles there is that which is far higher. I am not only to love God with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself; but to be willing to lay down my life for the brethren. If God in His grace is pleased to work in me to make me like Christ, I am to be the display of what Christ Himself was, and all my works are to spring from the root laid down in Christ. So far from bringing into bondage, works are the greatest privilege. Is a soul converted? it is the life of Christ given to that soul, and there is not a single occasion in which that life is not to be shewn forth, even in the giving of a tumbler of cold water. In your house, in every little thing that occurs, the Lord looks for fruit; everything may be used to express the life of Christ in you; and instead of its being bondage, it enhances our joy in everything down here, because of enjoying all in connection with Christ and with God. A believer is not justified in saying, "What can I do?" knowing that God in His greatness comes into every particular of his life. If it be the question of Christ being everything to a saint, Christ cannot *let him off* from manifesting it in all the outgoings of his life down here. What will you trade on? What will you put on the loom to weave? if it be not Christ.

Many may build wood, hay, and stubble on the true foundation, and be saved so as by fire; but how different their power to walk! How beautifully was there displayed in Paul the sense of his

fellowship with the life of Christ! He could say "Follow me as I follow Christ." His association with a risen Christ in life, flowed forth in such a way as to preach to all.

What was there in your soul or mine for Christ to love? Yet He loved us and washed us in His own blood. Did He do the work imperfectly? Did He leave streaks of sin upon us, or are we whiter than snow?

What magnificence in the thought that when He went into heaven, He went as the one who had made purgation for sin.

I, as an individual believer, can say "I am *quite sure* that He loved me and washed me from my sins in His own blood;" but more than that, I can say "I have Christ up there as a living Person ever at hand when I get into trouble."

I can have no relationship with God, save as being one on whom He sees the blood of His Son sprinkled; and that Son of His love is seated as Man at His right hand, with every capacity to feel as a man, and to mingle Himself with things that affect us down here.

His eye and His voice guide His people down here when they are near enough to hear and understand. Those who are so, know His mode of guiding, so that they know what He wants them to do. I do not see Him, but His eye is upon me, and I hear His voice behind me saying, "This is the way." Do you turn the thorns and the soil you may pick up by the way into so many the more reasons for walking with Him? Faith says, "There is a Man in heaven, and all the divine glory is connected with Him; I can walk with Him."

What would one do if instead of looking at Christ, one looked at all the billows and vanities down here, around or within? Here all conflict, up there all peace. Oh, the sweetness of that! and "Behold he cometh."

To know that I am Christ's, and bound up in one bundle of life with Him, is one thing; to say "I am a poor weak servant of His," is another thing, and it is yet another to be used by Christ as a messenger to His people; not only able to stand fast with little strength, but also to have direct messages from His heart of love to His people.

What shall we take into heaven? A glorified body, fit for the presence of Christ: but we have to keep ourselves unspotted down here too. We have to walk through the world as men who are clad in white robes—robes that ought not to have a spot on them. A person walking with defiled robes, will not care if they become more defiled; but one who has on a spotless robe will walk carefully and not allow it to get the least spot or mark to defile its purity.

Philippians iv. 17, 18. The Apostle Paul wanted every tree in the Lord's garden to bring forth *much* fruit, and he could rejoice in even such a thing as a little money being sent. He calls it "an odour of a sweet smell, acceptable to God." Turn to Ephesians v. 2, where it is written that Christ's giving Himself for us, was a sweet-smelling savour to God: and He has so made us one with Himself, He so fills everything connected with His people, that even a little money sent for His sake is called

an odour of a sweet smell. The fragrance of the divine love of the Lord Jesus, led their hearts out in love one to another, saying, "The Lord having loved us and given Himself for us, how shall we express our love?" It is a beautiful thing when passing over a clover field to inhale the sweetness of the odour it gives forth, but here was "an odour of a sweet smell" fit for God: not merely the contribution, but the blessed root from which it grew.

We are too little to carry home the thoughts of Christ. Some poor thing might say, "Ah, I have never done a thing for Christ!" but Christ may reply, "I have not forgotten *that cup of cold water* which you gave." There was no costliness in it, but *His name* was connected with it.

Even an expression of love to Christ, comes from the heart with a full savour of a sweet smell, acceptable and well pleasing to God.

Do you find yourself constantly praying for the church of God? Has it as large a place in your prayers as your own trials and difficulties? Do you say, "I know that all is working together for good as to my troubles, but how can I help praying for that which is so precious, so beautiful to Christ? I cannot give it a secondary place in my thought. I am going to live for it, in the same way that Paul did."

It is marvellous if you and I are walking in the power of the eternal life, what a quick scent it gives. If anyone goes into a dark room with a lantern he sees everything in that room which could not be seen without the light. Believers are vessels to carry the light of the glory of God which

shines in them from the face of Jesus Christ, in dark places.

How blessed to be able to say that the world has turned you out because it turned Christ out. If you are treading under foot all that is of the world and of the flesh, there will be abounding joy in every service. When the child of God is walking in the power of that life, there can be only one thought, one object, to be occupied with; saying, "There is Christ, and His whole heart is set on me; and here I am with a heart that is very little, but it is a very great thing to have that heart of mine occupied and filled entirely with Him, the eternal lover of my soul."

God says, "I have marked out a path for you, and if you do not walk in it, I am so near to you that my hand will be upon you." When Israel would not walk with God, He got a people to come against them and break them to pieces.

Did you never taste what the poor prodigal did when his father's arms were round him? The flowing of God's mercy to your soul, is not from any suitability in yourself to receive it, but from the strange marvellous ways of God. When His mercy reaches the soul, it comes with the revelation of the character of God in love.

We ever see the heart of man in nature seeking blessing through the law, but the heart of God seeking blessing for man through Christ. If after receiving the Spirit, man would add something of his own to that which is the mind of God for him, the whole is spoilt; let the

*smallest* thing be brought in, all is spoilt in God's mind.

All were exposed to the curse of a broken law, till Christ was marked out as holy by the very law which cursed all besides. In Romans vi., we see all that Christ has given us, in contrast with the law. If it comes to me to do anything it is only this, how to get faith in that blessed Lord Jesus. Having got that faith, the poor sinner can say, "I have died and have been raised up together with Christ, and God has got Him at His own right hand for me, and what can disturb or destroy my peace when God has said, 'I have found a hiding-place for you ; you are raised up together with Christ, and your life is hid with Him in me.' " (Col. iii. 3.)

A man in Christ stands on other ground, on a new principle altogether, from that of the natural man. He is before God without guilt. Looking up where Christ is, can you see your sins? No. What takes them away? Christ's having left them in the grave, and God having raised Him to His own right hand, and you with Him: He the Head, we the members ; one life with Him. This gives unity : Christ is the source of it. God has made us one Spirit with Him, and I am required to be like Christ in everything—an epistle of Christ. But what presses most on my heart is unity, not outward unity of the flesh, but unity of heart and spirit, one with the other, of those who are one in Christ. Ought not my heart to feel united to every believer, because I am one with him in our risen Lord? When I see that God has raised Him and made Him my Head, ought I not to realize unity among the members? United

by one Spirit to the Son, there is nothing between Him and us.

You cannot have eternal life without the responsibility of walking according to it. If I have it in Christ and in God, I must act on it, it must be seen in my practice. Oh, I would urge with power the earnest desire that the walk of all who have this eternal life be worthy of it: each one saying in his walk, "I am a living member of Christ, and I am going to live as one who has eternal life." Think of the effect! your walk would be like Christ's walk, following in His footprints, bringing everything into the light of that eternal life, to see how it will look there. It is entire freedom. I am as free as the eternal life is free; but if I have this life in Christ, I am a servant of Christ, and must walk according to the mind of Him who has given it to me.

It ennobles a Christian immensely to know and to feel that he is a channel through which the life of Christ is to flow out.

All is perishing and fading down here, but I know a living and unchangeable Christ above.

Paul could say, "I not only know that I have eternal life in Christ, but I know Christ Himself as a living Person before me." Do you know that living Christ as a Man in heaven with all affections in His heart? I do know in whom I have believed; I know His ability to keep me. I could not keep myself for a day. Ah, but there is that Christ. Were He to leave me, I should perish, or fear to turn out a hypocrite some day. But He

*will* keep me. He is my Trustee—a Trustee that cannot change.

If Christ were to save me from the world and from Satan, and not from self, what should I do? I have a self-will of my own. Christ must save us from self, and that is why we often get falls. Peter had a good opinion of himself, and the Lord let him alone. David was allowed to go down into the depths of evil, that he might learn how unlike he was to David's Lord. If anyone knows Christ, he will know Christ's willingness to save from self; he will be able to say, "Ah, there is One up there who if He has to break my heart to pieces in order to break self, will yet keep me unto that day."

Your body may be perishing, and all about you be broken up; well, never mind, you can say, "Eternal life is mine." Say it to yourself again and again, and walk in the power of it.

There were certain reasons why Peter and John walked on earth with Christ—God manifest in flesh: they had the blessed privilege of it, but every vessel is made for its particular purpose, and He who made them could use one where He could not use another; the living water filling each in readiness to be used, because He had made *that* vessel for *that* particular purpose. In Peter, John, and Paul, you get vessels through whom God gave the truth.

It is sweet to have communion with saints in the truth; but after all the heart has to live with God.

The great thing is, beginning and ending with

Christ—the same Christ that first quickens the soul, renews it unto the end.

One reason why Christians go so weakly, is that they are not occupied enough with Christ: if we want to be strong we must be full of Christ—going through no service without remembering that we have a living Christ with all power and with all capacity to enter into every feeling of our minds, and every movement of our hearts as we pass along.

The path of sorrow may be yours, but you cannot say that you are “The Man of sorrows.” You may be in depths that you cannot lie in—“poured out like water”—but He, the Man of sorrows, has a heart to meet you in everything! He entered Himself into every sorrow—*His* experience makes all ours beggarly. If one looks at the experience of Abraham and others, we find *His* infinitely larger. *His* sorrow was without sin. Sin falsifies it in us in a measure. In trial, I am a sinner, and I shall be sure to give way to the flesh in some point or other; but there was not the smallest particle of dross to mar the perfection of that Man of sorrows; not a particle was there to come out in Him, as it does in us, of the flesh or of fleshly evil.

We could not fully know what the flesh and the world were, save as in contrast to Christ; He is the touchstone of everything, and He filled this scene, as He passed through it, with the beautiful manifestation of the character of God. If I could not go to Him when I find sin working in me, what refuge should I have? Ah, blessed Lord! cannot I count on Thee to come in, if I find hypocrisy or anything else? Amid all the strange

things that come up in this heart of mine, my soul needs to be where (with the sense of everything being against me in connection with the flesh, the devil, and the world) I am yet able to say *God is for me*, and if He be for me, who against me!

People have often a much clearer view of the work of Christ than they have of what it is to walk with Christ, as a living person ever occupied with them; and until they get this, they will not walk with Him. We cannot walk with Christ in that vivacity of joy, and power of the Holy Ghost, which the early Christians had, unless we know Christ as a living person with His eyes ever fixed upon us.

We love Christ because He first loved us. We find that love expressed in John xiv.; He took us up at the hand of God, and loved us on that ground—"The men which thou gavest me." "Thine they were and thou gavest them me." He puts forth His love to us as a divine thing in Himself, entirely irrespective of what we are. He might have to say to Peter, "You have faith in your own love to me, yet before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice;" nevertheless He could say to him, as to them all, "Let not your heart be troubled, I shall go away [and 1800 years would pass], but I shall come and fetch you, that you may be with me for ever." See when He says three times to Peter, "Lovest thou me?" how He is bringing off Peter from resting on his own love, to rest with implicit confidence in the love of Him who knew all things.

Everything is ours in Him. Having given Him to us, how shall God not with Him freely give us all things? What will He keep back?

## GLEANINGS.

The love of God is a love that gathers us into the presence of God Himself; a love that communicates the life of His Son to those dead in trespasses and sins; and they possess a life that is locked up in the Son, never to be touched. Is it true that you can turn to God and say *that* is the manner of life you possess? Life hid with Christ in God! If Christ Himself, up there, is my life, it links me up with Him in whom is the whole bundle of life. If the head could not say to the feeblest member passing through the difficulties and sorrows of the wilderness down here, "I have no need of thee," why is it? Because of being bound up in one bundle of life, that life being communicated by the Father, and being so in us that Christ cannot say He has no need of us. Did you ever look up in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the consciousness of having *one life* with Him? If so, you cannot entertain a single question about the place you are in before God. If you have the eternal life that is in the only-begotten Son, you cannot look up without seeing that you are in a new place altogether before God.

Looking round Eden, man might have said, What a large giver God is! But what can *we* say, as those to whom this life has been given? Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son!

If you possess that life, you have found and will be finding out, till you go to Him, or till He comes to take you to Himself in a glorified body, what a contrast you are to Him; but it is not a question of what *you are*, but of the portion that has flowed to you from the Father.

If I begin with self, there is nothing but ruin.

Is there anything to be got out of the ruin? any want felt there of God? Impossible that there could be! I begin with God, not with self. If God uses my sin to shew out the virtues of the blood of His Son, am I to be occupied with *Him*, or to be saying, "My leanness, my leanness!" *Your leanness!* how came you to be calculating on anything in yourself? If you bring an empty vessel, you can keep it full to overflowing if you put it into a cistern of water, even if there be a crack or flaw in the vessel.

The proper expression of a redeemed soul is thanksgiving, that such a manifestation of the divine will should have come out—the deepest, highest, brightest, fullest, most blessed counsels of God, having their expression in Him who said, "Lo, I come to do thy will."

Who was that babe laid there in a manger? What could it mean, those angels saying, "Glory to God on high"? God could look down on that babe, and see there the perfect expression of His glory. All God's glory came out in connection with the person of Him who said, "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he who hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father."

After all the self-denial of Christ for me, is there to be none from me for Him? When He says, "I bought you with my own blood, I charged myself with all your guilt," am I never to say, "Anything that is not for the glory of Christ I will renounce?"

How beautiful to be on those terms with God,

that we find in the word certain individuals were on with Him !

By intercourse with Christ in heaven, you get the perfect answer to every question : Christ in heaven is God's answer to everything.

“Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ.” What are those spiritual blessings? Not the golden city, but we find that we are brought so near to Christ that everything we want we get in Him. That God can look on us with the same delight as on Christ, because we are hidden in Him. He cannot stop the flow of His affection and delight in Christ, and so it all flows on us. We are before God in all the completeness of Christ's work in the removal of everything He had against us. Christ charged Himself with everything, and all God's delight is in the work of that Son of His love. All the perfection of what *He is* and of what *He has*, He gives to us; we are blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in Him ; amongst them we are quickened, raised up, seated in heavenly places in Him. All the blessings connected with the place where He is sitting are ours. Are you realizing that you are before God as one dead, buried, and risen, with Christ? People find it so difficult to believe that God sees them without spot or wrinkle, *in Christ*.

If you and I knew a little more about Christ's ways, we should get a great deal more communion when we come together ; we should speak more of those things which we possess in Christ as our portion.

I never get near Christ as an individual without the consciousness that the Holy Ghost is mine, so

also I never get near Christ without the consciousness of having power to do what He wants. He has the power, and I have only to go forward *with Him* and I shall never fail.

If I were to say "All is wreck and ruin, and all I can do is to sit down like Lot in Sodom," I should not find Christ uncovering His glory *there*. But if I say, "This state of things will not do, I must be holy, I must be separate from all that is not in character with Christ," then He could say that *that* is like Himself, and that if I am not going to forget the Holy One, He will not forget me.

What an unspeakable comfort it is that there is a glory of Christ connected with individuals! He might shut the door and put you aside—would you find no sweetness in being able to say, "*Christ* has shut the door"? Which is best, the door being shut by Christ, or opened by man? In a hundred ways He may shut the door: I must not struggle like a naughty child because He has shut it. He cannot deal in full blessing with a soul till it can say, "Thy will be done." If I sit down quietly, because He would have me sit down, then He can say, "Rise up and go out; whether you sit down or go out, you are acting as the expression of my will."

To me it is a more real thing knowing Christ as a man in heaven, than seeing Him as His followers did when down here. God has let the *reality* of His being there into my heart, and the light of that reality shines forth in rays that come to me right down from heaven. I call this, faith in living exercise; but I may have faith, and yet ma-

not be dwelling on the reality of a living Christ in heaven. My heart may not be up there, with all its feelings gathered up to Him.

Salvation has a divine as well as a human side. Nothing that God had created could satisfy Him, save to have Christ as man sitting on His throne. Ah! His ways are not as our ways. God's glory in redemption was to shew how low He could let the Son of His love stoop—in letting Him go down to the death of the cross—break His heart in woe—and then to set Him as the centre of a new system as the Lamb slain. Would that be according to *man's* thought of glory? But God would have His own way, and all His glory shone forth in redemption. His glory is to have heaven filled with poor sinners, brands plucked from the burning. And His Christ finds Himself sitting patiently waiting 1800 years for heaven to be so filled.

Can you say, "Ah! that Lord Christ has washed me from my sins, yes, washed me after a fashion which none but He could have had the least idea of; and He is waiting now, but soon He will rise up—and may such an one as *I* go up and be accepted? Yes. Why? Because the whole place is filled with the fragrance of the work done by the One in whom I am accepted."

I was for years endeavouring to find God, but like a bull in a net struggling and striving to do something first for myself, not knowing that God had done something for me; till I looked into heaven (thus an earthen vessel gets turned up to the light) and there I saw the very thing to suit a poor sinner—a God of grace, in Christ; in a place where there is not a single element of the place I

am in now. And I am brought into the light shining there, the light that makes everything here easy to be read and gathered up.

If you ask me to measure sin, there is no measure for it but the cross. There alone can you form any idea of what the intolerancy of God is to sin. If looking up by faith to the One crucified there, the cross will be your mark by which to measure everything in you.

There is no charge against me, for Christ has met it all, and perfected me for ever. The blood shed for sinners, ever pleads in the presence of God, and not only can I be perfectly free from guilt there, but God delights to give me all that Christ has and is.

If God has cast seed into a heart, ruined thing by nature though it be, He expects something to come forth for Himself out of that seed. His eye is looking down on Christians, and ah! must He not say they are not like what they were on the day of Pentecost? Do any say, Circumstances are not what they were then? Ah! He will not measure you by what circumstances are, but by Himself. He comes forth to Laodicea as the true and faithful witness. That is the character in which He tests and tries everything. Are those eyes fixed on me? fixed in searching power, fixed with unwavering purpose, on me, the eyes of that One who has responsibility to keep me, because of my being part of the bride down here? Thank God they are!

Can you say that the One who never had a thought apart from the Father's will, and who

knows no blessing apart from that will, is occupied with you, and that He regulates all your blessing in accordance with that will?

Does it *suit* you to be in the place where the light comes down on you to bring out your ways and walk as an individual? Once you and I did not like the light. What! everything to be brought out? If everything *is* to be brought out at the judgment-seat of Christ, what think you of Christ's eye being on you now, reading in the light everything in you that is practically inconsistent with it? He must act in thorough consistency with Himself; if He finds anything of death allowed to work in me, He must say, "I did not take you up for that, but for *life* to work in you. I do not forget that you are mine, and I am watching you as one predestined to be conformed to my image." If you have to say, "There is no one who loves me enough to find fault with me, not enough to couple me with Christ so as to find out *in* me all that is contrary to Christ and tell me of it," there is one who does; Christ Himself!

Up to the last moment He says, "I stand at the door and knock;" up to the last, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and I will sup with him and he with me." Can you say that He who is Jehovah's fellow has been occupied with you, calling upon you to hear His voice? Ah! it is only wonderful that He should have gone on so long. What a mark of His grace! The professing thing, *as a whole*, set aside, and He calling on individual saints, saying, to each individually, "If you have heard my voice and open the door," &c., bringing you into com-

panionship with Himself, putting you on terms of mutuality—that is *His* heart. Judgment is coming on the mass, but He is saying, “Do *you* come out, and sup with me.” The *heart* that has got hold of the gospel, knows the force of that expression, “I will sup with him,” knows what companionship with Him is.

Are we in the wilderness down here, labouring through the sand and clay? And never was the labour more heavy for those who are not of this world, than in this our day; but Christ says, “Weigh all that I shall give to him that overcometh.” Contrast it with all your toil and suffering below, and what are your difficulties? Will the having passed through them be a strange thing to you at the end? No! Though the horizon of difficulties, like the horizon as one mounts to the top of a hill, appears to be higher and higher, the farther you get, yet Christ sets against them all, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.”

It is amazing to be able to look back at the cross and say in God’s presence, “Blessed Son of God and Son of Man, Thou didst bear the whole of God’s wrath for me, and now Thou art at God’s right hand for me.” Amazing thing that I should be able to look up there and know Thee in the glory as the One who bore my sin! Thine eye coming right down on me, saying, There is one with whom I can have intercourse in the power of that light which shines down from me into his heart.” Think of that Lord Christ looking down at any of you and saying, “Where is that poor sinner

whom I saved from wrath? I must have him up here, he must come and sit down with me in my throne." Ah! blessed Lord, what manner of love is thine? How could such love flow on the ground of my deserving it? Never! It would shock any mind if a poor sinner were to say, "*I have a right to shine in glory.*"

If I am a quickened soul, raised up with Christ and brought to God, knowing Him as the living and true God, do I owe nothing to the God who has done it? Should I like it to be proved that God has not an open hand to receive anything from me? Should I not be unutterably sad if my heart, standing in such blessing, could find no God to render its *little bit* of service to? Having brought us where we are, is it not unutterably blessed that He would have us there rendering up the fruit of our lips for what He has done? It is from the continual realization of what He has done, that praise flows forth; and oh! how it brings out the exceeding magnificence of God in His greatness, that can take notice of the very smallest things. What a little breath, breathed forth in a few words of praise, an "acceptable sacrifice!" One can understand *Christ's* sacrifice being acceptable—that one sacrifice by which we are perfected for ever. But does the same Spirit, after telling us of that, turn round to you and to me, saying, "I look to you to offer sacrifice?" What! can God accept as sacrifice a little breath, embodying to my soul the thought of what He has done? Yes! and I am to offer it to Him continually as the fruit of the lips giving thanks to His name.

There is a poor thing on a sick bed, lisping

praises, and God having an ear to listen to and accept that sacrifice of praise. I was with a dying one who was full of uncertainty as to what would be her end; I said, "Would it not be better to use up the little time remaining to His glory?" "What!" she answered, "I, gasping here, able to do anything for His glory?" "Yes, if you take all you are suffering from His hand, saying to it all, Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight, He will settle with His Son all about your end, on the one hand; and on the other hand, be listening for your sacrifice of praise." All love on one hand, and all magnificence on the other.

The great secret of getting to the sunny side of sorrow is to get to its divine side. Who can say they are able to give thanks in *all* things? It is very happy when one can, then one will not be on the world's side, but will see God in everything; and that is the divine side, where the soul gets perfect rest in God, seeing *all* ordered by Him.

It is what is within, that forms what comes from us. If you do not know that you are saved, you will be asking God to fill the void in you, not knowing how things stand between your soul and God; but if you know that you are saved, your soul will be bursting out in praise. With John at Patmos it was not "O that He might love me!" but seeing Christ, the first thought of his quickened heart was, "Oh that is He who loves me!" and his soul at once wants to express something of its rapture. "Unto *Him*." *Who?* Ah, a well-known One, that One who has washed us from our sins in His own blood. That *first* thing must ever be before

the mind. If the heart is not settled in peace, by knowing the personal love of the Lord Jesus in having washed us from our sins, every day will bring something to startle us and prevent our doing one thing for Him.

Do I know that Christ has brought me near to God? then I cannot go on a step without feeling a spiritual want to praise and worship God.

Ah, shall I not say when I see the worthy One in the very highest place in heaven, "He is the only worthy One?" And if suffering for Him down here, will not the going forth of my heart be all praise?

No one but the Lamb slain is recognized in heaven as worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing, in the place where God is, all laid down before the Lamb.

If we look at Him now, with all the glory of that place given to Him who is to have all things, and say, "But are not man's misery and sin to shut him out of that place?" The answer is that we have absolutely nothing to bring to Him except our sin and misery, but the love which met it all has given us a claim to be there. And just because of that misery and that love, we can say, There is a house of mercy where crimson and scarlet stains can be washed white, and He who leads all the redeemed people before God in heaven, is the only One to be praised. Who shall be praised save He who for deep crimson stains gives robes of white? Only that One is worthy; not only washing you and bringing you there, but the thought of *reward* in His heart towards you! He will not forget the least thing done with an eye to Him—every cup of cold water marked. "Lord, when saw we thee an

hungred or thirsty?" Ah, it is His own way, "ye did it unto me." When we shall hear Him praise His people, the deep feeling of our hearts will be, "Ah, it is like Himself, and He alone deserves all the praise!"

Can you take your place before God with the thought of all His light breaking in on you, to shew nothing but rags and tatters, nothing whatever in you to fit you for His presence, but that same light shewing you what He is for you there, and that He has given you His Christ as your fitness?

If you are in the enjoyment of settled peace with God, you will be standing in it with the conviction that the only thing worth living for is to please Christ. If you have not that peace, self will be at work to obtain it: "*My* house is not so with God, *I* am not this, or that."

It was God's thought to connect you in life with Christ, and you must not for a moment look at yourself apart from that Christ. God connects you eternally with Him. You are bound up for eternity in the same "bundle of life" with Him. Ah, if eternal life in Christ is yours, you can take that as a girdle to gird up the loins. The body may be perishing, all about you broken up; well, never mind (may you say), eternal life is mine. Say it to yourself again and again, and walk in the power of it.

Can you say I know Him who is life—light, so that I have got light about myself and about God. About myself as a ruined creature, about God as having given me rest in Christ; being able to be in His presence and in the presence of the Lord

Jesus in the light, conscious of there being no condemnation for me. If I see if I am in the light, I am not like a blind man groping for a wall. All things stand out in the plain light of life that shines out from Christ with all the brilliancy and transparency that He who expresses the whole mind of God can give it. Where do I see the light of eternal life? In the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. I see it in the Person of Him who is presented as the light of the world.

What was Christ's character in the world? He was "full of grace and truth." So full, so overflowing as a fountain, that every empty vessel brought to it He would fill—the waters flowing over to all, in all circumstances. A man might have looked up to heaven and said, "Why, there, up there, is the Man I spit upon, and He is saying 'If you call upon me, you shall be saved.'" A poor puny worm having treated *God* like that, and He saying "You are in an awful position, yet look up to me here, I can give the Holy Ghost to any who call upon me." So with Saul of Tarsus; the eternal light and life was stronger than man's darkness. Saul left his darkness and death, to go in the power of that life, and be a servant of the Lord Christ who had looked down upon him.

Do you know the Being who has a life that never had a beginning? You had no being before you were born: compare the life you have with that of a Being who never had a beginning.

God had a plan for the glory of His Son, and that plan was to shew the perfection of the

Son's obedience, and that perfection of obedience to be followed by His being raised up to the perfection of glory at the right hand of God, the Father of glory.

In Revelation iv., v., I see the glory of the place He is in. A certain Lamb is there in the midst of the throne. Co-equal with the Lord God Almighty as the object of worship, the place of glory that that Lamb is in, is as complete as it possibly could be. It is the place of perfect light. The believer can go right up to the throne of God, because the Lamb is in it.

This blessed One was raised up and planted by God at His own right hand, to be the centre of all, and of every heart. Oh, have we got self as our centre, or this One who is the centre of all God's dealings, and is all His delight. A living Man in heaven, making all new. If you were to pick out the best down here to be a centre, you would only find in him the first Adam. What a different centre to bind things round is this Christ of God! If He made Himself the centre round which to bind a man like Paul, everything of sorrow and difficulty which Paul went through, became the means of binding him more and more closely round Christ.

Do you ever, like Peter, find your heart searched by Christ's "Lovest thou me?" and followed by some such sweet little word as "Feed my lambs?" You may have been very weak, very inconsistent, but still able to say to that blessed Searcher of hearts, "Thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love thee, and could not do without thee, now and at all times."

What broke in upon the heart of Saul was the beauty of the eternal Son of God, who had come to Calvary and shed His blood, and gone back to heaven; and there that Son of God had a heart to look round the earth and appropriate to Himself one who had been a blasphemer and an enemy, and to make of him a model man.

Look at the glory of that One who was with God, and was God, from all eternity, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will;" and then, having come and perfectly accomplished that will, going back into His own eternity, that all the riches of God's grace might be read in Him in the very dwelling-place of God, in the light no man approacheth unto. He alone could say, He alone had a right to say, "*Lo, I come to do thy will.*" None but the eternal God in His own eternity could have said it. He, in eternal glory, knew the mind of God. He alone could do the will of God—carrying out all His plans and counsels. He knew that what was nearest to the heart of God was the removal of the barrier between man and God, and He said, "Lo I come to do thy will, even to the death of the cross, in order to remove it, and to connect believers with Himself in relationship with God, so that He could say 'My Father and your Father, my God and your God.'"

He has no more to do, there is no more offering for sin; but through His work we have boldness to enter into the holiest. We have perfection of access into God's presence by the blood. We are brought there now in spirit, through faith, but soon He will come and take us as the fruits of redeeming love, in bodies fashioned like His own, radiant with glory.

“I know thy poverty, but thou art *rich*.” What did the Lord mean by “rich?” To the divine mind the most beautiful works are of the character marked here: “but thou art rich.” If Christ said to the Syrophenician, “Oh, woman, great is thy faith,” to His mind she was the richest person in the world. It was the expression of His own work in her, but she shewed a character of faith that He could not but commend. He treasures her faith. It is not a little thing in a day like the present, to have faith.

What a difference when things are looked at on the heavenly side! How different Paul saying, “Take away the thorn,” and the Lord saying, “No, I shall not, you shall keep it, because I want you to have an excuse for leaning on me.” What a poor thing was Paul’s “take it, take it, take it away”—the poverty of the vessel comes out.

One has had a bitter cup, and has been able to say, “Father, I will drink it:” ah, but to put the cup down to be filled again and again, as fast as one could drink it—the Father giving it as the greatest possible expression of His love. And when one has passed through it, seeing it to have been so.

The address to the church of Smyrna begins with a divine title, “the First and the Last.” If you get into eternity, you find that this Son of God never had a beginning. He was with God, and was God, *in* the beginning. The thought of eternity to come is more easy for the human mind to grasp, than the thought of eternity behind,

without beginning. I have in the eternal life given to me a new order of being. If I drop the body, the life goes up to Him who gave it. There are many spirits absent from the body up there. Paul and Peter are there, with no hindrance, walking about where all is bright and beautiful. Who secures the joy and perfection of it? Who came down, went to the grave, and rose again? Who drops that side of the curtain, save the One who stood and held open the other side? The blessed Lord who became dead, and He lives. They killed the Prince of Life, but before He became man He was the eternal God. That *Man* spoke of Himself as the First and the Last.

In the persecution raised by Satan against those whom he hates because they are Christ's, what a difference if you look at being cast into prison by the devil, with the thought of his having got his own way at last, or if you say "God told me before I was put into the furnace, that He would put me there to be tried, in order that, as a specimen of His own handiwork, I might shine in it." It is important to take everything from the Father's hand; important to look at the trials of others in the same way—saying to a tried Christian, "If not a sparrow falls without the Father, how could you be in this trial without the Father?" What a difference when things are looked at on the heavenly side, feeling that whatever comes of suffering or difficulty, we have got the sunny side with Christ.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The contrast here between the death of the body, and the life, is very beautiful: the death ending the union of the believer's

body and soul, *this* being the dissolution. "Be faithful till I take your quickened soul home."

John could say of Christ, "He was a Man down here whom we looked upon and our hands handled, but I never think of Him under any other character than that of the only-begotten Son of God." (God manifest in flesh.)

