

Life In Christ And For Christ.

By Handley C. G. Moule
A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1890.

[Spelling and punctuation selectively modernized. Bible citations converted to all Arabic numerals. Footnotes moved into or near their places of citation.]

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Prefatory Note.

The following Chapters are so far all connected that the vital relations between our Lord Jesus Christ and His believing people are the theme of all. But while the first four form a consecutive series, written as such, the remaining two were not originally designed for any collocation. The fifth is, in fact, a Sermon preached before the University of Cambridge at the opening of the academic year. The sixth was written for a Church periodical, as a meditation at Easter-tide.

To our Lord and Head the writer humbly rededicates these few pages, asking His merciful use of them, if it be His will.

North Malvern, June 28th, 1890.

LORD JESUS CHRIST, grow Thou in me,
And all things else recede!
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
From sin be daily freed.

Each day let Thy supporting might
My weakness still embrace,
My darkness vanish in Thy light,
Thy life my death efface.

In Thy bright beams which on me fall

Fade every evil thought;
That I am nothing, Thou art all,
I would be daily taught.

Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be Thou my life and aim;
Oh make me daily through Thy grace
More meet to bear Thy name!

H. B. Smith.

From the German of Lavater.

1. Life in Christ; Christ in Life. (i)

JESUS, Thy life is mine!
Dwell evermore in me,
And let me see
That nothing can untwine
Thy life from mine.

F. R. Havergal.

It is a happy feature of our day that, go where we will, we find among Christian men and women a marked and manifest desire for “something more”. The desire takes very different shapes and expressions, and some of them sadden rather than gladden the observer who knows the depth and strength of the old “faith once delivered” (Jude 3). But even these phenomena have a connection with the fact that far and wide there is a longing for “a closer walk with God,” “a yearning for a deeper peace not felt before,” a search after more power and serviceableness in the work of the Lord. Is not this an altogether happy omen in itself?

The desire is no new thing. It is old as the Gospel, and continuous as the Gospel. Young Christians who think it was born with their generation know little of the past, and will gain much by “preparing themselves to the search of their fathers”; such fathers, for example, as Baxter, and Romaine, and Brainerd, and Hervey, and Fletcher, and Martyn, and M’Cheyne. But the extent over which the desire is felt in depth and force is a new and manifestly growing thing. So viewed, the phenomenon calls for glad and thankful welcome, and not least from the students and lovers of the

Christian past. For, in its essence, in its nature, it is just a proof of the immortal vigour of the old Gospel. It forebodes no change in one iota of that Gospel. It is a cry for new realization of old truth. It has no necessary tendency towards novel theories of acceptance, or of life, or of power. No, but towards a firmer grasp, a deeper sighted and more restful appropriation, a more buoyant and expectant use, of what in itself, and in “the faith of God’s elect,” (Titus. 1:1) is the same yesterday and forever. Thanks be to God for this stronger and fuller pulse of life in an immortal frame. Happy the Christian man who feels its holy warmth and health at work in his own soul. Happy the Christian teacher who, in face of it, knows how to guide without discouraging, to warn without repelling, to welcome the heavenly upspringing gale, and give thanks for it, without forgetting chart, compass, helm, and anchor.

The double heading of these chapters is suggested by two directions of this blessed spread of the “desire for more”. On the one hand there is a large and growing sense that the New Testament doctrine of our Union with the Son of God as our Life spiritual and eternal is a truth pregnant with “boundless stores of grace”. *Life in Christ* may be a phrase sometimes appropriated by error, but it is felt by more believing souls, and by yet more, to be a primary treasure of the truth itself. And on the other side, as to exercise and outcome, there is a growing sense all over our living Christendom that the holy life-power is meant for a holy life-practice and life-service. *Christ in Life* is for many among us a motto charged with the force of a new realization. In the rising warmth and light of the spiritual life, certain imaginary partitions between supposed secular and consecrated parts of a Christian’s walk and work melt away into air. He discovers himself, in many a case where once it was quite undiscovered, to be always and everywhere the bondservant of Jesus Christ, and the living limb of the blessed Head, and the vital branch of the blessed Root. He not only accepts as theory but assimilates as living truth the certainty that he is everywhere and always not his own; that he exists morning, noon, and night, and then tomorrow again, as one who has nothing and is nothing irrespective of Him in whom and by whom he lives.

Is it not so? And is it not a developing aspect in Christian life, service, and witness? Nothing can be older fashioned in principle and in individual instances. It is as old as Bishop Ken’s “*Direct, control, suggest,*” and as Charles Wesley’s “*Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go,*” and very much older.

But in the sense of an ever-widening consciousness in the community, and of a greater and often sudden depth of recognition, and embrace, and expectation, and restful strength, in the individual, there is newness, there is growth.

In the three later chapters of this little Series I propose to take up the motto *Christ in Life*, and follow it into some details. In this chapter let us think a little of the antecedent and underlying truth, *Life in Christ*.

“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (John 5:11); “Christ, who is our life” (Col. 3:4); “Because I live, ye shall live also”; “He that eateth Me, even he shall live because of Me” (John 14:19, 6:57); “Not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2:20) Such are a few links of this bright chain of truth. I have nothing at all new to say about them. But let us recollect a little of what we know.

(1) We know that the Scripture *means all that it says* about Life in Christ. Its infallible language – in other words, its divinely accurate language – certainly does not call for explaining away when it speaks of the believer’s life in the Son of God. True, it does not therefore demand any theory of local and quasi-material connection and infusion. But this it does demand, that by our life in Him is meant more, far more, than emotions towards Him on our part, or even than His own most sacred and infinitely needed action of love and mercy towards us in substitution, rescue, protection, and our covenant acceptance under His mediation. Not one of those truths can we really dispense with, if we would at once be awake and at peace. Let no fashions of opinion discredit for us the mighty legality (in the noblest sense) of the apostolic presentation of salvation; nor let the inestimable preciousness of redeeming mercy, the divine warmth and depth of saving and pleading love, be thrown into the shadow for us by – anything. Nevertheless, Life in Christ is a truth not identical with these holy things, though eternally connected with them. It means, it implies, such a nexus of the regenerate man with the blessed Lord – incarnate, sacrificed, glorified – such a nexus with Him by the power of the Holy Comforter, “the Giver of Life,” as that a new and quite supernatural continuity and oneness is set up between the man and the Lord. Through that nexus the “fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19) has flow and passage into the will, understanding, and affections of the regenerate in a sense infinitely deeper than that of moral suasion, or great example, or emotional attraction. The man and the Lord

are “one spirit”. (1 Cor. 6:17) The Head has indeed a new limb; the limb a living and empowering Head. There is not only new action (as in one degree or another there will certainly be) but new basis for action, a new fulcrum for the lever of love. The bond is spiritual, wholly. It is the Holy Comforter. But it is therefore infinitely more than a vivid figure. It is life, it is power, in their inmost and ultimate essence. Such is the vital union of every regenerate man with Christ.

(2) We know, again, that this union is revealed in order to be used, and is revealed as a thing to be developed in the using. And one all-momentous method of at once inwardly using it and going forth with it to use it in outward service is the active exercise of meditation upon it, or rather upon Him who is our Life. For the life is life not in an Abstraction but in CHRIST. And what a difference is made in the experience and employment of it, therefore, by the deepening acquaintance of its happy possessor with Him! Do you indeed, by the Holy Spirit, possess Him? Then set yourself anew, as if for the first time, to acquaint yourself with Him. “Consider Him.” (Heb. 3:1, 12:3) More difference than many a Christian man thinks is made by neglect of that “consideration”. And there is only one certain path and school for it; the search and study, before the Lord, and in faith and prayer, of the Holy Scriptures.

