John - Commentaries by Frederick George Patterson

Words of Truth: Volume 5, Eternal Life

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

It is remarkable the way in which the Lord here shows the source and power of eternal life, and how closely they are connected with Himself How entirely He takes us in the power of eternal life out of the place of nature, and brings us into fellowship with the Father and with the Son. The word of God holds this remarkable place, as the instrument by the Holy Ghost, of bringing us thus to God, on the ground of redemption.

The Lord had come down from heaven and associated Himself with man upon earth, walking in and out amongst men, and he took the hearts and thoughts of His disciples entirely out of the world. Grace had brought Him down into it, yet there was no connection with man, or man with Him but on the footing of death; as we read, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;” and, “I will raise him up (who does so) at the last day;” I will give him another state of life altogether.

The Lord is the Word of life—the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us in the. Son, (1 John 1:2). He comes and speaks words to us; and it is upon the word of His testimony which all depends. Grace must work in our hearts that we may receive His words; but “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.” Thus we get everything by faith. We see who Christ is by faith. He was the carpenter’s son—seen outside of faith. He had no condition in the world, no authority, nothing that would enable you to see that in that person the eternal Son of God was in the world, but positive faith. Suppose that even prophecies were brought to bear and miracles laid hold of your mind, they would leave you just where you were. I could not see the person of the Son of God, except God had given the eye of faith.

In the second chapter we find— “For he knew what was in man;” that is, there was no work of God in their souls—nothing but man. He might have honest and sincere convictions, but still no new nature. The people who followed Him were the same who cried, “Away with him” afterward. It is not insincerity, but only what is in man. There was no personal perception that the Son of God had come into this world. The eye was opened if there was any perception of this, and it connected itself with the desires and need of the soul.

We must first have this desire of the heart and need in the conscience; the sense too, that we cannot do without Him! Whether there is one or the other, both are connected with that, and for both we find we cannot do without Him.

Suppose I believed all that the church has taught for 1800 years before I had this new life, there would be no more of eternal life in me than in that table! It would not bring me nearer to Him—because Christ has not been revealed to my inward soul. It would not be what Paul writes, “When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me.”

You get this desire of conscience here in Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” (v. 68). When the sifting comes, nothing else could replace Christ; there is nothing else that can; there was the consciousness that if they had not Christ there was nothing left. The heart and the conscience want Him, and that is eternal life. I might have every thought right as to truth without this. There is no true work where this is not done in the conscience. The heart is drawn to Jesus because the soul sees who He is. Like Peter in Luke 5, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;” but there is power to keep him, he cannot go away.

The prodigal illustrates the same thing; he says, “There is blessing there.” His heart was formed by the grace he knew was there. His heart was drawn to Christ, but his conscience told him he was not fit to be there; still the heart could not keep away. Then there comes a word from Christ which satisfies the soul. To Peter, it was “Fear not.” To the poor woman of the city who was a sinner it was, “Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace,” and all was done. She had Christ’s word for it, and this was everything. He had the words of eternal life, as Peter had said, “Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” This is the only thing that is the ground of faith. Faith is the effect of the word of God directly from God to the soul, without any intervention. Faith cannot rest upon any authority but that of God Himself.

What I press is the Word. Christ is the living word; so it is the word of God that has come from God, and has come into this world, and by which all and every operation of God is affected. Where that is not the case, there is no real result. Miracles were proofs of His mission, but they were not life in the soul. If faith rested on the evidence of miracles alone, the Lord would not trust man. Where the word is received, the soul is begotten of God.

Suppose I believed every truth which I now believe before I was begotten of God through His word, it would have no link between God and my soul; there would have been no revelation of God by it to me—nothing that brought God into my soul by it—no drawing of the Father to make Christ needful and precious.

Such knowledge is merely the fire being laid, but no more. The revelation from God is the revelation of God. Christ was this when He was here; though known as the carpenter’s son for many years. What Christ spoke, was an expression of what Christ was. Who could reveal God, but God Himself? and Christ was God, come into a world which had departed from Him, to reveal Himself to souls, and “he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true,” (John 3:33).

“Lord, to whom shall we go?” There I get the fact that the soul cannot do without Him who had laid hold of their heart. Ah, I say, He has “the words of everlasting life;” I cannot go elsewhere. The soul has got the first link, by the testimony of the word to it, and it knows Him.

You should ask yourselves whether the voice of the Good Shepherd has reached your souls—has spoken to you so that you know His voice! Take an instance of the thief; He knew him; He answers for every bit of Christ’s life from one end to the other. God had revealed to him what His Son was, and when everyone was against Him—when the authorities of the world had all got rid of this presence of God—one man was

there who answered for Christ's spotless humanity.

Why had the word of God to come down in this way? Why not teach man, and guide man as he was? Why bring the Eternal Son from heaven? People will accept a great deal of truth, but, Why have a revelation? they say. There must be a revelation, because man has departed from God, and God in mercy to him must reveal something new to him.

If God is not revealed in perfect grace to my soul now, I must have to say to Him in judgment by and by; I cannot forever stay in the dark in my own soul as to God. I must have to do with Him sometime or other, then I find the grace of revelation of God. I get in Christ—the word of God—God Himself come down. Not waiting till I go up for judgment—that would be a terrible story! Then the whole question turns, on this, how has He been received? How have I received Him? Why, my heart has turned to every vanity when He has been presented to me! That is the way I have received Him.