"I beseech you, abide in him, that when he appears, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed;" that is, He has set us to work, to preach and to build you up in Him, and we want to see you all so walking that we may have gladness of heart when He appears, because of not having laboured in vain. This thought of John's in connection with the appearing is touching, but not the same as Paul's joy at standing in the presence of Jesus with his dearly beloved Thessalonians round him. The fruit of his ministry will be his crown of rejoicing in the Lord's presence with all the blessedness that belongs to it—the grace of Christ being sufficiently large to admit of Paul's joy at that crown. People say, "What, shall we think of *any other* in the glory save the Lord?" Surely of none like *Him*. (I shall worship Christ but never Paul.) But while giving Christ the place which *He only* can have in every heart up there, my soul would exceedingly miss it if the Lord would not allow my affections to be there in connection with those dear to me down here; and so Paul says, "What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing, is it not even ye? who are the fruit of our labour for him in whose presence ye will be with us, at his coming?" A

great many things will rejoice us in the glory, and *you* are one of them, a *crown* of rejoicing. Paul expected every groan in the wilderness to shine in the glory, and it may well be so, for it is life down here, the life of Christ in the soul, and it will not be another life when in glory. It will be the same life that was displayed in different circumstances down here, that will be displayed there.

Every vessel will be filled up to the brim in the glory; but there will be the difference between big and little vessels. If I saw Paul walking in the glory, I should understand the difference between large and little vessels; and should I not delight to see *him* honoured of Christ, who wrote many and many a blessed sentence in my soul? delight to see him there within with Christ, enjoying the reward of his much suffering here, up there where will be the full manifestation of everything.

If you cannot *see* Christ with you in the furnace, you can be quite sure He *is* there. What though I were in the deep three days and three nights, if I have Christ with me there! Whatever the place I am brought into, I shall find sweetness if He is with me. O do not let Christ have the second place! It is to be nothing else than Christ and you, and you and Christ, all the way through the wilderness. Let Him always be the only object before your mind. Refuse to see anything save with Him. Having Him you will find strength for everything.

The very taste of weakness should link the heart with strength in another—with that One whose strength is made perfect in the creature's weakness.

Wherever the flesh appears, there is something that Satan can touch, and unless we judge ourselves, can turn to grief of heart in us and dishonour to God.

If you have not a thorn in the flesh now, it will be sure to be given you one day, to make you realize your weakness. The pitiful *beggarliness* of the flesh makes you ashamed to speak about what you are passing through, to any but the Lord. There will be different thorns for each.

We are washed as clean as God could wash us, but we have to walk down here where we find difficulties of every sort. If you say "I cannot get over *that*," Christ says "I am there to help, you have got my hand to deliver you. Poor crippled thing that you are, *you* cannot jump over that river, but *lean on me*, and so get over."

"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear. I had no ear to hear till God opened it; and now that it is opened, I shall not take in any voice but the Shepherd's. He, the eternal lover of my soul, the One who laid me as a lost sheep on His shoulder, He alone has a right to be heard; and what does He say? Ah, it is very searching when He who knows the heart tells me what He would have me do. Blessed Lover of my soul! dost thou say, "Stoop down and pick up that poor thing?" Dost thou say, "Come up hither?" Hast thou called me to give up life or health? Could I say if God were to bring the Turks over this country, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight?"

"Who is he that overcometh the world, but he

that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Faith in Him as Son of God on high is the power to overcome. As a child of the Father I must be an overcomer. That which as a "young man in Christ" I overcame, I must now overcome if I am a father in Christ. I have to be daily overcoming the world, self, and Satan. I have as an overcomer to realize my connection with the One who completely overcame everything, and is seated up there as the proof of it. We cannot run up the bright shining way, save as overcomers, and He who overcame will help you to press on because He has overcome. It is exceedingly blessed; God giving the revelation of a reserved portion for the overcomers. (Rev. ii. 3.)

It is very blessed when passing through all the trials and difficulties of work down here, to look at Him who came down to battle with Satan; all the sorrow in the world not equal to His sorrow; and the One who was obedient even to the death of the cross, drinking the cup of wrath. Most blessed, I repeat, to see Him set down on the throne of God because He overcame, and calling on His people to overcome even as He did.

Soon He will leave the Father's throne and take a throne in which we can sit with Him, and He with us. *Is it a fact* that you and I, individually, shall sit down with Christ in His throne? *Yes, it is*; and when He has taken up and presented the church, without spot or wrinkle, to Himself, He will seat her with Himself in glory. (Rev. iii. 21.) Often one hardly knows how to get through the trials down here; but the fruit of them remains, for which the overcomer will bless God for ever.

How we see the Lord dealing in different ways with souls in the wilderness, to bring home to their hearts that all flesh is grass! Whether it be by the agony of sorrow or by a taste of the glory, what a withering sense we again and again have that all flesh is grass! and with it, that all the sympathies of a Father are for us.

The flesh must be broken. The Lord can use us then, not while it is unbroken. While Paul was writhing under Satan's thorn, he could get some estimate, though not a full one, of what the flesh is as God sees it. When it was broken, and Paul did not know what to do, the Lord came to pour sympathy into the writhing heart of Paul.

Ah, what a marvellous display of love comes out to fill the soul with joy at the very time that the Lord is teaching us our own nothingness and misery. When one sees the thought of God and of Christ, in the breaking down of the flesh in us, how one should joy in Him and rejoice! Better, saith Christ, be a poor weak creature in utter weakness, than have any amount of power without "*my* strength."

In Paul we see "a man in Christ" in the third heavens, losing—in what he was in Christ—all sense of the weakness of the flesh, and then coming down to the full experience of utter weakness, and having all Christ's sympathy at the bottom of the will. These blessed tastes the Lord gives us of our portion in Himself. But we shall never know, in anything of its fulness, what that portion is, save as we realize Paul's blessed experience as "a man in Christ." As men whose feet touch the earth, we must have the experience of utter weakness. As a man in Christ, Paul does not speak of the

flesh, but whilst we are in the body, there must be discipline to hinder the flesh shewing itself out.

When people fail, we are inclined to find fault with them, but if you look more closely, you will find that God had some particular truth for them to learn, which the trouble they are in is to teach them.

I would press two things : the difference between life in the soul, and the light always streaming down from Christ. If Paul deviated from his course, that cast no shadow on the heart of Christ, but Paul must be corrected for it.

The action of faith in the believer's soul is very simple, it is the *realization* in the soul of the *nearness of Christ*—a groan caught up by Him in a moment, every fear, every sigh, marked by Him. When the sun is shining on you, you do not measure its distance from you ; but walking in its beams, you can look up and see how bright the light that is shining down upon you. And so if your eye be single, light comes right down from Christ and guides you—there is no care, no anxiety of yours which is not a care and anxiety of His. Why should I have any burden on my heart to trouble me, when I may take it all to Christ?

Believe me, you can only plead with God as you know Christ. He alone is the channel by which God can bless.

No one can get above circumstances unless he knows that he has the ear of God. The power of intercession is a great thing to the servant of God.

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among

us! Do you know *this One*? *Who* is He? Ah, the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And we beheld His glory. No veil concealed it, there was the full revelation of a higher glory than the lower glory of creation work. The glory of the Only-begotten of the Father. In God's own eternity, the only One who could reveal God. If any one were to say, "Where shall I see the glory of that God who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto," a saint would answer, "Do not you know that there is One who came out of that glory to shew God to us?" God manifesting Himself in flesh. When I see Him, I see all the beauty, the glory, the character of God in Him. And He is just the One to suit an undone sinner. Man's ruin and rebellion, and all that Satan has done for us, was just as a background for the shewing out of all the bright glory and beauty of this One, in whose face we see all the glory of God and the Father.

If you have a thought of God being against you the answer is, "Why is He who bore our sins now upon the throne? If He is there because of having done a work upon the cross which perfectly satisfied God, and if God sees every one who believes in Him as dead, buried, and risen *in Him*, how can there be any question about that person's acceptance?" This is what I call His death being brought into the soul; and if you do not thus count yourself to be dead in His death, you will find the old nature working in an extraordinary way; and your heart will go out after everything of the old man, if you have not so taken in this truth as to have it become a part of your very

being that you are crucified with Him—dead, buried, and risen with Christ.

I beseech you, carry about in your body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in you, as you pass through the world: not having a word to say for self, not coming with *I, I*; not wishing and hoping to become more *worthy*—not *I* at all, but reckon yourself to be *dead*. Had not Paul thoroughly done with self, when he could say, “Not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God?”

The prophet Habbakuk gets up into his watch-tower and strikes the key-note of the gospel: “The just shall live by faith.” He gets into the presence of God, and only watches for what *He* will say. He had not a single thing besides and he says, “If you want to be justified it must be by faith.” This did not alter Habbakuk’s circumstances, but his soul being occupied with the secret of God was kept at rest.

One who has faith takes God’s estimate—does not look for the evidence of his own senses, but says, Let me hear what *God* says, He must be true. What God says will come into constant collision with what is in myself, but I have to say, “Let God be true and every man a liar.”

If any one says, “I have faith in the blood, and I am sure I shall be in heaven at last,” and that person is mixed up in all the rubbish of this world, does God take no count of it? *Yes*, and most surely God will bring, will *drag* His people

out of Sodom, perhaps just as the whole thing is about to be destroyed. He knows how to pull them out, and I delight to see Him doing it, *forcing* them out, and making them *go up hill* into glory, whether they like it or not.

The Lord makes His people act, not by their feelings, but by the reality of the place they are in; makes them act as those who are in His presence.

If the world offers a Christian any advantage, he should look at it and say, "It will not become me to accept it—I am one seated in heavenly places, I have but one object in life." Whatever the world could offer him he should turn from it, because a man cannot have two objects, if he be a heavenly-minded saint. The savour and root of everything, to such an one, is Christ up there, and he does not want to be a prosperous man down here, where Christ had no place.

What a thought! to be so one with Christ, so living Christ, that we have to put as a test to everything, "Would my Lord like *this* or *that*?" The Christ of God, who has made me one with Himself, what does *He* think of it?

Happy the person who has an empty vessel and God ever ready to fill. Unhappy they who have no empty vessel. The oil flowed still, when the woman lacked vessels. The Lord sees plenty of empty channels to be filled, and oh, it is a blessed thing to take up all our needs to God, and go before Him as those who know His character as a giver.

I doubt whether many know the sweetness of going into the presence of God as a channel or pipe to be filled in order to bring out what is want-

ed for others—saying, “I have got the ear and heart of Christ.” He let the apostle Paul pour out all his thoughts and met them with His grace, far above all that He was asked. Blessing is not measured merely by the wants of the individual, but by all that is in the heart of God towards those who are in Christ.

You may not think there is much brightness in the furnace whilst in it, but when come out of it, its light will be in your soul. Something put there by the Son of God who walked with you through it, which will shine out to His praise and glory when He shall appear.

Suppose the Lord were to say in the case of two of His children, “I shall shelter and take home *that one*; but as for the other, I shall make him go through all the closing days, carrying the testimony which would certainly be the last;” such an one will find perilous times and plenty of sorrow, but which will look brightest up there?

The extent of Christ’s love for those given Him by the Father, the Father alone can understand. Look at the prodigal—what a pitiable object! and yet there he is in the father’s arms, all the expression of the father’s love put on him, all the joy of the house flowing out in response to the gladness of the father’s heart. What did the prodigal bring? Nothing save the marks of misery. Starvation and rags. The angels did not understand God’s mercy till then. They could not know it till Christ became man. When they saw the Babe lying in the manger, they knew that Babe to be the eternal God from off the throne. And it was only by the

church that they learnt the manifold wisdom of God.

We understand that mercy in the heart of God, because we have tasted it.

It is a secret between my soul and God. God looked upon me and picked me up, and brought to my soul individually the taste of pardoning love through the Son of His love washing me in His own blood. Oh! the sweetness of the thought of this Son of God having given *Himself* for me, and having occupied Himself with me in all my misery. The most precious thought in connection with redemption is that of being a poor prodigal in the Father's house. The bringing in of the prodigal was to prove the delight of God in shewing out *all* the riches of His love to poor ruined sinners.

Does any scene on earth now tell of the power of God without a mark of Satan? As we pass along, we have to see the marks of feebleness and sin in one another; and we stand out as witnesses of some strange thing having come in through Satan.

What is the rest of my soul for eternity? The fact that He, the *Just One*, took my place, the unjust one, on the cross. And then another thing comes out—the essential glory of Him who died there. We see in Him the power of One whose springs are in Himself. The way in which He bears the wrath of God, tells, if there were nothing else, of divine glory; there is one there whose springs are in Himself.

When I come to the cross, it is impossible for me ever to understand what *He* suffered there. He

had a heart full of affection—the *volume* of it, no heart of ours can understand. He had a mind that grasped everything; we can only say of ours how very little they can hold, like a shelf that can hold a certain number of things, and if we try to put any more, they will roll off.

As a creature, I can get no idea of what the mind of Christ was, because it was the mind of *God*. When I see what the cross presents, it is not possible for me to form to myself the full idea either of the sufferings or the glory of the One who was put there to open shame.

Not a single spring of gladness in the heart of God, but was found in this perfect One, entirely God as well as man. Oh the thought of God having sent this Son down from His own eternal glory, this Son of His love, all His bosom's ineffable delight, sent down to the cross for me! It puts me in the dust. What am I that He should not only have brought me salvation, but have sent that Son of His love to bear all for me—as man essentially perfect, divine in every way, yet made sin for us. I believe that in the present day, it is a matter of deep moment for the Christian to look again and again into the place of the Son of God on the cross, and to study all the divine attributes of that divine One who hung there.

“Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered.” The Lord did not quote the latter part of this verse nor the beginning of it. “Awake O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.” That is *God's* estimate of Him whom man valued at thirty pieces of silver. (Zech. xiii. 7.) The last part of the verse is exceedingly sweet: “And I will turn

mine hand upon the little ones." What a sweet thought must that have been to the Lord's heart, that if *He* was smitten, God would turn His hand upon the little ones. If wrath came on Him and the sheep were scattered, there was that drop of sweetness in the bottom of the cup. Oh! I cannot tell you what that word has been to me, in hours of trial and difficulty. God's hand being turned on the little ones—not one of them ever lost. Where were Mary, John, Peter? God knew they were where they would all turn up, unharmed; they were given by God to this Shepherd, and God kept them for Him, and no one could pluck them out of God's hand.

The blessed Lord's heart could enter into all human feelings—there lies in that fact the very thing that gave such a poignancy to His sufferings. Our minds are so little, they cannot hold more than a certain measure of great sorrow or joy. If in great sorrow we cannot feel little things. The Lord had all great things in connection with suffering, and yet the shooting out of a lip, the shaking of a head, all was felt by Him in detail at the same moment.

*You* cannot see the breast-wave roll over you, and let it come up, and up, till the last moment, giving up your life in obedience. *He* did this. He walked on calmly through His whole course of obedience.

The cross shewed out what was man's hatred of God, but there was in it a woe such as man and Satan could not give: He was forsaken by God.

When we shall see Him with all the brightness of God's glory about Him, we shall say, "But He became Son of man, and He came down to die ;

He became a man of sorrows in the midst of His brethren. None ever went so low, or tasted sorrow as He tasted it." When we come to the Father's house, that home of joy and glory, what a thought it will be for our hearts, that *He* should have left it, and come down here to be initiated in the way of sorrow.

Am I only to see Him as the man of sorrows? No, I can go on to the Solomon glory, and rejoice in His joy whom God hath anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Never was sorrow like unto His sorrow, but there is nothing *there* of the man of sorrow. Has any human heart ever felt what the Lord Jesus now feels? The oil of gladness poured over Him above His fellows.

I do not know what you feel, but joy opens the heart, and it is joy to see every poor sinner rejoicing. Soon we shall see His face radiant with joy, and be rejoicing for ever in His joy.

He is heir of all things : and he that overcometh shall inherit all things. If I go forward to the thought of association with Him, it is not only in heavenly places, but I find a new heaven and earth, where I am to be with Him, the heavenly man. A scene where the eye may search in vain for anything unworthy of God. A spotless place all filled up with the glory of God.

If God were to deal with me as a creature I must stand before Him until every one of my sins can be counted up, for each one to receive a just recompense of reward. How perfectly simple it is! If God from Sinai gave certain laws for the government of His people Israel, and not one of those

laws could be infringed without a certain penalty, it must needs be the same still to any who take that ground. If *you* are standing on that ground before God, *take care!* He will not pass by one single transgression without a just recompense of reward; and you must receive it. If I go before Him to prove my own righteousness, He must weigh me in His scales, must weigh every thought and imagination of my heart.

But if I come before God on the ground of being a poor lost sinner, what are His thoughts? He says, "I am not going to put you on doing this, or not doing that, I have a purchased right to come in and pick you up as *lost*, and if you are lost, there is a *Saviour* for you."

Have I ever turned my thoughts upon this great salvation in heaven, in the Son of God? Oh how blessed to be a poor sinner brought into all the glory, bound up in one lot with Him! Everything sweeps round Him, as waves sweep round a rock, round Him who made all things. When we contemplate the glory of Him who is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person in connection with the great salvation that He wrought when He by Himself purged our sins, what added glory flows to Him from that great salvation!

After He had purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. The very last place where man in nature would go to look for one who had been crucified between two thieves. This gives a very special character to salvation. The religion of human nature kept man at the foot of Sinai; the religion of Christ Jesus brings him to the right hand of God. A ruined sinner, and this

great salvation, those extreme points, meeting there.

I cannot draw any limit to this great salvation. Drop following drop is not the expression of the fountain's fulness. We may see all these drops, but that is not enough. It is the fountain itself, Himself in person who purged sin, that I want—not salvation only, but a *living Saviour*. The affections of the heart can never flow, unless fixed on Christ in person. When I look at Christ Himself I know it. Christ who has washed me and is ever making intercession for me in heaven. When I get individually a living Saviour, one with me and I with Him, instead of salvation as measured out to all the saved, it is the bright light shining into my heart from His *living presence*.

Oh! if I can get with all my trials and sorrows into the light where Christ is sitting, at God's right hand I get there fresh life and joy. What a difference it makes in the practical power of walk if you can say, I have not only been washed from my sins, but I have got a Saviour at God's right hand, and He Himself is the One I am to live unto; drawing spiritual strength and nourishment from union with Him, as a sucker out of a root.

What can harm me if I am upon Christ's heart? A ruined one like me and a Saviour like Himself go together; my name is upon His breast.

I was a child of Satan once, under the curse of a broken law, and nothing would do but for some One to come in and say, "That Saviour is given to this sinner, and this chief of sinners is given to that Saviour, belongs to Him." Yes, blessed be

His name, we can say that we *do know this*, that the one resting place of our souls is Jesus.

I cannot keep my salvation—God keeps it, and He has turned my eyes to it, where it is at His own right hand in heaven. We cannot get away from the blessedness of saying, “That great salvation, that Saviour, belongs to us, and we belong to Him.”

The world is going on at the foot of Sinai. Content to stay there, under the full blaze of the light of salvation by faith, and in the sight of a great Saviour at the right hand of God in heaven. What effect does the thought of Christ up there produce in the hearts of professing Christians? Are not many of them equally saying, “Who is Lord over us? our lips are our own.” But whether they think of it or not, that Nazarene *is* sitting up there, and nothing escapes His notice, not a word, not a thought. When careless walkers think of Him *there*, what effect has it on them? not peace

It was God’s thought to give an inheritance to those who, by Adam’s transgression, had lost their heritage; not by putting man again into Eden, but by bringing him into a paradise of glory, an habitation of God. It was His thought to have a Son sitting with Him there as the One who would bring many sons to glory. Let us pause and see the entirely *new world* which that expression “*bringing many sons to glory*” opens to the mind. It was no new thought to the Father’s mind: He knew what it was, but man knew it not, for it had not entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for these sons, but, saith Paul, “He hath revealed

them unto us by his Spirit ;” and as soon as we know it, we get the thought of the joy of the Father’s house, we enter an entirely new world—a world unknown until revealed, and the Holy Ghost alone could teach us about it. We cannot look at it apart from atonement: “It became him, through sufferings, to bring many sons to glory.” (Heb. ii. 10.) These sons are all brought to glory from amongst a sinner race, therefore if there were not the atoning and cleansing blood, we could never see God.

If I am to be in the Father’s house, a redeemed sinner, I want a perfect Man there. And if He is up there as the One who has run the race down here, and won all for us, what can I do? There is nothing to be done but to *receive* from Him. I suppose *that* is just the difficulty which the human mind finds the greatest; that is, to receive everything from Him at God’s right hand. Not to have a single thing but what comes from the hand of God; and not merely receiving, but shewing in every act whether the things of Christ *rule* in us.

There is but one place of anchorage for the soul, and that is faith in Jesus. But even where there is that faith, there may not be settled peace of conscience, and that is why it is so important to have a right understanding on the question of works. It is not the question only of getting peace on first coming to God, but of abiding in God’s presence with unbroken peace ever after; and this cannot be unless God’s idea of works be clearly understood.

Are the Jews alone in thinking that they had, as sinners, the same power to keep the word of God

as Adam had before sin entered? No. If you look, not only at Rome, but at most protestant churches, you will find that the basis on which they are formed, is the competency of man to keep the law. *That* is the great master-principle of human nature. Man's thought throughout is that he can do something for God. But the thought of our being able to do anything cannot exist with peace of conscience in God's presence. *One* only could stand there and say, "All that thou requirest I can and will do. In the volume of the book it is written of me, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."

Paul had thought by his own resources in works to meet God's demands, but when converted, a new principle broke in upon him, he found that *that Nazarene* was in heaven telling him of gratuity of grace, and he took salvation, not of works, but by faith.

God does not cause to germinate some little seed already folded up in man, but He implants an altogether new principle of life. God cannot see in man what we can see in examining a seed through the microscope—the exact form of the future plant all folded up, which when the seed is put into the ground begins to spread forth. When God's eye examines a sinner, what does He see? What did He see in such an one as Saul, the persecutor? Did He see the divine life, afterwards manifested in him, all nicely folded and shut up within his soul? No; but the enmity which made Saul persecute to the death the followers of Jesus. He saw moral death, but no life in him. And how was all this changed? By the communication of a new life, an incorruptible seed. (1 Pet. i. 23.)

## GLEANINGS.

Has your mind been occupied with this thought, "He hath quickened us together with Christ?" Let us picture to ourselves the blessed Lord in the grave. He had been crucified, death had followed, then the grave. He had gone down into that new grave wherein man had never lain, but He could not see corruption; not here the question of His coming out of the grave, but of the quickening in the grave. He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again. He was quickened as He lay in the grave. The movement of life in Him could have been seen, which could not have been seen in Lazarus. The power of another must cause *him* to move, and the voice that said, "Let there be light, and there was light," must say, "Come forth" to him.

Observe, also, the difference between the life of the Lord and our life in Him. He had given His life for the church, and the first expression of power connected with it was the quickening of His own body, as the Head of His church; and He has so associated her with Himself that we can say we were quickened *together with Him*. (Eph. ii.)

What amazing grace! God saying to us, "You have I quickened together with Christ, when you were dead in trespasses and sins." He is here speaking of our new nature which we have first presented to us when Christ woke up in the grave. The place where we first find the life given to us is here.

I cannot but dwell on that expression "quickened together with Christ," it comes so to me in connection with the glad tidings of the gospel. To think of being quickened together with Him who is now upon the Father's throne! All the church,

## GLEANINGS.

in every separate member, being in Him up there.

I can trace everything connected with my circumstances, and what I am here to the first Adam; but, connected with all my blessing *in Christ*, I have to go up there where my life is hid with *Him* in God. How wondrous the grace of God! His mercy does not rest merely in the cleansing blood, vast as that blessing is, but it puts poor sinners into association with the Son, in life above. (Col. iii. 3.) God reckoned to Him our guilt, and if we are freed from guilt and in association with Christ in life, we get power from Him to walk as living men.

Where living faith is in any soul, there has been the communication of the divine nature to that soul. God can look on us with the same delight as on Christ, because we are hidden in Christ. He cannot stop the flow of His love and delight in Christ, and it all flows through us, as being in Him.

The human mind cannot see the glory of Christ in having come off the throne of God to the cross, but the believer has received "the mind of Christ," and can see something of it, and he finds that according to the measure in which he can enter into the humiliation of Christ, in that measure he sees the beauty of it.

Ephesians i. God says that He chose me from the foundation of the world; and He called me within this present century. Six thousand years ago He chose me, and never has He wavered during all that period for a moment. I could not say that since He called me, and since He has been my

choice, that I have never wavered in love, never turned aside from the path of enduring affliction with His people ; but if anyone were to say, "How do you know that you are one of God's chosen?" my answer would be, "I know it because God revealed Christ to me and let His glory shine into my heart." The time was when there was no place in my heart for Christ, and as to feeling anything like interest in Him, I had not the slightest; but now He is the central object of my heart, and everything turns upon it. God has let into my heart that there never was so beautiful a Being as He who hung between two thieves. *No, nothing ever like Him!* And *that Person* has said to me, "I took everything that God had against you on myself, I bore all your sins in my own body on the cross." And I believe His word; I stake everything on the truth of it. I have not a thought but that Christ has been revealed by God to me, and He is the connecting link between my soul and God, telling me that I am one of the chosen.

Revelation ii. 17. If it were not for that wondrous unsearchable Person, God manifest in flesh, and for His sake, He having taken the cup of wrath for us, what would have been our future?

If we look at the glory, we could not do without Him. Ah, and God would have the manna laid up in the *golden* pot, to shew *His* delight in Christ. Is there nothing that speaks to our hearts in the delight God has in the Son of His love? If I feel that *I* could not do without the manna; to think that *God* could not either! Do not talk as if it were only you that cared about the manna—God

does. He had the golden pot of manna laid up before Him, to shew His delight in it; and gives us to feed on that hidden manna.

I have tasted God's delight in Christ, I *know* He is precious God, and I too can say, "Precious Jesus!" If anyone asks, "*Why* do you say Precious Jesus?" I answer, "Can you say it?" If you can, you will know what God thinks of Him. You and God will be of one mind. And if you get the taste of it here, what will it be when you get home? There it will not be the manna hidden in the golden pot, but the open display of God and the Lamb; God leading us inside the glory. Not like sunshine down here, bright one moment, and a storm coming on the next, but the fixed calm shining of the glory for ever.

Not only will all of you, as overcomers, eat of the hidden manna, but each is to receive a new name, a name that none will know but the one who receives it: a secret between Him that gives it and yourself.

Would you not like to know that there is something *individual* in Christ's heart connected with you? You might have all glory, but a heart that loves Christ would rather have something particular giving it the taste of His love individually. You will find some one with perhaps nothing but a broken text, full of the taste of Christ's love. I had rather be an old woman hardly able to read, who tastes thus the love of Christ, than be a person of the greatest knowledge without tasting it.

Ought it not to be something precious to us that we are called *Christians*, that the name of the anointed Man should have descended to us?

In the Lord's people it is to be the *positive*, not merely the *negative*; not gathering up things, but throwing them off; getting the heart fitted to feed on Christ, and the feet free to walk with Christ.

It is up there above whence power comes that pushes us right off the world's platform, keeping us occupied with and knowing a great deal more about heaven than about earth: walking in Nazariteship and saying, "Blessed Lord, the only thing I have to do is to live to thee and to die to thee." Only as we do this are we imitators of Christ's life. A certain joy this gives, which nothing can take away, able then to rejoice alway, come what may; saying "Christ is mine, and if He laid out His life for me, I want to lay out mine for Him, that whether I live or die, He may be magnified.

Wonderful is the thought of God being so occupied with me as to bring me into desires after spiritual things; and when I cannot tell what it is I want, He says, "I know it and will give it you." It brings out the weakness of the vessel. I learn the poverty of nature, but somehow I find certain desires in my heart that are dear to the heart of God, and He understands all about these desires, and I am brought into the consciousness that that which is working in me connects me with Christ and with God. I am sure that the Spirit of Christ is in my heart, and sure that He is in heaven for me; but I am brought into consciousness of the weakness of the vessel, realizing by this weakness the strength made perfect in it.

Evil in us cannot hinder God's love. It will

flow in and so fill your soul that you will have no room in yourself to be occupied with self. Is it not more blessed to think of the flow of that love than of your own shortcomings? Not that it will cover sin ; if sin be allowed, it brings in discipline, but the soul owns it as all right. If anything of self is shewn out, He will not pass it by. The believer is one whom He means to be a channel for the eternal life to flow in, and He will not spare discipline for that which would hinder it. His whole heart is set upon you, and He cannot pass by a single thing.

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.” But there is a godly fear, which nips in the bud many an evil thing ; a fear which, if a saint were saying “I should like to do this or that,” would make him feel “but the eye of God will be looking at me, and I shall give it up.”

What part have I to play in connection with redemption? None but implicit subjection ; forced to repudiate everything connected with self, and receive blessing of God’s providing.

The want of a distinct apprehension of the difference between the flesh and the Spirit, keeps people in a very low state. They may be safe for eternity, and yet may grieve and quench the Spirit. If you have got salvation but have *Jewish* notions of a Jewish walk, you will be incessantly grieving the Spirit, accrediting something in your walk which God wants to strip off. God cannot accredit Demas’s love of present things. He cannot accredit anything of the flesh in Christians. If the

Spirit of Christ is in me, all that is of myself must be judged.

In a cup of water, how could you displace the water? By putting something heavier into the cup. If you have a heart full of lusts and vanities, how are you to give them all up? By the precious gold of God poured into the vessel—all there will be displaced by it.

Do not talk of what you have given up, if God has given you Christ. Can you compare anything with Him? Are they not *unsearchable* riches you have in Him? Are you not obliged to say “Father, thou only canst know what that gift of thine is—thou knowest about His cross and glory.” Oh, what heart can conceive what it will be to look in that face! What will you say then of the beauty of Christ! Oh, when one thinks of what that anointed One is personally! Who shall read the fulness of the Godhead in Him, and not feel like a little child looking at the Father who gave Him, and feeling “He knows all about Him,” and there the heart rests.

Evangelists say, “Can the gospel suit a person who does not feel that he is a sinner?” It suited me! I found by it that God had given Christ, and that Christ, as a living Man—God manifest in flesh—with all human affections, occupied in heaven with me, was revealed to my heart. The first effect was to bring out a flow of affections towards Him; the rest came afterwards, and I had to learn all my sinnership. But my heart was caught by the beauty of that Christ. I have not got Him yet, but God has got Him for me.

Rays of light shine down from His face, but I shall not see Him as He is, till He comes to take me up. I can raise my voice and join the saints in songs of praise till I see Him face to face, and am glorified together with Him.

Where love is in activity in the heart, action precedes thought. The Father is on the prodigal's neck, and the reason is given afterward. Love leads the heart captive. The Father's eye crosses an object, and His heart and mind single it out at once. "There is my prodigal son."

So in John at Patmos. The Spirit knew how great the tie was between Christ and John, and gives an impulse to his heart's affections, so that it all bursts out in a moment. Christ stands before him—there He is! and John breaks forth "Unto him that loved us . . . . be glory and dominion, for ever and ever." Christ, in certain ways, had told of heights of love in the divine character, and of depths of misery in the objects of this love. He had let all this height and depth into the heart of poor John, and John singles Him out (Rev. i. 4, 5), and his heart is instantly put into the position of worship: "To him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen."

*Christ Himself* is that which feeds our hearts, and His love so realized that it becomes the one object of our hearts to love Him.

The heart of Christ is with us in the very least thing that is trying us, but all is to be received at the hand of the Father, and discipline shews us what that hand is in the correction of evil as we pass on.