It was but just now that I read words, written by a young Christian man not long ago awakened to Jesus Christ, which I hope to remember for myself: “We may know Him, and yet know very little about Him.” It is so. Our very assurance of life in the Lord may be misused to slacken our study of the Lord; and then, soon or late, our use and growth of life in Him will suffer. The Christ of Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles must be our study; not “the Christ that is to be,” but the Christ Jesus who is the same forever. (Heb. 13:8) His Person, His Work, His Glory – we must bend over the revelation, the one revelation, of this, and (with reverence be it said) assimilate it into thought, and tone, and spirit, into the cast and character of our love, and joy, and peace, and adoration.

And all this, meanwhile, as “having life”; as being united, in a depth we believe but can never fully know, with Him we look upon and worship. So be it.

2. Life in Christ; Christ in Life. (ii)

From God's glances shrink thou never,
Meet them ever;
Who submits him to His grace
Finds that earth no sunshine knoweth
Such as gloweth
O'er his pathway all his days.
C. Winkworth.
From the German of Von Canitz.

We have briefly reviewed something of the spiritual mystery and fact of Life in Christ, taking the phrase as expressive of our Vital Union with the Lord, which is its special and leading though not exclusive reference. Enough, I trust, has been said to guard our meditation from the risks inseparable from a real oblivion of other sides of truth while we are treating of one side, even of a preeminent side. Union in covenant interest, union in the merits and righteousness of our Head, must never really be forgotten, never dropped out of thankful appropriation, while we dwell upon this other side, the true vital union between the member and the Head. The Lord grant us so to hold fast both aspects of revealed truth as that each shall not only safeguard for us but vivify and glorify the other. But we are confessedly here dwelling for the time emphatically upon this one aspect.

And now for a few short studies on the application of this divine mystery and fact. *Christ in Life* is the sequel in thought, and concomitant in experience, to *Life in Christ*.

A beautiful suggestion of the deep connection of these two holy things is conveyed by what is, in fact, a mistranslation in Luther's Bible. Luther renders Philippians 1:21, *Christus ist mein Leben, und Sterben ist mein Gewinn*; "Christ is my life, and death is my gain." The words are familiar in German religious poetry; and they may have been seen by some of my readers as a pious motto on ancient chalets in German Switzerland; one such I remember, bearing the date 1624, not far from Thun. Now this rendering of the first clause of the verse cannot be sustained, it is true, from the scholar's point of view; we must translate, "To me to live is Christ." But when we weigh that wonderful little sentence, and read it over in the light of Scripture, seeking to enter somewhat into its depth and height, does not *Christus ist mein Leben* shine through it from beneath? A life, a life-course and life-work, which may be summed up and described as "Christ," can it

be anything else and less than the stream of a Spring which is the living Lord Himself?

“To me to live is Christ.” The words elude alike a superficial explanation and an elaborate analysis. Their best exegesis lies in the study, and in the practice, of what it is to go out into the realities of day by day as one who lives, in the secret of the soul, in and by the Son of God.

“To go out,” I have just said, “into the realities of day by day.” But the words “go out” must not be taken as relating only to the activities of human intercourse. *Christ in Life* is a principle whose first outcome is in secret, in the chamber where the doors are shut. And it is of this outgoing and exercise of life in Christ that I write a little in this chapter, reserving for after treatment some points of our walk and intercourse with men. Such is the true spiritual order. What the Christian man really is in the home circle, in the street and market, in society, in public, depends, in the order of grace, with an intense sequence and connection, upon what he is, upon what the Lord is to him, when he is quite alone.

This most certain fact has a special light cast upon it by the truth of *Life in Christ*. That truth, as we ponder it and embrace it with growing realization, sheds a joyful while solemn vividness upon all thoughts of the Lord’s presence, and of our intercourse with Him. It throws its cords of life and love around all other truths of that presence and that intercourse, and draws them home. All that we know of the Lord’s friendship, companionship, masterhood, and all we know again of His mediation, intercession, and high priesthood, comes home with ever renewed preciousness and power when we see it in the light of His Life-Union with us, with me. Seen in that light, how instantaneous is the touch upon Him of the prayer of the regenerate believer! How tender and powerful the touch upon the believer of His messages by the Spirit through the Word! How deep meanwhile the repose, how intense the interest, of the facts of His work for us, for me, in the Holy Place, when I recollect and realize the truth that while He is indeed there *for* me, a Person not myself, pleading the causes of my soul, and dealing most objectively with both its guilt and its weakness, still He is all the time in me, and I in Him – my Prince, my Priest, but also and inseparably my Head, my Life!

Let me lay it down, then, in humble earnestness, that the stream of *Christ in Life* must flow out from the well of *Life in Christ* first and most in secret. Let no inference from the blessed truth of Jesus Christ’s “ability to

keep” (Jude 24) beguile us into slackness in watching, praying, adoring, reading, thinking, believing, in secret. Rather, let us all the more practice diligence over the secret means of grace, because of a joyful recognition of the mighty present reality of grace, that is to say, of “God working in us.” (Phil. 2:13) Are we indeed united to Jesus Christ who is our life? Then we are united to Him who, possessing the immeasurable Spirit, yet “continued in prayer,” (Col. 4:2, Luke 6:12) yes, continued sometimes all night in it, and who so read the Scriptures that He knew how (Matt. 4:1–10, etc.) to draw from their very nooks and corners the sword with which to lay low the Tempter. Are we united to Him? Then we are united to One who loved not only to request, but to adore; whose blessed prayer, (John 17) uttered indeed in His disciples’ hearing, but yet in the Secret of the Presence, is steeped throughout in an indescribable reverence; “Holy Father,” “Righteous Father.”

Here then is a manifestation of *Life in Christ*, underlying every other, antecedent .in a sense to every other – *Christ in the Life of the secret place and hour*. Christ in that life – what will it mean? It will mean for one thing a patient and exploring study of the Scripture, even as He studied it. It will mean prayer and adoration instinct with His presence and life. [I may be permitted to refer to my little book *Secret Prayer* for further suggestions.] The believer will take his Lord, as the Gospels present Him, for his pattern in this secret walk with the Father; while he will add always to the thought of the pattern the truth of the Mystical Union. He approaches Him that is invisible as one who indeed “has access, introduction” (Eph. 1:6, 2:18) “*in the Beloved.*” To speak in terms of the simplest practicality, the living Christian will do anything rather than make his “life” an excuse for indolence, and for want of method and self-discipline, in secret devotion; or for a want of adoring reverence in the manner of it; or for neglect of the Written Word as a vital element in it, and as the one sure guide and guard of it all along. He will most specially take care that “Christ” is thus “in his life” in respect of *morning* intercourse with Him. His “morning watch” will be a time of sacred necessity and blessed benefit. He will not merely confess the duty of “meeting God before he meets man”. He will understand that he cannot do without it, if indeed he would deal with the unfolding day as it should be dealt with by one whose “life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3); one who possesses the priceless treasure of the blessed Union, “joined to the Lord, one spirit,” and who has his treasure at hand, in hand, for use. And he will

be not less watchful over his *evening* interview with Him who is at once his Master and his Life; coming with punctual reverence *to* Him who meanwhile “liveth *in* him,” (Gal. 2:20) to report the day’s bond service, to confess the day’s sins in contrite simplicity, to look again deliberately upon the Master’s face mirrored in His Word, to feel again the bond of the Union, tested and handled through the promises; and then to lie down in the peace of God. And will he not see whether some midday interval, if but for a few brief minutes, cannot be found and kept sacred, for a special prayer and watch halfway? Such stated times are no substitutes for the spiritual attitude in which the “eyes are *ever* towards the Lord” (Psa. 25:15); but they are, I believe, quite necessary in order to the proper preparedness of the soul for that attitude, and for the right use, too, of all social and public ordinances. Nothing can annul the vital need of secret and deliberate communion with Him in whom we live, by whom we move.