He has come down into the world—the "living bread"—to raise people's hearts to God, and to take them out of the world; but we do not like this. He comes amongst men as the lowliest of the lowly—so that the unjealous angels can sing, "God's good pleasure in men." Yet in Him we see the only begotten of the Father. He comes down so that man where he was, and what he was, might have God close to him. My heart is opened to the blessed consciousness that God has found His good pleasure in men

But you will always find that a revelation of God is a revelation that says, "You are all ruined and bad." This is too low for the world—it does not suit a person of fair and proper character. There is that which is attractive to the natural man in Christ; there is that which God meant to be attractive to the heart of man. You see the daughters of Jerusalem weeping as they followed Him. They are actuated merely by natural feeling. The pride of this world would not have Him; but the love of God did not stop for that—God will go on with the truth; if the world will not have it, He will go on for those who will!

But if you receive Him, you must do so as a dead Christ —One who has come under the power of death; "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." If you will have an incarnate Christ, you must have a crucified Christ as well. This hurts man's pride. In the present day an incarnate Christ is put in the place of a dead Christ; because an incarnate one exalts man. But a' dead Christ shows where man lay, and the need of redemption. An incarnate Christ was presented to man down. here; but now it is one who has passed through death and gone on high.

"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day"—I cannot give him a portion in this world, but I can give him a place with me in glory! He can give me thus a part with Himself but He could not have a part with me here, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Now I get the blessed side. I do not live by Adam—I have to contend with Adam—with my old flesh; but I live by Christ, and "Christ liveth in me." I live by Him and shall reign with Him, but entirely outside everything here.

In the opening of the chapter He sends the disciples away and He goes up alone to the mount, and there they are toiling, away from Him-it is a picture of what is going on now. Now He says, there is food for souls while I am away—from the beginning to the end I am the sustainer of your life!

The moment we know Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, we are justified. But what I dread is that a person should rest here. He has saved you but do you not want to abide practically in Him, and He in you? Do you not want to sit under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit be sweet to your taste? Do you not want Him to manifest Himself to you?

I may be going through the billows of this scene, but I am feeding on Christ. I see Him if I trace Him here, and find every feeding blessed! He says He is my food; and by eating Him I shall have the consciousness that He came into a world without God, and brought God into it, and the world would not have Him. Then I find I belong to Him in glory (where He has gone, but I have not the glory yet), meanwhile I have Him for my whole living portion.

Is that what your hearts are following after, beloved friends, in this evil world? Are your hearts taking as your everyday portion, that One whom the world rejected, or are you taking the world which rejected Him!

The Lord give us to answer this truly in the secret of our hearts, for His name's sake. Amen.

Words of Truth: Volume 1, Manna

In the verses above we have a vivid picture of the present dispensation, which is characterized by the absence of Jesus from his own, while he exercises His High-Priesthood in the Heavenly Sanctuary; and by the circumstances in which they are found below.

The multitude whom He had fed with the barley loaves and fishes, attracted because they had eaten of the loaves and been filled, own Him as the great Prophet whom Moses had promised that the Lord Jehovah would raise up amongst them (Deut. 18:18,19); but it was only with their outward senses they had thus owned Him, and the Lord perceived, and in their carnal zeal, they would take Him and make Him a King. This could not be—He could not take His place in kingly glory by the carnal will of man, and He departed from them, and went up into a mountain alone. His nation was unfit to have God's King amongst them, till the time when the Lord could take that place in virtue of redemption, and until there would be a moral fitness in their hearts to receive Him. When Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King'?" they replied, "We have no king but Cesar." They rejected their Messiah, and His crown was placed on His cross,— "The King of the Jews;" and like His departure from His disciples to the mountain alone, He went away to the Heavenly Sanctuary to be a "Great High Priest" for His redeemed. Meanwhile they are, as it were, left alone in a little ship, toiling towards the land of their destination, aiming at, but not attaining their object—surrounded by the seas and stormy winds of circumstances—unable to accomplish their purpose, "for the wind was contrary" but watched over by Him. He joins them miraculously, and their object is attained—the shore is reached, the danger past, and Jesus with them personally once again.

All this is truly blessed, but we learn something still more blessed in the remaining portion of the chapter. We learn what Jesus is as His people's portion, first to impart life, and then to sustain it here below during their toilsome and dangerous journey, while he is rejected by the world and absent from them. We learn this under the figure of the "Manna"— "the true bread from heaven." "The bread of God is He which

cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6:32,33)

When the Lord Jehovah redeemed Israel out of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness, we find that they learned what it was to hunger—(Ex. 16)—and in their murmurings to reproach the Lord for bringing them forth out of Egypt, where they had eaten bread to the full. In answer to their murmurings, the Lord, in grace, provides a portion for their daily food. He gave them the "Manna"—the bread from heaven. What a precious thought we find in Deut. 8:3, "He suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna." The Lord does not always prevent the trials and sorrows of His people in the wilderness way, but he makes them the very occasion of supplying the need or of giving them something better. "He suffered them to hunger." Want of faith in Him says, "Egypt's food would have been better than hunger in the wilderness." But see what He provides—bread from heaven—angels' food. This need always draws forth from the resources of God.