Until our heart gets broken, and we see the folly of our own wisdom, we do not care for the sympathy of Christ. When we find wave upon wave, sorrow upon sorrow, then our hearts look out for some stay. It is a horrid discovery we have to make of the slowness there is about us to take our place under the yoke with Christ. He lets all things roll in upon us, and our souls cannot get away. He touches us to the very quick, because He must teach us the lesson we have to learn.

Ah, the secret of a disciple's quietness under trial, is the knowing that things do not happen by chance. If we see them in the light of God, we have rest immediately; not only rest in the future, but rest for to-day. Seeing things in the light, and under the power of the hand of God, makes all the difference as things roll in upon you. My walk may be inconsistent and unsteady, I may need deep humiliation, and have loss and very dearly bought experience, in order to be able to say that I see the Father's hand present in everything.

One of the most important things is to get a start onwards. If the start has been made, is there in us all a *going on* to God? He had no such thought as to give truth for the imagination to play with. He wants to feed our hearts, that we may grow; and if we do not go on we shall find His hand in discipline. Oh, what a place our God has set us in! going before us as the Provider, giving blessing, and never refusing help. We shall find that nothing is right until seen in the light of Christ, and in connection with all that given to poor sinners by that One who is the Ser-

vant of blessing to all, and who has the keys of everything.

It does not matter what it is if you have not got the thing in the light of the personal affections of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not form a correct judgment about it. The experience John had of the Lord's dealings at Patmos, is that of His people now. Christ's love did not come with greater freshness to John's heart than it does to our own. It was not because John was an apostle that there was a greater echo in the Lord's heart towards him than there is towards any poor saint on earth now. Are you walking in the light of the affections of that Lord Jesus who loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood? Is that name of *Jesus* causing a vibration in your heart as you walk along the wilderness? And in service to the Lord, does that glory of His for ever break on your soul with the sense of full blessing and joy in the One who was dead and is alive at God's right hand? And if it brings the sense of your own weakness—oh, is He your Upraiser, ever ready to put His hand on every poor servant who has fallen down? Oh! for our hearts to be more fixed on Him—more bound to that blessed One!

We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and we shall be in Him when the heavens and earth have passed away. What can touch this eternal union? And "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one."

It is one thing for the living water to descend

from Christ into the heart, and another thing how —when it has descended—it moves the heart to worship. All power of worship in the soul, is the result of the waters flowing into it, and their flowing back again to God.

Can you draw near to the Lord, saying, “Nothing can satisfy me save coming before thee, and speaking of thy glory, standing as a testimony of thy love in the world, to tell of thy glory and to praise thee?”

In Genesis iii. 14, 15, we see the commencement on God’s part, of His purpose to carry on a conflict with the serpent, and the firm purpose expressed, that Satan should be worsted. Satan had got this man and woman down, God comes and takes the matter up against Satan, “Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed—the seed of the woman shall bruise thy head.” That was the beginning of the conflict which has not ceased up to the present time. No one can escape it. Believers are to be delivered by the Seed of the woman, but cannot get out of conflict as long as they are down here.

The serpent’s head shall be bruised: that is a truth which stands, and acts on my soul, giving strength. Suppose a man in a scene with Satan on the one hand and the Seed of the woman on the other. If anyone said to him, “Call on the name of the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved,” it might give him joy, but his *position* would be just the same, he would still be on the ground of conflict. I want not only the consciousness that I am saved, but that I am to get deliverance from this evil world, because *God* is on *my* side where the

conflict is going on. Can you not take delight in the good news that the earth *is* to be delivered from Satan, the liar and murderer? Do you find no joy in God's having declared that He will overpower that wicked one? It *is* good news, I can rejoice and see beauty in the thought of God destroying the destroyer. I see the glory of Christ in it. I see a beauty in the thought of there being no spring of power against Satan, save in God, and that I can calculate upon God's coming in: Satan did not.

What discoveries were made to the early Christians of the depths, the immeasurable, unfathomable, depths of evil within! What can give any heart simple rest, in such an experience? Nothing but the thought of God's taking up the evil in conflict with Satan, declaring that He would provide One to bruise his head. If I have got firm hold of that, whatever be the discovery of evil I make in myself, I shall not be daunted. I find such depths of evil, all sorts of evil, in my heart, that I cannot fathom it. It requires the power of Jehovah Himself to sound and measure it. I must have been daunted, had He not put forth that word. I can have rest from all that the power of darkness can do, because the Seed of the woman *shall* bruise the serpent's head. Who is the Seed of the woman? Only *One*, born of a virgin—only One, the Son in the bosom of the Father before He was the seed of the woman.

It is a very solemn thing to feel that one is in the place where this conflict is going on between God and Satan; and one cannot get off the scene of conflict, but how blessed is the knowledge that God is for us in it!

When I think of the walk of Christians from the day of Pentecost to the present time, what can I say of it as corresponding with that which is given? And why is not that taken away? Why is there the constant putting forth of it in the leading on and restoring of the soul? Why? It is only mercy. If I cast my eye forward and think of what is to come, and have a thought of those who are absent from the body, and that Christ will raise those bodies to fashion them like His own, what can I say, save that it is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?" The self-same grace displayed by God in the gift of His Son, which we shall taste all through the wilderness—just the same taste now as when first converted, always the same in different circumstances, the same when we get home. All the glories of Christ are only the development of the grace of Him who died upon the cross. All glory is a part and parcel of that display of it upon the cross.

God tells us that the Son of His love has a glory yet to come, and He shall not be robbed of it, that is, the presenting many sons to glory.

There were two parts of the world, there was Egypt with everything to minister to the flesh, and there was the wilderness; the latter equally expressing the power of Satan, but a place in which nothing can harm me if I am there with the cross, if I am walking with the heaven-side of the cross. It is a wilderness, the whole place is marred and spoilt to me, because I have to walk as Christ did. He never had a home down here. He could turn aside for a while with a little company of His own,

but it *was* a wilderness to Him, it did not bear the stamp of His Father's heart.

One can look on the wilderness as the place formed by God for the display of Himself; Christ being hid in God.

When we know that it is God who works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, ought there not to be fear and trembling, and a solemn feeling—not on the ground of what we are, but of what God is doing in us? If He has taken me up for Christ, and is blessing me and working in me, to make me like Christ, there ought to be a very practical feeling in my soul as to walk.

The life of a believer is inseparable from the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Among all the glories and marvels of that blessed One, there is nothing more precious than that He is the *life-giver*, and is Himself the life. If you have not got Christ as your life-giver, you have not the rest and peace which are inseparable from that life. The life so given bears the impress of *Him*. The living water in the heart of a poor sinner bubbles up to the spring from whence it came. Who can let go his hold of the things that are clamouring in our hearts down here? Who can rise above it all as a secondary thing but the one who knows Christ as a life-giver?

“*Sonship*” supposes none but children, and nothing standing between the Father and us.

Do not tell me of the wonders of creation, I will tell you of something surpassingly wonderful:

God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Can there be any wonder like that? And because of it a poor creature like me made able to lift up my head in His glory, able to worship there. Wonder cannot be separated from worship. Adoration and wonder linked together.

There is something to move the whole soul with wonder and delight, to think that we have such a God! One whose love led Him to give His Son that we poor ruined sinners might be brought to Himself.

Oh! do not let the blessing given to you be uncultivated blessing!

If we turn to the world at its best, all is vanity of vanities; but there is a power enabling us to pass through it—a golden chain hanging down from heaven, which we have laid hold of.

We must either be subject to one who would like to tear everything to pieces, or to One who delights to bless. Every man living is either in one place or the other, either nothing but a football of Satan's, or a poor withered flower picked up to be worn by Christ in His infinite grace.

When in prison, Paul was weighing everything to see what would be most to the glory of Christ.

Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh what afflictions Paul took pleasure in! What was the secret? "While we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." Our connection is with unseen things: a risen Christ in glory filling the eye, the mind continually weighing the things of

the Sanctuary above, with the things of time and sense down here, the believer can turn and trample on them, and combat all of the flesh and the devil, that would take the mind off to things seen.

That one thought, asking in everything, "What will be for Christ's glory?" is impossible to us if the question of our salvation be not settled. How can I be thinking what is for Christ's glory if I am pondering as to whether He has perfectly saved me? Job's heart was not happy in God, and all that came upon him tore his heart to pieces. Paul was happy in Him, and let all outward things go on as they might, the inward joy in God was not disturbed; nothing took him by surprise.

Take your heart full of cares, and get into the presence of the God of peace in heaven, what will be the effect? Will they remain in you there? What are they? Only *outside things* connected with self. Can you find one sorrow of one individual believer from Abel downwards, of which you could say that sorrow was not in connection with the God of peace? Not that He is the sender of sorrow, but the God of peace, sitting in heaven and causing everything to work together for good to us, taking flesh into the account, sweeping the very ground of the heart, taking strength from the strong, causing pulsation to cease. But is anything terrifying when we get into His presence? No! all is peace in the presence of the God who counts the hairs of our head.

"In everything give thanks." Is there a lust or a single thing in me that I would try to hide from God? No: I would like His knife to cut, to

root up every evil, so that I may bear more fruit.

How apt we are to limit thanksgiving to things that we can understand to be good, but we have to give thanks for *all* things. If we are within the veil and living there, we shall know what it is to give thanks for all that is most contrary to what we should naturally choose. Are there any who have one thing they cannot give thanks for? Whatever that particular thing may be, they have not got into the light of God's presence. If they had, they would know what cause they had to thank God for that very thing, as for all else.

There was a peculiarity of sorrow in that feeling of Paul's when he said, "Not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." He did not come behind any, either in service or in suffering for Christ, but ah! he could not forgive himself that, before grace came, he had persecuted the church. When he had learnt to see God's thought of marvellous wisdom about the church, the heavenly bride, and to see its beauty as the expression of God's thought, how could he forgive himself, or ever get rid of the recollection that he had been a persecutor of it? "This beautiful thing, this church, the body of Christ, and I, miserable thing, in ignorance of God's bright glorious luminous thought, I, like a very blood-hound of Satan, would have hunted it down in the hope of utterly crushing it." His soul was bowed down so low, he had got his face thoroughly in the dust, with the sense of his own unworthiness and nothingness, and of God being everything. If any looked at him, he said, "Do not look at me, I am

less than the least of all saints, not meet to be called an apostle; and am I the man picked out to make known the mystery? I know that I belong to the body of Christ, but I do not know where to put myself so as to meet my thought of self—I would go down lower than all.”

How all that is in Christ just came out to suit such a one as that poor thing at the well of Samaria! How came He to be there when she came? How came He to be *on earth*? Why did He come out of heaven at all? There is no other answer save the father's in regard to the prodigal: “It was meet and right,” &c.; I cannot ask *why* God should shew mercy—He declares, “I will have mercy on whom I will.” Blessed be His name He has a character of His own, and He will shew it forth in having mercy on poor sinners. How? Ah, by their being justified by the Son of His love! If a builder, there must be a foundation-stone. His own Son must come off the throne, out of glory, if poor sinners are to go up into it: and oh! the willingness of that Son!

“I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” In His soul there was a deep need that went far beyond the need of the body, and He had been meeting that need of His soul, while the disciples were looking after bits of bread for the body. He hungered and thirsted till the work His Father had sent Him to do was done thoroughly. And ah! blessed Lord! because Thy Father is seeking worshippers, Thou canst turn any poor sinner into a worshipper as Thou didst that poor woman. When one thinks of that woman, Where is she now? absent from the body, present with the Lord, and when

He comes forth, there will she be with Him, the possessor of eternal life, a monument from first to last of redeeming love, to the eternal praise of God.

When once the soul has bowed down before Christ, it finds there is such an infinite unsearchable fulness in Him. Do you not when you have to do with Him, find an open fountain from which flow thousands of rills of blessing in connection with Himself? It is all my salvation and all my strength to see that it is all in Himself. How are you sure that you will not break down? Because you have got something that is clean outside the range of the creature, it is God, and His Christ. Do you think *they* are competent to make you sure? If God has put His hand to it, it is the security the competency of God Himself.

Ah! has Christ ever touched the quick of your soul in solitude? Do you know the exquisite tenderness of His touch? He does not tear and lacerate. The necessities and trials of saints down here are created by God in order to shew them what Christ is for them. If I have taken Him as Lord, I do not expect an easy way; God never meant us to have it as disciples. He takes us into a rough path, to shew us what Christ is, and that in it His grace may be able to vent itself. There is a yearning in His heart up there to let this grace be displayed in a poor needy people down here—a longing that His strength should be made perfect in their weakness. Do you know for yourself the grace of that living Christ? Do you know what Christ has to do with you and

you with Him? Do you know yourself as one of a flock that belongs to Him, that He is tending and guarding through the wilderness, and carrying on to glory to be for ever with Himself?

Do believers like the details of their lives to be spied out in the light? And how is it they come to be spied out? Because the Lord Jesus would have people in present association with Himself. He had an object in dying, to bring them into that association with Himself, and if I am not prepared for it, I am not prepared for Christ, as the risen head, to claim me as a part of His body at the present time. As a man is occupied with every one of his members, so Christ, the head, is occupied with every one of His; and if I do not want that occupation of Christ with me in *everything*, how shall I be able to say, "The love of Christ constrains me because He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him who died and rose again for them?" Who would like to say to Christ, "Well, sorrow in this world forced me to seek a Saviour, and now that I have found Thee as one who has saved me, I do not want to have any more to do with Thee?" Would it not be treason against the love that led Him down to my depths of woe, if I said it? But is it not, *practically*, so with many souls?

With Paul the love of Christ was not a constraint from fetters outside, as when he was bound to a soldier, but a constant hold of Christ on the heart, saying, "I am led captive by Christ; that love of His binds me like a fetter and makes me go

as a captive whither He would." It was not Paul's love but Christ's.

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that he hath done." Everything will come out there! there can be no disguise at all in the pure bright light before the throne of the discernment of Christ, where all the full intelligence of His mind will beam out on His people. It is not the question of being saved, but of how we, as saved ones, have been walking. Is it strange, since it cost Christ so much to accomplish that sacrifice, that when He gets His people home, He should say, "Now let us look at their walk, no question as to personal acceptance, but let me see whether they have walked according to my Father's thoughts, who would have His sons and daughters walking as those who are separated unto Him by the blood of His Son; as those bought with such a price, did they walk worthy of it?"

I can by faith say of all that is in connection with the first Adam, "It is a thing ended." I can reckon myself to be dead, buried, and raised up, with Christ, because God reckons me to be so. The rock, Christ, was smitten in death, and afterwards life flowed down to us. The life of Christ in heaven is that which I am made a partaker of. And as to my walk down here, if I have His Spirit, is it to be different as to its results in me from what it was in Him? Are we walking down here as Christ walked? All the counsels of God let into His soul, the will of God His only thought, and, as to everything belonging to the world, dead

To Him, death characterized the whole scene. Moral death was everywhere. Where the weak flesh of the disciples shrank, Christ let all roll in upon Him—morally dead to the whole thing. No one could pretend to be what Christ was, but we have to walk as He walked, as sons of God in the world, dead and risen with Christ. As to all our mind and motives, “like master, like servant.”

Christ could look on the vilest sinner whose deeds are only worthy of hell, and all that sin might be blotted out entirely. Ah, but then there would be another thing—if His blood has blotted out my sin, I have to walk as the servant of such a master ought to walk. Ah! how infinitely short do we fall in our walk from that of the early christians. The death of Christ shut out the world from them; they were morally dead to it, being connected in spirit and ways with Christ above.

I ask you, who are sons and daughters of God, Can God look down on you, saying, “There are my sons and daughters passing through the world, shewing forth the death of Christ, and walking in the power of what Christ is at my right hand; walking as a people blest in Him?”

There is never anything so sweet as trouble in which we have nothing but Christ. Is not Christ enough? Christ had nothing but the Father, was *He* enough?

Which is happiest, to be like water in a still place never moved, or to be poured from vessel to vessel, finding it all Christ, and Christ, and Christ? The Lord does not let the prospect of glory into the soul when any are settled on their lees, but when they are poured from vessel to vessel. He

chooses the time of trial as a time to give the sweetest taste of His love. When in a time of difficulty, faith may break down, but Christ will not. He sees when the storm comes, and makes that the time to come to us, walking on the waters, and at His word the storm subsides in a moment.

If I have met a person in the street, and sorrow is mentioned, and I have said, "God has done that for blessing," a bright side has been seen directly, *God's side* of it.

In Eden, nothing that the hand of God could give, enabled man to taste His redeeming love; but in the paradise of God, the place of His joy, we find a place where all His redeemed people will be gathered in the full sense of it, and with nothing to remind them of the past; but it is not a place where man as a mere creature could find his joy. If we take the close of the book of Revelation, and compare the description there with Eden, we find God shewing in every point the superiority of one over the other.

The thing I see most important to understand is that God has pitched a tabernacle of mercy in the heavens, so that a ruined creature can draw near and worship. There can be no thought of being in heaven without worship. I know *who* is in heaven, and I cannot be there without my heart melting with adoration and worship.

When God gives living water in the soul, all need in the soul has a perfect answer; and not only that, but the water springs up. It is not

difficult to know whether one has such a fountain welling up in the soul, although not always walking in the power of it.

How blessed to find when under trial, or in weakness and temptation, a little stream rising up in connection with God which gives power to go on: to see this power in saints on a death-bed, enabling them to rise above all the misery of human anguish, giving thoughts of the Father's love and of joys above, by which thoughts of self are all broken down; and to see this stream rising with more and more power; it is something that comes without effort, springing up into eternal life. When saints walk onward with this stream in them rising up to eternal life, they do not thirst for anything by the way.

The believer should be able to say, "I have seen the glory of the Father revealed in the Son. Out of His fulness I have received this new nature, the Spirit of adoption, the earnest of the inheritance, the seal of the Spirit. God has let me into the light of His presence where all glory is playing round the Lord Jesus; and He has set me in the relationship of a son with Himself in that glory." That earth-rejected Christ, seated at His right hand, will say, "Behold me and the children given me of the Father!" The Father looks on Him as the First-born, and sees the church in Him, receiving grace for grace.

It is a searching thing to ask ourselves to what extent we have that singleness of eye which Paul had; and to what extent, with such singleness of eye, we are living the life of Christ, going

straight on to one point, cost what it may. Could you and I bear the scrutiny of the Lord's eye as to this? Are our consciences at rest as to singleness of purpose to *live Christ*. It is an immense thing to say, "God is my exceeding great reward, and the life I live is to be spent to God, and I will set myself to spend it to Him, cost what it may." It was just that which gave Paul his strength in service. Over and above acceptance through Christ in God, which was perfect, there was this life of Christ in him ; and that was what he had to live up to, and blessedly could he say, "To me to live is Christ."

O that there was that character of Nazariteship in us! Like Paul, could we say, "It is a little thing if you hear that my head is cut off, it is only that I shall go straight to the arms of Christ. If it is not cut off, I shall have another occasion to magnify Him down here?" His life being in Christ, he is sure that that life will always come out, no matter where.

Would that when any of us are ready to depart, we might have that blessed power to say, "The whole of my life has been spent for Christ, and the testimony of God!" Not to be with any of us as with Demas—loving this world, and turning back.

If Christ has given me life, He takes care of it and makes it shine forth, unless I grieve His Spirit. Is salvation merely taking up my cross and going through the wilderness? No. He who has taken me up and made me His, will bring me through it all ; but till I see Him and have a glorified body, I have not got full salvation. Peter.

and Paul have it not yet. It is the being with Christ in the Father's house.

I have the knowledge that all the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ, and the rays of light that have shone into my soul are infinitely more precious than every other thing; but when I see Christ as He is, I shall be clothed upon like Him; I shall see Him with my eyes, hear Him with my ears; there will be no distance whatever between Him and me. Christ proposes to us to stand in the Father's house in bodies of glory like unto His. You have His competency to be in heaven. You are a partaker of His nature. You could not be there save on that ground. If any fall asleep, they are present with Him. He enables me to say to the Father, "I have as true a right to come into thy presence as He who is on thy throne; for I come by and through and in Him who has given me the right and title without a thought of what I was.

Why do believers go so heavily through the wilderness, going through the sand, and their feet sinking so heavily down in it? It is because they do not see that their acceptance with God is as perfect as that of Christ; God seeing all the beauty of Christ upon them, and they will be presented by Christ to God, glorified with all His glory. I am on my road to glory, able to sing songs in the night.

If Christ has said that He means to bring us into the Father's house, He will be occupied about us the whole of the way, and will have us to know it too. If thinking of self, I shall not be able to sing songs in the night.

If we want to follow Christ, we must have

fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, bearing the stigma as did Paul. If thinking of the flesh and of what belongs to the first Adam, it will be sorrow all the way ; if of the second Adam, it will be joy all the way.

Philippians iii. 21. We shall find when we see Christ, all the perfection of what He is. He cannot look into dead souls without giving them life. He cannot look on this body of humiliation without making it a body of glory. Your body carries in it all the seeds of corruption, and is all through life a dying body ; and the more you think of Christ, the more conscious you are of the contrast between your body and that of Christ. Everything in ours to humble us, pain and weariness, and exercises of mind, all sorts of thoughts arising, and we have to put them down, but there they are. How sweet the thought that the body of glory is to be fashioned by Him, according to the mighty power whereby He subdues all things to Himself. There may be temper, or anything else, that we would not have had seen by any eye save His, but how blessed to know that He will subdue it all. He has only to speak the word, and all the beauty and magnificence of the glorified body will be given to each believer.

Whilst on earth, He means us to have the sorrows and trials of the wilderness. We may have to walk through a forest of difficulties, but we shall have Him with us. He meant us to be tried that we might learn His grace, and find in His love a blessed well-spring of joy all the way through. Blessed it is when we realize that Christ is with us ! Is there any time when He is not so ? No,

but our poor foolish hearts get occupied with all sorts of things. Yet if there is one heart full of joy down here, it will be the heart of that one whose eye is on Christ, occupied only with Him.

“Rejoice in the Lord.” You may say, “I cannot rejoice;” but if the Spirit of God gives a command, He gives power too in connection with it. Looking at exhortations as coming from the Lord, one finds help by bringing in the thought of His power with them. My hands may hang down, but if the command comes, “Now are you to rejoice in the Lord,” I can begin rejoicing, and I find He gives strength for it.

One evil after another starts up in this heart of mine, and I might well be discouraged and cast down; but the answer to all is, “Did not God give me to Christ before the foundation of the world?” A Peter might curse and swear, and deny Christ, but “having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.” He is up there in heaven as a Saviour God—as the One who can pour out peace and joy. I can say, “He is on the throne of God for me, He knows what a price He paid for me.” But is it because He loves me that He leaves me down here as a sheep for Satan to drive and harass? Yes, because He will break down all that is not of Himself in my heart. But having loved His own, He loves to the end.

He cannot be in heaven without revealing to us now that He wants us there; wants us all around the throne. What would it be if, after all the travail of His soul, there were no saved ones

there? What! if He who sits upon the throne were to see all the seats around it vacant? What were we worth when Christ picked us up? What are we *in self* worth now? Nothing at all. But we are united to Christ, and He never forgets His own, given Him by the Father before the foundation of the world. He has prepared their glory—not on the ground of their worth—but on the ground of what passed between Him and the Father, when we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

A believer once asked me why anyone should find fault with him for wanting to be a rich man. I answered him by 1 Timothy vi. 10. Adding “If you gather riches for yourself, awful sorrows will come;” and so they did. He lost wife and child, and had other things which touched him to the quick.

Would any like to be as Lot, settled down in Sodom? God burnt up the place, and drew him out of it; shewing that He would not be a party to such a walk as that.

Do you ever feel that you ought to praise, and yet your heart is out of tune, and you cannot have any thought of what to say? Just repeat over what God has done for you; and that will be the best praise you can give. God has made manifest His power in the gift of His Son, and in the work He has accomplished. Ah, not only are we able now to give thanks for the marvellous way He has led and brought us through the wilderness; but soon, in bodies fit for His presence, we shall be able eternally to shew forth His praise.

Nothing but redemption can bring to the heart of a poor sinner what God's character is as *Love*. God is God. Let Him have His own way; yes, let Him have it! There is nothing like it for His glory—nothing like it for our needs. He knew right well what He did in giving Christ. He came not only to save a people, but to have a saved people with Himself in glory.

We never rightly see the full measure of the blessing wherewith God has blessed us, unless we see that it all sprang up in His own mind, as the God rich in mercy. God always keeps the place of the God rich in mercy. There is no end to what He will give. He has given us His Son, and He will send Him a second time off the throne to take us up in bodies of glory, to shew out in us the riches of His mercy.

God always acts as God. How utterly beyond all the thoughts of man, His having sent down His only-begotten Son to put away sin, because none but He could do it. Redemption through *His* blood only, and those who believe, marked off in a peculiar way before the foundation of the world.

When I think of the throne of God, and Christ there, the only One who has the right and title to be there, and when I say that God chose me in *that* Christ before the foundation of the world, and I am accepted in the Beloved, how could my own or any other human mind have ever formed any thought or intelligent idea of such a purpose in the mind of God!

If a spring has not been opened in a soul, a spring of living water from God's own Son, no waters can flow and there is no life in you.

If you were to put all the good works of every believer all together, do you suppose that would give a title to go on the cloud of glory with Christ into the Father's house? No ; it is not their worthiness, but His, and He bestows it on His people, saying, "If you come to the Father in my name you will be heartily welcome." Why does God always smile upon me? Because He sees me *in Christ*, and loves me as He loves Christ. Are we really welcomed there? It is because we belong to such a Master ; and as it is for no goodness of ours, the feeblest little one is as welcome as the oldest apostle, because of coming in the name of Christ.

Christians have not learnt the double bearing of death and resurrection in themselves, if they do not see that being dead with Christ is the entire putting away of the old man. As a believer I am a crucified, dead, and buried man, my old self put aside. God looks on me as identified with the life of Christ, and tells me all the things which this life has made mine—"blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ ;" "one spirit with the Lord."

If you say, How can we stand fast? God will give you the power, just as surely as when He said, "Lazarus, come forth!" and His word gave life and the power of life, and Lazarus came forth.

God calls us to joy. Joy not sustained in the soul by anything of our own, but God having given His Son to bear all that He had against us, He would have us to joy and rejoice in Himself ;

and never can we get to the end of that joy. The want of joy in Christians comes from the want of practically understanding that its spring must be all found in Christ. Let Christ be your portion, and you cannot but joy and rejoice in Him. What! is all that God sees in Him, *mine*? Let nothing then come in to disturb me in the enjoyment of my portion. When a saint is really enjoying Christ, a thousand little things are quietly set aside: having food and raiment, he is therewith content. If my spirit is always occupied with the Lord as my portion, I shall be satisfied.

If the only thing I am looking for is the coming of the Lord, feeling how soon I shall be with Him, I shall feel that I have not time for a thousand things that might otherwise occupy me.

I never had my heart occupied with a living Christ in heaven, without finding that His love drew my affections after Him. I never grew careless without there being cold chills. If occupied with Him, you will not be thinking of yourself, your walk, your beauty, or anything except the love which draws your heart after Him.

I can give no reason why my heart was wrapped round Christ, save that the grace of God drew me to Him, and has kept me these forty years, because He loved me, and will love me unto the end. Peter cursed and swore, and denied the Lord, but the Lord had bound Peter to Himself, and He would keep him to the end.

To the disciples it was not only that the Lord was their shelter, but it was HIMSELF they loved.

I cannot have to do with Christ without having His life communicated to my soul. I have to do

with the Son of man as a Life-giver. Where is eternal life? In the Son. Nothing in me can change the intrinsic value of what I have in Christ. Is there anything of nature in it? No. The waters of the well have no connection with the rock in which the well is dug. The spring is below, and if the waters flow out, no thanks to the rock. Christ fills the soul with living water, refreshing not the rocky nature but the new nature that we have in Him.

There is something very sweet in being able, as a saint of God, to recognize the entire stripping off of everything connected with the old nature, and so getting rest of heart, perfectly undisturbed. If I knew nothing but my own failure as a creature, I could not have that rest, but in the presence of God there is the One whose blood has cleansed me. The Quickener, who gave me eternal life has so connected me with Himself, that God sees me in *Him*.

How many look at death (believers, I mean) as something solemn, the thought of which is to be avoided; instead of being able to say with Paul, "To die is gain." True, death came from the entrance of sin, but, if it should overtake me, I shall be borne upon the crest of the wave, right into the presence of the Lord, one leap into the bosom of Christ.

In the death of a believer, I only see the expression of the love of Christ opening the way to a place where the soul can be present with Himself.

Ought we not to be able to say of a believer, that the way he lives to God, delights the heart of Christ; and the way he lives to Christ, delights the heart of God?

There were some of whom the Apostle could say, "I remember without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." I am sure that my eye is not so keen as was Paul's, I may entertain happy thoughts of those around, but should you be surprised if you heard me say of any individual, "Oh, that is a man or woman, in whom I see the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope?" Those three things Paul saw had wrought thoroughly in certain individuals, before men and in the sight of God. Does Christ see this in you, as He counts over His sheep individually? Does He look down and see your heart true to Himself in the presence of the Father? Does He see not only the work of faith and the labour of love, but the patience of hope? Is His coming known as that which you have to steady yourself by? If there are breakers ahead, are you able to say, "Ah, He is coming—I can endure, I can steady myself because He is coming?" Does He see love producing such fellowship with Himself that it moves you to work with all the energy of your heart? Is love an energetic thing constraining your working? Does He see it working because the *light of God* has shined in your heart and you are continually gathering from God, standing in communion with God?

The moment we are "in Christ" we should be laying hold of everything that is connected with faith, love, and hope.

What a joyous thing if I can say that my eye is on Christ, and that *that Christ* is the vessel in

which I am hid in God, and in which all the fullness of God is to be poured into me. And if so, is it not a little thing to have to give up *all little things* to that Christ, to let all I do be in the light of His presence?

There is a difference between looking for Christ, and living in the light of His coming, as the point to look up to, referring everything to it. We are set between two things—the cross and the coming. Hope, when really in power in the heart, looks straight on, right up to that point. Our life should be given up to the Lord *in the light of His coming*. Oh, to do all, and to give up all, in the light of this coming Lord! What a blessed thing to the heart that loves Him! Oh that one might be found occupied and busied in doing *everything* as to this coming Lord!

What strange beings we are! professing to be occupied about the coming of Christ, and yet refusing to do things, or be occupied about things *only* in the light of His coming.

It is the question of the *object* of life—what is it that I am living to? That is a life of the Spirit where Christ is the *only object*. It signifies little who it may be, whether a Timothy or an elect lady—it just comes to the simple question, Are you living *to Christ*? A bed-ridden saint may live to Christ; another there may be whose object in life is the looking for the coming of Christ, and who is doing everything in reference to that.

“We look for a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Ah! there will not be scenes there in which man in failure will meet the eye of God. It will be the Lord’s earth then, no Serpent

there, no temptation, but everything that meets the mind of God. Not man as a creature in Eden, but man where all in man meets the mind of God; the whole a scene becoming His Son. That One—both God and man—able to introduce God in everything. God thinks it meet that His Son should be in a place every part of which has the savour of redeeming love, that He should have His people there in glory with Himself.

When we come to the glory, it will not be the golden city, not what we are, but *Christ Himself* that will be the absorbing object of our hearts, the being with Him, and the being able to appreciate what He is, all the deluge of glory nothing, compared with being where He is fully and completely appreciated, and He being the alone object to each individual heart. Even when down here in humiliation, do not we see that directly He appeared on the scene, no other could stand, He the alone One to open His mouth, to be listened to; and as they failed to see *Him* as the One, the All, in the scene, so they failed to get blessing.