As I close, let me remember that *Christ in secret Life* does not mean only Christ in secret devotion. Most men have some work to do, some leisure to dispose of, in secret; some men have much. Let the man who indeed has *Life in Christ* remember that in secret work and secret leisure *Christ* must be in *Life*. Toiling in his study, resting at his fireside, walking in the quiet field, threading the solitude of the crowded street, he is still “joined unto the Lord, one spirit”. In that fact lie secrets of the noblest freedom. It is a fact able to fit into the widest range of interests, and into greatly varying moods of natural emotion. It has nothing to do with a Stoic “*apathy*”. Rather, it is able to quicken and refine every pure *sympathy* as nothing else can do. But meanwhile it has its restraint as well as its animation; it has its *noblesse oblige*, for the Christian who recollects, alone as well as in company, that the Spirit is in him, and Christ by the Spirit.

JESUS, I live to Thee,
Thou loveliest and best;
My life in Thee. Thy life in me –
In Thy blest love I rest.

Living or dying, Lord,
I ask but to be Thine;
My life in Thee, Thy life in me,
Make heaven forever mine.

H. Harbaugh

3. Life in Christ; Christ in Life. (iii)

We are the Lord's! – in life, in death remaining,
 We are the Lord's, the Crucified, the Son;
We are the Lord's, the mighty King now reigning;
 We are the Lord's, who fought for us and won.

We are the Lord's! – His holy name thus naming
 Ours be the life with which His name accords;
By thought, by speech, by deed each day proclaiming,
 Louder than words can speak, "We are the Lord's."
 "H. L. L."

From the German of Spitta.

Our thoughts in the previous chapter took the line of the secret and solitary parts of life. We go out from this privacy today into the broad open field, into the days and hours which we spend in active intercourse. The vastness of the subject would be not only discouraging but prohibitive if I had the dream of treating it, or even a part of it, in detail. What thoughtful man is not growingly aware of the infinity of duty, of the variety of circumstances in their incidence on character, of the impossibility of constructing *a priori* solutions in detail for all possible cases of conscience? Who does not feel, as life goes on, and wears into our beings the "line on line" of its lessons, or rather of the Lord's lessons through it, that it is the most impossible of things to be the conscience of another man; that, for example, the experiences of different lines of life and work vary so much and in such subtle ways that the traveler in one line only cannot possibly divine by instinct many of the special temptations of another? Nay, in the subdivision of labour, different tracks worn on the same high road have characteristics all their own. A clergyman whose life work is academic teaching cannot enter *a priori* into many special problems constantly presented to his pastor brother; nor can the pastor in the town tell by "inner consciousness" what are the tests and burthens of his brother in the country.

A sense of the importance and reality of such details of life is just what warns me not to try to meddle with them directly. In these two remaining chapters of the series I would rather seek, by the heavenly Master's grace, to get in some sense behind or within the vast world of details to an interior so central that its power may radiate into them all, and that the Christian of whatever character or calling may recognize a something which comes home to his need.

In this view I will say a little here of *Life in Christ* and *Christ in Life* in the direction of the *detaching* and *separating* power of those truths. Later, with God's merciful help, we will consider their power to give us true *contact and sympathy* with circumstances.

"Their detaching and separating power." It is one of the paradoxes of the Gospel that it separates in order to unite. It demands of its disciples, who are to be "the salt of the earth," (Matt. 5:13, Col. 3:2) that in order to this they shall "not set their affection on things on the earth". In order to the blessing of the world, in order that the world through them may be led to believe that the Father sent the Son, they are to be "not of the world" (John 17:16, Gal. 1:4); "delivered from this present evil world" (1 John 2:15); "loving not the world, nor the things that are in the world." The Lord Jesus Christ endorses the spirit of the Mosaic precept, "He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death" (Exod. 21:17, Matt. 15:4); and the Gospel may be said to be the almost creator of Home, the true secret and life of the sanctities and charities of the Family. Yet the same lips have said, "If any man hate not his father and his mother, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26) Is there a contradiction in these sayings? Indeed there is upon the surface; but in the depth they strike a holy and mighty harmony. In order to the true work and true joy of all human relationships, and intercourse, and help, and influence, there must be an internal separation in the regenerate man; a separation from the creature as rival to the Creator and Redeemer, a separation from self to Jesus Christ. That separation is the truest pathway to the deepest and most fruitful experiences of sympathy and contact.

The whole Gospel is full of the truth of this internal separation. It has much to say indeed about external separations, for which need may often arise. But it has vastly more to say about this detachment inwardly. Every precept bears upon it which speaks of supreme love to God; of "forsaking all that we have" (Luke 14:33, Rom. 14:7, Eph. 1:14) for Christ; of being the Lord's property whether we live or die; of being His "purchased

possession,” His servants in a literal bondage, brought about by redemption, and reverently owned, and in some measure realized, in self-surrendering faith. The great range of truth connected with Atonement and Satisfaction bears upon this, because it bears with such intense directness on the transference of us from the usurping master to the true Master, who died for us that we might go free and yet never go free; “redeemed from the curse,” (Gal. 3:13, Rom. 6:22) “made bond servants to God.” But our present concern is with the way in which the truth of the Vital Union bears on this holy separation; *Life in Christ* coming out into *Christ in Life*, in respect of this inner detachment of the believer.

I scarcely need point out in much detail how it does so. The mere statement of the facts about it carries at once with it this deep, tender, searching inference. I am “joined unto the Lord, one spirit.” (Col. 2:19) I live by “holding the Head,” and deriving life and strength from Him, out of His fullness, in close and growing contact with Him, in “growth into Him”. I am a being so related to Him that a separation from Him destroys altogether my true *raison d’être*. Imagine a branch cut off and thrown upon the garden path, and claiming to be a thing having a purpose and a reason in its being! Imagine a finger amputated from the body, and claiming to be a substantive body! And even so imagine, if it were possible, a believing Christian dislocated from Jesus Christ and claiming to lead for one moment a true life, with a faculty, a reason, and an end! The imagery of the Gospels and Epistles, the language about branch and limb, is directed expressly against such a mistake. Other figures might have given the thought of life, and of life imparted from a divine source; but these give also, and inseparably, the thought of life maintained by contact with that source, and no other, and (especially in the imagery of the Head and Limb) life essentially appropriated, devoted, separated, to the purposes, not of the limb, but of the Head. Truly to recollect this relation of ours to Jesus Christ, and truly to accept it and put it into conscious life and work, is a deep secret of that internal separation of which we are thinking. And, like so much else in the Scripture doctrine of the sanctification of the saints, it is a positive, not a negative, secret. The separation is not wrought in vacuum, but into Jesus Christ. It is not merely “touch not, taste not, handle not,” (Col. 2:21, 27; 3:2–3) but “you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God”; “set your affection on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God,” whilst also He is “in you, the hope of glory”.