The children of Israel "gathered, some more, some less; and when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating:... and they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating." (Ex. 16:17-21) Each appetite was fully supplied-those that could eat largely had a full supply, and those whose appetite was small had all they could partake of. How blessed to have a large appetite for such heavenly food; to feed daily upon "the true bread from heaven," the Son of the Father—an humbled Man here below—nothing outwardly great—no form of comeliness in the eyes of the world—but one who entered into every sorrow in fullest sympathy, bore every trial, passed through every difficulty which His people should experience, learning obedience by the things which He suffered, that He might be able to sympathize with them as one who truly felt it all. Do our hearts feel the slights of a cold proud world? Jesus felt them to the full. Do we desire to be humble? Who so humble as He? To be meek. Who so meek as He? To be in our measure peace-makers or heralds of peace. Where such a peace-maker as Jesus, the Prince of Peace? Do we hunger and thirst after righteousness? Who can enter into the desire as Jesus? In every circumstance He can feed and sustain our souls, but we must feed upon Him. He is the Father's gracious provision for our souls, but He must be fed upon. The hungry soul it is who relishes bread, not the soul who has had enough. The more hungry it is, the more will it appreciate the gracious supply. The natural life must be sustained with provision suitable to it, and the spiritual life must be sustained too. The hosts of Israel had no supply around them in the wilderness; their food came down from God. The renewed soul finds that there is nothing in this wilderness world to satiate its spiritual cravings, and it must look up to heaven for its supplies from the hand of God. The natural life must be sustained day by day; it cannot eat in view of a future day; each day's supply must be given to sustain the life of nature. And so with the new man He must feed day by day on Jesus—must live on Him and by Him. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; and so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." He lived by the Father when He was in this wilderness world; the believer lives by Him during his journey here. "I live," said Paul, a saint who well knew what the thorns and briars of the wilderness were— "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) There is no use trying to feed upon Jesus in view of the need or the trial of to-morrow, or of the next day. When Israel gathered more than enough for the day's need of the manna, it "bred worms and stank;" it was useless. And so, if the believer seeks to lay up today's food, to sustain his spiritual life and support him through the trials of to-morrow, it will be like Israel's manna, unfit to support life. Jesus must be fed on by the day, according to the appetite and need of the hungry soul. The manna, too, was gathered early, before the sun was up; "when the sun waxed hot it melted." When the journey was commenced—the day's march entered on—there was none. The slothful Israelite who did not gather his portion had to endure hunger; his neighbor's feeding was of no use to him; each should feed for himself. But the man who knew his need, and counted on his day's toil, rose early and gathered a good supply; and so, feeding on his supply, he was strong for the way, while the slothful man had no portion.

How all this speaks to our souls. The diligent soul, whose hunger makes him rise early to provide for his need has his plentiful meal on Christ, and is prepared for whatever may come across his path through the day. May the Lord enable my believing reader to hunger for this heavenly food -the sustenance for his soul, provided by His hand who "satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." (Psa. 107:9.)

How often in the journey, when there is no appetite for the manna-no hungering after Jesus, the true bread from heaven—the heart turns back again to the flesh-pots of Egypt. How often "the vanities of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things," find an entrance into the heart, which thus turns practically back to Egypt, trying, perhaps, all the while, to feed upon Christ as well. It is impossible that the two natures of the believer—for he has two natures, the "old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and "the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness," (Eph. 4:22,24)—it is impossible that both can be in vigor together. Either the new man must be asleep, sunk down amongst the dead—to—God of this world, and the old nature, in energy and vigor, feeding on the flesh-pots of Egypt. Or the "new man" must be strengthened with all might, growing up in conformity to Jesus, its pattern; and the old man kept in subjection and death, getting, practically, the place and portion which God gave it in Christ on the cross. It is impossible, therefore, to feed both natures at the same time; and a useful practical question for the believer, with regard to all that he occupies himself with in the world, is, "Which of the two natures am I now feeding or sustaining by this?" Of course, this does not refer to his necessary employment in the world, for he must eat and drink those things that are necessary, and toil and sorrow, it may be here.

When we read of their turning in heart back to Egypt, in Num. 11, it is very sad. And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." The flesh remembers its comforts and its luxuries, but forgets the while its cruel bondage under Satan's power—and the heart turns back thus, practically, into Egypt.

How is it with your heart, my reader? Are you hungering for this heavenly food? or does your soul loathe this light bread? Has the bread of God become distasteful to you, and are you in heart craving the pleasures (so called) and the food of Egypt, forgetful, all the while, of the cruel bondage under the grinding hand of Satan, which all they of that land endure?

There was a golden pot of this manna laid up in the Ark, that Israel might see the bread wherewith God had fed them in the wilderness. (Ex. 16:32) It was the "hidden manna." How precious this is to the faithful soul, that, in the times of ruin and spiritual declension, Christ promises that it shall eat of the hidden manna, as a suited reward for its faithfulness here! When we find the church at Pergamos sunk down from being in the position of a "chaste virgin, espoused to Christ (2 Cor. 11), to having her dwelling where Satan's seat is, even in, and of the world (Rev. 2:12-17), and where evil was allowed, and all was ruin and wretchedness, the faithful overcomer, who had abstained from eating meats offered to idols, is promised that he will have the "hidden manna" to feed upon—the remembrance of what Jesus was once here, in a wilderness—way, and in a time of ruin and departure from God: His Nazariteship was perfect and undefiled. The soul realizes and feeds upon

what He was in the midst of it all.

When Israel got into the land of promise, the manna ceased, and they fed upon the “old corn of the land that same year.” “And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year” (Josh. 5:11,12). The circumstances in which they had needed this heavenly supply were passed: they had entered upon their possessions, and they partook of the proper food of that land when they had crossed the Jordan into Canaan.