What are the people who are one with Christ? Ah! they have treasure in earthen vessels. Do not we know it? Do not our feet stick in the clay? Do not we know what is the burden of these bodies we are in? We do, and we ought to know it, and when the Lord comes He will say, "I claim *that house*," and He will make it fit for His own presence. But as it is now, it is a poor *tumble-down* thing. We ought to know the character of the vessel and of the treasure set forth in it. Up there in the glory Christ is thinking of poor vessels down here, to fill them with all His own moral glory. He

can say, "When I went up, I sent down the Holy Ghost to make you one with myself; and now I can mingle all that I have with all that you are, not you to shine but I who am to shine in you."

Has the poverty of the creature been tasted, so that my only resource is the knowledge of having got the heart of the living Christ in heaven, who wants to use me as a vessel down here in which to pour forth His grace, and perfect His strength in my weakness?

Even as a man caught up into glory, the old "I" of Paul was there. I do not know anything more humbling to the soul than this specimen of what was the effect of the vision of glory on Paul, or anything more blessed than the specimen it gives of the grace of the Lord in dealing with Paul about it.

All the glory he was in belonged to another and not to himself at all; but the *I* of Paul's old nature could turn even that into corruption. Paul prays three times, and gets no answer till the third time, and then it is a point-blank refusal. Have you ever considered what this must have been to Paul? Like a child lifting up the foot to step a little higher, saying, "Now I know I shall get it." So he did, but what was it? "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Christ not speaking of Paul's ability to meet the trial, but of His own heart with him in it, to brighten everything, saying, "You want the removal of the thorn, but I shall leave it, because it will be something to make you lean on my arm. Do not you know that I went to the cross and went into the glory for you? and I am coming again to take you there; but whilst you are down

in the wilderness, I must be continually giving you something to guide and help you; my grace, my strength, are for you. I want you to see what a living grace mine is which you have to rest your heart upon. I shall leave the thorn just to make you feel what you have got in me, you will learn it as did poor Jacob every time the shrunken sinew told him that he was lame.”

When the waves were let roll in on Paul, he not only found himself to be a broken thing, but he found out that a broken thing was one which the Lord could get glory from. “My grace—my strength.” There is a blending here of two things very sweet to one’s heart, the blending of the sympathy of Christ and the thought of the Father getting glory for Christ out of poor broken things down here. And that thought changes all, to a resurrection man down here.

When God’s searching eye comes into everything connected with me, how shall I have perfect rest under it? Ah! it is a solemn thing, God going through all our thoughts and affections with the ray of perfect light, and yet to be in perfect rest. “Yes, my God, I have *perfect rest* in Thy presence, and why? Because the Christ in whom Thou hast brought me to rest, is the One in whom Thou restest with perfect delight, and I have perfect rest in Him.”

If the Lord came and looked into my soul to-night, seeing everything that starts up there as evil, if I had not Christ dwelling there by faith, I must cry out, “Woe is me!” If I have the eye of God on me discovering all these evil things, and could only think it will not be just in Him to let it all

pass (which I should if Christ were not in my heart by faith) I should give up all in despair, and come to the conclusion that I never had part nor lot in Him.

There is in the very centre of the throne of God a Lamb slain. Can you say, "That Lamb knows me and I know Him, He has been the channel of communication between the Father and me; and all the Father's secrets are opened out to the people connected with Him through that slain Lamb."

I remember the time when I thought nothing of Him, now, if I think of dying, my soul is as quiet as possible, because I have only to think of that Lamb up there, slain for me. Oh! what a blessed comfort to a poor sinner to be where he can have the same thoughts that God has, that there is none worthy save that One, and that His rest is in that One who really met God's mind. If I were to ask you about *rest*, could you say that you rest in nothing save Him? It will not prevent failure coming out, but that will not touch my rest. The need of rest is never so much realized as when God is humbling us, turning over everything that is inconsistent in us with life in Christ. Ah! it is a very solemn hour when God is pulling to pieces and breaking down in us what is not of Christ; but never does rest in Him come out so blessedly as then, so that we do not want to have a single thing covered over, nor to have a patched garment. No! I want nothing save for the Holy Ghost to discover it all in the light of God's presence where the Lamb is; and there is my rest before God.

What would a mind in nature do in a place where the whole mind must be occupied with Christ and nothing else? As to all you come in contact with now, could you say, "I have something to tell about the Lamb?" I remember there was once space in my mind for everything save the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can I bring anything into God's presence where none but Christ is precious? Will my work shine there? No, *none* but *Christ* can shine there.

There is no saint who does not know that whether he has to live forty years or three days, he is as much dependent on the present grace of God for the three days as for the forty years. Grace must be a fresh thing flowing to me to-day from God; not as the humanly religious man, who moves on and plans his own way.

You get up in the morning to go forth as sheep crossing the wilderness, doing there for Christ whatever there may be to be done. Do not let your shortcomings be unjudged, but remember the worthiness of the Lamb. I may put my head on my pillow at night, saying, "I have done nought to-day for Christ," but thinking, "If Christ had *told me* He had put power in the vessel to enable me to do anything, I should have done it." Ah, if I cannot recognize the fulness of the everlasting springs in Christ, it will always be, "My leanness, my leanness"—always occupied with the empty vessel, and not with Christ pouring into the cup.

If looking away from Christ, we directly find that we have lost the power which forms the heart

to live unto Him down here. We get it while we look at Him, and it gives at the same time the deepest humiliation. If there is one thing that shews the power of God acting in the soul, it is the experience one has when in communion with Christ, of how one loathes everything in oneself, whilst occupied with Him, there is the deepest self-loathing, and the deepest, calmest, rest of soul before God.

“And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.” (Rev. iv. 8.) That latter clause is very peculiar as connected with the grace of God in His own proper eternity. There are things His people suffer from, and that He never forgets. All their prayers are treasured up before God—their tears are put in His bottle and treasured up. What! the sorrow I have forgotten, has God *put that down*? Is that one of the things that will shine? He can use all for His glory, but can the prayers and groans of a saint be kept and have a special place, be an odour of a sweet savour to God? The sinner does not know this, but a poor broken one can say, “Not only does God remember my prayer, but He puts it by on His own throne, like the pot of manna which He liked to be laid up, to be remembered as a trophy of the way He carried His people through the wilderness. And so will their prayers tell *there* what their special need of His presence was *here*. “Golden vials.” *Gold* marks the divine character of that by which they are kept; the odour, a fragrant in-

cense going up ; the fragrance ever the same. Is that said of the prayers of saints ? Yes, not one of them lost. The Lord Jesus knew them all, they were ever before God.

Are you living in the *power* of life in Christ ? One has heard of many who have lived long in a damp prison, and when brought out into sunshine, have found themselves not able to walk, they could not go through the varied functions of life. You want more than the mere pulsation of life—you want the power of life, life not only to make a start, but to press on. Christ not only gave me life, but I have to shew the power of it—to shew what the persons are who have that life. I have to walk with feet unsoiled, where there is a great deal to soil them, and by every act to develope the great fact of my life being a life hid with Christ in God.

Would it not be very blessed if you who are in Christ walked so as to be in practical Nazariteship with Christ ? Not only going forward because He did, but going *with Him* as an overcomer—Satan doing all he can to hinder. Ah, but if you go with Christ, Satan himself becomes a minister of joy to your souls, while you can say, “ Ah, my Master was down here as an overcomer, and I have got Him with me to make good my being an overcomer too.” Satan cannot stand against this, and it gives a sweetness to being an overcomer, that to my own soul surpasses everything. It is Satan and the world that have to be overcome. What a blessed company there was of Jerusalem overcomers, what a still more brilliant band in Ephesus ! In the world a band of soldiers have often been

called the Invincibles. Overcomers are just that, in the thought of the Lord who gives them that power of victory, because of our being connected with Him in whom we believe, and of our being in a position where God is not ashamed to say of us "There are my overcomers."

We find no scene anywhere in which the personal glory of the Lord Jesus shines out so much as on the cross, when the hottest furnace of the wrath of God for sin came on Him. Was there any murmuring from that perfect Son of His love? Oh, no! When He came to the cross He was the perfect Servant, and in that hour of suffering, a poor thief could touch His heart. And another thing mark in Him: when a believer seems to get no more the bright light he used to have, he says, "I cannot praise without the light;" but this perfect One, when without one ray of light, could vindicate God. *You* will find that the power to praise is given by God, and praise can never flow save as He gives power; but in this One was the eternal spring whence it flows; for *He was God*, and the divine glory shines out there. I do think that Christians of the present day have but few thoughts of all the divine glory connected with the cross. But when we reach the glory, in the view of all that wide-spread glory as we shall behold it in all its parts, its heights and depths, there will be the understanding of its connection with Him who hung upon the cross, and there opened our way into that glory.

Is the cross between you and the world? What does the cross say to your soul about your connection with the world? What are the armorial

bearings of the world? *Not* the cross of Christ, and when we see that the world is running on, doing everything to magnify *man*, what are *we* to be doing? Ah, glorying in the cross, we have to bear the cross, and to follow Him who died on it.

Can I say that I have known that cross of Christ, not only as to what Christ did for me in bearing my sins on it, but that I have seen my connection *through that cross* with the glory, and am separated to God by the power of it?

You could not say that the Father was the *God* of the Lord Jesus Christ before the incarnation.

When I view the eternal Son as Man, I get the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not as with us, sons by adoption, but the Father's only-begotten Son. I was brought into the family by adoption before time was.

My fellowship with the Father is my taste of the delight He has in the Only-begotten.

That Son came into the world as the perfect presentation of all that the Father is; and the Son is presented to me, and all the fulness of God is poured into my heart through Him.

The Father would not allow anything to come into existence but in some way to be associated with the Son of His love. Everything gets its mould from the Father's thought about the Son—everything ran into it, like a pattern.

The moral glory—the beauty of the ways of God—is what I understand “the riches of His glory” to be. He finds His whole delight in the Son of His love, and you are to bear the stamp of, and to

have your heart full of, that Son—seeing the riches of His glory now in the exquisite beauty of a Father with such a Son, and of His having brought children into such a place.

In “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” We look forward and see the heavens as they will be in the millennium ; see not only one heavenly Man there, but heaven filled with heavenly men ; and when the Lord takes possession of the heavens, He has them all as His “staff” around Him. . The time is coming when God will use the heavenly saints as His dwelling-place, and possess the heavens.

If I turn my mind to that with which Ephesians iii. closes, that is, the breadth and length, and depth and height of love in connection with the infinitude of the divine Being, my mind cannot grasp it; but when I see the central object is Christ—Christ loving me—love presented in a human heart, and He Himself mine ; He in the very infinitude of God, able as a Man there to fill me with all the fulness of God, I can lay hold of it ; and it is the only way a creature could have to do with the divine infinitude. I am brought by the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ, blessed in Him, and the love in His heart made to bear on my heart. He has a people down here, and He is filling them with all the divine infinitude, “all the fulness of God.” How He has to empty me, to get my heart filled with Himself ! Wondrous ! to be able to look up there and say, “There is He, my eternal Lover.” I cannot grasp the infinitude of God, but I can say, “He does love me.” There is peculiar sweetness in being able to say, “*Our* Lord.” He of whom

God says, "That is my only-begotten Son ;" He, the One in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead ; and to think that He can love a poor thing like me, and that I can love Him !

A sheep of the slaughter down here perhaps, but Christ my portion up there ; and He saying, "I am the only-begotten Son of the Father ; I who have been in His bosom from all eternity, know that Father's heart of love, and the infinite fulness of it, and I want you to have the full idea of the blessedness of believing in my name, because His heart's delight is to fill you up with blessings in me." All the people who believe in Jesus can look up and feel the affections of the Father flowing through the bosom of Christ to them.

For forty-two years His hand has moulded me out, for forty-two years, in all the struggles and pressure down here, the thought of that Man up there on the throne as my accepted sacrifice, has brought me through, and kept me up, and made me resolve each day to thread my life on that truth of substitution up there. If God made Him to be the Sin-bearer for me, the whole question is settled. I am become the righteousness of God in Him.

Christians say, "I feel that my works will not bear the being spread out in the light." Ah, but they will, because God has taken you up for the glory of His Son ; and everything in you, and everything you do, from the greatest to the least, is continually coming out in the light before Him. Your heavenly Father will not take His eye off you for a moment, and all through your course

you have been under His eye ; and blessed that it is so, in order that the walk of His children may be becoming the place they are in, and that their consciences may be always brought before Him.

One, who had been, a few days before her death, full of peace, told me that for days the Lord seemed to pass in review before her, the whole course of her life since she had known Christ—what she had been as a wife and a mother, and how in everything she had failed ; the light shewing it out. “ Why,” she said, “ is He at *such a time* shewing me where my life has been inconsistent ? ” Ah, but she could look at it all *with Him* who had borne her judgment, and she had to reckon herself dead because of sin, and alive because of righteousness.

I am sure that saints are never established in peace, until all has been seen in the light and judged there ; so as ever to be in fellowship with God’s Son—able to say, “ To me to live is Christ.”



# GLEANINGS

FROM THE

TEACHING OF G. V. W

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(GLEANED BY THE LATE B. D.)

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## GLEANINGS.

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“AND when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.” Sweet thought! The Lord’s voice will yet be heard singing His song again amongst His brethren, singing the song of praise to God, as it was sung so often here below.

When one thinks of the wondrous glory of Christ, how astonishing that He can join with *us*! But more, when one thinks of His bringing many sons to glory at such a cost, one is lost in adoring amazement.

What was the first Adam, when set in his little territory in the garden of Eden, to the eye of God, compared with the second Adam?—*that One*, the Giver of eternal life, the smitten Rock, who in a moment could fill ten thousand souls with streams of living water. What a contrast! he whose days in the garden of Eden were but a span; whose beginning—a little handful of dust—God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life; and *that One*, the eternal life in the bosom of the Father before all worlds; He who could speak the word and give life to corruption; He, the One in whom God could accept those taken out of the pit where they had fallen, having chosen them in Him before the foundation of the world, to fill them with all spiritual blessings in Him.

In the wilderness it was the Lord trying the heart, to see if He Himself was enough, and whether they were a people who, as “strangers and pilgrims with God,” had their hearts so *packed up* that when they found no water they could say, “But we have God with us and Canaan before us.” Whether they found such a measure of joy in the wilderness as to shew that their hearts *were packed up* to go forward.

We are in a system where everything turns on fallen man as the main object. That which separates me from it, is the thought that I am Christ’s in heaven, chosen in Him before this system I am in had a beginning. This thought gives a great steadiness to the mind in all that we may be passing through. *His*, and kept by Him in everything, and waiting on Him to see what He will do. If I left my body to-night, I should go straight to Him; and when He leaves the throne to come and take His people home, my body will go too; the dead raised, the living changed, and made like Himself. All to stand round Him—He the centre, and they covered with all His beauty.

If you are not walking in practical holiness, you will be made to find it out in chastening. He cannot separate between the Head and the members; but He looks at our ways. The Lord is sanctifying us, body, soul, and spirit. What! is this corruptible body to be put apart for God? Yes! whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, all is to be for the glory of Christ. Are all the affections of my heart, all the thoughts of my mind, to be put apart? Yes! as a member of

Christ I have to walk in childlike faith; most watchful not to commit Christ to anything unlike Himself, because of being in *vital union* with Him. I may be but a hair of the head, the tiniest member, but God has blessed me with all spiritual blessings in Him, and being so blest, ought I not to walk accordingly—holy and without blame before Him in love?

Ah, it required *faith* in the poor widow who could bring her farthing to cast into the coffer, with the gold and silver of those ostentatious givers; but it alone was of value in the Lord's eyes. All the rest was nothing at all. I would mention another poor widow who, when asked if she had any particular want, anything pressing on her, replied, "Yes, I have: I have never been accustomed to pass the box, and it cuts me to the heart that I cannot put in something for Christ." She had not even the two mites which the other poor woman had to cast in, but, ah, there was the heart for Christ; and the desire of the heart was accepted by the Lord of the other poor widow.

It is my *Master* who has given me eternal life in Himself. He is the eternal Lover of my soul, and I want to be like Him. Not one will ever taste what the Son of man tasted down here, and the billows which reached Him can never touch me, but He is the model of my life. He would take nothing here below, and I will take nothing either. He is the touchstone of everything down here, as to the connection of everything with the Father. If any down here were connected with Him, they

made a home for that One whom He had sent. If not, they knew Him not.

It comes to my having the mind of God, do I want to be like Christ in everything? If born of God, I have power to overcome all that is not of God, and to walk according to God.

There is nothing we less expect a recompense for than the "patience of hope," but nothing is more precious to God, and nothing more marks a believer's life in the light. If I have got Christ as the spring of my heart, I must expect nothing but conflict down here; but what is there for me up there? "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." He says, "I make over to you the glory which my Father has given me, I share it with you, I keep back nothing from you." Have I got it yet? No, I have to wait for it.

There was to be a space between His going up there, and our getting up there. We have got *His heart* all the way, but the interim is to be a time of suffering, a time of patience. Are you girded up for it? You know you are in the Father; has He not shewn a Father's bosom, and love flowing out of it to you? Not saved only, but the greatness of the Father's love bringing me into fellowship with Himself; so that I can say, "I mind heavenly things, my fellowship is with the Father, and the Son in heaven."

Everything comes by permission to search the believer, but if God says, "I have shed my love abroad in your hearts," can Satan take out of a man's heart that love? The character of love is abiding. Some, alas, do turn aside, but what single thing down here can you covet, if looking

up in the patience of hope, waiting for Christ's coming?

Paul went down full of zeal and energy against the Nazarene, and directly that Nazarene looked on him, directly he turned full of zeal for Him.

The Lord had said of Paul, "I will shew him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake." And it was not so much in service as by suffering, that all in Paul which was like the Lord came out. If Paul was nearest in likeness to Him, he would have the most to suffer. He had been brought to the feet of the Man of sorrows.

If all the glory of Christ could shine down upon you from Christ, you would, in nature, see no beauty in it. This is a fact, and it displays in the most awful aspect what the heart of man is. When Christ is revealed to any one, He Himself becomes the object of the soul. I have to do with a living person, it was Christ Himself I beheld when I got rest.

It changes everything directly I get Christ shining in on my soul. There may be the same routine of things without, the same difficulties and trials of the wilderness, but everything is entirely changed, because it is all seen in connection with Christ; and everything has a different value, because Christ is the centre. When the glories of Christ break into the soul, what thought can there be of settling down in the wilderness, or laying up a comfortable provision for old age?

How came testimony to be broken up? From seeking our own and not the things of Christ.

What maintained unity at first was simply going after Christ as sheep after the Shepherd, not seeking anything else.

Ah! it is a very good thing to be brought down very low, not only by "Just as I was," a poor lost sinner, but by "Just as I am," a poor tottering Christian, as unlike Christ as possible. But still, He is leading me on, and God is conforming and fashioning me to His image.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." *Who is this*, coming out with His "Amen," when about to give up the ghost? Who is this whose eye could, before closing in death, turn on a poor sinner and dart a ray of glory into his soul? Ah! it was He who alone could say it, and give to that poor sinner the full consciousness of *who* He was.

As Nazarites do we feel the humiliation and glory of the cross as our strength of heart, all through our course in the wilderness.

Oh! the sweetness of the closing verses of Ephesians iii.! Have we not had to put our Amen, and to say, "Yes, the church is heavenly, divine, soaring up from earth, inseparable from the Lord Jesus in heaven! We *do* know that love of Christ, we *do* look for each soul individually to be filled up with that love. Cannot you say you have tasted it as a divine portion, something that hangs altogether on Christ?"

Oh, to be able to look up there, saying, "That Lord Jesus *did* give Himself for the church." How our affections ought to be stirred by seeing

what Christ has done! *Whose* affections are exercised about the church? *Christ's!* He formed her, and gave Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

In the closing chapters of Revelation, we have yet more that calls us to see the church's unworldliness and weanedness from earth. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." The glory of God and the Lamb are upon her, shewing her to be something not of earth, but heavenly and divine. Is that the thing your soul is going forth to?

All the glory of God gathered up will shine out, in, and from Christ, to be reflected by the church of the living God—this church used as the tabernacle to contain it. If Christ is looking on you and me as vessels to display the glory of God, He *must* love us. Love is a very *real* thing, not a flickering thing, but something connecting us with heaven and Christ. If Christ's heart is occupied with caring for the church as something which is to be the *curtain* round the divine glory in that day, surely we ought to be occupied with it! We shall never get an idea of what an unworldly thing we belong to, if our hearts are not in living communion with Christ in heaven.

Revelation iii. 14. What answer is there in my heart to that title of Christ, "the Amen?" Is my heart set on His glory? God's heart is turned round to seek it, and has my heart never been set to seek it? What! has the glory of God never in my heart had the Amen? Seeing where it is, and saying, "Amen" to it, the heart gets rest at once.

“Buy of me gold tried in the fire.” That is a part of divine wealth. Who has got divine wealth? If I am a pensioner of Christ, He is my gold. I let all I got in Egypt drop on the shores of the Red Sea, and now what have I got? I have got my Saviour God. He is my wealth, He is the gold tried in the fire, He is enough.

Are you so living to Christ that you take up all the duties that lie in your path, and do what your hands find to do *unto Christ*? Satan often blinds the eyes to the omnipotency of Christ, leading one to say, “I cannot expect Christ to come into such a little thing.” What! does not Christ fill little things as well as great? All the omnipotency and might of God is found in the heart of that risen man. If not, prayers could not be heard. I get His whole attention when I speak to Him in prayer, as if there were not one more save me. If I say that anything so small cannot occupy Him, it is only pride denying His omnipotency.

How often one has had a powerful consciousness in the soul that prayer has been heard, when no word, or half a word, has been uttered: one has suddenly felt that the *Lord* has come in to *answer*.

None can overcome the world and self, save by something divine and unworldly being shewn them. Christ always puts some personal glory to draw hearts out of the world. If He looks at you, wanting to remove all that hinders your soul, He never tells you to look inside, but puts something outside as a lever to raise you out of it. If I want to get

out of Laodicea, what is my lever? Why, that I have got to share the throne of Christ. Is He not on the Father's throne now? And does He not tell me to lay hold of that thought? If I am in deep miry clay, He says, "Why be cast down? I can give you power to overcome and to sit down with me on my throne." And I know He will rise up from His seat to take me up to Himself; that thought gives the heart present power over all circumstances.

If I am a saved soul walking round the wilderness, that heavenly man on the throne of God is with me, His eye watching me. If I am out of my place He sees it in an instant. When one thinks of Christ looking at us down here to see if we are in our proper place, the heart goes forth at once in praise to God, saying, "It is *His work* from first to last." He brought us out of death into life, translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, because He wanted us there. If God takes me up to glory, I shall say, All is of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Not a fragment of nature remains in the place you are in, *in Christ*. All your connections are new with God. There is a walk that becomes this place. If I know the heart of God toward me, am I walking as a child with Him?

Are you ready to go *at once* straight into heaven, if the gates were thrown open? What manner of persons ought we to be to say it! Are we walking in a way perfectly consistent with stepping to-night at once into the glory, to be at home in the Father's house?

Paul said, "I cannot take a step without the sentence of death rolling through everything."

It was a strange thing, the only-begotten Son of God coming into the world as a babe. All in heaven would be saying, "Why, what palace can be good enough for Him?" And man saying, "Turn a crib in which the oxen have been feeding upside down, and that will be good enough for Him."

After He had risen, His love shone out individually; it shone out to poor Mary weeping over His dead body, as she thought, and to others also: but when He left them and went up into heaven, what was the expression of love that came out? *That Christ*, looking down, saying, "Those poor things could not go through the wilderness, they have no power save in my death. I want them to know that I am up here *for them*, all the living water flowing from above; they are not to be turning aside a stone in the wilderness to find water, but finding it all in me up here." And what does He give us to do? "Shew forth my death, till I come." If faith in that Christ has brought you into the light of heaven, and you know a Man on the throne, and that that One has sent a letter to you through Paul, a letter in which He specifically tells you that He wants you to carry in your heart and to shew out in your life down here, *His death*, what answer are you giving? Do you count this death as that which is cutting you off entirely from the world and the things of the flesh? Could the world tell by the character of the things that occupy you, the state of your heart and mind as to

Christ? In this place between the cross and the glory, are you telling out what Christ's people have to do until He comes? We have not got the glory yet, but we have Him in whom it is secured to us. And till He comes, it is dying daily, carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that His life also may be made manifest in us. I repeat, *that is all* we have to do down here. How blessed! everything finished, and He, at leisure in the Father's presence, occupied about poor feeble things in the *fog* down here; and they being made to know that all through the time between His death and His coming again, He has not *once* forgotten them; telling them to shew out His death until He comes a second time, for the full manifestation of His love, and to take them up to the Father's house.

He comes to take those who honour the Father's counsel up to Him. He will come out in light—light streaming forth—and the first effect will be His changing their bodies, and with a steady hand moving them up into the Father's house. It might be when we are sitting round His table, that the Father, on whose word He counts, might say, "Rise up," and He would come forth to take us up, saying, "Behold! I and the children whom Thou gavest me."

Are our souls individually feeding on the thought that that risen Man at God's right hand has not *forgotten* that He is coming forth for us? And are we remembering His death till He come?

We shall find it very solemn if we are not *pilgrims*, if the door be not shut to everything of the first Adam, if not walking as citizens of heaven, and as children of the Father; we shall not be able

to dwell in spirit above ; not be enabled, like Paul, to pass through all forms of death, dying daily to *everything* because he had got life in Christ and power to carry it out and make it manifest "through deaths oft."

The secret of all power in the people of God to shew forth Christ's death and make manifest His life, is to find themselves shut out from the world below, where their feet tread ; and shut up to another world above, where their life is hid with Christ in God, hid in Him who is coming ; and who asks where my heart is whilst He is absent.

Paul was a blessed man, he had put down all selfishness, he would live only to Christ. Yes, come what might, he would live to the One who had been the giver of eternal life to him. Oh, if you could say, "To me to live is Christ," would you not in everything be more than conquerors ? Paul was a man of the strongest character of any man who ever lived on earth, but he mastered that and brought everything in him into subjection to Christ. In everything he did, he dropped into the mind of Christ.

You will find immense strength, if you know what it is to get before your soul the reality of a *Person, a living man*, in a body of glory, being up there as the prize to attain to. You may have to go through a dark passage, but saying, "Never mind, there is *that One* in the glory, and I am pressing on till I reach Him." It was not merely a *doctrine* with Paul, but the working of his heart's affections about a distinct person, and the certainty of attaining to and of being made like that person's own glorious body. Not merely was bright

light shining into Paul's soul, but the *love* of Christ was telling its own tale in the heart of Paul.

I have felt much lately about the want of power in saints to be the exhibitors of Christ. I feel we want exceedingly to have our hearts more occupied with Him up there. What would give such brightness of heart as the being able to say, "To me to live is Christ"? Are our eyes fixed on the risen Christ, and our hearts set on being with Him in the glory? Are we holding fast what He has given, keeping His works unto the end?

Not a glance of my eye, nor a thing that occupies me, but Christ notes. Why? Because *He loves me*, and He wants all and everything in connection with me to be according to His mind.

Two very simple things are telling the state of any soul: are they saying, "*To me to live is Christ, and to die gain?*"

When Stephen was being stoned, what was the Lord thinking? That Saul, the bitterest of all persecutors, should step in and fill up the ranks.

On which ground would you rather be—that of an upright man, or that of a poor sinner, saying, "Christ came and died for me, and I am justified by faith in His blood?" Justification means that there is no claim of God not met by Christ. But am I saved altogether? No, not yet. When Christ comes at the end, He will come as a Saviour who has to save those who are His, out of this world. He has property down here, the bodies of

saints, and when He comes, it will be to take them up.

Revelation v. 8. Where is this song of redemption-praise sung? On earth, or in heaven? Although now in a place where you feel more and more what the worth is of that blood on your crimson sins, (so that, as David said, Give me the sword of Goliath, for there is none like that, so you say, Give me the blood of Christ, and nothing else), yet there is no place where, in connection with that blood, its worth is more intrinsically appreciated than the throne of God. That song is sung, and has been sung, down here since the Lord took His seat on high; but when the time comes for shifting the scene, the twenty-four elders (that is, the church) will sing before the throne, "Worthy is the Lamb!" What so precious as the thought that this lip of mine will never be weary of singing, "To him who has loved me and washed me from my sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever?" Not one of the angels, nor any other creature can touch *that* note with regard to His blood.

Next we see in chapter vii. 9, a company arrayed in white robes—robes made white in the blood of the Lamb. That is something which we want. Our consciences are purged, but we want our robes washed too. That company is fit *outwardly* as well as *inwardly*. One might have a cleansed conscience, but a soiled robe. A believer ought not to allow a spot. Your robes are to be spotlessly white as you go along—fit to walk with the Lord. The conscience may be clean before the robes are.

Do I walk as a heavenly man—my ways, my

conversation, the ways and conversation of a man whom Christ has stooped to wash in His blood?

Walk is an *immense* thing to us—it is every thing to have a walk which tells that the feet are washed by Christ day by day, because we have been washed in His blood. Are we exercised about it? Exercised as to whether outward walk has a voice that tells out we are a peculiar people, not only washed from the guilt of our sins, but our robes white, everything about us in harmony with it.

Next turn to chapter xii. 11. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb . . . . and they loved not their lives unto the death.” We find there what every one of us requires to have, that is, *a screw* put on us. “You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” That is what I call putting on the screw. The calling of a redeemed people is to be overcomers, not to shrink from suffering. We find something like it in Hebrews x. 32. In Revelation xii. 11, we see a company who, when the whole energy and activity of Satan in every form was put forth against them on earth, overcame him by the blood of the Lamb. That was their power to worst him.

Shall I say, “I cannot overcome,” to that Christ who resisted unto blood, and shed His blood for me: He now crowned with glory at God’s right hand, because He overcame, putting that blood forward here, as that which tells of Satan being a worsted foe?

Ah, as we go on we shall find, and do find more and more, no one thing so precious to us as that blood. The blood of Him who was God manifest in flesh, and who came down here to shed it for us.

Never was there any character down here like that of the Eternal Son of God as Man—a character that has a depth and height in it that could be found in none but in God Himself, and could have been sketched only by the Holy Ghost. Satan would have done all in heaven and earth to have dimmed its perfectness, but he could not touch that holy undefiled One. It was God drawing near to man according to His own character: the whole thing, from the manger to the cross, was divine.

It is a very real thing to have to do with Christ; when you receive Christ, you meet all the moral glory of God in the face of that Christ; not merely His glory shining there, but all the tender affections of the Father's heart of love displayed in Him who took our form and dwelt among us as Man.

Why was He to leave heaven and come down here—this perfect, matchless, peerless God-man? What was this world to Him? people might say. Ah! God had all His plans centred in that One. From the foundation of the world it was ordained that He should take up the question of sin; and whatsoever the ruin and the misery brought in by it, Christ was perfectly equal to turning all the ruin to His own glory.

No one but the Son of God Himself could look up in God's face and say, "I can settle the question of sin." None save He could look down into the heart and mind of a sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, and say, "I know exactly what you are, and I can do a work of which God can say that He has found His rest, and through which He is perfectly free to deal in grace with the most wretched sinner.

There is no part of the life of the blessed Lord in which He stands forth so conspicuously *as God* as when on the cross, able to meet the whole volume of God's wrath for sin ; bearing in His own body sins heaped up without number, and by the sacrifice of Himself making clear God's right to be just in justifying the sinner. The character of God as Love displayed too, in giving His Son to be the accepted sacrifice for sin. God had never before been revealed after this fashion.

The doctrine of the gospel as *in the person of Christ* is a lost thing in the present day, because it is always presented on the side that meets man, and not God's side.

When one gets to see the beauty of Christ, how the heart owns it as something altogether matchless. Now on God's throne in human form, He could not but be set forth in heaven and earth as the most divinely beautiful of all beautiful objects.

When the high priest went into the holy place, he took a quantity of sweet-smelling incense which was burnt to go up as a cloud to cover the mercy-seat. Is there nothing like a cloud of incense in God's presence for us? Yes. Christ is up there for us, with such a sweet smelling savour, that its fragrance is filling heaven.