We observed in the preceding chapter how every sacred truth of our interest in Christ for acceptance, our peace before God's infinitely holy Law, and so forth, is (not confused, or replaced, but) brought home by the truth of the holy Vital Union. We may say the same here, with respect to its power over all the large range of Scripture precepts of holiness; all that bids us "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, carrying on the completion of holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1); all that bids us "be separate, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor 6:17, 5:15); "live not unto ourselves, but" altogether and always "unto Him that for us died and rose again." Many a reason, supremely reasonable, does the Scripture give us for so living separate from self and sin; many a motive, profoundly moving, in the sphere of gratitude, and affection, and hope, and right. But underneath them all, connecting itself as a chain of life with them all, is this truth of *Life in Christ*. Believing Christian, the free grace of God has brought you into a personal and vital contact, divinely real, with Him whose work for you presents these motives, and whose precepts about your inner as well as outer action are so explicit and so absolutely authoritative.

You, the recipient of motive and precept, are spiritually one with Him, "joined unto Him, one spirit"; possessed, because of Him, of the resources of that regenerate nature which is no abstraction but the life and strength of the glorified Head conveyed daily and hourly to you by the Holy Spirit. Your reception of that life and strength is, indeed, always imperfect here, in the mystery of the results of the Fall. But your contact none the less is real, and your reception may be made indefinitely larger, freer, and more continuous by the same Spirit who effected the contact, and "by" whom (Gal. 5:25) you are to "walk" as well as "live". He who bids you be separate from the interests, ambitions, and vanities of self is He who by His Spirit dwells in your heart by faith. He who bids you lay down upon His sacred altar your dearest affection, your most delightful pursuit, your most gainful occupation, *in respect of any rivalry of these things with His claims*, any reluctance of yours to be submitted in them entirely to His mind and views, is He who "sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24) in a union with your being which has no parallel save in the heaven of heavens; a union in which eternal life and tenderest personal love run forever into each other and into you. He who calls you to an internal detachment from the imaginations that defile you, from the self-will and the self-full anger or impatience that becloud and embitter you, speaks to you about it all not

only from the throne (as He does), but also from the depth of that “inner man” (Eph. 3:16) which His Spirit has “strengthened,” that He may dwell there; speaks from “the midst of His enemies” (Psa. 110:2) and yours. He does not, as from a distant height, bid you attack them, encouraged only by His notice and approval. He is present to be your separating power, because of His union with your inmost self.

In the light and strength of this great Scripture truth, then, let us “come out and be separate,” (2 Cor. 6:17) in no cold solitude, but in Jesus Christ, in whom we live, who lives in us. He is nearer than all circumstances. He is more internal than even all temptations. He is able to be in fact, as well as of course in right, the central point of every believing life, and to detach it, in a true and blessed sense – never interfering with humiliation and confession – from the life of self and sin. As sure as His word is truth, He is able to be thus “in life,” day by day, for all His true people. Be their callings in His providence what they may be, He can place Himself at the middle point of thought, purpose, and plan. He can so occupy that point, for the Christian merchant, or lawyer, or doctor, as that the love of gain and of fame, for its own sake, shall be “mortified,” every day and hour, by His Presence; by that peaceful, powerful, living *positive*. And who can estimate the new facility and decision which would come into the interior of many an estimable life, and so into its outward work and witness for Christ, if but that one work were truly done within, the “mortification” of those two loves? And Christ can so occupy the central point for the Christian minister of Word and Sacraments as that the cancers of jealousy and vanity (twin evils, opposite sides of one evil) shall be effectually healed; and so, too, the secret sloth, so apt to seize upon the spirit in a life and calling whose very sacredness brings with it some special possibilities of minimizing exertion. He can so occupy the center as that the man, be he what he may be in himself and his surroundings of duty, shall in a large and blessed sense, in the full daylight of real life in modern times, “see all in God, and God in all,” and that in the Christian sense of “seeing” and of “GOD”. And this is the inmost element of separation.

“Let us give ourselves up to God,” says holy Fenelon, in one of his *Meditations for a Month (Day 22)*, “without reserve or apprehension of danger. He alone will fill our heart, which the world has agitated and intoxicated, but could never fill. He will take nothing from us but what makes us unhappy. He will alter little (very possibly) in our actions, and

only correct the motive of them, by making them all to be referred to Himself. Then the most ordinary and seemingly indifferent actions shall become exercises of virtue. Then we shall cheerfully behold death approach as the beginning of life immortal; and, as St Paul speaks, ‘we shall not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.’”

I was permitted not long ago to see a letter written by an eminent and beloved Christian, recently laid on what seemed to be the bed of death, now in some degree restored. “He made,” so ran one sentence, “the valley of the shadow of death a lighted place for me, by letting me find Him, the Lord of Life, to be infinitely nearer than death, when death was so near.” Such be our experience too in due time; a separation in death to Jesus Christ. And let it be approached through a holy intimacy with Him in a separation to Him in life. Amen.

4. Life in Christ, Christ in Life. (iv)

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

A. L. Waring.

From the separating power of the realized truth of *Life in Christ* we pass to the thought of its power to unite the Christian to things around him, to give him contact and sympathy with circumstances.

Once more, however, let me emphasize the previous considerations. The internal detachment we have spoken of is a thing so wholly

supernatural in its reason and its process that we may well be allowed to assert to ourselves its sacred necessity again and again. It is a necessity indeed. Whatever else is *important* to a true life lived according to the will of God, this is *necessary*; a separation of soul and will to Jesus Christ, in the power of our redemption by His blood to be His property, and of our union with Him by His Spirit to be His living limbs. As this separation is realized in our consciousness, and carried into our spiritual practice, so shall we grow in the exercise of that influence which resides in freedom, in “not being brought under the power” (1 Cor. 6:12) of circumstances, in acting upon them from a position which is in fact above them.

Of such detachment, in and to Jesus Christ, we see a noble illustration in the closing words of the Epistle to the Galatians (6:17): “Let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks (the brand, the *stigmata*) of the Lord Jesus.” St. Paul is separated to the heavenly Master as his purchased and branded property; therefore he calmly warns off the intrusion of men from his region of witness and of work. The realization of his indissoluble connection with Christ, and it alone, gives him the instinct and tone – not of petulant displeasure but of immovable decision, of quiet authority, amidst the conflicting voices of dispute and opposition. And the same secret and the same power, appear later in the same man’s experience. (Phil. 1:15–24) It is where he has to encounter a double strain of circumstances; conduct to the last degree trying on the part of certain professing Christians, and the suspense of his own life or death upon the caprice or delays of a pagan judge. He rises, or rather he already stands, superior to both temptations; he is not exasperated, nor is he anxious. And the secret is that he is united to Jesus Christ in a way which makes Jesus Christ all in all to him. “Christ is preached”; “To me to live is. Christ”; “To depart is to be with Christ”; “My earnest expectation and my hope is, that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.”

St. Paul understood indeed the great secret of internal detachment. And the secret is an open secret. It is not locked up within the privileges of apostleship and inspiration, nor again within the prerogatives of genius. It is hidden in Jesus Christ, and to be discovered by entering upon union with Him, and then examining the treasures laid up in Him for the man united to Him, and separated by that uniting from the bondage of all else.