The Christian needs to feed on Christ in both ways. He is walking in a wilderness, and needs his daily spiritual portion from God’s hand; but the manna is not the proper food of the heavenly country; he is raised up with Christ and has entered into his heavenly possessions by faith, in Him. The food of that heavenly country is Christ glorified, He is the “old corn” of the heavenly land, and, as risen with Him, the Christian must set his affections upon, and seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God—feed upon these things by faith. He will find that he requires the manna, too; for he cannot enjoy always to the full his heavenly portion while passing through the wilderness here.

May the Lord give a keen appetite to my reader for his portion, whether it be that suited to the wilderness way, or the “old corn”-the fruit of his heavenly Canaan The more he feeds upon this food, the more will be hunger for it, and the food of Egypt will be increasingly unpalatable; and, with his soul filled with Jesus, there will be no turning of heart back to Egypt, and longing for the flesh-pots of the land of his former slavery.

Words of Truth: Volume 3, Well of Springing Water, A

We can hardly estimate sufficiently the importance of this Scripture, because it shows the condition and position in which a new-born soul is placed by Christ, and therefore brings out the largeness of God’s purpose towards a poor vile sinner. In the woman of Samaria we find one without title to a single blessing, and the Lord is here opening out to this poor lost one the purpose and blessing for sinners which had lain deep in the heart of God! It is not so much opening up His work for the sinner, as the issue, the result in the sinner, the good of His work to such, and if I do not know this, I do not know the place of unparalleled blessedness, I which He sets me. It is the extent of this present blessing of which souls are ignorant. True, the work of Christ in putting away sins must be done, or there could not be the full result of it made known. But it is in the result of the work that I reach the full extent of the blessing in which He proposes to set us now.

There is no way by which God could bless souls now but through the death of His Son. “The Son of man must be lifted up.”

He who could create a world, who healed the leper, who raised the dead, who could do everything, even He cannot save a soul unless He die! In the second chapter of this gospel, we find the Lord Jesus is on earth among men; but man is under judgment, and there is no getting him out of it. When Christ is at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, He finds the wine is out. Man’s brightest day is a failure! When He goes to the temple, He finds it is a house of merchandise. Man is a failure in His own state—a scandal in his relation to God. He is irreparable. It is not merely that man as man could not recover himself; but God’s trial did not recover him. He tried every means to do so, and all was useless. Why? because he is under judgment. There is not capacity for recovery, no constitutional stamina for it. Jesus would “not commit himself “to man, “for he knew what was in man.” The sinner must be set aside in the judgment of the cross. This is what chapter 3 brings out. “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” And, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.” The keeping of the law would have prolonged man’s life; the word was “Do this and live.” “The man that doeth these things shall live in them;” but it would not have imparted eternal life. Eternal life is life in the Son of God. We have forfeited our lives in judgment, but through the grace of God we are given instead, life in God’s own Son. My own life goes in judgment, but Christ offered up His life for me, and besides this, He met the judgment of God. God now gives me the eternal life—in Him who was my Substitute, and that Substitute is the Son of God! “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 John 5:12.) God puts man clean out in judgment; and what comes in God’s own Son risen from the dead. Head of a new creation; a thoroughly new thing! He it is who says to this woman, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

We have three things brought out here. (v. 10-24.) First, The gift. of God. (10-14.) Secondly, that our state is exposed by the light. (16-19.) Thirdly, the character of the relation and position in which we are placed before God. (23-24.)

First, “If thou knewest the gift of God.” What is this gift? It is eternal life; and this life is in His Son. You may say, “I know I am saved.” But I ask, Is that all? Is there nothing more? It is not merely that I am delivered, but I have got the life of the Deliverer. The moment I reach God, man is put out; the moment I get what God is giving me in Christ, man disappears—vanishes out of sight like a dissolving view. Many a man does not owe a farthing of debt, and yet he is poor. You may know that you owe nothing, that Christ has paid the debt of your sins for you, and yet you may not know your riches in the possession of life in the Son of God? Many Christians know they are freemen, but do not know their riches in Christ. So they are as ready to try to get the world as ever they were, and so they spoil their Christian profession. For while they can talk of being saved; they are looking about for something to minister to them in this scene, to satisfy their heart, just because they do not know the blessedness of the gift of God. This gift was what Christ is propounding to the poor woman of Samaria, and which the indwelling of the Holy Ghost makes known to us now. “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, hut the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” It is not a question of what man should do now to be saved. It is God’s gift. As the Lord says, “The water that I shall give!” It is not merely freeing a person from a weight of debt—that is the first thing surely—Christ not only bears the judgment, and takes the weight of my sins away; but what does He give me besides the Spirit of God—the living water—springing up into eternal life, so that I NEVER THIRST! The Saviour dies to pay the debt. Every Christian acknowledges the good of His death; but what does He lice for? What have you got by His life? “For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom. 5:10.)