As the whole mind of Christ, when down here, was set on shewing His delight in the Father, so now in heaven it is the whole pleasure of God's mind to show out His delight in that Christ, seated at His own right hand, as the accepted sacrifice. He wants our hearts to be filled with nothing else,

and when occupied with that, no question can come in as to our perfect acceptance.

No one who has got Christ in the light as his pattern could deny that the eternal life flows out from us in the proportion that it flows in. If it flows in, it sets my whole heart praising. Why does it not flow out in rivers of blessing? Ah! the water from the Rock of Ages is pure, but not so the channel through which it is to flow out. Just when going to praise, some foolish thought, something of self comes in. Blessed it is that none knows this save God, and that the more the light comes in, the more one knows what is of God, and what is not: while in that which comes out it discovers to me how unlike all my ways and habits of thoughts are to those of Christ. But the very light that tells me this, comes in with blessed healing; not only telling me what He is, and that I am not like Him, but ah! how sweet! as the light shines in, it tells me too that I shall not always be what I am. I see by faith Christ in His glorious body, and I know that I shall be like Him when I see Him as He is. Not only is Christ revealed to me in the light, but a whole chapter of glory yet to come is revealed as the light shines.

I know a dear believer who is afraid of death; not of what comes after, but of the pain; but what is the pain of any one if he is in the light? Is it the same thing if there? Certainly not. Ah, when all these questions come out in the light, we see the answer to everything there; see how magnificently Christ has done everything. I had rather not settle any little detail; He settles everything; why should I be occupied by any question about

*pain*? Whether I shall go by death into His presence, or whether I shall be down here when He comes, I am in the light, and He has settled everything about me. All these questions just catch us, like thorns that wound us as we go along. Let them make you ask whether you are looking at everything in the light. If you are in the light, and soon to be in the glory, will He, think you, let you be in want of a scrap of bread, by the way? The waves may come in rolling against you, but when it breaks you will see it came to shew you some particular thing the Father had to do in you, something He wants to bring into the light, because He would have it to shine out just there.

What keeps people nestling down in a little dark valley, when the eternal light is given by God to shine down in order to make their hearts rejoice?

God, in every dealing with His people, finds a way to make love and light shine down on their wilderness path, so that the soul goes on finding fresh joy unto the end.

No sin the believer brings to God, but when it comes to be weighed, is not outweighed by the blood. Broken down as Peter was, which was greatest, the divine love in Christ, or the sin in Peter? Ah! did He not give him a piercing glance? Is He changed? I am very vile; but that love is infinite: my sin has been very bad against that love—but *it* is infinite.

I can be before God just as I am: take care not to pass that by: it is a wondrous part of the glory of Christ, that a person with sin in him can be in the presence of God in perfect favour. *Sin* could not be *there*, but it was all borne by Him, who is

the accepted sacrifice in His own body on the cross, and put away for ever. By faith in Him I am brought into the light with nothing to hide—and I do not want to hide anything. There is sin and mortality about me, but all that I am cannot separate me from Christ. God says, “He is the accepted sacrifice, and I have nothing to say against you as to all you are in self; in Him you are perfectly accepted, the blood cleanses from all sin.” But I have need to be in the light to keep up a walk that becomes such a place. If I turn aside, I shall forget that I am purged from my old sins, and God must come in with a rod. You must keep your walk up by having your eye fixed on Christ.

If any turn aside—the heart hankering after the leeks and cucumbers of Egypt, and the eye looking for the well-watered plains—they will forget that the blood has purged them. It must be ever on my mind and soul, and I am to walk in communion with God to keep it fresh.

There can be no selfishness allowed if walking in the light. Look at Christ if you want to know what to do with selfishness. See what sort of God your God is, look into heaven and see that Son of His love, all that He is, and all that He has given you—your portion is there. In the place where Christ’s light shines, all selfishness is detected and judged, and then we can have fellowship. Christ enables the believer to know the place where He is, and to have all his pleasure in walking separated unto Himself whilst down here. It is only as the soul is in communion with God, that it gets a taste of the glory, and brighter and brighter it beams as the night is darker here.

Can I say "I know the cross of Christ?" A person may know the cross as his salvation, but not know the value of it practically. I got all my blessing by the cross; but to enjoy my blessing I must view everything in the light of the cross, so as to have God's thoughts about it; and I have to walk as a witness that no one is worth thinking of but the crucified One.

What God first raises in the mind of a sinner the awful thought of his own existence, world without end, for ever and ever—disappearing from all here, but not from the sight of God; when He puts before him a continuity of existence in that place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched—ah! what a contrast to put before him life eternal in Christ!

What a thought that God has found me, a poor sinner, and given me that *eternal life* which is in *His Son*!

I believe all the glories of Christ are connected with the rivers of living waters; every one who believes can say in one light, "God has made us as the lign aloes and cedar trees beside the waters." (Num. xxiv. 6.) Every stone might be heated, and not a drop of water to cool them; but there is one place in the wilderness where there was not only a drop, but rivers of living waters.

Christ is the smitten Rock, from which eternal waters flow to the soul; the water from that Rock rises up and flows in the heart of a believer. The water of life is flowing through my soul, witnessing of heavenly things; it is flowing down from

Christ to me, leading me on in the bonds of life in the Spirit.

By grace ye are saved, not of works. All human power and energy is at an end ; man excluded and God put into the place of supremacy. Amazingly different the clay on the potter's wheel from the potter who can mould and fashion it according to his own will. He knew how to take up Saul, the stiffest-necked sinner, saying, "I can take you up and wash you in the blood of my Son." Ah! God knew how to do it, so that the Son of His love, having gone down to the death of the cross, and being raised up to the highest glory, should not be there without the poor people saved by grace, to shew out in the ages to come the exceeding riches of that grace. And what can you and I say, except, "Oh! the depths of the riches of it," having so saved us that we can call Him Father, in Christ God our Father and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

That I am "created unto good works" could not be put more clearly than it is; but it sweeps work clean out as a foundation. What are these "works?" We see them plainly shewn out in the Apostle Paul. Before the light shone down he had been entirely occupied with things down here; when the light shone into his heart, he found that he was to be occupied with the interests of Christ up there, and the whole thought of his heart was what he could do to shew out down here the character and ways of Christ; and could he seek occupation in Judaism, or seek anything for himself? He had made manifest the Satanic power working in him, before, but when light shone into his heart he

thoroughly and whole-heartedly gave himself up to it, and found some of the very sweetest tastes of the grace of God, and of the sympathy of Christ: every minutest thing fell under the eye of Christ.

All is bondage if work is set before me as a fallen creature; what a contrast when, because He has called me to that glory where He is, He calls upon me to bring forth works meet for it!

No! not a single spot in nature where anything can grow for God. Everything that comes out of you as work for God, if mixed with what is of the flesh, bears nothing but the curse of sin with it, as does all religious work done by the world.

The last Adam is the fountain of life; not, like the first Adam, a vessel made to contain it. the "I am," the One who could communicate a new nature, as a life-giving Spirit. There was a glory in the first, standing in innocence in Eden; but what was that compared with the glory of the second—the life-giving Spirit, standing at the grave of Lazarus with the word, "I am the resurrection and the life?" When does the glory of the "I AM" begin? When He created the world? No! it never had a beginning. One cannot have a correct thought about Him, save as Lord; cannot begin with Him, save as in Philip-pians ii., the object of all God's delight, and of the worship of heaven.

Is there one single unwrecked thing of Eden to be found? No! it was the entire failure and wreck of everything, all having fallen under the power of Satan leading man where he would.

If, as a creature, I had not been found in ruin, God's gospel would not have suited me at all; it

is all about the grace of God, and nothing in the creature but ruin. To the mind of God, "Dead in trespasses and sins" is the state of the whole human family. If the rolling stone rolls on in its course without God's intervention, it rolls on till it rolls into hell. When everything was in the most direct opposition to God, then He shewed Himself rich in mercy. Satan's specimens dead in sin, whether Gentiles or Saul of Tarsus—such specimens, Satan's dark black crown, only setting forth more brightly what the riches of God's mercy. Ruin in self, ruin everywhere—and God's rich mercy.

When one thinks what God has done, and what the grace that has brought us into such a place that there is no blessing He could give us in Christ, which He has not made ours, what are the results as to our walk? If we look at it practically, have we the same blessed comfort as the apostle Paul? Are we a people who have such thoughts flowing through our hearts as those that flowed through his? Not that he was blest a bit more than we are; he took his place as a member of the body; but what a contrast the thoughts that came flowing through the heart of Paul, from the state of Christians now—in the besetment of things down here! Let us compare ourselves as Christians with the apostle, so as to see how far we understand the spring of what he had, and whether we have his full flow of joy through our hearts. God wants you to have joy as the result of understanding the place you are brought into. Paul had to turn to what was wrong in the state of other Christians, but his own joy was not disturbed by the state of other people. How do we find the Spirit of God

acting on souls now? Is that river of refreshment flowing through their hearts? Can we recognise them as a people of God's delight, practically walking before Him in love?

There is something very sweet when we can connect that which leads to suffering with the Lord Jesus. If more testimony were borne by us as to all power being connected with Christ, there would be more mockery from the world. The individuality of our place before God, in connection with Christ, gives liberty to leave everything that is not connected with Him; and pressing this raises the world's anger, just as it did when they thought that that Nazarene whom they rejected had the thought of a kingdom.

One sees not only beautiful light and glory for the comfort of one's heart under all sorrows and difficulties, but looking at the person of that blessed Lord, I find in Him everything I want as a poor sinner passing through the wilderness.

Not only many sons brought to glory, but He in their midst to lead their praises. He had tried to lead their prayer down here, but the flesh was weak, and they fell asleep: but here He identifies Himself with the most blessed thing man has, that is, praise.

One has one's own experiences of the wilderness, the light from above searching everything round about us; and in a scene connected with Satan, all searches us; but all joy and hope is founded on the fact of a Man being at God's right hand, Himself the title-deed for glory to all who believe.

This Christ is nearer to us than all the circumstances Satan brings against us. We find in Him

the perfect answer to every trial and sorrow. Faith sees ever at God's right hand that risen Son of man waiting to lead the praise of His people.

Do not leave it to God to press home things in you that are unlike Christ; go to Him and condemn it in yourself, and go on doing so if it comes up again and again. It is uncommonly sweet to a soul that is walking with God in the light, to say to Him, "Ah! there was a time when I brought this thing or that to Thee, and Thou didst help me against it, and that again and again, as often as I brought it; and now I bring another to condemn and judge myself for." What a sweet time for the soul when one thinks of those things which one has thus brought to God, which He has met, and given one power to go on warring against. Some one said, "Do you think we are all soldiers? What! any one not belonging to the church militant? I may be an inconsistent one, but I must take the word broadly."

Could any one say, "I do not want to be like Christ?" If God comes in and says, "You are not like Christ, my son; there is evil, and you are passing it by." The very value God has for the eternal life in you, will not let Him suffer you to go on in it. If He does not come in, the life of a saint becomes unbearably wretched. You say that you are a son, a daughter of God—does God see you walking as such? Does He say of you, "There is one of my children judging himself, and walking in the light?" What you need to have more vividly before you is, the *reality* of God seeing you on earth; let it be as one seeking to purge himself to walk with God in the light.

Should I like to be marked off as a “man of God?” That word is not more for Timothy than for me; Christ having set me in the light, and I seeing everything in myself that is inconsistent with Him, and saying, “these things *will not do*, I mean to be a man of God, judging them.”

What a subject to be occupied with is the eternal life that Christ has given me! Is it eternal life to-morrow? No! it is eternal life to me to-day. It has come down to my own soul from Christ, and ought to flow in streams of blessing. It will shew out the weakness of the vessel, and shew out that the power is of God. Do you and do I begin every action down here with the thought, “I have to act in this as one who has eternal life; I have to shew it out?” If so, it will give you to see the excessive weakness of what you are; but there is blessedness; and the secret of all joy down here is the walking in the power of eternal life, in the consciousness of all the delight of God in Christ, saying, “There He is at the right hand of God as the expression of His delight, and He is mine, and I am His.” If living in the power of that life which is hid with Him in God, you will have nothing but joy all the way. What then can disappoint you, what difficulties can daunt you? All earthly things drop off. If you have got Him and eternal life—God having given you the pledge of eternal life now—your soul can be happy under all circumstances. Paul lived in a dark day, all was gone to the bad; but he could ask Timothy not to be ashamed; the promise of eternal life was given, and he could make up his mind to go through all difficulties and trials, having God’s pledge.

One thing is often overlooked by persons in trial, and that is the peculiar privilege of *speaking for God*. See Daniel, and Jeremiah who was peculiarly a man of sorrows, and Elijah who stood alone in the place of testimony for the God of Israel. And to be in the position of Jeremiah and the prophet when a stand for God is connected with peculiar trial, is what God would have us count as a peculiar privilege; to be saying, "If all are seeking their own, I have got Christ and I will seek Him." God would have us to cultivate, to count it a peculiar privilege to be whole-hearted for the Son of His love.

There is a great difference between the coming and the kingdom. The appearing of the Lord Jesus to the church, is the expression of peculiar love to His people; the kingdom is the expression of His power. He knows His people as one with Himself; He will come and fetch His bride first. He went to take the kingdom without her. Looking at the Lord's love to us in that way, it is quite distinctive, and separate from all other grace He ever will or can shew. He will not shew forth the kingdom till He has come to get a heavenly people. Are my sorrows greater than Israel's? They are to have an earthly kingdom; but external power would not do for a Christian. I am part of the bride; the Lord has given Himself to her; He Himself is what I wait for.

The sway of the Lord Jesus in that day will extend to, and take in, the range of every thing. The people now associated with Him in sorrow, will reign with Him. The thought of being a king and a priest is beautiful for glory and dominion, but ah! it does not touch that blessed

thought of relationship, the Lord Jesus being the First-born among many brethren, or the thought of the affections of my heart as bride.

The Christ who looked down on Stephen is the Christ to whom we say, "Come!" Suppose we should ask Him to come to-night: are you ready? You cannot be, without a personal love to Him. No desire could exist to enjoy the presence of any one without this, and I, as part of the bride, a pilgrim and stranger down here, having neither rest nor home, may I say, "Come!"

There is an immense difference between saying, "I am set, with eternal life, battling with circumstances down here, because I have to overcome the world," and the realising in my heart that I have got the eternal life, unfolding itself in communion with God, and tasting the sweetness of being a partaker of the divine life, the new nature rising up and finding itself in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

People often say, "Let us not do so and so, because if you do, we shall be sorry for it afterwards." But if they said, "This is not worthy of the coming, not worthy of the kingdom," there would not be the finding of sorrow but the strength of joy in giving things up, saying, "That is of the flesh, and not something that will shine in the glory."

Looking at it as a fight, how few in this day could say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight." It had been a hard struggle, but Paul's course was just finished, and he was going home. Believers now have not that abounding spring of joy at the thought of departing, saying, "Oh! I am going

home joyfully, I have had nothing but fighting, and the thorough struggle makes the thought of going home a matter of rejoicing." If there is *not* joy, it is because we have not found the wilderness a place for the faithful fight that Paul found it.

My power to judge the flesh proves my association with God. The flesh is not my Rock, there is no stability in it—it can have nothing to do with God. I pass it by and condemn it. Part of our state of warfare is to separate the flesh from the Spirit in all within and about us: our skill turns upon dividing between the flesh and the Spirit. If surprised by the flesh, we are to bring the sentence of death on it. Circumcision in the flesh, marked a man in covenant with God: circumcision in the Spirit, marks one who has faith in Christ, so that God can unfold all in Him to that one. The Jew bears the mark in his flesh; the Christian in himself, it is a mark in the *mind*. The question is not how the flesh must walk through the world, but that in the glory there is the One we are to seek, the One with whom—if practically heavenly-minded—we must be occupied.

He had a cross all through His course, and you have to take up the cross and follow Him. You will always find sweetness in the thought of doing Christ's will, and suffering for it; you will find none elsewhere. The only thing in connection with the body in the experience of Christ, was the being a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: if carrying that out as our experience, we shall find inexpressible sweetness in the thought of having fellowship with His sufferings.

Faith sees Christ where He is now before God for us, as the alone foundation of all our blessing. The One coming again, the One in whom all the round of God's thoughts centre: and there it is that worship comes in. With my eye on that Christ, I know that God is for me, because I know what God's thoughts are about that Christ; and I can lift up my head and rejoice in Him. Paul could glory even in infirmities; there was something in Christ up there that enabled him to do so. If any are not holding this position as to the flesh, what will they do at the table of the Lord? Have you your bodies of sin and death, or have you left them behind? How could any have "no confidence in the flesh," if all is not set right for them in Christ before God? Only as you know it, can you get your place as sons worshipping in the Spirit, and finding that the only One whom God delights to know is the One who is the joy and delight of your heart.

Christ does not love people according to the flesh. Those only who do the will of the Father are the blessed beloved people, of whom He says, "Such are my mother and sisters and brothers; these are my nearest, dearest relations, they are the Father's children, they are those who receive my word, and they are the fruit bearers dear to my heart."

Have you counted on God as an opened fountain in which your empty bucket can be let down to be filled? In the midst of the wreck and ruin of the creature, can you say, notwithstanding it all, "I have found a spring in Thee, O God! and can count on Thee to give me all blessing in Christ;

not to fill me once, and then all gone, but filling again and again?" I would have you judge yourselves about the sort of faith you have. Is it a *living faith*? It is the *living* God upon whom His people hang, drawing daily supplies from the fulness of the living springs in Him. Ah! if you have found that God, no depths can be too deep for the heart of that living God, who meets us according to the circumstances in which we are.

Once we were in nature, and in the flesh, and now we are in Christ. Well! one of the things that become me in such a place, is to mortify the flesh, counting myself dead to everything which I cannot connect with Christ: drawing, as it were, the stroke of my pen through everything that is not of the Father, saying, "I am against it all." I do not speak of things necessary for the body, we have the name of the Father in connection with all things needful, and everything is sanctified by the blood to the children, and freely given and received with thankfulness. But what hundreds of things there are which are *not needful!* whims of the flesh, things not connected with Christ, something that minds for want of proper occupation are taken up with. Do those who have ways of their own apart from Christ, ever test themselves by saying, "If Christ were to come and find me doing this, would He like it?" I say, "Are you not practically hindering yourself if occupied with things connected with the pit whence you were taken, rather than with Christ?"

There can be no dying to sin if not walking in the way of eternal life. It will only be a teasing and vexing of the flesh till we get to the cross, and there see that having died with Christ, and being

quickened and raised up with Him, we have got power to count the flesh a dead thing. There is a Romanism which only torments self in order to sanction itself. We are to keep under the body, and have it in subjection; directly we dare to cease mortifying the flesh, we cease to enjoy Christ.

Am I occupied with the life that will unfold itself in the presence of Him whom the Father delights to honour? Ah! if we get to the sphere when that eternal life is to be displayed, we find a range of glory beyond what the heart can take in. It includes the whole range of the Father's delight in the Son, and ministers to joy as nothing else does. Eternal life is yours now, as a thing to be rejoiced in. When trouble comes, oh, let your hearts be in communion with that One in whom your eternal life is, and you will find that you have a portion, a fulness of joy that no circumstances down here can interfere with. You have a life above in Christ, soon to be made manifest in the day of His appearing.

People talk of eternity as the beginning of eternal life, but it will not begin with me there, it began with me nearly forty years ago, and is to go on in God's eternity; manifested then outwardly—revealed within now in blessing.

How the light discovers the position of any one who is under law! Once I laboured hard under it, thinking that when I had done so much, God would do so much. When light shone on me, how could I carry out that thought, saying, "I will *do*," when God said, "I have done it all, have given Christ, and the true light now shines down?"

God will not be in the second place, He takes

## GLEANINGS.

the first place, proclaiming life to the poor sinner through that Son raised from the dead. I am in a scene where God is everything, and I must get out of the way. Ah! how blessed when the soul can say, "Let God have His proper place as God, let Him act, and I will put myself out of the way." Does He say there is forgiveness by the blood of His Son? Let Him have His own way. Has He given the light? Let it shine. The effect of light shining in the heart of a sinner is beautiful—it gladdens the heart. Let there be no putting a curtain over my ways to prevent the in-shining of the light. If walking in the light I shall see failure and confess it at once. I shall love the light that discovers it and shall judge it; and the blood cleanses from all sin.

In early days there was an extraordinary power of communion amongst Christians, they seemed to be of one spirit and mind simply because they walked in the light. If I want to get the power of fellowship, I must have the full light shining down and walk in it.

The religion of a country does not deal with the question that the heart of an individual wants *life*. You hear of persons belonging to churches, without life: but that will not do for God—it is not the incorruptible seed. Adam in the garden of Eden was corruptible, but if a man is born again he is born of incorruptible seed. Like a little seed dropt into the ground, there it is in me, something formed within me, that cannot be corrupted, cannot see death. If called to be absent from the body, the body must go down to the grave, but the life God gives can never die. I dwelt for nineteen years in the things of the

world, dead in sin, never alive then. And then I found Christ as my living Saviour in heaven, and I got a life that could only be occupied by Him. I found too that I had got a *Father* up there—not only an incorruptible seed, but I dwell in God, and not only that, God dwells in me. He makes our bodies to be temples of the Holy Ghost; and in Ephesians iii. 19, we remark a larger expression: “Filled with all the fulness of God.” What love! God thus dwelling in me and I in Him now, and heaven opened for me to dwell eternally with Him.

It is not “The church, the church are we,” but it is “Am I a Christian through knowing Christ as my Life-giver, as the propitiation for my sins, and as my living Saviour on high?” And if so, I have to build on Him. It is this Christ, and this Christ only, that will do for me, a poor sinner.

The faith that God gives His people is an energetic principle by which the soul learns how to act with God—they who, by faith, receive the word of God’s grace. Faith always supposes that man has been in solitude with God. Man has to learn God’s plan—His projects. See what liberty a person has, like Rahab, like the Syrophenician woman; Christ had His thoughts about Israel, she had hers about Him; deep need gave her a wonderful sort of liberty in the presence of the grace which she knew would meet it. Is there not the same liberty for faith now to be before God in simple confidence? If I have to do with God, I can certainly calculate on finding in this God a blessing, whatever my circumstances may be.

Is it nothing that God wants your heart and

mine to be comforted? saying, "I want you to be partakers of my prospects; I put before you that my prospect, after caring for my people awhile in the wilderness, is to rise up and shew that they are not under the power of darkness; that because I died for them the waters of death which have risen up and swept off all Adam's race, have no power over them: I mean to shew out before the universe, that I have a people who are waiting for Me to appear without sin unto salvation."

When it comes to the question of what Christ suffered as my substitute, I must leave it to God. Never could I, in the measure of my little mind, conceive in the smallest degree what He suffered when that cry broke from Him, "My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" No! *there* I must bow my head and adore.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." God's gift of His Son is the setting forth of His glory throughout eternity. When He is seen on the throne we shall never lose the thought, that because God used the personal glory of His Son to give weight to the sacrifice, we enter into glory. Most important it is ever to remember that we are saved sinners. I could not be in heaven, if I forgot when there that I am a saved sinner, forgot the power of the precious blood to wash away every spot of sin. It would not be the heaven of scripture, if I could not there speak about the love and mercy that had cleansed me.

If Christ is at the right hand of God to make intercession for me, I see Him there as the anchor of my soul within the veil: and if the effect of tearing open all in my soul, and shewing me my

wretchedness, be to shew me that He who does it is there for me, conforming me to Himself to make me like Himself; is it not most precious?

I only know what a poor thing I am, when I got inside the veil; but *there*, I can be talking to God about Christ, saying, "Is He not my Saviour? Is He not my Life-giver? Is not all to be found in Him? Is He not the portion of all who believe in Him?" If you can talk to God of what Christ is to you, and God is looking at that Christ as the answer to all your difficulties, can you go away unsatisfied? Impossible!

We are gathered around the Lord's table to remember that the One who is Jehovah's fellow gave His body to be broken, and His blood to be shed for us. As for all false worship, it is the denial of the Lordship of Christ. God uses the people whom He has given to Christ as a proof of His Lordship. He can claim the hearts of a company. He says, "If I have sent down the Holy Ghost, where could my power stop? They are to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and they are to be the manifestation of me at the present time." Weak and few perhaps, yet God being able to look down, saying, "They are gathered together as the expression of what my Christ is up there."

Ah! but how much more there is to challenge all our hearts in that word, "Do this in remembrance of me," than in the Lordship of Christ! I might be gathered as a proof of the glory of that Christ, but I can say, it is this heart of mine with all its feebleness, whose affections He cares to possess. What! has He now, in all that glory on high, a heart to think of us individually? And does He challenge us to think of Him, to remember

Him as often as we eat this bread and drink this wine? The early Christians did that when they met together, because it was Himself they loved. Then, again, we are eating this bread and drinking this wine because we are overcomers. Ah! it is a very blessed and searching thing to be in the place where we are to be overcomers, where we are to be overcomers to the end. If riding on the top of a billow, it is blessed; and if not, why it is equally blessed to be in the place of an overcomer.

I could say to some aged saint, "If you are laid on a sick bed, and laid there to find out the right bearing of things, depend upon it, you will not find any comfort save in the word of the living God. It may be but a scrap of the old book, but with one word of the living God you will be more than a match for Satan, for all that is against you, because you are connected with a truth of the God who cannot lie."

If there have ever been hours of depression in any of you, the reason has been that you have forgotten the word, and are not bearing in your soul the touch of truth connected with the character of the God who cannot lie—forgotten that all His glory is concerned in His word.

It is quite contrary to nature to say that if God expects anything from me, He must first put it in me, and then He will have to tend and watch over it; and if I do bring him any fruit, it is only from His being able to create a second time: if not, there will be no fruit. If you talk of "good ground," what is the ground good for? It is good for the seed of the sower. Every seed He sows supposes that he finds *nothing*; it teaches the lesson of the

entire ruin inside more strongly than all that tells of it outside. Do not make a mistake with regard to the good ground, as though God thought to get anything good out of the flesh. He has weighed you up on the cross; if you know *that*, you have surely learned there the end of your flesh.

Every saint knows that the good ground fitted for a Saviour is a soul dead in trespasses and sins, where Satan has had the mastery. He that had to do with me as a sower, had a seed not to be found down here—a new seed that gave a new nature. There is only that one Sower—not two—only *that One* who can drop seed into the heart, and cause it to quicken and produce fruit.

If I am to be part of a kingdom, I, as a creature, can do nothing to bring myself there. How can you find your way into the Father's house? Are you fit for such a place? No! you need some one to fit you and make you meet for it.

God would have you absolutely without a will; the moment you are in subjection you have the consciousness of being *just where* God would have you.

Ah! do let us see how far the anointing which made the soul of Paul in prison so full of joy, (whether cast there for life or death) has made us fellow workers with Paul; how far that anointing is enabling us to maintain our Nazariteship—enabling us to live out Christ.

If faith in Christ has brought you into the light of heaven, and you know a risen Man on the throne, and that risen Man has sent a letter, not to Paul only, but to yourself, in which He specifically

tells you that he wants you to carry in your heart, and to shew forth in your life down here, His death till he comes; what answer are you giving? He, at leisure in the Father's presence to think of poor feeble things in the *fog* down here, occupied about them, and they being made to know that all through the time between His death and His coming again, He has not once forgotten them, telling them to shew forth His death till He comes in the full manifestation of love to take them up to the Father's house.

Unless the full grace of God has its place in the souls of Christians, they never can walk with God in the powers of that grace. If the *least* thing of self comes in, it is all over with the joy and liberty in which free grace enables a believer to walk. If grace be the groundwork, it does not give way; if I have failed (whatever may be the character of my failure) the light in which it comes out to be judged, gives my soul a fresh start to go on again with God. It is a solemn question whether I am holding fast to free grace.

You may be saying, "Ah! I shall never get through this week without a fall or a spot on my garments;" but rather say, "Let me not talk of my difficulties; there is One up there going before them all, One who sees Satan, the world, and myself, and meets all for me. He can bring me through to the end of this week, as He did through the last. He ever lives, is He not competent to give me a fresh start onwards and fresh strength? And if I am not able to walk, He goes before to move difficulties out of the way. Yes! He is just the one for me to lean on through this week."

“He that believeth hath everlasting life.” There is eternal duration of existence for all men, but those who believe have got present fellowship with God, they have *now* the life which will be unfolded in heaven, as the power of present joy to the soul.

If I meet a man in the street, I know by his very looks whether he has found peace or not, whether he can say, “Christ looked at me and gave me life, and I know Him as the One, who by going into death for me, put His blood between my sins and the wrath of God.

Is it as being one Spirit with Himself as members of His body that Christ looks upon you? Does He see the church as the pearl of peculiar value which He sought for the Father’s house, and as a bride adorned for her husband? Is the thought that Christ *is* thus looking on you, the object and motive of your lives down here?

What we want is a rope let down from above—the strength of Him up there, let down into our souls.

On whom am I, as a creature, dependent? On Him who upholds the sun and all created things; on Him, now a Man at God’s right hand, by whom all creatorial glory was displayed, who created the whole universe. That One, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, *He is my Lord.*

Ah! the eye of that Lord is on all His people before they know Him—an eye passing up and down, reading everything about and in them.

Three distinct things the soul has to recognise; the Son of Man who bore the judgment of God for sin—the Son of God who rose from the dead, a life-giving Spirit—and the Son of the Father, all

things put under Him, all made over into His hand.

It is an amazing thing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory, saying, "I have put forth a Man, and what I claim of you is to see in Him all that is true of me, you could not know me without Him. He is up there as your Security, and now you are to be filled with all My fulness in Him." A vessel floating in the sea, gives the meaning of being filled with all fulness of Christ, being filled like a vessel let into water. How the feeblest saint gets to be connected with the immeasurable glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of God is not satisfied merely to bless. He wants to have my heart happy in the blessing; He is not satisfied merely to heap up blessing, but wants to have all the inward feelings of my heart in unison with those of the Son of His love, and so in communion with His own heart.

You often say, "I have to serve God to-day." Is there nothing else? The very effort to maintain such a character is affliction, God letting you know the poverty in self, bringing in the deep sense of weakness and the prostration of self.

There was an immense deal whilst the people of Israel still abode in Egypt to minister to the flesh; they had something to give up. In the wilderness nothing but seas of sand to go through: it was something to try the heart as to whether they had gone forward in faith, with the land of Canaan before them. It could not be a question of returning to Egypt when they were clean outside it. I could not go back to Egypt; why? Because the death and resurrection of Christ have come in between. My feet may be tired by the sand of the

wilderness, but the same mind that was in Him is to be in me. I am a son of the Father, I have the same eternal spring to gladden my heart.

God may take up bad clay and grit, and have to pass it through every sort of process, but the skilful Master-hand will form of it a vessel fit for His own use. If God means to place me up there as a vessel to display His glory, is it not separation of a very peculiar character that He looks for now?

In connection with the names written on the breast-plate . . . . every time the high priest breathed, the breast-plate moved; and I am not on the breast-plate, but *in the heart* of Christ. I am connected with every throb of that living heart of Christ. I can see Him as my justification before God, and God reckoning to me all that He is. God looks upon the blood of His Son sprinkled on me. That Son of His love is seated as Man on His right hand, with every capacity to feel as man, and to enter into things that affect us down here. Yes, He has the feelings of a man, and is entering into ours.

To *meet the Lord* in the air—what a volume in those words! Nothing can give cheerfulness in the thought of treading a path never trod before, but the Lord Himself being there—meeting Him there.