The name and example of the Apostle leads us by a just and beautiful transition to that other side of truth which we are considering today. If St.

Paul was in one respect as truly detached from circumstances as perhaps any redeemed man ever was, in another respect he threw himself into circumstances, and felt and handled them, and acted upon them, to an extraordinary degree. One brief period of seclusion, if it was seclusion, he spent in "Arabia". (Gal. 1:17) Then, till the end of his days, he was never alone; immersed in the most miscellaneous intercourse; in communication, ay, and in living touch, with endless differences of character; applying a heart of fraternal and paternal sympathy to the effort to "save some," and to "the care of all the Churches". (1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 11:28)

In this, too, the great Saint is an example for all saints. His detachment was of the essence of the Gospel; and equally his attachment; his sympathy, and insight, and interest; his response to everything that came really in his path of service.

Christian, recognize and realize this fact of *Life in Christ*, of *Christ in Life*. You are not a St. Paul in range of natural capacity, in vastness of influence, in height of spiritual authority. But quite as truly as St. Paul you are in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Life. And for you quite as truly as for him it is the will of God that you should expose yourself to the circumstances of His choice, not seclude yourself from them. The New Testament does not recognize the hermitage. It nowhere contemplates with approval, or rather, it nowhere considers the existence of a life spent in educating itself in a solitary and abstract sanctity. It calls the disciple out into the life of home, the life of the Church, the life so far lived in the world that the world at least can see it, touch it, apply its microscope to it, and try to understand it. It reminds the man whose "affection is set on things above," (Col. 3:2-3) whose "life is hid with Christ in God," (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2) that he owes loyalty and tribute to the State, that he is bound to think about and pray for the powers that be; in short, that he is called to attend willingly and earnestly to every form of relative duty; to be the model married partner, and parent, and child, and master, and servant, and subject. (Eph. 5, 6, etc.) I need not, however, dilate upon this; it is so conspicuous, so prominent in the New Testament foreground. Only let the fact be pressed home on conscience as well as on memory. The follower of Christ who spends his hours in "self-culture" of any sort *for its own sake* is just so far not a Christian. Be it mental information and elaboration, be it spiritual self-protection and seclusion, if it terminates in itself it is for him unlawful. He is detached from the separate interests of self decisively and

impartially, in His attachment to Jesus Christ; and to Jesus Christ accordingly must all the possessions and all the training of his personality be always referred. And most certainly, if he listens to Him to whom he belongs, he will be always hearing “a voice behind him” saying, “Live for others because for Me; spend for others what you have in trust from Me: your means, your knowledge, your strength, your heart.” The Christian as such cannot for one day shut out that claim. Whether he works at the moment or rests, it is to others, because it is “unto the Lord”.

It is indeed most true that this great conspicuous principle of the Gospel has its limitations in exercise. Beyond question the Christian is not meant to be always thinking articulate thoughts of “others”. From time to time his duty as well as joy and rest will be to contemplate and adore his God and Redeemer with a directness and isolation of worship such as might be paid if he were the only created personality in existence. And when he does go out to others and their interests in definite thought and purpose, it will be (in almost all conceivable cases) under some inevitable limits drawn by his own time, and capacities, and knowledge. He will lose rather than gain by straining after a display of “interest in everything”; leaving, perhaps, manifest “duties that lie near” in order to exhibit the width of his sympathies in some field of inquiry or activity which his path (I mean God’s path chosen for him) does not really cross. Many an earnest and devoted life dissipates not a little of its proper strength and solid usefulness in such an effort. Many a disciple, for instance, forgets that few things so powerfully attract the attention and respect of “the world” as an unaffected but unmistakable unworldliness; and so he wastes time and power in misdirected efforts to be “all things unto all men,” where it would have been better for the very purpose in view to watch over and develop his own intimacy with Jesus Christ. But all this leaves untouched the great principle now before us. Notwithstanding all these reserves, the Christian is designed, and constructed, and sent, to be a light in the world, to be salt in the earth. He is to welcome, not to shun, human intercourse and interests, as his field of life and work for God. Detached from worldly “love of the world, and of the things in the world,” (1 John 2:15) he is meant all the while divinely to “love the world” as his heavenly Father loved it. (John 3:16)

He is to watch over his inner separation, above all things that he may be the stronger for a true participation with his fellows. As regards outward separation, he may have occasion – I think he often *will* have occasion – to

incur the charge of “antiquated *Puritanism*” – a word of no ignoble history. But he will seek never to expose himself to the just charge of *Pharisaism*; “I am holier than thou; God, I thank Thee I am not as other men are.” It is one thing to be decided; it is an altogether different thing to be unsympathetic, to be separated in an isolation self-righteous and censorious. [I venture to refer to a little tract of my own, *The Christian and the World*.]

As we close, let us recur to the double motto of these chapters, *Life in Christ; Christ in Life*. We set out with that deep, radiant truth of revelation – and of revelation alone – the believer’s Vital Union with Jesus Christ; his position and possessions as he is, by grace, “in the Lord”. With it let us end. It is the root and secret equally of a true separation and a true sympathy. Are we indeed “members of His body”? (Eph. 5:30) Are we indeed related to Him as our fingers, as our lips, are to the centers of physical and of mental action? Our fingers, our lips, are appropriated to us by that relation as they are to nothing else; they are separated. But they are also, by that relation, *connected* with all the purposes and interests of heart and head. They have to be, and are, busy day by day with a thousand contacts and conversations, very probably most miscellaneous, certainly not always physically pleasant, and certainly very often fatiguing. But they, fingers and lips, exist for the use of the ruling powers of the being; they thus fulfill the law and function of their existence; and it is for their own health and good to do so; to spend and to be spent in proportion to the energy, and activity, and largeness of intercourse, of the central power. Now we, who belong to Jesus Christ, and are “joined to Him, one spirit,” stand thus vitally related to a Head whose interests and whose energies are indeed wide, deep, and various; whose “tender mercies are over all His works.” (Psa. 145:9) When He walked on earth He scattered round Him daily proofs of His sacred sympathy with not only the eternal but the temporal needs of man; with the sorrows of not the many only but the few; with the needs of the weakest, and of the lowest of the fallen. He was loyal to the home of Nazareth; happy in the home of Bethany, and weeping beside its grave; divinely kind at the marriage of Cana; attentive in His deep weariness to the hunger of the multitude in the desert; watchful over His mother amidst the agonies of the Atonement; always and everywhere “having compassion of the ignorant, and them that were out of the way”; detached in an absolute sense from the bondage alike of man’s plaudits and of his revilings, and yet open to every appeal for love and mercy. Such was, and is, the Head. And we are separated to Him, and

united to Him, as His limbs; to go where He goeth, to do what He pleaseth. Separate from sinners, He yet was no recluse. In our union with Him lies at once the law of our life as a life of love and duty in the world of concrete circumstances, and the hidden power to carry out that duty, and to feed, so that it shall be ever burning on the altar, that fire of love.

5. The Bright and Morning Star

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 “I am this dark world’s light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
 And all thy day be bright.”
I looked to Jesus, and I found
 In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I’ll walk
 Till travelling days are done.
 Bonar.

“I am the bright and morning star.” – Rev. 22:16.