The first offering we read of in Scripture is Abel’s. He offered “the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.” Abel sees what the righteousness of God demands, and owns, as it were, “I am under judgment, and God’s righteousness requires a victim not chargeable with my sin, to bear my sin; and not only so, but there must be the fat—the excellency of the animal also.” Thus the excellency of Christ was

brought out most distinctly in His death. It is not only the burden of sin is removed, but the life bestowed of Him who has done so. “If thou knewest the gift of God.” God having taken off the weight and burden of sin, what is to be the result? “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.” NEVER THIRST! we must not allow the word to be weaker than it really is; God does not use exaggerations. Can you say, “I never thirst?” People reply, “I shall be able to say that in heaven.” But Christ says, it is to be so with you NOW. Do you believe what He says? He says so to the sinful woman, without title and without repute, and what is more, He shows her that He would like her to receive it. He would not only like to relieve her conscience by presenting salvation to her, but it is as though lie says to her, “I want you to be a participator in the fullness of the blessing which I am propounding; I am laboring for your blessing,—toiling for you! “He makes it manifest to her that He takes an interest in her welfare. He makes it manifest to her soul that He desires to be the communicator to her of the blessing of which He spike.

Oh, let us not make any qualification as to what this wondrous blessing is. Why have not all Christians the enjoyment of it because they do not expect it—do not look out for it; and blessing does not come to those who are indifferent to it.

The Lord first awakens in the soul of this poor woman a desire for the blessing, and then bestows it. So, when the need for it and the value of it is awakened in your heart, then you will get it. God makes no demonstration of interest to you greater than you are able to accept. Well, there are souls who can confirm the sincerity of God’s statements, who can say, “I have tasted of this water, and I have got what is superior to everything. It puts me in a place in which I do not want anything to be added, for it is one incapable of addition! It is a region of satisfied desire!” If you tell me you have not got it, I reply, the word is, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.” Your eye must be occupied, not only with the wondrous work He did, but with the one who did it; and when you are occupied with Him, your soul will know that the life of Christ is of such a character, that it makes you superior to everything in this wide world, and independent of everything too!

He knows the whole of your secret history; you cannot have peace in His presence unless you can let His eye dive down into the inmost depths of your heart—to search out what you are, and disclose how lost you are without such a Saviour. Then, knowing what He is to you, you can, like this woman, talk to others of the way He has made room for the blessing in your heart. (v. 28-29.) There is no blessing without Him. The moment the character of this life comes out, He shows us that it can only be known entirely outside everything human. He says to the thief, “Today you will be with me.” He takes him out of every connection he had here. He does not restore his own life, but gives him another—a new life—when He had died and delivered him from the consequences of his sin.

The third point is, the relation this wondrous gift introduces us into with God. (see verses 20, 21, 23.) “The hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” It is not the worship of distance, but that of the nearness of relationship. It is the soul occupied with an object that delights it—not seeking for anything, but in the full sense of having got everything the cop is full! You can say then, I have got the enjoyment; I know the joy; I am in the region of satisfied desire; I am put by the Spirit of God into the full result of the work of Christ, where there is no room for want. He has given me His own life, which is superior to everything; and God, who is the foundation of all blessing, becomes the object of my adoration! Blessing God is the expression of the worshipper. Why Because God hath blessed him! You must be a recipient of the highest order, or you cannot be a worshipper of the highest order. “The Father seeketh such to worship Him.” But alas! Christians are not even looking for this; they are often as ignorant of the fullness and character of the gift of God, as a sinner is of salvation. Let us not make light of the blessedness of the condition in which He places us. You don’t make light of Christ’s having come into the world to be the bearer of sin; but that alone will not make you consciously rich, it will make you righteous, but not rich. What God has called you for is to enjoy and manifest the life you have in His own Son. Man was the crowning thing of all His works; God is obliged to put His foot on him in judgment, and what does He say? I will set him up again in the beauty and fashion of my own beloved Son! Not in that condition in which the judgment fell, not in the image of the earthly, but in the image of the heavenly. God has come in His own exhaustless purpose of grace, and triumphs over the ruin of this scene; and people don’t believe it! They just accept relief from the penalty, but they want to keep up and minister to the sinful nature, the thing that brought in the penalty. But the grace of God has put out the one, in order to bring in the other, to set me up in His own Son.

You say to me, “Do you shut me out of all the attractions of the world?” I reply, “yes—clean out of every one of them!” Worldly joys are thoroughly eclipsed by the life of Christ; and if nature and flesh wants to come up and claim a place, I say to it, “ I have got a better thing than ever you were.” Hence every natural mercy is accepted, and used only as subject to this, which is superior to

May God give you to understand it. When He does you will see how it surpasses everything of which your own mind could form any idea. S.

Collected Writings, We in John 3:11

Q. “We speak,” etc. (John 3:11). Whom does the Lord associate with Himself to make “we”?

A. There is nothing peculiar in the use of the plural here. The Lord speaks as personating the divine teaching of which He was the exponent, using the “we” in contrast with that other of which Nicodemus was the representative, as He refers to by “Ye receive not,” etc. The “we” and the “ye” stand in contrast in the same verse, though the Lord, as one person, spoke personally to Nicodemus as another.

Collected Writings, John 3:13

Q. If Enoch and Elijah were taken up to heaven, what is the meaning of John 3:13?

A. They were caught up to heaven. No man had “ascended” up to heaven till Christ. He did so in the calmness of His own divine and indwelling power.

Words of Truth 3:216-220.

Words of Truth: Volume 2, Last Adam - a Quickening Spirit, The

In the twentieth chapter of John's Gospel we find the Lord Jesus, in resurrection, consummating all the previous chapters of the Gospel.