The hope of the Lord's coming is a *divine* hope, centred in Himself; not only rejoicing in hope of the glory of God—more than that, waiting for Christ Himself, who, being now in the very highest point of glory as Son of man in the glory which He had with God before the world was, will come forth from that glory to take us up. How are your hearts affected in regard to the thought

of this Christ of God not only coming to throw open the Father's house, but coming *Himself to be our joy*? Can you say that the longing of your hearts is flowing forth in the invitation continually ascending, "Come Lord Jesus?" That Nazarene has it in His heart to come, and if He speaks and says, "Surely I come quickly," have such words, dropping from His lips, the continual answer in your heart, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

There is such a thing as walking with God. The invisible God is not hidden to the soul. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Enoch walked with God, the God of heaven, his heart was above, and he had the testimony that he pleased God. What else ought men of faith be doing, save walking with God! Faith says, "Ah, there is a man in heaven, and all the divine glory of God in Him, and connected with Him, I can walk with Him. I do not see Him with my bodily eye, but his eye is upon me; I hear His voice behind me."

There is the law of sin and death in the members, and what would it be if God did not keep up a constant process—obliged to send things to prevent the flesh in us from working, and to shew us the necessity of our judging it? He can use Satan to bring out, not sin, but—the utter and entire worthlessness of what we are. He can use the adversary to teach and make you know what the flesh in you is; and thus comes in, to use the very writhing—the lowness—to shew forth His almighty sufficiency.

It was not the question of the measure of light they had who followed the Lord; it was Himself

they thought of and loved. They felt it, no doubt, a wonderful thing to walk about with Him who had all power to heal the sick and raise the dead: but ah! They loved *Himself*. Can we not only say, "the Son of man made all things," but is this Lord Jesus Himself the one object before whom our heart is bowed?

I cannot merely accredit that which is bad in me as being the effect of a bad education; it is there because I am a sinner, it is connected with the whole system of sin and death. If this were shewn to a babe in Christ, it would be scared; but it is nothing in comparison with what God shews a believer when He teaches him to measure his sin by the cross of Christ; as though He said, "How much more you will think of your sin when I tell you that My Son bore it for you in His own body. I had therefore to hide My face from Him, and the heart of that blessed One broke in woe that yours might throb with joy."

If failure comes in, you must not give up all for lost, but thank God that you have a connection with Christ in God, which your failure cannot touch. Satan cannot check the living water that flows forth to me in spite of all in myself, enabling me to be "*up and on.*"

In Noah's experience we get what are God's thoughts of the things around. Noah was to be separated from the old earth. If we look around now—take London for instance, is it a city in which God's children are to find rest of heart? No! but a place they have to separate themselves from. Believers have to go through the world, but to keep

themselves unspotted by it. By our very relations we often find ourselves hindered and interrupted, and cannot get separate for want of faith. We need the energy of faith. Noah's energy all flowed from faith following the line traced out by God; and when the judgment came it found Noah in the ark, laid to rest there with his family; and God saw in it the expression of his faith, as a person separated by that faith to God.

If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with Him. Suffering comes in as the consequence of our adoption into the family of God. It was quite different from sorrow, as a man connected with the first Adam. Paul desiring to be spent in filling up sufferings for Christ, was suffering on quite another ground from Adam—suffering.

There never was a higher life, there never were higher motives, nor higher hopes, than those in the apostle Paul! And all came out practically in the life of a man like this; his whole practice was correspondent with his heavenly position. His thought was, "God has given me as a sort of bell-bearer to His flock." God bethought Himself of His people, and gave Paul for a pattern to guide and help them on, and they were to follow him as he followed Christ.

It becomes a very solemn question in a day like this, in which the *name* of Christ is taken up very *easily*, whether we are following after Christ, whether the cross is before the mind as that which crucifies the world to us. A very solemn question in connection with what the throbbing of the pulse of the inward life is, in those who *are* Christ's—do they know the cross? or do they shew forth the spirit of the world? Is it in their hearts? Take any

one passing through the street—the world is all about him, but is it in his heart, or is he living out of it? It is a blessed thing to say, We have nought to think of or to seek but heavenly things. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;” that is our profession.

If there is a place strange to me, it ought to be this place where my Lord was crucified; and if it is not so, what is it but a place where I have been walking ~~in~~ the flesh—satisfied to have passed through the Red Sea, and that is all.

We know what it means to have *fellowship* with any one in the things of this world, namely, having things in common. What have you in common with a risen Christ? With Him to whom power is given to call the dead out from the grave—with such an One who, unless He can deny Himself, must raise you up with all believers from among the dead, and make you a partaker of all His glory, a *joint heir* with Himself! What a strong expression!

The door of Eden was shut against man, but the Lord opens a way, the whole way up, for a people to share the glory connected with Himself.

Christ was not only the repository of all the affections of the Father's heart, but He made Him to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ. Is it the perfection of what Christ is in Himself that we have as the ground-work to rest on before God? No! more was needed, but it was that *divine perfection* that fitted Him for the work He came to do. None but a Being absolutely and altogether perfect could

be a Sin-bearer ; the least thing God could find fault with in Him would have spoilt it all. The beauty of Christ is precious to the heart as shewing forth that perfection. God can say of Him, "I let all My billows go over Him, and He only came forth the more bright;" and He was made the Substitute for sinners, and it is on the truth of *that* that I am standing before God and rejoicing in it. It is *that* that connects a soul with Christ. It is the only way my soul can get any power whatever to walk in joy. I remember how the "great white throne" used to stare me in the face; I could never get any rest of soul connected with what I was as a young man dead in sin. How, thought I, shall I be able to bear the light of it? What is the effect of it *now* when I think of it? Ah! I say, I shall see *Him* there who bore the whole wrath due to me. The whole power of that wrath came into His soul, and when He had borne my sins in His own body on the cross, and put them away for ever, God raised Him to His own right hand, soon to come again and take His people there too; and in the interval God sent me the message that He had been my Substitute. I have been very feeble in confessing Him as my Substitute, but it enables me to say I have done with the first Adam, God sees me in the last Adam. He could not set aside my guilt save by giving the curse due to me to the last Adam on the cross. It is only by closing with His offer that I can say I have set my seal to the truth of that work on the cross having saved me.

A believer is looked upon by God as dead, buried, and raised up together with Christ. Not merely

Christ a Rock in the desert to which I flee and find refuge, but I get in Him a vivifying power by which to walk in newness of life. "He that is dead is freed from sin," not that the law of sin and death is out of his members, and that we have not still to watch against it, but the Spirit of God comes as the seal on my heart of the truth, that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 2.) It is still there, but which is strongest, Christ in heaven, or that which remains in me? Which is strongest to overcome, the Holy Ghost sent down as a well of water springing up, or the weakness in man? Paul was a man of strong passions, and what is the testimony of the Spirit in connection with him? "To me to live in Christ." *Is Christ my Life?* What is the effect of that Life on my life? Ah! it is a most blessed thing to be able to say that that Christ at God's right hand is *my Life*, and that God looks at me only *in Him*, and I can be talking to God about Him; and the consciousness of being brought where I can have that communion, puts perfect peace into my soul down here.

Till changed and made like unto Christ's glorious body, I must have this body of sin and death; but I have power given me to reckon it dead. I am in a place of power, the power of the Communicator of life; and wherever life has been communicated, that power works to change those who have it into His image from glory to glory. The divine nature is communicated to enable me to walk with God and live unto God. Could I do that in nature? Could nature bring down the energy

of a man like Paul, and make him wish to be nothing at all? No! only the power of Christ could do that.

I may close my door and say, "Now I am going to have happy communication with God," and soon I fall asleep; and why? Because I was going to set myself to do it, it was my own energy that shut to the door, and my energy was to be disappointed.

We may be often not in right circumstances, but Christ ever knows how to speak to us in them.

If God dwells in me I am a new man—and a new man knows how to peel off the things that are contrary to the Spirit.

If you and I love the world, it is incompatible with love to the Father. (1 John ii. 15.) The Father's love cannot beam on a heart where the things have a place. Many would make, as it were, an inventory of certain things answering in their minds to worldliness; but that is not what God does; He does not say, "Fine houses, costly furniture," &c., but, "The lust of the flesh and of the eye," and the child of God cannot detect this lust save when he is in the presence of God, and with the savour of the full acceptance in the Beloved. Out of His presence there is entire inability to form an idea of what lust really is; it is not in circumstances, but lies down in the depths of the heart alike in poor and in rich.

Ah! let not those passing things which Satan has in his hands, and whereby he keeps souls at a distance from the Father, be allowed a place in your heart.

If I had seen myself fifty years ago, a ruined creature in God's presence on the ground of grace only, satisfied to be there in all my ruin, drawing all from the springs of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, which could turn all my misery and ruin into an occasion of shewing forth that mercy, I should have been saved years of anguish.

Surely it is a marvellous position the child of God professes to hold! not a citizen of earth, but walking in the path that leads to heaven. A son of God—sealed with the Holy Ghost—left in the world to have the opportunity of identifying himself with the earth-rejected One sitting at God's right hand.

It is not merely the glory of the Father's house, but the affections of the Father's heart which are ours. You cannot separate the love of God's heart from one to whom He has been pleased to turn and call *a son*. Oh! that we were more filled with the thought of it. Look at the people of God—what a poor wretched flock it is; what heavy hearts, what feeble strength; ever so occupied with our earthly work and our thoughts of heaven forgotten. Oh, turn to the freshness of the love in God's heart, that God who has called you with a heavenly calling, and made you the expression of the love which has brought you into the place of His affection for Christ, making you sons. Not ashamed to confess as sons such poor contemptible things—His *love* set upon us!

He appoints us our burden, and we must bear it, but He is looking on us as children passing through the wilderness, *loved* children. We may not like our wilderness burden, but we have the

best portion now as sons. I shall never be more a son than I am now, never be more beloved than now. All the affections of God's heart are flowing to us now, we shall have His love more truly when we come to glory.

I may see a saint shining in every way, and say, "I will go and imitate Him;" but that will not do; you cannot carry any of the energy of nature into what is heavenly. If anyone can truly say, "I am more like Christ than I was," I am sure that result can never flow from the energy of human nature.

What false views we take of one another, if we look only at the exterior. The faces of many bear a look of peace and quiet repose, but how little we know all that passes within! The heart of Him who knows it all, the heart of the Son of man in heaven is changeless, and He has made Himself responsible for every lamb in the flock.

Whilst the sea of Satan's wickedness washes over the earth, Christ says, "I have servants on that earth, and I can make good in them works that I can recognise." Is it possible for you to be one of them, and fail to render service? Exceptional cases there are—a Lot dragged out of Sodom—or wood, hay, and stubble to be burnt up; but such cases are exceptional.

The Holy Ghost has made the church of the living God His dwelling place, and His desire is the coming of Christ. He has the character of servant till Christ comes. He will not be then, as

He is now, the Comforter, the One who, in the absence of Christ, does as Christ would have done. He will not then be the Guardian taking care of the church in the wilderness; but ever the power of life and enjoyment—the power that knits up all to Christ.

To us it is not the great white throne, not the coming of the Lord to take the place of a Judge, but His rising up to come and claim us and take us up to be with Him. God's first mark of approbation for His work on the cross, was that He should not be alone in glory but should have a people, the bride, the Lamb's wife, with Him there, in the midst of whom He will be; the light of His glory being enshrined in them and reflected by them: He in them. And also, that till He comes He should have a people down here who can look up to Him there, and know the character of His love for them. *That* is what we want for our comfort. Who are they that can say, "Christ loves me, and He is going to glorify me, and I am waiting for Him?" Ah! they are those who have passed off the ground of the first Adam. A people passed clean off that, to the ground where they are not only washed and forgiven, but where they can say they know nothing like Him; that one who, through death, delivered them from him who had the power of death; He, the holy harmless One, having been made sin for them, that they might be entirely free.

How sad that true Christians are not more practically separated to God—that the world should look at them, and be able to say, "There is *this*

and there is *that* in you which does not savour of Christ ;” why this looking to earth, that fretting care, that troubled forecasting thought, if looking up to the glory and seeing Christ there, and if He has come and opened His heart to you as God ?

Think—if we realised practically that there is no separation between the Head and the body—that we are one with that *Only One*, who never had a will, never had likes and dislikes, whose whole course was the bringing out of “Thy will, not mine, be done.” He went in obedience to the death of the cross, and was raised up to the Father’s own right hand, where we see Him above the range of everything : and He says to us, “You are risen with me, and one with me ; and if you walk in the power of that, you also will be above everything.”

The blood shed on the cross puts me before God entirely clear as to sin. The worth of that blood is known by none who do not read it as it is read in heaven. If I look at it as read on earth, it calls for vengeance, but in heaven that blood is the expression of God’s love in giving Him for us ; and not only that, but it is the proof that He who shed it has triumphed over everything : those who know it, say, “Ah ! I can never taste death, because of *that blood*. If I died to-day, I should not taste death ; it is glory, whenever I die. I shall never taste what He bore in bearing my sins.

Has not the Lord often found you where you never ought to have been ? And yet has not His love even come out just there, and shewn you that He loved you above all your thoughts of His love ;

loved you according to God's thoughts about you, loved you above all your inconsistency, according to the place God had set you in; and yet you have had so little faith in that love that you have said, "Now the Lord is only going to upbraid me." Well, if He did, He never upbraids the worldling, but He does His own children.

If I look round, what is the state of everything now? Churches all ruined, candlesticks all broken; I cannot see one as it was after Pentecost. If the Lord were not the Restorer, where would all testimony be? What would become of His people in these closing times—the people that are waiting for Him—the poor weak ones who are saying, "Come"? He has ever been the Restorer of His people; if all has been ruined, yet all is so restored, that we have got everything which they had at Pentecost—the Holy Ghost ever abiding in and with us, as then, although in some respects *acting* differently. And I suppose every heart too can say, "I know something of that restoring love, the Lord passing through my circumstances, passed me through my sin to Himself."

Nothing but personal affection for the Lord can ever give the heart boldness before Him, the soul *must* find that it has been laid hold of by the Lord in His love, and that such a light shines down upon it from His face, that in spite of failure and everything coming against it, there is love in the heart of the Lord towards it.

Do not be afraid of the wilderness; God will always find a bit of its sorrows for you, but while

wilderness inconsistency comes out in you, remember that Christ alone is changeless, and do not be afraid to let His boundless love come out in its own way into your circumstances. Remember that there is no path for us smoother or broader than the path of the Son of man while in the world.

We do not like to suffer—but the world was a wilderness to Him and must be so to us. If you make for yourself some little path where you feel you can serve with comfort, and know where to put your foot so as to avoid every little stone or roughness, He will not let you stay in it, He will change your lot. You may try to get out into another path, but you will find He makes it to be the wilderness. He still means it to be the wilderness all the way.

What Polar star have you to guide you down here? Nothing but the coming of the Lord. The bride has nothing as a future but the coming of Christ. Christians have too much forgotten the widow's place, watching through the night for their absent Lord. He cheers them by saying, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Why is it night? Because He is away.

Has the secret been revealed to you that He is the bright and Morning Star, and are you practically waiting for Him? Before the sun rises, before the light of day, He will come and take us up to Himself. There I get my rest in everything because I know He is coming.

There is not yet possession of the purchased in-

heritance, but the Lord *waits*. How little the children of God understand how to fortify souls under the sufferings by the way! by leading them to see how the Lord Christ Himself, Paul, John, and all up there, are *waiting*, not having got the inheritance yet, but waiting for it. I believe souls might find immense strength to sustain them by the thought of that intermediate position, that patient waiting in heaven.

Nature cannot hold the word; there may be clear views of truth, but a man in nature cannot act on it. Two of the clearest tracts on the heavenly calling were written by a Puseyite before going into Rome—it was not part of the man.

Satan cannot bear the word, because it nourishes and cherishes the people of God; but whatever he can do, can you and I say, “The Word of the kingdom is mine, and I shall have my place there when Satan’s power has come to an end?”

The rapidity with which all is hastening on in a great vortex is as marked as the rapidity of present travelling, compared with that of past times. It is a fearful rapidity, and Satan is working with a fearful rapidity. What is described as thorns choking the word in Matthew xiii., is at work specially now. If I value the word, it draws me within as narrow a compass as possible. I can have nothing to do with duty connected with *the world*. A voluntary association with it, will be as thorns that choke the word. You can testify to the distracting effect of it on the soul, and that all the things connected with it have a certain effect on the word. You may have your morning refreshment over it, and the world may come in and drive

it all out. Ah! do not tamper with anything that chokes the word. As to the deceitfulness of riches; the least possession the heart is set on, is enough to choke the word. How we see this in persons who make a profession and have lost all freshness! Which was the happy man—Paul who said, “One thing I do,” (altogether Christ’s and no one else’s,) or Demas?

Faith is an individual thing—it is God and myself. If God has spoken to me, I have received the word, and do it I must, whether men bear or forbear. The one who receives the word has to yield himself to God.

The life we make so much of has death in it; death is necessarily connected with the body, but I get rid of it—Christ left a savour in the grave quite different from the savour of God’s wrath. He has made death to a believer to be nothing save being absent from the body to be present with Himself.

The church never really dies; the people of God pass off the scene, but do not taste death. If there must be a people down here, saying, “Come Lord,” until He come, how is it that Stephen and those who leave this scene worn out in service, or those taken away, like Lot out of Sodom, have been removed above? Ah! they are there not only still to wait with us in anticipation of His coming, but to experience in a new way what blessedness the Lord gives. I am not speaking of glory, but of the experience they have meantime of the preciousness of His love. Will not it be everything to be *with Him*? No kingdom, *no* glory, can be compared to that.

Oh! let the love of this Lord who has given His people the privilege of knowing that they are vessels He pours His love into, and that He will not take a bit of glory without them—oh! I ask you to let that love of His fill your heart.

The Lord Jesus, Christ is not the Head of humanity, because then the whole human race would be saved, but the Head of a poor people to whom eternal life has flowed from Him, the smitten Rock. “The sanctified ones and He who sanctifieth are all of one.” We know our unity with the Lord, unity which none can divide, and the Lord acts upon that, “For which cause he is not ashamed to call us brethren.”

As an insect is seen when entombed in amber, so God sees His people only through the medium of that Christ at His right hand in heaven.

“Let him that is athirst come;” Living Water is for ever streaming from that Rock. In the ten commandments it is, “Thou shalt not;” but to whom was it ever said by God, “Thou shalt not touch the waters which I have caused to flow from the Smitten Rock?” No! but He says, “Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life *freely*.” God has found a living stream in Christ for poor sinners, and whilst the world lasts living waters will still be gushing forth. As long as the Spirit and the bride say, “Come,” those life-giving waters will be flowing.

At the present time there is a great want among the children of God of the consciousness of their

feebleness, and of being faithful to the deposit made by God. They do not see that one great object in giving it, is to make us remember in our scenes of trial, that God is to us what He was to Israel, carrying them through the wilderness: that we may have the consciousness of all the fulness there is in Christ, and in God for us. He means us to see our weakness, but to know in the midst of it that He has stores in Jesus whose fulness is to fill us.

One of the first elements of obedience is a perfect repose of soul in God; you would not be easily startled by events if you saw all that you have in Christ to enable you to meet everything calmly. Oh! it is simple. Where do you begin? With the heart of Christ? If you have got that, let what will come, you are hidden in a secure place—in *Him*. He is always thinking of you, while you are only occupied with self.

“Let not your heart be troubled”—there is rest. Outside, there is trouble, trouble, nothing but trouble all round; but if the heart is kept happy outside, experiences do not signify at all. Outside darkness only makes the light within shine brighter.

It is very sweet the Lord's saying, “Let not your heart be troubled;” sorrows of the wilderness and pilgrim fare there may be, but no need to let the billows of outside circumstances break into your heart. Christ does look upon my heart and yours.

When the martyr is at the stake, the faggots flaming round him, his joy is secure because Christ knows how to make his heart happy.

“I go to prepare a place for you;” what a thought that Christ should be, as it were, jealous of

the service of preparing a place for us ! He alone making it ready. Could any one prepare it save Himself ? Is that thought of Christ in the Father's house a vital reality to your heart ?

How little we find hearts under all circumstances untroubled, saying, " I believe in God and in Christ, and my heart is kept happy."

Am I individually identified with the energy of God's hand ? The God who took me clean out of the world—like a root transplanted and made to grow—and who is going on meaning to present me without spot. The God whose hand, if I will seek my own way, will not let me go. I may get hard rubs, and the cutting word, " all seek their own," but it is my blessing to know that I am identified with God's work, and God's plans in connection with Christ : God saying, " I have arranged all for the day of His bridal," and that I am to be in my own special place there, His hand moving me on to it. Am I moving with Him ? Is the bright and Morning Star fixing my eye and guiding me, or some circumstance down here ? God is working to make me give up all that comes into collision with His Spirit—nay, striking with the rod all that is not going with Him. The God who formed in our hearts the desire to be with Christ, is the God who is leading us on. God with us and for us, the certainty of success. Are you tasting in your souls the joy of association with God ?

Have not your hearts known the pleasure of having something to lean on as a sort of Rock ? How little we think that we have GOD to lean on—a God in heaven !

What a volume of love in those words of the Lord to poor Peter, "Feed my lambs!" as if He would say, "I am going to make a channel of you for love to flow through, and I am breaking you down that you may be able to feed my lambs. You thought to be a strong disciple, I am making you see your weakness, giving you a broken heart, that you may be strong." Ah! there is nothing like a broken heart for a shepherd, there will be room in it for the lambs when he has got to the end of self. The Lord must always be breaking down a shepherd to enable him to feed His lambs.

"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." That was just what John's heart wanted in that scene at Patmos; as a man he could not find comfort for his heart, save as a sinner whom Jesus had loved and washed in His own blood. In that very touch John put the brightest diadem on the brow of Christ, he could touch something in the heart of Jesus. There are all kinds of glories on the head of Christ, but John saw the brightest of any to be "He washed me in *His own blood*."

I would have you see the completeness of the statement. Child of God, where are your sins? Are they all gone from before God? Yes, there is not a stain, not a spot left behind; Christ has washed us. As having to do with the living God who is not mocked, is the power of that truth felt in our hearts, that we are poor sinners, but that Christ has washed us in His own blood.

Do you "look above, and see no cloud—within and see no spot?" Do you say, "down here I have no rest, but up there I am a kingly priest?"

Let my manners of life shew that I am connected with the true tabernacle, as one of God's kingly priests.

We are not a common people, we have no right to be scraping earth together, we are citizens of a city which gives us a positive right to the Son of God. I am connected with Him as one loved by Him, and washed in His own blood.

What hinders our walking in the practical power and joy of His presence, as we walk through the wilderness, each one with his own chapter of trial and trouble? In all the troubles of the past year, which did you find most—the trial, or Christ? You may have gone through deep waters, and many a furrow grief may have left on your forehead, but as you passed through the trouble, which did you find most—the trial, or Christ who passed through it with you?

The most consistent and closest walker with God will know the joy of God's presence the most; not that the inconsistent believer will have less of God—but there is all difference in the state of the two souls. The one will have one sorrow after another to learn his failure and weakness; the other may have sorrow after sorrow, and songs of joy in the midst, because God has been so present.

Mark that word: "The church of the Thessalonians, which is *in God our Father*, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 1.) From all eternity the Church was hid with Christ in God. God is *our Father* in Him. Have I a connection of blessing with Him—not merely filling my little cup down here, but in heaven, in the name of the

Father, and in relationship with His own beloved Son, through whom I am connected with that Father in blessing? Can you say, "Yes, I *have* a hiding place that none can touch, I *am* hid with Christ in God?" I do not believe any soul has one correct thought of what belongs to a believer, if his heart has not seen Christ in God as a hiding place.

Oh! if one is *in God*, how it puts out every thought of human merit! What amount of work can you pile up so as to justify the thought of deserving mercy from God on account of it? No! the whole thing is so divine, so entirely of God: God, the hiding place—Christ, the vessel in which we are hid in God—the Son resting in His bosom from all eternity; and if we are resting in Christ there, what sort of glory have we got! What sort of settlement of all questions about acceptance do we get there?

God is as a wall of fire round about the church as she walks through the wilderness. She will have a wilderness portion, but it is a portion connecting her with God Himself. There was no path in the wilderness—God must come out of heaven to walk with His people.

Picture to yourself any one with these two thoughts. In Christ hid in God, and grace and peace flowing to that one from God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Say, two believers are together—one always talking about himself and the sorrows of the wilderness, and the other about God and a stream flowing from Him which all the sand of the desert can never sop up. Oh! if one oftener found the latter!

Think—if these two thoughts had, by the Holy Ghost, got hold of your souls; “I am in God, hidden in Christ,” and, “All the springs of grace and peace are in God for me.” God causing the river of His grace to flow through all your circumstances. It is a deep subject of confession that it is not so. If we find the least failure in the supply, if we do not find the water gushing out for ever, it is because we have forsaken the living fountain for broken cisterns.

What is the force of those two words to your heart; “Jesus,” and the “Resurrection?” He, the One in whom is life, has risen and is before God, a living Branch, into which ~~the~~ the soul of the believer is grafted and therefore able to say, “Here is resurrection, not only for Christ but for me.” There is a remarkable contrast between *association* and *fellowship*. Every man will arise from the dead, because Jesus is *associated* with man and He is risen, but what comfort would that be to me if I were to come up a wicked sinner from the grave? But as a believer I am risen with Him, and sitting in heavenly places in Him—this is *fellowship* with Him.

It is very very important to know our fellowship with the Lord Jesus as a living Person. “If we are planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be in the likeness of his resurrection.” (Rom. vi. 5.) This goes a great deal deeper than the resurrection of the body; though we shall indeed be like Christ in glorious bodies, as the fruit of identification with His life.

It is to *Jesus* the heart says “Come.” And

he that heareth saith "Come," to others. I cannot get to the Fatherly love in the bosom of the Father without longing for another to enjoy it also, without looking round for another heart to breathe "Abba Father," with me. I cannot think of Jesus without wanting others to join with me in saying "Come." I cannot help feeling thus, it is a drawing of the heart towards Him, and John felt the Spirit constraining Him to bid whosoever would, to come.

Can we all say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly?" It is a sort of plumb-line, a sort of touchstone to test our state of soul by: and by it inconsistent believers often find out what it is that hinders their desire to see Christ.

Paul said, Christ was crucified thirty years ago, and I was crucified with Him. A Jew hearing this might have said, "Shew me the marks;" but if Paul had answered, "My old man was crucified with Him," a new light would break in. This death of Christ on the cross gives me its full value when I can say that I was crucified with Him, and so crucified that my body of sin is dead. Not the body of flesh, but the body of guilt was all put to death on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a strange thing that the first principles of religion are so forgotten in these days. Do you know what you imply when you say that you are a Christian? It is that you are as guiltless in God's sight as Christ Himself.

I know no greater sinner than myself. I deserve to be utterly forsaken of God. All that Christ bore was justly due to me.

Eighteen years of my life I was without Him,

I would not have Him ; but said, " Let me have my lusts and passions, let me enjoy all the delights of this world." I thought that when I was sixty or seventy years old I would think of religion. God came and knocked at the door of my heart again and again, but I put Him off and tried to drive Him away till He broke it open and brought the light of life to the very bottom of the well.

My soul is quickened and united by the Spirit to the second Adam, but I am still in the body of the old Adam. I have still the wretchedness of the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing to combat against; and this causes that unceasing conflict described as " the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." I have all this, but I so know that the penalty of all this was borne by the Lord Jesus that I can say God has nothing against me. The whole value of the death of Christ is on my side, and accepting it, I can say that I am perfectly clear from all guilt.

In the solitude of a prison we see thanksgiving bursting forth from Paul at the remembrance of blessed inward things in the Thessalonians—their work of *faith*, labour of *love*, patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, all marked them in the sight of God. Is it marvellous, knowing for what I am called, that others should see whether my heart is taken up with the hope of it? What a difference between God having given me a call, and being able to thank Him for its evidence in His sight! Oh, it is not only the question of God bringing people to Himself, but whether Christ is in them the hope of glory, and whether that glory is continually bursting on the heart to produce faith-

work, love-labour, and hope-patience. There is a difference between the patience in 2 Peter i. 6, and hope-patience. The one consists in enduring much for Christ, as a soldier counts on enduring hardships, not expecting to get softly to glory, but through much tribulation. But in the other—*hope-patience*—when your heart is bowed down, how troubles drop off as soon as you turn your eye to Christ and say, He is coming. Has He whispered to your heart, “Behold, I come quickly?” That thought should come like oil on the troubled waters, or ointment that refreshes the weary body.

This object of hope, this blessed Person and His coming, should ever be near the heart, but, as a *patient* hope that would not wish Christ to have an uncompleted body. A hope that can wait on in the calm quietness of faith, knowing that if put off, it is that others may be called; and that when the last is called, then He will come; but not *till then*.

His first impression of power will be to rifle the grave of the bodies of His saints. Is that distinct in your minds with regard to all the friends you have lost, whom you loved in the Lord? Have any lost a brother? Is it the stay and solace of your hearts, that he is not only present now with the Lord, but that the dead shall rise *first*?

When He Himself as Conqueror over death and hades, is manifested to all His people, the dead shall be raised by His mighty power. How utterly powerless man is in face of death! But that Son of man will come forth, knowing how every one of His own are sleeping in the dust, to call them out. Death has been conquered—its sting is gone—what then of the dust of believers? That word is just

as true as ever, "The wages of sin is death." When we believe, our bodies are not glorified ; the body in the dust of death is the mark of sin.

The dead *first*. Surely none but God could have had the thought of making that known to us ! Christ is sitting at God's right hand, the centre of all God's plans, and when God says to Him, " Now rise up," His thought will be, " If I rise it will be to remember *first* among all those given me of my Father, the weakest, those who are in the grave, that I may bring them out of it. Think of this being all purposed by God ! and who could do it save the One who knows all the counsels of God ? What a position it brings us into ! not only a ray of light shining in me now, but a bright ray on my future. God has told us that the coming of Christ is the next great step in the ways of God. How gracious to let that light shine in now, making the church the confidant of His counsels in Christ ! Whether absent or present, seeing Christ in my hope and it lives beyond the grave.

I ask, has the *restorative* power of the Lord's coming got possession of your hearts ? A glass of wine offered to one when fainting, would have no effect unless taken.

The world that crucified Christ is no place for me. I see there what man is. Ah ! there is only *one Man* worth thinking of—that One at the right hand of God, the Lord Jesus. I can say, " A certain Man up there heard the cry of a poor sinner like me—a certain heart was so interested in me as to say I will save you."

Is the blessed gospel *all* that God has given me ?

No! there is something more. I must see every knee bow before Christ, hear every tongue confess Christ's name, as Lord of all, to all, to the glory of God the Father—that is what my soul must have. Should I be content to have Him for ever up there and the devil possessing the earth? No! He is in my heart as Lord of all and King of kings, and I long to see Him glorified as such.

But He has not only a title for earth that every knee shall bow to, but a title belonging to the heavenlies, the peculiar glory of "the bright and Morning Star." A glory in Himself, to be seen and admired by His saints. This was something to meet John's heart when he looked and saw failure within and without, the church scattered, communion of saints broken. He was waiting in the night for that bright Star—that Lord who loved Him and gave Himself for him.

Why should I be looking into myself to see what measure of faith I can bring out? Do I not know the grace of Christ and can I not leave myself in the hand of Christ without reference to what I am? If I can, I say, "Come, Lord Jesus," but if I think that I have a quantity of things to do before I can say it. I shall know nothing of the blessedness of waiting and watching for that bright and morning Star. Looking at this Lord, the poor sinner washed in His blood, can say, "Come, Lord!" It is the Christ he loves, who has been sympathising with him in all his trials, *He* is the One that is to come.

When the heart has got to that point, it is the Spirit and the bride saying, "Come." Many hardly know why they say, "Come, Lord;" but it is the Spirit of God forming the desire in their heart. The Spirit says, "Come," As soon as He

puts the Lord in Person before the soul, the next utterance is directly, "Come, Lord."