This is the last place in Scripture where the glorious Saviour bears witness to Himself. A few lines below He once more promises to return; “Behold, I come quickly.” But of His own words regarding His own excellence and majesty this is the last: “I am the bright and morning Star.”

The hours of the great Vision were almost over. The Apostle who had walked with Jesus long ago as His daily friend had been entranced for a while into an experience of His presence as He now reigned in “the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7:16); and at length the trance was closing. An influence altogether from God had been imprinting on John’s soul the messages to the Churches, and the future of the Church; and now at the end the spiritual Voice has still this word to say; the Lord speaks of Himself once more. Perhaps the shadows of literal night were rolling from the rock of Patmos, and the literal daystar shone out in the region of the dawn. But however, the spiritual view and the inner word were all of the light and of the day; “I am the bright and morning Star.”

Our blessed Lord speaks here in a manner which is indeed all His own. Nothing is more deeply characteristic of His utterances, from first to last, than His witness to Himself. It is one of the main phenomena of the

Gospel, most perplexing on the theory of unbelief, most truth-like on the theory of belief – this *self-witness* of the Man of humility and sorrows. Sacred exemplar of all that we commonly call self-denial, Jesus yet presents Himself always and unalterably in terms of self-assertion, and such self-assertion as must mean either Deity, however in disguise, or a delusion (may He forgive the word if its mere mention is irreverent), moral as well as mental, of infinite depth. “I am the Truth; I am the Life; I am the Bread of Life; I AM”; such is His tone. (John 6:35, 8:58, 14:6)

And here we have the same tone, perfectly maintained, as the same voice speaks again from amidst the realities of the Unseen. The imagery indeed is lifted from earth to heaven. He who is the genial Vine and the laborious Shepherd (John 10:11, 15:1) now also reveals Himself as the Star of stars in a spiritual sky. But the novelty of the glorious term only conveys the truth which had always stood in the very front of the testimony of Jesus; the truth of His own sacredness and glory; the doctrine that He, the Son of the Father, is the ultimate peace, and hope, and joy, of the soul of man.

Let us enquire a little into this divine utterance. Many treasures must lie hid in such a testimony so spoken. Some of them, however few, we may hope to make sure of as we go.

“I am the STAR.” For the moment we take the sentence in this abbreviated form, for it will suggest to us something of the reason for the use of the starry metaphor at all. “I am the Star”; why the Star? Most certainly the word, with all its radiant beauty, is no mere flight of fancy. Prophecy, not poetry, gives us these last oracles of the Bible. If we need a ready proof, we have only to recall the clause just preceding; “I am the root and offspring of David”; words which are heavy with the golden weight of prophecy and prophetic history; part of the long testimony borne by Messiah Himself to the divine nature and structure of those Scriptures which had, as a matter of recorded and verifiable fact, begotten the astonishing phenomenon of the definite expectation of His first Advent. In close contact with that sentence occur the words before us; “I am the Star.” Here then also is an appeal to the prophets. And among the prophecies in which stars form the symbol there is but one which can be thought to point to Messiah – the prophecy of Balaam. Balaam, as he heard “the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty,” (Num. 24:4, 17) had heard of a mysterious Person, or at least a mysterious Power, strong to conquer and to save, and had seen the prospect figured to his soul as a Star, destined in

other days to rise from the horizon of Israel. And the belief of the Jewish Church, before and in the lifetime of Jesus, was that the Star of this old prediction was the King Messiah.

No doubt the import of Balaam's words has been variously explained. No doubt the whole doctrine of definitely predictive inspiration has been, and is, most laboriously denied. But do we believe that these words of the Apocalypse are themselves a divine reality? Do we believe that both in, and thus after, "the days of His flesh" Jesus undertook not only to teach but to foretell? And do we believe that He was and is all that He claimed to be? Then we have passed the point at which for any *a priori* reasons we can think it seriously difficult to believe that He had been already foretold, however long before, as the Star of Jacob.

"I am the Star." Prophecy then spoke of Messiah thus. The word indicated His kingly dignity, touched and glorified with the light of Deity, or of Divinity at least. So the Lord takes it up here. He claims here to be the mystic *King*, immortal, spiritual, divine; the regal Conqueror, quelling His enemies and possessing His redeemed. This is what appears under other forms in other and earlier passages of the Apocalypse: "He had a name written, King of Kings"; the Lamb is "in the midst of the throne," which is "the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:17, 19:16, 22:3)

But now we look further into the text. It not only claims the ancient prophecy for Jesus as the King of the new Israel. It expands that prophecy, and brings truth out of truth from within it. For the Saviour does not only assert Himself to be the Star, the bright Star. His presentation of the glorious metaphor has in it something new and special; "I am the MORNING STAR."

Why was not the word Star left alone in the utterance? In pointing to Messiah as the star were not the ideas of brilliancy, and elevation, and all that is ethereal, sufficient? No; not sufficient. Messiah Himself so qualifies the word by this one wonderful epithet as to show Himself as not the King simply, but the King of Morning, around whom gather, and shall gather for ever, all things that belong to tenderest hope, and youngest vigour, and most cheerful aspiration; such beginnings as shall eternally develop, and never contract into fixity and decline. He claims, where He indeed is King, to be the secret of such *juvenescence* as nothing else can ever give to the finite spirit. For His Israel, He claims to be the ever-blessed Antithesis to all that has to do with decay and ruin, to all the woes and weakness of melancholy,

to all “profitless regrets and longings vain”. Not that He bids His follower crush pain, and ignore bereavement, and forget the past. But He asserts Himself the Master, the King, of a future which will far more than make amends for the discipline of the present. And meanwhile, being the Eternal One, He is always so present with His own as to put them already into vital connection with that future, and to pour its strength and joy into their life this hour.

“I am the MORNING STAR.” Such in part is the import of this last testimony of Jesus to Himself. It reminds His happy disciple that the beloved Lord is no mere name of tender recollection, no dear relic of a perished time, to be drawn sometimes in silence from its casket, and clasped with the aching fondness and sprinkled with the hot tears of hopeless memory. He is not Hesperus who sets, but Phosphorus who rises, springing into the sky through the earliest dawn; the pledge of reviving life, and growing light, and all the energies and all the pleasures of the happy day. And the word speaks of a kind of joy for which the open noon would not be so true a simile. It suggests the joys of hope along with those of fruition; a happiness in which one of the deep elements is always the thought of something yet to be revealed; light with more light to follow, joy to develop into further joy, as the dawn passes into the morning and then into the day.

We have matter here then for some thankful thoughts on the blessings of light, and happiness, and vigour, and hope which are bound up with the true idea of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we are reminded how remote from melancholy are its principles and its motives. Here is One able indeed to guide, and enliven, and develop, the whole of existence for His disciple; not only to prop his dying head, but to animate the fullest energies of his strongest prime; and then again able with persistent grace to be His blessing to the last, shedding a morning light over the decline and shadows of advancing years.

Let us take up some of these aspects of the truth of our text, and think a while over their details.

