

## Gleanings, Volume 3

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Gleaned by B.D.

"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 show 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 lay 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 tonight, 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 I 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 shown 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 show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake." And it was not go 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 3! 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 show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." The glory of God and the Lamb are upon her, showing 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 3: 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 shown 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 tonight 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? "show 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 show 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 show 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 show 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 5: 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 Revelation 7: 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, butt' 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 everything 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 Revelation 12: 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 10: 32. In Revelation 12: 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 able to meet the whole volume as when on the cross, 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 showing 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 till 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 show 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. 24: 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 stiff-necked sinner, saying, "I can take you up and wash you in the blood of my Son." Ah! God know 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 show 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 shown 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 show 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 Philippians 2, 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 showed 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 answer, 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. Someone 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 tomorrow? No! it is eternal life to me today. It has come down to my own soul from Christ, and ought to flow in streams of blessing. It will show out the weakness of the vessel, and show 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, show 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 show He will not show 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 tonight: 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 you 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 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 inshining 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 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 3: 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 Syro-phenician 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 show 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 show 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 showing me my wretchedness, be to show 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 show 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 show 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 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 today." 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 breastplate . . . every time the high priest breathed, the breastplate 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 show 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 show 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 shown to a babe in Christ, it would be scared; but it is nothing in comparison with what God shows 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 act 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 show 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 showing 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. 8: 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 2: 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," etc., 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 showing 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 today, 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 shown 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 inheritance, 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 maybe 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 13, 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 show 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. 1: 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 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. 6: 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, "Show 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 1: 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 *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 2: 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 103: 17, there is a touch that shows 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 give 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 1, 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, showing 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 showed 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.

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. 5: 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 1: 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 savour 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 was 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? 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! I 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 show 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 separates 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 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 blessings 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 (John 1) 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 show 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. 1, 2) 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 around. 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 over 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 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 laced Thee at His own right hand, that our fail 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 sunbeam 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 weakness, 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 4: 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 our 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 dispensation 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 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 show 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 today 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 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 showed 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 it 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 4. "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 over agitated has been, "What is the church?" The answer in scripture is very simple. In chapters 1 and 2 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 (Eph. 1: 4, 5); second, in heaven (ver. 20); and third, down here on earth. (Chap. 2) When were we chosen in Christ? Before the foundation of the world, and chosen to show 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 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 pool, devil-possessed sinner, even to a Saul of Tarsus. The third position views the church down here as the visible thing (Eph. 2: 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 whim 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? All, 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 show 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 1: 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, etc. 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 22 as ministering, 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 A 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 2: 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 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 maybe 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 shows 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 show 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 tomorrow, 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 tomorrow 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.

Revelation 2: 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 showed 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 blessings? 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,*" etc. 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.