Looking at ourselves in service, there would be nothing but despair, but the moment Christ Himself is manifested to the soul, there comes a joy that neither my light nor my darkness can dim. I see the One whom I love up there, and no wave of man's wickedness can wash up to His throne. There He is, claiming all the promises of David to be fulfilled in Him: there He is claiming the hearers also: and He is coming, and a bride surely kept by the Spirit will meet Him. Lift up your eyes amidst all your failure, He *is* coming!

If we knew Christ's love as having its springs in Him who chose and accepted us in that Son of His love before all time! and the end is not come out yet, the bride not yet brought into the Father's house; and only One, the beloved of that house could do that. Only One could re-arrange every thing to bring home poor sinners to heaven. No one but the Son, as Man, could bring poor sinners there. The mind can not only go forward to the coming ages, but can look back before the world's foundation, and see the church of God, His own, chosen of the Father, the manifestation of the love in that Father's heart. In meditating on that blessed portion, Ephesians ii. 4-7, we ought to see and understand a little what feeds the love of Jesus for His church. It is His connection with God, He, the alone One who could give expression to the love of God, the alone One who could fill heaven with poor prodigals. It is only as we feel the

force of this, that we shall have the proper savour of Christ's love to our souls.

The Lord's first object seems to link our souls with the Father and with the enjoyment of His love.

In Eden we find man standing in innocency, but the act of sin, listening to Satan, brought in moral death. Moral death was in Satan, before the creation of man, but it came then into Eden together with the natural death of the body. Just think—what a scene, in that once fair and beautiful creation! man standing there identified with *Satan*, no harmony in that scene for God, no chord in creation answering to the creator's heart. But oh! the wonderfulness of the ways of God! If sin reigned unto death, He could turn even that to His own praise, and bring out a greater glory than creatorial glory. He could look forward to that new Adam, and to the time when His tabernacle shall be with man, the earth purged and made new and all shall serve Him. See what a flood of glory comes in then. If Satan got man in Eden, God shall get man in glory.

God's thought was to give an inheritance to those who had lost one by Adam's transgression; not by putting man again into Eden, but by bringing him into a paradise of glory, an habitation of God. The Son sitting there with Him as One who has yet to bring many sons to glory. But we cannot look at it apart from atonement. These sons must all be brought to glory from amongst a sinner-race; they are unclean and vile—therefore, if there were not the cleansing blood, they could never see God. "Behold I and the children God

has given me.” None can come except the Father draw them.

How little our hearts are occupied with the thought of God looking all through time, that we His enemies should be brought in one by one and be housed away up there, to tell forth His manifold wisdom in ages to come !

It is a solemn thought that it is one thing to leave Egypt, and another thing *not* to fall in the wilderness. One must expect a false professor to fall, and the discovery to be made of his hypocrisy. I may have a fall, but as a believer, there could not be the thought of my not getting to Canaan.

God always looked on Israel in a peculiar aspect, as those over whom His Son was to reign. That thought was always as “ salt ” in the mind of God. That being ever the thought of God, all in them was to proclaim God. Their land was of God in all its circumstances, whether He made it a land of judgment, a land of blessing, or a land of glory, all was to speak for God on the earth. The question was not what they would be for heaven, but they were to be a praise of God on the earth.

When they rejected and put to death the One He sent them, He did not cast them off for ever. That nation should, through His grace, be brought back, and that same Jesus whom they would not have then, should come in, in their extremity saying, “ Here I am, going to be your King.”

Paul had to say, “ I have no man like-minded who will care for your state, for all seek their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ’s ; ” not-

withstanding this, Paul recognised that he was in a scene where God was at work, and he took heart, because of that. If we look round, we see a strange contrast between what Christians are now and what they once were—but still, God is evidently at work; seen too, if Christians will but look up above all circumstances to the love of Christ's heart. Nothing could take us out of Christ's heart. Paul was able to be in deaths oft, able to face the boldest adversaries; the love of Christ came out in this way—and it makes us more than conquerors; things that distract us do not distract Him, and nothing shall be able to separate us from Him and His face.

It is only as the heart is fresh in communion with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is real love to the brethren. The children of a family are not found together because born of one father and mother. If the tender mother, the beloved father be gone, the power that kept them together, is gone from among them. So, with regard to fellowship with the Father and the Son, if that be not maintained with all freshness, love to the brethren fails.

What gave Christ such liberty in a scene of entanglements, a thicket of difficulties, where every thing seemed to say, "There is no God?" It was that He looked up and saw God and the glory of God; and that is what you have to look at—*God*—a God who maintains His own character, and carries out His own plan, come what may. Most comforting to the soul is the effect of this; if death come, there is resurrection from the dead. Nothing can fail.

In Psalm ciii. 17, there is a touch that shews how David had got the divine taste of that mercy connected with the character of God from everlasting to everlasting, something belonging to, and of God. When God saw David unlike what His anointed one should be, He would deal with David. His flesh had come out, but God's mercy was from everlasting to everlasting, something apart from creation and above the world, a spring full of water in itself, on which David could wait, something that humbled him, yet gave him a sure footing before God.

You cannot stand where God stands with anything of yourself. If it is a question of guilt, nothing but mercy can act. What, save that, can account for my position as a believer? I, who was a child of wrath even as others. As soon as I know that Christ has washed me in His own blood, my conscience is purged: I am made meet to be in God's presence. But *why* did Christ die that there might be that only blood shed which could cleanse such a vile sinner as I? There is no other answer save "Because of the free grace of God."

Has God translated you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son; brought you out of this evil world, separated you from the conflict going on all around? But if delivered from it, you will still have conflict, have the discovery that Satan and all that is evil are against you. But we are brought out of it as a people who are not under the power of Satan. Let the world go on as it will, we are out of it in spirit, associated with the "seed of the woman," and the time is soon coming when He will bruise Satan's head. God

would never have so spoken of this, if the millennium were to come first, or if His people were to be settled in a nice land of Goshen. No! they are to be pilgrims and strangers here in the place where the conflict is going on, and *He* is for us who is at God's right hand, meeting the mind of the Father who delivered us from the power of darkness, who is dealing with us not to give us happy feelings only, but to have us a testimony on earth of the conflict going on between Christ and Satan. But we belong to Christ and not to Satan; there we get our rest. If there is the discovery of evil, and I am suffering in measure under its power, I can turn to God and say, "I know Thy pleasure is to destroy the whole power of Satan, and Thou wilt drive him out with all who cleave to him."

Every time God's eye looks upon us He sees some blot, or some blur. "Ah," He says, "but I have made you sons, and you enjoy my love, and stand in relationship with the Son of my love."

In Hebrews i., I see the Son of God seated at God's right hand, as the One who accomplished the work to put away sins, and settled it for ever. Once I did not see this, nor feel the solemnity of the subject; now I see how I was robbing Christ of His glory. Suppose you say that you want peace, do you mean to call in question what God's eternal Son did when He made peace and sat down at God's right hand?

The martyrdom of Stephen gives the golden key that opens this epistle to the Hebrew Christians. Christ is presented by God as a Man in heaven, the answer to everything for man. There is no

allusion in this epistle to oneness of life with Christ, but the curtain is unrolled between us and heaven, shewing that there is nothing between Christ and us, as there is nothing between Christ and God.

God must judge all the ways of His people, but as to personal acceptancy (mark that word), "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Here the enemy is powerless. Balaam speaks (under the power of the Spirit) of the beauty of the people, not as a Moses or a Joshua would have seen them, but as they were seen in the eyes of God. It was not the question of the delight God took in His people, but that all the hopes of earth were connected with them. There was a star to come out of Jacob, a gleam of blessing, One to come who should set everything right on earth, who should fill with righteousness the whole earth, as a proper dwelling-place for His people.

It is important to see that it is not the *walk* of His people, but what they are *in Christ* before God, which is their personal acceptance. Satan's power is not less true now, but what can he do against you if God has accepted you in the Beloved? Does God speak to us as a people over whom Satan has a right? or as knowing us as a people in the light, who know that His present thought about them is that they belong as a chaste bride to His Son; telling them that that Son of His love has a glory yet to come, and He shall not be robbed of the glory of presenting many sons to glory.

We see the effect when rays of light came on the sins of the poor thief. Light not only searches everything within, but makes discoveries of something quite outside. It shewed him the glory of Christ and brought in the fear of God. How entirely he takes his place as a sinner! "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? but this man hath done nothing amiss." Was there one other to whom he could point and say that? Who could dare to say of any dying man, "there is one who never did anything amiss?" When God makes up His jewels, it is *that One* only amongst them all, of whom God could say it. If it had been written on a flag for every eye to see it, it would have formed part of His glory. The one who said it, was here in a very peculiar position. There was a spotless One at his side, whilst he himself had not even the thinnest veil by which to cover any evil in him; and he comes to the other with such a word as "Thou hast done nothing amiss!"

Who is this One who could bring poor prodigals right into God's presence and put a song into their lips which no cherub or angel could join with them in singing! Oh! it is this Prince of Peace—He who has made peace with His own blood.

He is in a place that no creature could have entered, save by that work on the cross, and I am *in Him*; life flowing to me from a fountain which no power on earth can choke up or stop. It is no question of what this creature is—this creature is dead. It is the question of that One in the glory who—knowing no sin—was made sin, in order that you and I might become the channels through whom this life should flow.

## GLEANINGS.

Is there that eternal fulness flowing into the soul? the fulness of that matchless love which took up the vilest of sinners as channels for it to flow in and through.

When the Lord had gone up, the disciples could not help their hearts being up there with Him. They could say, "Here we all are in this room together as before, but the One we love has gone up into heaven, and we have been told to expect Him to come again in like manner." They saw Him distinctly go up—and that fact is really at the bottom of the question: How can I become heavenly? Have I got fast hold of the fact that Christ went up to heaven? It is very distinctive, God putting that fact without any other as the great element of heavenly-mindedness.

Get yourselves into the light of the early Christians, and see whether, like Paul seeing all a ruin with regard to things around, you are yet able to look up, knowing the *heart of God* to be just the same as ever, staying yourselves there.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand; can Christ see that you and I are clean out of all the positive and negative evil round about us, knowing as temples of the Holy Ghost, that there is One within who can keep no terms whatever with anything that He humbled Himself to the death of the cross to put away.

How little the thought of the blessedness of being part of the one Body, dwells in our souls!

What a thought that there is no promise ever given to Christ, that His members will not have their share of!

When it is a question of healing and restoring souls, it is made the occasion for letting flow forth a larger supply of grace than they had before.

I have not to make my boast that I am connected with Abraham, but that I am chosen in Christ, that only-begotten Son of the Father, so moving my affections that I can say Abba Father, being brought by adoption to be a Son with Him. A child would not be thought less of because of being an adopted child ; you would try to put it in the place where all the affections which your own children have as their right, could flow to it. The Lord tells us that we are loved *as He is loved* by the Father, and the world is to know it. The poor dark world will have to say “ There is a place in the Father’s house that belonged to the only begotten Son, and He has actually taken those poor sinners to that place to be sons with Himself.”

Where do I begin in connection with this blessed place of sonship? Who gave *me* (a greater rebel than anyone else) this new life, this incorruptible seed? It was the blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what I get is the flow of His affection towards me according to the affection flowing to His Son. Oh! are we walking as sons, walking as the only-begotten Son walked when He was down here?

The Lord probed Peter’s heart, and the heart of Paul; does He do it for you, or is that a peculiarity which He has ceased to exercise?

Could I take my place at a race-course, and say, “ the Nazarene at God’s right hand is coming, and

in every thing those who are His are to be like Him and to be waiting for Him in separation from all the things of the world, because they are to go with Him to heaven when He comes?" He is jealous to have a people down here to live to Him.

Do many believers understand that the whole way through the wilderness is death and resurrection? We do not take it up in simplicity that all through the scene down here, the eternal life in us is to be evolved and developed by Christ.

Remark the emphasis is laid on the Lamb being in the midst of the throne. (Rev. v. 6.) The light of the jasper and sardine stones discovered what John had not seen before, this *Lamb*, the person of the Lord, brought in so blessedly there. It will not do to separate the person of the Lord from any blessing of God. In Ephesians i. 7, it is "*in whom* we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins." *In whom* presents the living person of Christ; *in Him* is the forgiveness of sins, and we can look here at the marks of redemption which He bears in His person, He is seen in the midst of the throne as the Lamb slain. To God's eye the proof of redemption is now there, ever in His own presence, in the person of His Son as the One who was dead and is alive. And He is the One in whom we can have thoughts in communion with the mind of God and are able to be in God's presence with all the light of that place thrown into one's soul, and why? Because the Lamb is there as the One who has brought one into God's presence. Can you say you are there because of that Lamb being there?

Those who shared in His rejection are to form the very brightest display of His glory.

Oh, what a wealth of glory in this acting of God in connection with Christ, whether as coming to take us to the Father's house, or as being put into the place of being made sin for us! What wealth of glory!

One day many in and of the world will say to God, "Ah, I have sung the gospel a thousand times set to fine music." That is how hearts become so hardened—singing the gospel without a sense of the soul's need of it. But what can one think of the children of believers singing the gospel and its having no effect? It makes one tremble and one can only look to Christ for them, as the One who is the Life-giver.

The slain Lamb is on the throne of God: the blood not outside only, but inside on the mercy-seat; and it is the question whether the blood or my sins will have the ascendancy—one or the other must have it.

"He is our peace." It is not only the sweet saviour of Christ's work and the preciousness of the blood, but Christ Himself. The Lamb on the throne of the Almighty God, is my peace.

If you got into heaven, and found there only a sceptre and crown, you would not be happy, but if you found there *Him* who is the centre of all God's perfections, and could say, "*He* is my peace," you would be perfectly so.

If I am in the presence of evil, I can speak to God about it, brought nigh by Christ. Satan

cannot go there, he can go lower and accuse the brethren, but Christ is there for me, and God is perfectly satisfied. Satan may come against me like a great wave, but Christ cannot let me be overcome.

As believers, we are cut off from all thought of futures, from making plans in connection with this world. I shall not be ready for Christ to come if I am settled down in Sodom and trying to heap up its dross. Whatever duty the Lord has meant us to be doing, each one should be found at when He comes.

When we get into glory there will be no longer hope for eternal blessedness with Christ, but the full position of our present hope. In the glory, the Spirit will always be permeating all, as the energy and medium of everything.

It is an awful sin that nominal Christianity commits in making so little as it does of the blood of God's Son. It is either something that I know as shed for me, or something repudiated by me; and the not accepting that blood as what God has declared it to be, is one of the solemn sins of the present day. I dishonour that blood if I do not believe that it has washed my sins away, if I do not see all guilt gone, if I am not quite at peace and free in the presence of God, looking for the Eternal Lover of my soul who is coming to take me to be with Him as the One who bought me with that blood and saved me for ever. Saved thus, the dying thief went to the paradise of God with the same liberty as Christ Himself.

We have to judge our whole course down here in the light of His coming. To all I would say, are you in life and ways like people who wait for their Lord? Like the Thessalonians, occupied with that one thing, can we honestly say, "If thou, Lord Jesus, hast thine heart set on coming to gather thy children home, *the sooner the better for us.*"

The Jerusalem sinners had it brought home to them by the Holy Ghost sent down, that if they had indeed been the aggressors, there was the aggressiveness of love up there, and that through that blood which their hands had shed, there was alone forgiveness of sins.

If John knew that that blood had washed him, what shall I, one thousand eight hundred years later, say? Who was near me to tell me that that blood had another voice than that of Abel, and that that blood had washed me? Who? it was *Jesus Himself*. And there is not one of you who once writhed under the burden of sin who does not know that it was Jesus who washed you. And why? Because God delights in mercy. Why? Because God is love.

Is it a fact that Christ is my life? not merely that something in Him is given me and certain blessings are mine; but something that keeps my heart occupied with Him as the object of worship and adoration, and that something is *His life in me* here as a real thing. He, the Rock, the Fountain, —the soul never can forget that all its springs are in Him.

A very dear one said, "I don't feel worthy to

take His name on my lips." My answer was, "that is your measure of sin: the perfect One took the measure of it, and when bearing it, had not a ray of light, God's face was hidden; *that* was its measure. *It is infinite* and God alone knows it." I do not try to measure my sin except through the worthiness of Him who bore it: and I find Him saying, "If any poor sinner comes to heaven he will get from the Father the very welcome I have."

God tells you that He counts the hairs of your head; suppose I go to a sick-bed and find the mind of a saint anxious and troubled. What, I say, is your Father in heaven, the God of the sparrow, and not one can fall without Him? Put it home to your heart—is that the Father you trust? If one points to a dead sparrow in the street and says, "without your Father that sparrow did not fall to the ground—and he counts the hairs of your head."

If John at Patmos instead of seeing Christ had been looking at himself and his own conscience, he would not have had faith to get beyond saying, "I am pardoned and accepted through the blood." There he would have stopped; but rays of glory were coming down from *that Person* which made his heart burst forth in further praise. Hope bent forward and carried John beyond Patmos: he looks into the face of the Beloved and says, "There is a priesthood and a kingdom, and I am to be there, He has done it all for me."

Why did the Holy Ghost take His place outside

the temple? Because Jesus had gone up on high, and the promise of the Father was to be fulfilled to a people outside, whom He loved; and the Holy Ghost took up everything for them. And why has there been a revival at the present time? Is the house better than before, or is evil thickening and everything growing more dark? Infidelity on the one hand and superstition on the other, and what new phase of evil may come in next none can foresee; and how can any of us count on going through it all and being kept? Ah! because of that One who never wearies. That One who can never forsake the church of God. The One who came down to reveal the worthiness of Him with whom His people are linked, and they can count on Him to keep them, in spite of all the evil, looking for deliverance out of it, the Spirit and the bride saying "Come!" Is the bride for the earth? What has she to do with the wilderness, save as Rebecca, passing through it? What gives her her whole character? A certain position recognised, not by her but by Christ. Herself recognised by Him as that which without spot or wrinkle is to be presented to Himself. It will be a marvellous scene when Christ presents the church to Himself, when the last Adam takes that bride of His to share His glory. Ah! not only that; but it is oneness with Himself that characterises us. What the heart feels to be so precious is the fact of our being looked at as belonging to Himself, and that the Father sees us not only in a relationship that links us up with the Son of His love in the glory, but *such* a relationship that He could not do without us. He, the Bridegroom, must have the bride up there. If you follow His course from the Babe

in the manger to the death on the cross, and see Him now on the throne of God, the circumstances are very different, but ah! it is the same Lord Jesus; it is Himself, *He Himself*, who is the object of love, and we know that we are for His own self in the glory. *That* is the distinctive thing, that is where the heart rests.

When, through faith, a poor thief cast himself off on *that One* nailed like himself to a cross, the next word he heard was that he was to go with that One to the paradise of God. Ah! He has a way of *His own*, and which of you could dare to stand up and judge the work of Christ? As Son of man He acted as God would have acted.

Amazingly blessed though the doctrine be, that Christ is the Head of a body, it does not, even in that, exhaust all the blessedness of our position *in Him*: it is part of the mystery—not all of it. You cannot compare the title, Head of a body, with that of Son of the Father; *that* is beyond all dispensations, it takes us up as those given by the Father to the Son before all worlds, with the title He had with the Father from everlasting to everlasting. I am as a Son in the same connection with God as Christ Himself, and all things are ours as associated with Him in glory.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” As a potter moulding the clay into a vessel, so is He forming us to walk according to the works unto which we were created anew in Christ Jesus—His life working in

us. In this secret power working in the soul for the development of the new nature ; in the uncovering of the heart, so that with open face beholding the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, how completely God has met His own glory. God saying, I have an only-begotten Son, the end of all that is abolished, and my plan in bringing Him into the world *as a man*, was to shew out what I am, and that if a brand is to be plucked out of Satan's hand, I only am He who can do it ; and if I have called one like Saul of Tarsus, one like John Bunyan—called the *chiefest of sinners*, who shall lay anything to their charge? Ah! cannot you and I say, “Who shall lay anything to our charge, if that God of grace does not?” We have an accepted sacrifice, our consciences are perfect, God says that the blood on His throne satisfies Him, and we say that the blood on our consciences satisfies us. Ah! but more than that—He not only bowed to take up Saul of Tarsus who would have mowed down all he could find belonging to the Nazarene, but to take such as he, as a vessel to mould and fashion for His own service and glory.

How could a *Jew* understand a *man* coming into the world, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, saying, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ;” and from this Man all divine power constantly flowing out?

Are your souls, I would ask, familiar with that grace of the Father in having chosen and accepted you in the Son of His love before the foundation of the world? Do you find in it power that sepa-

rates you from the world? I believe we are now in a very peculiar stage of its history, the powers of darkness letting loose a vortex of evil of every kind, and many a child of God will be caught in it if not walking with God. Some, like Lot, may have to be dragged up out of Sodom. Not that God will not keep His people, in one sense; but it is not only that, He also wants them to have the experience of what His love is, in such largeness that it will keep their hearts fresh with heavenly streams, fresh in blessed and divine thoughts. They who know all that Father's divine love, have a fountain overflowing from heaven. Are you drinking of it?

Did it not all begin with Him? You know it did, in that He chose you in the Son of His love before the foundation of the world; and what joy it is to know that He wants to have you in the heavenly city: His love not satisfied save by your being associated with His Son in glory. Oh, if you know what a portion is yours as one who is to be associated in heavenly glory with Christ, walk in the power of it and of the Father's delight in Him. He wants you to remember as you walk that He took you up before the foundation of the world, and He will not be satisfied, in the largeness of His love towards you till you are in the divine glory with His Son. Oh! the freshness of joy your heart will have as the result of communion with Him in heaven!

The early Christians knew that any and everything in them had been met by Christ, and took their ground as a redeemed people. This gives its character to the love of the brethren: if you love

## GLEANINGS.

me you will look and see whether I know that I have eternal life, that all my sins are put away, and whether I am walking in the power of it to the Father's house and glory.

Can you say that "all your goods are packed up and gone before?" Do any know that state of having nothing but what is of and through Christ? Ah! will there not be droppings enough of blessings from Christ! I cannot help being a pilgrim down here: if asked to go to court, my answer must be "No, all my things are packed up and gone"—a full expression of what the apostle felt as he looked up and saw everything there.

The secret of all blessing and progress, after a soul has been brought to taste of blessing in Christ, is the being led into intercourse with God as He has revealed Himself in scripture, knowing Him as the living and true God in action in scripture. Standing then face to face with Him we see what poor things we are, and what the blessing for us in this book—called truly God's library.

What was your position when in the hand of Satan? It was an awful position—your soul driven hither and thither in Satan's power. But, how blessed! *His* power came in who says, "I will have mercy on whom I will." Ah, He will act worthily of Himself. If there is absolute power in wickedness, there is absolute power in blessing as the contrast; and why? There is a Man sitting in heavenly glory, and in connection with that Man the earth and heavens were formed, and God began to deal with men for the sake of that One.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, but when it was the question of introducing that One, it was not till four thousand years after. In John's Gospel (chap. i.) we read, "In the beginning"—not the beginning of this world or of the angels, but in the beginning He, who never had a beginning: He, the eternal Son, who was with God and was God, was there. When we look down here, everything is gnarled and sin-worn. The earth had its beginning when God by His eternal power created it. The gospel had its beginning when He who was in the beginning came into the world: He, the one who created and originated everything.

How much is lost by souls who look at the power of Satan only, and have not the thought that the eyes of God are always on those that are His—who have not the thought, when hardly bested, that God likes the weak ones' company, and has His pleasure in walking with even a few poor sheep, that His delights are with a feeble few. Do you realise it? Do you find, when the tabernacle shakes and all seems going to pieces, that God has His pleasure walking with you because you are His?

A Roman Catholic would say it is indeed impossible that man could help in creation; but when it comes to the salvation of the soul, he says it is impossible to be saved unless man puts forth all his strength and energy. What strength did Saul of Tarsus put forth? Why did God shine into Saul's heart to unveil the most beautiful object in His own sight, and to shew out all the brightness

of His glory in the face of Christ? Why did He? Because He wanted to give to another all that which delighted *Himself*; and it was *just like Him* to do so.

It is important to look at the opening of the scripture (Gen. i., ii.) as to the question of man's responsibility and position before God, ere sin came in, and his position now, as a sinner. Have you man's innocency before he fell? Why is it that death, from that hour to this, is stalking through the world? Why is it that sin so runs through the very being of man that it is like the chords of the hand, and that as it springs up in us we cannot divide between what is of the Spirit and what is of the flesh, without Him who is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart?

Oh! I would ask myself, and ask it more and more, whether fellowship with the mind of Christ stamps me. The only way to be genuinely humble is to be ever seeking to do God's will, and having His mind in every thing and nothing of our own. All else will be a fictitious humility, and will fall to the ground. I feel it to be of exceeding importance in the present day, in connection with the increase of service, that we should have fellowship with the mind of God, and an abiding in, and a walking with, Christ; as the One by whom and through whom God can alone work. All you do will then be in harmony with the mind of Christ: and all the rest He will cast behind His back.

With the consciousness of who and what He was, the only thing with Christ was, "Lo, I come to do

Thy will.” Is it true of you that the will of God is your only thought in everything? In every difficulty, every thing that harrows your heart, how does that word bear upon it? What is it, in all that is seen in your soul by the Lord Jesus Christ? In your individual walk with Him, you cannot tell what He reads in your soul. Can you bear the scrutiny of His eye?

The first Adam was a figure of Him who was to come; the counterpart, but infinitely more, was found in Christ. Whilst Adam slept, God took out the rib, out of which He formed Eve: and thus the eternal Son came to die that in His death might be found eternal life for all that are His.

No change in a subordinate changes a superior. It is true that I am full of sin, but can God give up His claim to the creature? He cannot deny that He made man; He cannot deny His goodness. His character comes out in goodness, as clouds drop fatness. No! God cannot deny Himself the claim He has on me if I am His creature. The relationship is broken on the creature's side, but I am brought into relationship a great deal nearer by that word of the Lord Jesus, “I go to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father. As a fallen creature I did not dare call Him *my* God. I knew that He had created me, but there was sin in me and hell before me, and all within me trembled at the thought of a holy God.

Is there nothing marvellous in a ruined creature being able to say, “*My God?*” I could not have said it till Christ came. Yes, I, a ruined creature,

am brought in Christ, more intensely near God than Adam innocent was.

And how are you and I walking in such a place? Are you I ask, walking as a people who have their spring in God—a people who are temples of the Holy Ghost, and children of the Father, walking as those who are not living to self?

How beautiful—when perhaps there may be no outward manifestation—a heart turning round to Christ in every thing! In the morning saying, “I have to rise, but I shall do it with Thee: whether I eat or drink I have to do it unto Thee.” It is an unseen life, but have you as the very clue to everything you do, as it was to Paul, “To me to live is Christ?” Do you like Christ to know what your secret, private walk is?

The Father’s love, the Saviour’s love is upon you, and you ought to have the joy of the Holy Ghost ever in your heart.

The secret of all joy is to know that I have a great work to do, that is, to live for Christ, and to feel that I have not time for myself. I have time only to live to, and to manifest Him down here.

If I saw Paul, he would not tell me that he had more of Christ than I have; though he knew a great deal more of what it was to suffer for Christ than I.

The Lord draws every soul alike; a pure spring of water will fill every vessel alike, whatever the size or shape of the vessel.

The Lord could look into my heart to fill it with

Himself. He sees if its affections wane. He is ever turning to see what each heart wants, identifying each one with Himself—all the largeness of what He is belonging to each believer, however little his faith intelligence may be.

If I am in Christ, all His fulness is mine, and of His fulness have we *all* received, not one and another getting a bit, but all sharing equally.

Here am I like a poor piece of wood on the water, driving here and there, and how could I have been kept floating so long, but that His fulness dwelt in me, and all He has to give is mine? He heaps one thing after another, not sufficiency only but superabundance, as when He broke up the five loaves and fishes, and twelve baskets full remained over and above to those who had eaten.

Oh what a blessed thing it is to know that I have Christ Himself in me! What an amazing spring of blessedness to me to realise this as my link with a scene which is to be filled up with His glory!

As Lamb of God He is the One to remove sin from the world. He is seen now as the Lamb slain in the midst of the throne; but the highest glory is to be displayed hereafter, the sin of the world having been taken away, and the new heavens and earth created—the Lamb by His blood purging out the sin of the world, and filling the earth with fields of glory; not a thing in the New Jerusalem or the new heavens and earth incompatible with God being there. He can be there because the blood that was shed when they cleft Him, the only begotten Son of His love, on the

cross, made this earth the place where the waters from the smitten Rock flowed out.

None but God perfectly understands the value of the blood of Him whom they crucified. I understand that it has perfectly cleansed my conscience, and by it that I have perfect liberty to go into the holiest; but as to the value of that blood, and what that cross is, I leave it to God. God only knows all the fulness of it, and all its means.

If my heart knows Christ, Christ is the answer to everything. I begin and go on with Christ, matchless in His beauty; and He goes on with me. I desire to be His, and nothing but His.

Whatever the mind works from and to, will be found connected with that word, "Keep yourselves from idols." If Christ is lost sight of, as the end of all a believer is doing, even were it writing out scripture, or whatever it be, it becomes idolatry. In any work that is being done, if Christ is not before the mind, he who is doing that service is doing it apart from Christ, and helping on a system which God does not think fit for Him to dwell in.

Turning to Paul's life, where can we put a note of interrogation? We can put our mark to the failure of many—to where Abraham told a lie—to where David fell—and with Paul you will find where he went beyond the measure, but he was so closely following his Master that all his failure was found in going beyond in devotedness. Where did you put your mark on self yesterday? Did the water of life fill you? How often did an

arrow from the enemy get between the joints of your harness so as to entangle you in your walk?

Are we dwellers on earth, or in spirit in heaven? Are we so busy and taken up with this scene down here that it looks as if we were of it, or have we Christ's character? He was so completely separate that He could find no joy here. This world ought not to be the place where your heart finds its aliment and occupation. It will not be so if the Spirit occupies you with the things of Christ, and your heart is set on Christ; He in heaven will be your object, and the things of the world cannot then lay hold of your affections.

There is no point down here, nothing to hold us save being linked up with Christ where He is. We want that Nazarite power--so to be associated with Christ up there, that be it what it may that leads captive down here we can let it go and be occupied only with Christ all the way on to the glory where we are to be with Him.

When God has brought people into this relationship, His love does desire that they, as His people, should serve Him; but how? Ah! He says, Give a cup of cold water--keep your garments clean--go and visit the sick and the widow, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world.

*What* proof have I that God is Love? *When* sin came in as a complete barrier between Him and fallen man, He gave His only-begotten Son to move it all away. I ask, is it moved out of your way? Is there nothing to hinder your being in

the bright light in God's presence? No! not a single impediment if Christ is up there as your propitiation. Do I know that I am perfectly spotless; not a single thing against me in God's sight? If not, I do not know the love that sent Christ to die for sinners. It is of immense importance to get that at your back as something to stand against in the field of battle. How am I to walk as a man in whom is the eternal life, if I do not know that God cannot see a spot on me? Impossible that He could, if Christ has washed me in His blood! But are you going to walk in the world with this eternal life in you, and yet saying, "*I like,*" and "*I dislike?*" If so, you will not know the happiness it gives to like only what Christ likes, and to dislike all that is contrary to Him.

No human mind could say, "The Lord Jesus is in heaven and I am in Him." Men of the world would laugh at you for saying it. Yet it is a fact, and the believer can say it is so, because it is revealed in the word, and he has tasted it in his own soul.

Never take a penknife, because you think statements in the word are too large, to cut them down to your own tiny measure.

We find constantly that where Satan gets power over a soul is from fragments of truth being presented, which do not satisfy the soul and do not lead on to glory.