1. First then we are reminded here that as “His commandments are not grievous,” (1 John 5:3) so the motives He gives to animate His loving follower to obedience are not melancholy. I would not be mistaken. The religion of Jesus Christ is very far from teaching that “there is nothing in God to dread.” What language can outdo the terror of the warnings of the

Saviour when He speaks of what is, according to Him, the sequel, the necessary sequel, of that wide road on which, according to Him, so many travel? But this is not to say that His motive principles are things of gloom. It is not melancholy that looks direct at realities, and acts upon the view. It is not melancholy to bid us gaze in earnest on the unfathomable mystery, which is also the iron fact, of sin, and to tell us without reserve what sin must lead to, in the spiritual nature of things. Not to do this would indeed be melancholy; for it would be the reticence of a dreadful irony. But the Lord, who speaks about the abyss, does so that He may speak with infinite earnestness and the smile of His own welcome about the rescue and the remedy. And that remedy is no shadowed secret, no nocturnal initiation; it is the morning light of the knowledge of Himself. The life eternal, the destruction of the second death, is the knowledge of Himself; and to know Him is to live in light indeed. It is to touch a sympathy boundless alike in its tenderness and in its power. It is to deal always and everywhere with One who is not poetic legend but the central Rock of history. He has proved Himself in the fields of fact to be a reality for ever; and He is exercising at this hour in human experience a personal influence too vast, too manifold, too peculiar, to be explained by any mere memory of recorded and departed power.

He being such, and such being the knowledge of Him, what are in brief His sacred principles for the man that seeks, Him? In their essence, simply these; first to trust Him, then to follow Him. The soul is directed, for its repose and its life, far from subjective bewilderments of thought to things objective altogether, because altogether His, not ours; to the blood of His Cross, and to the power of His Resurrection. And for its progress, for its hope, it is directed still outward from itself, because still to Him; into the ethereal open air of His will, His possession, His glory. It is called every day and every hour to a surrender of itself to Him; to the daylight reality of a true self-dedication to One who does indeed reserve to Himself the right to be silent when He pleases, but who has proved Himself worthy of an absolute trust in regard of His perfection of wisdom, and power, and love.

2. Again, this glorious epithet of the Star of Salvation, this morning word, reminds us that not for a part only but for the whole of the earthly course, early as well as late, late as well as early, Jesus Christ is the true light to lighten every man. Not for the sick room only and for the dying bed is His Gospel good. Let us often thank God that it *is* good there. Many of us

have stood and watched in the face of others all that can be seen of death, perhaps while the very “desire of our eyes” (Ezek. 24:16) was being taken from us; and there we have felt a little of the mighty difference between the moment before death and the moment after. Or perhaps our own life, even in its early prime, has hung in balance, and some of “the powers of the world to come” have touched us through the thin curtain of most extreme weakness. One religion only will do at such a time; the religion which has really dealt with sin, and with death; the Gospel of a Redeemer who has willed to die beneath the rod of His own law, and has risen again with the keys of the Unseen forever in His hand.

“Jesus, I cast myself on Thee,
Mighty and merciful to save;
Thou wilt go down to death with me,
And gently lay me in the grave.”

There is but one religion which can make such language as this the natural speech of its followers. Let us be glad that there is one.

But this same religion is not only the last light for dying eyes. It is the star of *the morning* of even this lower life. There is that in it – or rather in HIM who is His own religion – which is of all things fitted to enter with harmonious power into all the confiding joys of childhood, and into all the wide excursions and strong ascents of youthful thought and will. One condition does the Lord propose to the young soul, as to all souls – the condition of submission to Himself. And where through His grace that condition, in its true sense, is accepted, there an element essentially of strength and gladness will be found to develop within the life; a cheerful assurance of a companionship most warm and tender because divine, of a vivid sympathy meeting every true need of grief or happiness, of a wisdom which concerns itself with every detail of every day, of an affection to which the best endearments of earth can but point as to their glorious archetype. And above all this, and with it all, there will be the power of the known presence of an invisible but awful purity, and of the spoken promise – in connection with that presence – of a final life of deathless joy. And without a law of unbending holiness above it, and without an immortal hope before it, the gladness of the most youthful heart carries, lurking beneath it, the sure causes of gloom, and failure, and melancholy decay.

Will my brethren who have just entered on their academic course [See the Prefatory Note to this volume.] suffer me, in the sincerity of respectful earnestness, to point this appeal direct to them? Would you have this new life of yours, rich beyond all reckoning in possible happiness and good, would you have it not merely safe but glad, glad with a pleasure which will bear looking into, and fruitful, as it is meant to be, of results full of pleasure for yourselves and others? The sky for most of you is bright with the morning of this world. Not that many have not already tasted something of the sadness of things; many a man comes up here for his first university term experienced already in loss and sorrow. But these burthens in their fullness cannot yet have come to the most among you, thank God; and the hope and joy of life prevails. Well, do you really care to perpetuate hope, and to make joy immortal? Do you care for that which will be in you a well of youth springing up into the endless youth of the sons of the resurrection? Then assure yourselves of Jesus Christ, who is the Morning Star. Acquaint yourselves with Him, in that special and definite contact of faith which, finding Him to be Saviour, inevitably also apprehends Him as Friend, and as Master. In Him so known you will find that which will lend an immortal brightness to all other things which, being pure, are capable of reflecting immortality. You will find in Him an influence which will intensify all just enjoyment and will glorify all healthful knowledge by connecting it with things to come; an influence *without* which nothing else, no, nothing, can be safe from impurity and decay; no social pleasure, no delights of reason or imagination, no charm of letters or of art. Take up these things and leave your Lord behind, and you will be only carrying your possessions to their burial, with your face to the region of disappointment, weariness, and final loss. You will be on your way to find the hollowness – on these terms – of all delight; to be at length above all things tired of your own principles of life and your own tone of thought. But take up these things, as you can, and make sure of your Lord with them, as you may; receive them, and use them, for Him; and you are bearing your possessions along the path of life, and light, and day, straight towards the rich eternal issues of all the training, whether of affliction or gladness, through which you pass under the leading of Him who is the Morning Star of the Epiphany of glory.

3. In a few short years there may, there must, come over you the sense of an approaching maturity and fixity as to earthly conditions of life and action. You will find, late or soon, that as to this world your rate of

movement in work and in enjoyment is no longer what it was. But if indeed “Christ dwells in your hearts by faith” (Eph. 3:17), there will be a charm there which will not only console you under the change, but will glorify it to you. As eternity approaches, you will more distinctly see the connection between it and time. The appointed task, even under the burthen of the failure of outward power, will be met by you as those only can meet it who know that all things are links in the indissoluble plan of an eternal Friend, and that the veil is already parting which shuts out for a season the open view of the perfection and acceptability of all His will.

Grace can work strange and beautiful contradictions to the natural decay of our sense of enjoyment of external things. I know of one whose life had been spent in a city rich with splendid monuments of the past; and it had been a life of dull indifference to all things noble and fair. But his Redeemer at length became to him a reality; and then he said that never before had he seen the beauty and grandeur of the place where he had lived so long. I know of another, a brother student of our own, who so far differed from the great Poet of Immortality as to declare that the “splendour in the grass and glory in the flower,” and the infinite beauty of the vernal woods, had never truly come to his perception till he discovered the light of “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:39)

So we have traced a little way some of the suggestions of this heavenly utterance. We have remembered the divine, the dear, Redeemer whose Gospel is the very antithesis and antidote to that melancholy which is always akin to perplexity and weakness. We have seen in Him the true Secret for a true security and perpetuity in the days of life’s full vigour, and then as the Revealer of that glorious continuity of time with eternity which keeps the cancer of despondency out of earthly maturity and decline.