He is here making known His resurrection, and the power of it in the midst of the congregation. He is standing in the solitude of resurrection; a solitary Man risen from is among the dead. Alone! There is none other such as He. He is fulfilling the 22nd verse of the 22nd Psalm. All the waves and billows of God's mighty judgment on sin have exhausted their strength on Him. He has endured them in His soul. He is here as having come out from under this judgment which none but He could have risen out of. He has borne the judgment of God upon man, and now stands in the midst of His disciples, and is making known His resurrection, and setting forth the results of His victory in the congregation—consummating all He had declared in the previous chapters of this gospel.

He is standing above the ruin of the first man on the landing of resurrection. Let us see how He reached it. We must look at Him in other solitudes ere He reached it.

The world, as God made it, was ruined by man he was the last thing made. The world is involved in the ruin which came in through man. Man filled it with corruption and violence, and God shrouded it in the judgment of the mighty waters of the flood. (Gen. 6-8) Who is to repair the ruin? Who is to redeem it? Christ, the Son of God comes in, to "make all things new." The heavens and the earth were the first thing which God had made in the beginning. Now He begins the new creation with man.

He becomes a babe in a manger-touches the weakest point of humanity— "a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2) He spends thirty years of His life in retirement, and then enters His ministry as God's Servant in the midst of a world of sin. Satan then comes to oppose Him. —(Luke 4)—and He overcomes Satan as God's servant, and Satan owns Him as Son of God—(ver. 41). For three years he walks in this solitude of power as the Servant, declarative of God. "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father" declares Him. It is God exhibited in a world of woe. The poor, and the wretched, the sinful, and the vile, find in Him a relief from every burden, every sin; and yet he puts forth no power for Himself. The poor, and the vile ones of the earth, find in Him the heart of God. In all this He is in the midst of men, in a distinct solitude, all through. Not the Saviour yet, but the Servant; and so perfectly this, that at the end of His pathway He can say—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9.)

His hour then comes that He must depart out of this world to be with the Father. (John 13) When His hour was come, He enters another solitude, but it is the solitude of misery suffering. He says, as it were, "I'll now go where I'll be the victim." He had been in the solitude of power, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, declarative of God, up to this now, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24.) There, He accepts all that God's mighty judgment required against the first man—all that His righteousness demanded, to put an end to the offending thing forever. Satan opposes Him in this, as formerly he had opposed Him as God's Servant. He now opposes Him as the sacrifice—the Saviour. The Lord accepts the place of victim. He says, "Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42.) It was a solitude of suffering in which He sought for comforters and found none. They who had followed Him in the time of His ministry, now "all forsook him and fled." They say, as it were, "We are mistaken in the man." None could be with Him now. He was left alone. Yet not alone, He says, for the Father is with me. Judas intrudes upon' this mighty solitude with a betrayer's kiss; and Jesus says, "Good for that man if he had not been born." All combine then and bear down against Him. The world —Satan —religion —all! One of His disciples, too, denies Him to the enemy. He accepts it from the hand of God. He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He comes charged with this cup to the Cross. There He bears the judgment of the sinner from God, and is forsaken of Him. He says, "My God, my God, why halt Thou forsaken me!" He consummates the work by His death. He goes down into death, under which the sinner lay; but rises out of that place, and we find him in John 20 in the magnificence of His victory. A solitary Man, risen from among the dead. Every enemy gone—occupied in dispensing the spoils of e His victory! dispensing His blessings as the Risen One! He had been in the solitude of power—manifesting God. In the solitude of suffering in which he drained the cup of God's judgment on man. He is now in the solitude of the resurrection, making good in others the blessings of the victory He had achieved, saying, as it were, "I will now make it all true in you." "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God."

He does two things, as the Risen One—He pronounces "peace." What does peace mean? It is peace on the other side of judgment. Many have a spurious peace—a satisfied feeling in their own hearts,—which will some day pass away. Peace means that there is no hostile element that can ever rise again between the soul of the believer and God. Not peace, because of victories, nor midst enemies, but peace because of their overthrow—their destruction. Like Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, singing the song of triumph after their enemies were drowned in the depths of the sea:— "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." This was the chorus of their song, of triumph. Their enemies were defeated and destroyed. The Egyptians which they had seen, they should see again no more forever. They were drowned in the depths of the sea. They sank unto the bottom as a stone. They sank as lead in the mighty waters. Every hostile element was gone; to rise up against them no more forever! Can you say you possess this Peace with God! It is the Peace which Christ pronounces, after He had risen out of the waters of judgment. He dispenses it to His people as the Risen One, pronouncing "Peace." All your enemies are gone—it is what belongs to you as the new race of which He is the Head—the new creation of God. The old race (the first man) is judicially ended before the eye of the Judge. His righteousness demanded the end of the first Adam race—that His love might, without check or hindrance flow out to those who believe. Everyone in Christ is a new creation.

He now does another thing. You will find that the general desire is to get Peace with God, so as to go on with an unburdened conscience in the world—the scene you are in: God does not stop there. This is why the people like to hear of the forgiveness of sins, and peace, and stop there; because this makes no demand upon them. But Christ does not stop after He has pronounced peace. You must now get the life of the Person who has given you peace (He is our peace), the life of the Person who bore the judgment, and triumphed over death. And so "He breathed on them," —imparting to them His own life.