To my mind there is nothing more exquisitely beautiful than the thought that God should covet to be the object of the affections of this poor little heart of mine. He might have called me and left

me to die at the eleventh hour; but oh! what grace that He should say, "You must choose me as I have chosen you; you must live to me as my Son lived." It is touching grace. Shall my answer be that I cannot do it? If God is working in me is it difficult? If He created me in Christ Jesus unto good works to walk in them, shall I say there is no power? God's word is power. When the Lord said, "Take up thy bed and walk," did not faith know and act upon the mighty power of Him that spake?

The eternal life I have in Christ is a thing apart from what God made the soul of man in Eden. Christ could not be Son of man without being the resurrection of the whole human race, each one to be raised according to whether he honoured or dishonoured God down here, the one to eternal glory, the other to the judgment of the great white throne and the lake of fire; either joy without end or misery without end. He raises them in His own eternity, and the eternity of the wicked is as eternal as God Himself is, and the eternity of the blessed the same.

The life breathed into the soul was good, as connected with a creature in the garden of Eden; but the first action of the eternal life in the soul is the bringing of him who has it into fellowship with the Father and the Son. Until Saul of Tarsus had this life, how utterly impossible to him would have been that first thought that Jesus of Nazareth was Jehovah!

When you look at that eternal life, go back millions and millions of ages, that Life was there, and never was there a beginning of that Life.

But think of seeing that Life displayed in perfect beauty! A beauty calculated to draw the worship and awaken every feeling of adoration and love in the soul; not a step in the way but I have to say, "Why am I such an utter contrast to that Christ? All is so adorable and beautiful in the life of Christ, yet I can say "that Life is mine!"

It may be that there is a great deal of the world about you, a great deal that will have to drop off. You can only write a few ciphers about yourself; I do not want you to have a good opinion about yourself, but of Him whose glory is so transcendent that He finds not the heart to condemn those who know Him as their Saviour.

It is not my being able to understand that Christ of God; I have known Him these forty-five years—and what can I say, Ah, Lord! Thy Father knows all about Thee. He raised Thee and placed Thee at His own right hand, that our faith and hope might be in Thee.

What is confession of Christ? Light shining in and coming out. Saul was entirely dark, and Christ let all the glory in Himself shine into him. What was the effect? Was it merely like a sun-beam that swept across his path and vanished? No! it was the revelation that the Nazarene was the Son of God, and he immediately began to preach it. He had become connected with a system the centre of which was Christ in heaven. Saul was a poor earthen vessel, but so full of Christ that all His thought was that Christ should be magnified, whether by life or by death. Confession

was seen flowing out in His life, just as life in Christ had flowed in. He was as clay in the hand of the potter, but he was the expression of the life of the glorified Head in heaven, with all his weakness.

You cannot be like Christ, but you can walk like Him. I would not for worlds lose that God should say, "I am jealous that you should walk like my Son." Do you say it is too much love on His part? Ah! do not you love to be set by Him as His child with the Son of His love? He would not have you in any other place than that of a son. He lets me know that He never thinks lower of me than of the Son of His love. I in Him and He in me; that is where He has set me.

According to the measure of God's love, so is His jealousy as to the walk of His children. He cannot say of any who are in Christ, "They joined to idols, let them alone." No! He would say, "I cannot let them transgress, I must come in as a Father and chastise, till I see their ways and walk changed."

That which is poured into a vessel accommodates itself to the size of the vessel. So if God's truth is poured into a vessel, it just carries the fulness God fits it to hold. He filled Jeremiah for the very work He had for him to do.

If we are told of the thorn in the flesh, the apostle does not say what it was. Christ's Spirit in Him did not make him write it, but he looked at everything that discouraged him in the presence of the glory; if it was the question of his own weak-

ness, the Lord meant that too to be carried up there: in everything to be glorying in the Lord.

There will be perfect ease in service, if the ground of it be nearness to the Lord.

Is the peace of God in the soul disturbed by things down here? No, never! If waters break in stormy currents against a rock, the rock is unmoved; it is only the waters that are disturbed.

The peace of one who is hid in the cleft of the Rock nothing can disturb.

Mark the expression in Philippians iv. 18: "An odour of a sweet smell:" it is a strong word. What! a purse of money "an odour of a sweet smell, well pleasing to God?" Yes. It would have been, "Thy money perish with thee," if presented without love to Christ as the motive; but even in a cup of cold water there is an odour of a sweet smell, if given for Christ. How He will surprise His people by the way in which He counts and notes every little thing done for His sake!

Do I feel love to the God who gave His Son to die for me, and is love to Him who by that death enabled me to call His God my God, the motive that enables me to empty myself out of everything for Him?

The Philippians were stripping themselves for Paul, but his heart was so simple that he could accept it all, saying, "My God shall supply all your need." He could not refuse their last bit of bread, because he knew that his God would supply them.

It requires the mind of Christ to accept what one does not require, because given for His sake. I once declined taking something from a poor widow; I was not up to the mark. She wanted the gospel preached, and came up to help with her two mites: and one ought to take care not to refuse any the blessed privilege of identifying themselves with the work and interests of the Lord.

God *does* care to supply all your need, but He has a plan of His own, a plan in which He has everything to satisfy the heart to overflowing. He will supply all the present need of His people, and then give them riches in glory by Christ Jesus for evermore.

People are fond of speaking of themselves, but when occupied with Christ there will be very little space for self. I used to try to get the measure of my sins, but I never found the immeasurableness of the fact that God had to hide His face from the Son of His love, never found it till seeing Him forsaken on the cross, I said to myself, "Do you know the volume of that scene? Two thieves, and Jesus the eternal Son of God hanging on the cross between them! The whole of the wrath due to my sins was met there. He who hung there knew the holiness of God, and He settled the whole question by bearing the whole penalty."

There is the strongest contrast between the whole life and standing of man as a creature, and the eternal life: life that was with the Father. The life of the creature is seen displayed in its most perfect form in man in Eden, body, soul, and spirit; but the perfection of existence, past all dispensa-

tions, will be when Christ raises all believers as men in His own eternity and in His own likeness.

With us it may be sometimes such a little thing that Satan gets hold of, but in Christ he found nothing and he was utterly worsted ; and what can he do against us now if Christ is up there watching over every child of God ? He may find fault with my walk, and allow me to be passed through a process, like Job's, to purge away the dross ; but there is not a question of what I was as a sinner. If Christ is up there the whole question is settled.

When Paul or others were conscious of any failure, it was to Christ Himself they turned for fresh power ; and if I fail, what have I to do but just to turn to where Christ is—He is up there to destroy the works of the devil, and He is my power to start afresh.

It is a solemn thought, how are the hearts of people that are so little fresh in love to Christ to get freshness at all ? It is only by seeing anew what God has made Him to them, and what He is. The more they see it, the more fresh the heart will be. There is an immense lack of freshness in us.

What trial have you ever had that would not have lost its bitterness and become sweet to you, if you had taken it in connection with Him who was from the beginning, looking up and saying, "He is not put out at this thorn in my flesh that is making me writhe, His strength is for me in it ; He is not dismayed at the thicket of difficulties I am passing through ; He gives the guidance I need ; He who was from the beginning lets me know that

He is with me, and His love meets me and carries me through everything.”

Is it possible for a believer *not* to know that his sins are forgiven? Could the passover be in a house, and guilt be attached to it? Can a saint say, “O God, put my guilt away,” when the blood of His Son has put it all away? I know my sins are forgiven, and yet before an hour is passed I may get my robes defiled and have to say, Ah, how I fail even when doing all I can to meet His mind, but the measure of my guilt was laid on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God has no reckoning against me because He reckoned it all to His Son ; but if I, a forgiven person, go wrong, He will directly call me to account for it.

At Pentecost there was immense power from personal knowledge of Christ and the presence of the Holy Ghost ; and yet, had they a single copy of the scripture? I have seen the most unintelligent saints putting aside error, saying, “I *know Christ*, and this thing and He cannot go together.”

A mere outward profession gives no thought of connection with Christ—of Christ being able to say, “*I in you and you in me.*” Yes, the believer can say—I, down here, can say, “I am in Christ and Christ is in me, he has become my life.” Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would not admit this. What, they would say, do you mean to assert that you are in a Person up in heaven when you are down here on earth? My answer would be, “If you are believers, you will never find

in the word that you are *of* Christ, but that you are *in* him." I know that I am bound in one bundle of life together with Christ because He, now sitting on that throne in heaven, says, "I in you and you in me;" and with the simplicity of faith I say it is so.

If you trust to yourself, most certainly what you are will come out, as it did in Peter; if he speaks of his devotedness, all he gets from Christ is, "Before the cock crows thou wilt deny me thrice." We ought to get into the state of Paul when Christ stretched out his hand to take the veil off his heart, and he fell down crying out, "Who art thou, Lord?" He took the place of being exceedingly little. He had tried with all his energy to blot out the name of the Nazarene from earth, but no sooner did he find himself face to face with that Nazarene in the glory, than all his own energy came then and there to an end.

The opposition that comes from Satan as a roaring lion is very different from his serpent character of seductiveness. There is a great difference between the action of that poor old woman who took a green faggot that she might add to the sufferings of a martyr, and that of trying to turn aside the spirit of a martyr by blandishments and seductions.

As Son of God, Christ had a perfect right to say, I will and I will not, and He is the only one who (save on two remarkable occasions) never did so.

Directly Peter and others confessed Christ they got a new nature ; love from the Son of God was flowing through their hearts, and it brought them to go following in His footsteps. They had no intelligency as to the Messiah, they were poor stupid Jews, but He had revealed Himself and He was a magnet to their hearts and they followed with purpose of heart to cleave to Him.

It was the patience of a Redeemer that left Cain where he could shew out all his wickedness.

If I take up the Bible, and say to many Christians, " Do you look into this book, saying, ' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' " They say " Ah, that would cut us off from everything ; we are so weak, we have eternal life, but we never can overcome the world." Ah, (I answer) *you* cannot, and why not? Because it is *you* and not Christ. It is only through faith in Him that victory is obtained.

Where is Christ now? Gone up to heaven and seated there out of the world—by " the world " I do not mean the earth, but the system set up by Satan all around us now. How much did Christ honour that? The only thing He looked at in it was people that were to be born of God and brought out of it linked to Himself. Are you out of it with Him? Have you a range of life outside things down here, in it but not of it, even as He was not?

What I have is just the life of that one Person in whom is all God's delight.

It is a blessed thing to feel, as those to whom Christ has given the light of eternal life, that not

only all our springs are in Him, but that the path of each one, however humble, may be marked by the spark of eternal life shining out the whole way.

If any one asked me whether the believers I associate with are practically living the same life as Christ lived on earth, what could I say? Has your walk and mine to-day been the walk of risen and ascended ones in Christ? Did we walk last year looking as to a hill we had climbed, able to say that our life was practically the display of the life of Christ all the way?

There is an immense difference between intercourse, and communion of saints. If there is communion with Christ, much will flow from it. I might do the humblest work, wash the feet of any poor saint as a member of Christ, and feel that it flowed from communion with Christ; but when it comes to mere kindly intercourse one with another, and no roots in such intercourse from communion with Christ in heaven, what is the worth of it?

One should bear it most distinctly before the soul that in anything we are doing we are just going through it *with Christ*, and the waters will flow freely; no frost ever congeals them, no heat ever dries them up. You may have sorrow, temptation, and everything to try you, but nothing can touch those living waters, and why? Because we are loved with an everlasting love, and it is Christ the fountain of living water who leads us.

You will find it the very strength of your soul to go before God with a text and say, "This is

written in thy word, and because thou canst not lie, I know that I have got that thing.”

Perfect love casteth out fear. If it is a question of your getting into the love of God you cannot get in ; but if it is the question of Christ having brought you into it by washing you from your sins in His own blood, there can be no fear.

If a company of saints get at ease and lose the freshness of love to Christ, God can kindle a fire so fierce as to touch all of the flesh that turns their hearts from Him.

Have you known fellowship in suffering with Christ? known deep waters? You will have to go down to them. If you do not get sorrow in fellowship with Christ, you will get it in discipline.

If Paul had borne the mark of a ruined creature and Christ had taken him up to make him His, would he not have a mark to reflect the Person who had said, “You are mine?” And in everything Paul himself desired the mark of being Christ’s. There is something very beautiful in the way he could glory in all that man or Satan could do or inflict, because he *would* be like his master.

When Christ brings us to heaven there will be no more thorns needed—there no joint in the harness to gall the flesh—no heaviness there—no falling, as one dead, at His feet, like John ; nor like Daniel who felt his comeliness turn into corruption at the sight of the Lord, but the body will become the medium of tasting perfectly what that

Christ is who followed with unwearied love the course of each sheep down here.

Is it the thought of any that they might be nearer Him in the glory than some there or brighter than others? Ah! that is a thought of something for *yourself*. Each will have his own place. Paul will not be among the eleven apostles: will he say "Oh what a place they have?" Might not the Lord say, "Ah, Paul, I am the one you alone desire to look at?" Yes, Lord, Thou art the only one! Thou art that Lord who knew how to heap good things upon me, who kept putting the vessel down into the waters and filling it up. Ah! soon that Lord shall come out of heaven to fill up with the power of eternal life every one now waiting for Him, and He will bring them home as vessels filled up. He only is to do it.

Oh, that God would act as in the day of Pentecost, and put us where we so little stand as reflectors of that Son of His love, each one presenting the reflection of that Christ at His right hand. Every heart will own we are not like Pentecost believers.

Peace may flow as a river—but the moment we are washed in the blood, God takes us up to train us for Himself. It does not interfere with our blamelessness before Him as washed ones; there is not a thought in His mind of blame, but because I am so connected with Christ, He sees all the little ways in me that are unlike Christ.

There is a routine of things and duties connected with earth which sometimes catches hold of us and

draws us down ; even necessary care for relations may get to occupy the mind so as to hinder the outflow of a heavenly walk.

Everything with Paul became service. Whatever it was, whether life or death, he said, "There is something I can fill with Christ."

If God has done a work for me, witnessed to by the Holy Ghost, in my conscience, I could not have a doubt of its perfection. All God's character, His holiness and love, are united and bound up in it ; if it is not received by me, I am lost for ever.

The presenting the blood is one thing, the appropriation of it by the sinner is another. The moment I can say to Him who died, "Thou hast washed me in thy blood," I have appropriated it by faith ; but if I say, "I want to be the servant of Christ, as well as being washed in His blood," I shall give the proof of being set apart by the blood to live only unto Him.

Without a purged conscience it is impossible to go into the place where worship is ; for that place is where God and the Lamb are, and nowhere else. A purged conscience is the first element in the soul of a worshipper.

Faith not only supposes light shining down, but the Lord giving to the soul power to receive it.

That searching eye of God not only reads the heart and lays everything bare in the light ; but that searching eye of God looks on the believer

with all the affection with which He looks on Christ.

The church is to be to the praise and glory of God's grace throughout all ages. We see it in the Apocalypse like a crystal vessel, through which all heavenly glory shines out, God and the Lamb being inside and all their glory shining out through it. This company of chosen ones are the fulness of Christ, and will be the means of the display of His glory ; He in God, and we in Him.

Not merely has Christ in His mind the time when all glory will centre in Him as Son of God, but as Son of man He is forming individuals to be together with Himself in that scene of glory, fashioning our hearts to be in association with Himself when He comes.

What a thought that there is no promise ever given to Christ that His members will not have their share of !

Had God when He had given the Son of His love exhausted His love ? Did He not give the Holy Ghost ? and has He spent it all ? Ah ! when we come to the Father's house, shall we not find that fountain for ever flowing in all its fulness, in all its boundless torrents of blessing !

The number of those who understand the mystery of the church is very small, but far smaller is the number of persons who know what resurrection life is.

People continually say, I know I am not what a Christian ought to be. I answer, If you are not

dead and Christ your life, and if you are not walking in the power of it, how *can* you be what you ought to be ?

The life of the Son of God is my life, and it is a life of resurrection. It may be up and down again—nothing but ups and downs continually—all my ruin as a creature coming out ; but from the time when God revealed His Son to me, He took possession of my heart's affections, and I know that I have been in Him and He in me from that time.

I believe the time is coming, if not come, when it will no longer be the question of professing to be Christ's, but of whether we are living the life of Christ.

I know Christ, and you do also, but did you ever get a full taste of Him and say, " I know nothing, O Lord ; help Thou mine unbelief ? " I have. Such a sense of fulness in Him and of an eternity of blessedness *with Him !*

I see my reflection in His blessed eye. No one ever looked on Him without seeing all the Father's glory in Him. The infinite fulness of the Godhead is in Him bodily. Oh, how little we know of that fulness in Him ! What will it be to see that Christ Himself with faculties given by God to enable us to take in the glories of His person !

Do you comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height of God's thoughts about that divine Person—you, a creature of yesterday ! Look back these thousands of years—that One whom man nailed to the cross and put out of the way, was

there creating the world! And then, as man, God shewed that a person was there able to deal with sinners, with the worst, making them a part of the bride.

As a man, all human affections are in His heart. We know, if we believe that there is love in the heart of anyone toward us, how we rest on him. Ah! there is a volume of love in His heart, and it is fixed on each individual given Him by the Father.

It is not length, depth, breadth, and height abstractly; there is a centre—Himself. I know that the God-man who loves me is the centre of all God's thoughts and counsels; my heart is resting on the very object which God's heart rests on, and all that is precious to God is mine.

How blessed is the truth that we are one with Him, His body; able to say to Him, "Ah, Lord, thou knowest who and what Thou art, and I, the least of Thy members, am one with Thee. Oh teach me, Lord, to know and to realise the wondrous mystery of the truth that I am in Thee and Thou in me, the truth of this unity of the body." It is *that* one's heart feeds and muses on. Oh look to it that your hearts be occupied with and feeding upon that blessed truth, that we are one spirit with the Lord.

Where believers often fail is that they have not patience to wait on the Spirit of God to be taught any truth; and if it is not brought to them at once, they exercise their own thoughts. But it is better to wait even ten years, saying, I have not yet got light from God's mind. To do otherwise will be like building with a bit of bad stone.

What a remarkable word is that in Ephesians iv. 32, "Forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven us." I, a ruined creature, to forgive my brother, because I have been forgiven all.

Two beautiful vases were set in the garden of Eden, and falling on a rock they were dashed to pieces; and just in that ruin, God says, "I can give a Saviour, I can forgive all."

A blessed portion of truth came out at the Reformation: but still the question ever agitated has been, "What is the church?" The answer in scripture is very simple. In chapters i. and ii. of Ephesians, you will find the key to open out the truth, and to enable you to understand the doctrine of Christ in connection with what the church is. We find in these chapters three different things and three different positions, taken up first, in eternity (chap. i. 4, 5); second, in heaven (ver. 20); and third, down here on earth. (Chap. ii.) When were we chosen in Christ? Before the foundation of the world, and chosen to shew with Him scenes of glory of which neither seraph nor angel could say, "We know *that*." It was the Father tracing out to us the character of our relationship with Him in the Beloved, before the world was. It was not His thought to put these adopted ones in relationship *less near* than His beloved Son; not only He the head and they the members, but He the first-born of many brethren. The second is a scene that took place when man had been four thousand years in ruin. The only begotten Son came down here, God manifest in flesh. Ah, John, did you love that One on whose bosom you lay? And you, poor Peter, although you

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denied and forsook Him? Ah, yes! and by faith you followed Him up to the right hand of God, waiting for the fulfilment of His promise to send down the Holy Ghost. How do I know that there is that risen Man seated up there at God's right hand? Because it has been revealed by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost came down as the seal of the Father's delight in the Son, and the seal of our being His; but not only that, but Christ is up there as a life-giving Spirit: there is power in Him to give life to any poor devil-possessed sinner, even to a Saul of Tarsus. The third position views the church down here as the visible thing (chap. ii. 19), builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. What gave the church visibility? The Holy Ghost: when He came down He made it manifest that Christ had a people on earth as heavenly saints, a people whom God claimed as His; and they were to be His light-bearers. A light-bearer is not invisible. He holds that which He sets up responsible, till He puts it aside.

If you think of the church being manifested now on earth, the general state of professing Christians is such that their walk is a positive denial of it. Do you who are vital members of the church live a life so heavenly that all around you can take notice of it? Ah, we do not see in believers that which was visible in the Lord whose whole course was the declaration of whose He was, having no will of His own; and in Paul who had the same mind as His Lord. That is how we are to shew out the things we have in Him who is invisible, raised up to the right hand of God.

If you do not understand what God's present claims over you are, you may depend upon it that as days of testing come on you will not be able to keep your footing.

Revelation i. 4. In this verse we see the effects of the gospel on the heart, and the enjoyment of its privileges by John. He stands with his eye turned upwards, contemplating the glory of God and seeing in each of the three Persons of the Godhead severally grace and peace. This grace and peace come in varied forms, according to the varied circumstances of the people of God. Grace and peace would come differently to John at Patmos, and to Paul travelling about in busy service, and to you in your connection with things here—your own internal conflict with self and Satan, your want of faith, &c. Well, for each there is grace and peace, according to each individual need.

It is very sweet to see that the mercy which we need as poor sinners, we never lose the sense of as saints. The poor sinner finds this mercy is connected with all the actings of his life as a saint; he finds it always refreshing, and it puts him in the place of recording the good things which have flowed forth from God. It is a very different thing to look at the mercy of God as connected only with my need, and looking at it as connected with Jesus as the opening up of what *God is*. The joy of seeing what God is in this mercy has no end, it is infinite. Ah! it is the sweetest thing on earth to the saint to be tasting what God is.

The church is seen in Revelation xxii. as minis-

tering with Jesus as priests in the heavenly sanctuary not made with hands, and also as reigning with Him (having suffered with Him). Well, we see in this the ripe rich fruits of Jesus' love, and the question is answered, "Where am I going to, being turned out of paradise, but still my sins having been forgiven?" Here I find that there is a place where Jesus will reign in His glory as King of kings. See how John marks the place of service of these kings and priests, the locality of the exercise of their service. John was able to take all this and give it back to God in praise. He not only enjoyed it in his heart in secret, but takes his place in broad daylight, and gives praise and glory to God.

I believe our thoughts about praise ought to be very deep—not only are its effects on us very wonderful, but praise glorifies God. I believe that if the spirit of praise and worship can be kept up in the heart, and the blessed sense of all that God is be kept alive in the midst of the greatest evil, it cannot touch us.

Let us ever remember that God recognises *every expression* of praise and of His people's love. He knows so well what His love and grace are to us that He must expect us to praise Him.

The bright light of what Christ did, occupied Nicodemus, but he could not see the glory of the Person who stood before him as Son of man, Son of God, Son of the Father. What are miracles or tongues? They may be for a testimony down here, but what are they in heaven? But what was He the measure and standard of down here?

The poor woman of Samaria sees the glory of His Person, and at once devotes herself to His service and goes away to get all to come to Him. The things that mark our connection with the Christ of God, are things that take us above all circumstances down here—*heavenly things*.

How often has my own heart deceived me! How often my dreams that have run on man, have deceived me! Have I ever been deceived when my thoughts have run on the things of God? Has it been a delusion when in distress I called upon God, and He answered me, a delusion that He heard me?

Things in the unseen world brought by God to the soul, are found to have a strength in them that nothing can withstand.

I have the knowledge that all the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ, and the rays of light that have shone into my soul are more infinitely precious than any other thing.

If I am looking for the coming of Christ, I do not stop to look at my shadow behind, but up to the Lord's appearing. My only object is to reach the goal, and, receiving a glorified body, to be with Him for ever.

The God with whom we have to do is a God who calls us to joy, and never can we get to the end of that joy. Why do I rejoice? Because Christ has loved me, and washed me in His own blood—because He has given me life in Himself—has connected me with all spiritual blessings—has given me to know that I am linked with Him now, as a

living Person, in all I am doing and passing through. *Why?* Because when He comes on a cloud of glory, He will take me up and make me like Himself. *Why?* Because I shall go into the Father's house with Him. What! all that God sees in Him, is mine! Let no one come in and disturb my enjoyment.

What a most divine and perfectly graceful life was that of the Lord down here! All things taken up and thoroughly gone into. If He called Lazarus out of the grave, He adds, "Loose him and let him go." God meant us to know the whole circle of what that love was.

Revelation ii. 2-5. There is something remarkably searching to the hearts of believers in this word of the Lord's. Christ putting in pointed contrast two kinds of works, by saying, "I want the first works, not the works done when you have fallen from the first works." The Ephesians had left their first love—they had a range of works, they could suffer for Christ and could not bear evil; they laboured without fainting, but all this could be done in a lower range. It is not to put the secondary class of works aside—there are many things we have to do and various kinds of service. All are not gifted to minister in the word and doctrine: those who are may form a very small company in comparison with the number of Christians; but it is that *first love* which puts the soul above secondary works. One cannot go forth in the power of that love and see "a lion in the way," no, for one sees Christ beyond. The humblest believer can say, "I know that Christ has His heart occupied with me individually, and the knowledge

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of this centralises my heart's affections on Him, and gives me power to carry out service, all being done from the principle of love to Him who first loved me."

Ah! what does Christ look for but the love of His people individually? Every thing may be in a state of chaos, but He says, "If the freshness of your love is lost, mine remains the same." If your soul gets hold of the sweetness of His love, it will shine out, making you very bright—not outside service, but something between our souls and the Only-begotten Son of the Father. Any who have tested His love, can say, "I know the sweetness of that love." Ah, if you do, do not let it slip away. Christ says to the Ephesians, "You are giving me the second place in your hearts, you are thinking a great deal about my house and candlestick, but what of me?" Repent therefore, and do the first works.

The question of speaking to souls is a question of personal love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not say you have no gift for it. Do you love Christ? If so, you will never lose an opportunity of speaking a word for Him.

The freshness of the hope of the Lord's coming springs from ever bringing before the mind the Person of Him for whom we are waiting: as the one who is occupied with us in all we are passing through; the One who is the strength and joy of our souls and our portion.

I should like to know what saints feel when the thought of the glory crosses their minds. I say when thinking of it, "where is the Lord in it?"

Without Him, the very glory itself would be not without a trouble to me.

How can any understand what the church is, unless they see Christ, at God's right hand, Head of a body? People are not only responsible to see the church of the living God on earth now, but to see how that church ought to be the reflection of what the Head is above. I am to walk on earth as one looking up and seeing heaven opened and Christ there, not only sympathising, but saying (as to Saul), "None can touch one of those, they are a part of me."

*Whose* affections are exercised about the church? *Christ's*. He formed her and gave Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself, a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish.

The plummet line has never gone to the bottom of that word *grace*. The church in God shews it forth. Oh! God looks upon us as *children*, not the children of another but *His own* sons and daughters; and if so, what is there not for your consolation? The wilderness may be very dry, nothing but sand and barren rocks—are you thinking of these or of Him going before you, speaking to you of His love as a Father?

He is the Rock—and how surely does the water from that Rock shew itself if in the heart! Yes, as surely as it did in the heart of the woman of Samaria.

Have you never known the eye of the Lord

coming right down upon you, seeing all things in you? saying, "I can say nothing for you in regard to yourself, you must take another ground, and that is, you must see what *I am* for you."

"I will write upon him the name of my God—and my new name." Most precious to have His new name written on one! But ah! how little our hearts are carrying and living on Christ's to-morrow, awaiting that morning in calm rest and joy when He shall rise from the Father's right hand to come forth, not only to take His people up, but to be the Dispenser of that which He alone has to give, because given Him by God to bestow on them. Are you living in this to-morrow of Christ's?

My soul is quickened and united by the Spirit to the second Adam, but I am still in the body of the first Adam. I have still the wretchedness of the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing, to combat against, and this makes that unceasing conflict, described as, "The flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." I have all this, but I so know that the penalty of all this was borne by the Lord Jesus, that I can say, "My God has nothing against me." The whole value of His death is on my side; accepting it, I can say, "I am perfectly clean from all guilt."

It ought to be with us as with Christ. All through His course down here, His heart was broken. His very disciples caught but a glimmer of the truth He put before them, and when it came to the testing time, they were all scattered.

## GLEANINGS.

Revelation ii. 2-5. This portion is exceedingly searching to the hearts of believers. Remark two kinds of works spoken of, and set in pointed contrast; (that is those in ver. 5) Christ saying you have fallen lower down, I want the *first* works, not the works where you have fallen. The works of verse 2 are works connected with their circumstances—connected where the feet are—with toil, and labour, and judging evil, right to keep from it, because Christ's name is named on us; but none of these things will be found in glory; nothing to try us in glory. All the activities of service in glory, but no weariness, no danger of fainting, no opportunity of holding fast anything there; there, anything we do, will be connected with the character of the glory we are in. There was this against them; they had felt their first love. If we turn to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, when the light shined in, he found a quantity of labours of his own energy not accepted at all, but something from above had shined into his heart, and the love that was revealed, laid such hold of him, it put him into constant service, for that Christ, who had so revealed His love, he felt obliged to walk as one bound by this love, and how he loves ever to turn to this love in his writings! No wonder that the extraordinary scene of his conversion was always fresh in his soul, ever thinking how Christ had stripped the veil of his heart when dead in trespasses and sins, and had laid hold of his heart entirely. Were there ever such a set of circumstances as those in which he was found to bring into prominence that the eternal love of Christ was set upon him? *That* Christ wanting him to be His servant and taking the entire hold of his affections

and intelligence. Is it surprising that this man finding himself laid hold of and loved by that Christ in glory, his heart took hold of Christ? In Ephesians we find that love so beautifully brought out, if there were any to whom Paul could pour out all the truth of the love of Christ in heaven it was to the Ephesians ; but these Ephesians had forgotten their first love. I find Paul in Timothy with his heart's affections as fresh as ever, about to lay his life down for Christ with the *full freshness* of that love in his soul. In Philippians he had got to live Christ, and he went through it all with the taste of first love bright as ever, he could say to the Ephesians, " I can go through everything for Christ in the power of vital union with Him, if you are one spirit with Himself he would have you walk as He did."

The Ephesians did not keep their first love ; they had a range of works, they could suffer for the Lord, and could not bear that which was evil ; they laboured without fainting, but all that can be done on a lower range as a candlestick. Many of us could say, " I am a religious man ; I could not do what I did before ; with the death of Christ before me could I go and do it?" Yet you are still in the circle of things down here. When breaking bread, I had the thought, Who *would lay down their life* for me? Could I say, I know any brother or sister who would do so? But who did give His life for me? The blessed Lord ; He says, " I *stood* in the place that was yours, and I want you to stand where I am ; I have shewed you you are to have part in the priesthood and kingdom ; I bore your sins, washed you in my blood, and brought you without spot into the Father's presence, and I am

looking down upon you and want you to stand in my place." What ground are you on? If He so loved us, not occupied with evil, proving false apostles, taking long journeys, but it is the blessed taste of His love He speaks of. He speaks elsewhere of having created us unto good works. Works that are connected with His purposes of love to souls down here, will not shine out here as in heaven; but it is the communication of the nature connected with Christ that brings out love.

The first time the spiritual perception is given any soul, that there is a Man in heaven, and that He is arresting that soul, saying, "That poor sinner shall know what my love has been," the first work of that soul is receiving the love of that One who has arrested him. What does He look for, but for the love of His people individually? Everything may be in a state of chaos, but He says, "If the freshness of your love is lost, mine remains the same; if your soul gets hold of the sweetness of His love, it will shine out, making you very bright. Not outside service, but something between our souls and the only-begotten Son of the Father. Have you any light come down from Him to shine on people: where will be the stop to men's blessing? Any who have tasted His love thus can say, "I know the sweetness of that love." Ah, if you do, do not let it slip; the Ephesians had lost their first love. We read, "Because iniquity abound, the love of many," &c. It was not so with Paul amidst the coldness, he only drew nearer to the fire, and where it is darker we need the greater light.