May we not, in conclusion, move a step further, and find here a promise which is concerned also immediately with the heavenly world itself? He who here calls Himself the Star is elsewhere called the Sun (Mal. 4:2); and we might think that He speaks here as, in a certain sense, His own Forerunner; the Firstborn from the dead, whose own resurrection is the heralding of His own final triumph. But it seems truer to the analogy of His other metaphoric titles to view this title as belonging properly not to any passing phase of His majesty but to its essence forever.

What elsewhere He claims to be, that in perpetuity He is. On the throne, as truly as on the Cross, He is still the Lamb. (Rev. 7:17) In the

fields of heaven He is still the Shepherd, “leading His flock to the living fountains of water.” And surely in the upper skies He will thus be *forever* the Star of Morning; the eternal pledge of a life which will be forever young, of energies which will accumulate without end, of a service before the throne which will always deepen in its ardour and its triumph, of discoveries in the knowledge of the Eternal and His love which will carry the experience of the blessed from glory to glory in a succession which can never close.

Avidi et semper pleni, quod habent desiderant.

“At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Ever filled and ever seeking, what they have they still desire;
Hunger there shall fret them never, nor satiety shall tire;
Still enjoying whilst aspiring, in their joy they still aspire.

From the Latin of Damiani; translated in “Chronicles of the Schonberg-Cotta Family.”

6. Christ the Lord Both of the Dead and Living. An Easter Study

And fear to sorrow with increase of grief
When they who go before
Go furnished; or because their span was brief.

* * * * *

For doubt not but that in the worlds above
There must be other offices of love,
That other tasks and ministries there are,
Since it is promised that His servants, there,
Shall serve Him still.

Archbishop Trench, *On an Early Death*.

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.” – Rom. 14:8.

Few lines of Scriptural enquiry are more rich in suggestion and blessing than the study of the mentions of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus in the Epistle to the Romans. They form a considerable group of passages, scattered over the Epistle so as to occur in just eight out of the sixteen chapters. They are always incidental, never dealing (as St. Paul addresses himself to do in 1 Cor. 15) with the proof of the Event, but none the less therefore contributing all-important evidence to that proof. For such passing but joyful allusions to this great foundation of the Christian's peace and hope, made at a time when living memories of the date referred to were alike multitudinous and vivid, form by their very manner the most impressive of testimonies, when we study them (so to speak) with our whole nature, and in sympathy with the attitude and circumstances of the writer and the first readers. These allusions, again, are always doctrinal. Each is made for the sake of spiritual and eternal truth. The Apostle brings in the Resurrection always to prove, with its deep and glorious logic, with a dialectic which rises direct from the miracle to its everlasting significance, some inestimable point of truth about the believer, or about the Lord, or about both at once.

Among these passages I take the last in the Epistle.

I do not attempt to examine the verses in detail throughout, (Rom. 14:8–9) or to say many words about their context. It is enough to remember that the great aim of the Apostle is to bring home to the Christian believer, as such, the fact of his belonging to Jesus Christ as personal property; belonging as vassal to Sovereign; and this not only by way of might but by way of right. The Lord has not only seized him as Conqueror. He has done so; but he has also, and antecedently, acquired him as Redeemer. He has died for us, and risen again. In the virtue, in the merits, in the claims, of that finished work of atonement and of victory, He has entered, from the point of view of eternal right and law, upon the absolute possession of His people as His property.

One manifest spiritual lesson of such a passage I point to, but do not enlarge upon. It is a lesson which, God be thanked, is being learned with a special attention, earnestness, and self-application by ever-growing numbers of His people in our day; the lesson that our redemption is not only *from* condemnation and its eternal issues of woe but *into* a relation to the Redeemer which is through and through a relation of property, of blessed servitude by purchase, of our being now and forever, and in all things, in

our whole selves, and in all their circumstances, “not our own”. (1 Cor. 6:19) This is the first and most obvious message of the passage. And its very prominence, both in Scripture, and in the present thought of believers, shall for this once allow us to do no more than refer to it and pass on.

The message of this passage to which I call full attention here is a less obvious one, but one of precious worth, and one which, in the glorious light thrown by Easter upon the world beyond the grave, seems peculiarly appropriate to the hour. The Apostle four times over in this short paragraph makes mention of death, and of the dead. “No man (of us) dieth to himself”; “Whether we die, we die unto the Lord”; “Whether we die, we are the Lord’s”; “That He might be Lord of the dead.” And this last sentence, with its mention not of the dying but of the dead, reminds us that the reference in them all is to the Christian’s relation to his Lord, not only in the hour of death, but in the state after death. It is not only that Jesus Christ, as the Slain One risen, is absolute disposer of the time and manner of our dying. It is not only that when our death comes we are to accept it as an opportunity for the “glorifying of God” (John 21:19, Phil. 1:20) in the sight and in the memory of those who know of it. It is that when we have “passed through death,” and came out upon the other side, – “When we enter yonder regions, When we touch the sacred shore,” – our relation to the Slain One risen, to Him who, as such, “hath the keys of Hades and of death,” (Rev. 1:18) is perfectly continuous and the same. He is our absolute Master, there as well as here. And we, by consequence and correlation, are vassals, servants, bondservants to Him, there as well as here.

I lay this message of the verse before my reader, not as if it were in the least degree new. But it is a truth which, I cannot but think, richly repays the Christian’s repeated remembrance and reflection, and that not only in the way of asserting the eternal rights of our blessed Redeemer over us, but in the way of shedding light, and peace, and the sense of reality and expectation, on both the prospect of our own passage into eternity and the thoughts we entertain of the present life of our holy beloved ones who have entered into eternity before us.

Everything is precious which really assists the soul in such thoughts, and at the same time keeps it fully and practically alive to the realities of faith, patience, and obedience here below, here in the present hour. While the indulgence of unauthorized imagination in that direction is almost always enervating and disturbing to the present action of Scriptural faith,

the least help to a solid realization and anticipation, supplied by the Word that cannot lie, is in its nature both hallowing and strengthening. And such a help we have assuredly here.

He who died and rose again is at this hour, in holy might and right, the Lord of the blessed dead. Then the blessed dead are vassals and servants of Him who died and rose again. And all our thought of them, as they are now, at this hour, “in those heavenly habitations where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity,” [Visitation of the Sick (*Prayer for a Sick Child*).] gains in life, in reality, in strength and glory, as we see them, through this narrow but bright “door in heaven,” (Rev. 5:1) not resting only but serving also before their Lord, who has bought them for His use, and who holds them in His use quite as truly now as when we had the joy of their presence with us, and He was seen by us living and working in them and through them here.

True it is that the leading and essential character of their present state is rest, as that of their resurrection state will be action. But the two states overflow into each other. In one glorious passage the Apostle describes the resurrection bliss as also “rest”. And here we have it indicated that the heavenly intermediate rest is also service. What the precise nature of that service is we cannot tell. “Our knowledge of that life is small.” Most certainly, “in vain our *fancy* strives to paint” its blessedness, both of repose and of occupation. This is part of our normal and God-chosen lot here, which is to “walk by faith, not by sight,” (2 Cor. 5:7) ου δια ειδουζ, not by Object seen, not by objects seen. But blessed is the spiritual assistance in such a walk as we recollect, step by step, as we draw nearer that happy assembly above, that, whatever be the manner and exercise of their holy life, it is life indeed; power, not weakness; service, not inaction. He who died and revived is LORD, not of us only, but of them.