The Lord God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul; (Gen. 2) but man fell, and this life was forfeited, and under judgment. Here Jesus Christ "The last Adam—a quickening Spirit," (1 Cor. 15:45) after bearing judgment, and abolishing death, comes forth and breathes upon them, imparting His own life eternal life which makes you free from the law of sin and death. But it connects you with Him who has gone out of this scene altogether who has no connection with it whatsoever. He is the life of him who believes

consequently it connects the believing one with the place where He is, with the Father. “Your life is hid with Christ in God;” therefore He adds, “Seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” (Col. 3:1.) How then can I connect myself with the place, and the things out of which He has risen? If I have life in Him, and Him for my life, this life will assert its own qualities, and overcome the world. He that “is born of God, overcometh the world” (1 John 5.); rising above the storms, and disturbing elements of flesh and nature, and all out of which Christ has-risen, it seeks its own native element springing up into everlasting life. Seeking the level from which it came. The eternal life was with the Father—was manifested to us in the Son—and is now communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. It is thus a well of water—not a stagnant pool—but a springing well, seeking, like water, its own level, and springing up into everlasting life. Like the Frigate bird, which, we are told, when the storms agitate the surface of the ocean, when winds and waves rage in contempt of life on every side, rises aloft into the calm above the storms, and floats securely and tranquilly in that peaceful atmosphere, where it finds itself at home and at rest!

The reason why the saints of God do not enjoy this cloudless peace is, that they are engaging their hearts with the things of earth, and cultivating the nature out of which Christ, their life, has risen; and not cultivating the pursuits, and aims, and interests of that eternal life which is theirs in Christ

The Lord lead our hearts into the heavenly atmosphere-the proper element in which this life which He has bestowed puts forth its leaves and fruit; and grant that His beloved people may walk in the vigor and power of that word, “Christ in me,” through a world where every breath is against them; for His name’s sake. Amen.

Words of Truth: Volume 3, What Christ Effects for Us

In the first chapter of John’s gospel, we have an account of whom Jesus Christ is. John brings Christ down here—He displays God upon earth. We learn in the chapter not only whom He is, but an intimation of what He effects; now, (v. 29-42) and in the future. (v. 43-51.) It is important for us to know what He greets for us; if we have not some idea of what He proposes, we do not seek for it.

Reader, what is it you are looking for, in the secret of your heart? Of what nature, I ask, is the deliverance you are seeking? Satan knows better than you what you want; and hence we read, as to the way of corruption that is in the world, “Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.” (Prov. 5:6.) Souls have not retired into the secret of God’s presence, and pondered there, “What does God propose to do for me?” Hence we find that souls arc not seeking what God proposes to accomplish; and there is defective practice. It is not that souls are enjoying the extent and scope of what His purposes are to accomplish who does enjoy this, according to its height? but they have not glimpsed at it; and they are reducing it to the sense of their own mind. When we have tasted it in the fullest measure, we then find how meager arc the thoughts we have about it.

John the Baptist points out Christ as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” This is whom He is. Then we find what He does, next, He “baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Then again, there are two witnesses as to what He effects for others. “The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”

Is the eye of your soul arrested as you hear the announcement, “Behold the Lamb of God?” How an earthly prince can arrest the eye of the multitude! Here is God’s Lamb. He calls you to gaze upon Him. He is not come to judge the world, but to save! What is your idea about what God has announced Him to do? It is not merely to discover man’s wickedness—(‘tis true He does this too;) but God announces that He has come to bear sin away,—not merely of a man, or of a person,—but of the world! Sin has caused the distance between God and man. Ile has come to bear away the whole thing; and that from God’s side. Abel takes the other side. He brought a lamb. Just as if he said, “God is righteous,—I am a sinner,—I can’t approach Him without a sacrifice; I must have one, not chargeable with my sin; and having a personal excellence when bearing the judgment of my sin,-this is what His righteousness requires.” So he brought the “firstling of his flock,” and the “fat thereof.” The fat could only be seen in death. It was the personal excellence of the victim. This only expressed that which righteousness required. It was the confession of it. It was man who offended God—He should have produced the sacrifice. He could not get one. What would it have availed me if I gave “the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” I must get a sacrifice like Abel. One presenting a personal excellence—available—before God. A life for a life merely, won’t do. Suppose I owed ten pounds, and some one came and paid ten pounds for me; that won’t do. This might free me, but would not show me what God’s righteousness required. It was the personal worth of Christ which came out in His death. The, fat of the sacrifice was only seen in death. Hence “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” God’s Son, was— God’s Lamb—He comes in and bears the judgment of God. The wonder is, and the blessedness is, that the Lamb came from God’s side. God was about to make good the offense of man in His own way, and on his own terms. The person who offends another ought to make the reparation. You find people coming to God with the thought, perhaps unconsciously, in their hearts, of “presenting Christ to God.” See some hymns too, which talk of our laying our sins on Jesus which have this thought. It is a wrong thought—you couldn’t lay your sins on Him. God did so. This is another thing. We are bound to repair the offense against God. Instead of that, God does so. His own Son comes down, from His own side, as if to say, “I will be thy Lamb.”

There are two things connected plainly with this thought: 1st. God must be perfectly satisfied with the way He has made the reparation. If I had provided it, I must ever be uncertain how it has answered; but the moment I learn that God has done it; I know that He is satisfied! 2nd. That the Blessed God did not desire that there should be a distance between us. It hindered Him revealing His love.

Suppose I have a dispute with another, and that I don’t like that it should be so; and that I repair the thing on my own terms, I can never call in question the reparation.

This shows us the heart of God. He did not like that this terrible distance should subsist; God’s Son knew this, and said, “I will go and be your Lamb.” “Lo I come to do thy will, O God.” He came, and put away sin, by the Sacrifice of Himself; and that from God’s side too, to make a clearance of sin for God. “I know His heart,” He says, as it were; “and I am straitened till it be accomplished.” Can you not imagine for a moment a father yearning, and longing, that the barrier might be righteously removed between him and his prodigal child! When we think of it for a moment—the Son of God had come, and had found the prodigal under sins—He knew God’s heart was yearning to embrace and kiss the prodigal. He only knew it. He dies, and bearing the judgment, removed the obstruction. Hence, God’s love is righteous, and consequently there must be continuity in His love; there can be no want of permanence in it. The barrier is thus removed; but only as a means to an end.

What then is to come out? The love of God in all its excellence! A river of blessing, with the darn which hindered its flow, removed. It longed to get over; God's Son only knew this,—and shared the Father's love,—He comes and dies that it may flow out in all its blessedness!

Now what does He propose to do having removed the barrier? He baptizes with the Holy Ghost. This was a new thing. Not to leave me where I was but to change my condition. Not merely paying my debts, and leaving me in the same state. This is what He explains in part to the woman of Samaria. It was not what God required, but what God gave. A well of water springing up into everlasting life—possessing which you never thirst. It wants nothing—looks for nothing, here below.

Now see what happened to those who did receive Him. What did they when John pointed Him out? "They followed Jesus." What happened? "Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith to them, What seek ye? "What is the object you have before your eye? The action of grace had made them follow; and now they must learn, "Where dwellest thou?" They looked out for a continuance with Him. Not merely to be saved by Him. Not merely to get relief for sin and yet remain apart from Him. His answer is "Come and see." I find where that is in Eph. 2. Risen with Him I abide with Him,—where He is,—He is my life. I can't belong to the thing He is risen out of. I must either belong to Him who is risen out of all here; or I must belong to that order of things out of which He is risen; and which is under judgment. Hence, if I belong to Him, I am only passing through it here. I get the tastes of the person with whom I am living-assimilation to Him with whom I dwell—in a sphere where all things are of God—all things are new. He has spread a supper for His Son, which declares His ability—and prepared a robe for me which marks His love.

The soul that knows that it is introduced into that bright scene of joy—that has responded to His "Come and see," finds the world a darkened place. If it has never tasted it, it only shows that the world is filling the heart, and not the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. Things that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:9,10.)

The Lord give His people to ponder in the secret of their hearts, what are the purposes of His love; which He proposes to effect for them, for His name's sake. Amen.

Collected Writings, John 1:51

Q. In reply to "M. S.," Lyndhurst, with reference to John 1:51:

A. The first chapter of John's Gospel is a magnificent epitome of the person and titles of Christ, from His existence as the Word of God the eternal Son — till His millennial glory as Son of Man; His heavenly characters, in the present interval, of High Priest and Head of His Body, being omitted. It begins by showing that He was God, then that He became flesh, and concludes by showing Him the Son of Man — God and Man. Nathaniel, at the close of the chapter, gives us a striking figure of the faithful ones of the Jewish nation at the end of this age, before the introduction of the Millennium, who own the Lord Jesus when he appears as the Son of God and King of Israel, according to His titles and person in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son," etc. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psa. 2). The Lord Jesus then says, in view of that time, which will be the introduction of the Kingdom, that "henceforth (this is more correctly the force of the word than 'hereafter') ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." In other words, when the Kingdom comes the once slain and rejected Son of Man will be the connecting link between the heavens and the earth: He will reign in His full Melchisedec character, — "a Priest upon His throne"; and the Lord "will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hos. 2:21-22).

It is worthy of note that Jacob saw the bottom of the ladder, and heard the voice of the Lord above it, while the angels ascended and descended upon it (Gen. 28). While Peter, James, and John saw the top of it, as it were (Matt. 17), when they were on the Mount of Transfiguration, beholding a fore-shadowing of Christ's coming glory as Son of Man. In the passage before us, He is seen as the connecting link between the heavens and the earth, when all things in heaven and earth shall be gathered together in Him (Eph. 1:10).

Words of Truth: Volume 6, As I Have Loved You

The Lord, speaking of their condition when He would have left them, bids them "Love one another, as I have loved you" a wondrous manner of love; and they are called to exercise it. Wisdom is needed with love, so as to make it productive of good in another. This love to them of which He speaks here, is not God's love to a sinner; but Christ's to His disciples while in the midst of them, meeting their weakness.

In the degree in which I am obedient I get the communications of His mind. The great thing here is confidence and intimacy; not theirs in Christ, but His treating them with confidence. He puts full confidence in those whom He has associated with Himself. "I call you friends"—He will not call them servants, though they are such; He makes companions, as associated with Him, and He reveals the Father's thoughts to them, bringing them into the intimacy He has with His Father. He tells them everything He had heard of the Father. What a place this was to put them in! For if they were not fit to receive these communications, He was betraying the confidence of His Father.

We have received a divine nature, which makes us capable of enjoying another world. But then Christ is the One who fills that other world; therefore we must know Him, if we would know what that world is.

The disciples were called out of the world, and linked together in service to the glory of the Father. What separates us from the world is, that Christ has chosen us out of it. "Ye are not of the world," &c. A time will come to every soul to test it as to which has the most value for it—Christ or the world. There must be, then, the standing alone; not without Christ, but without known helps.

How can the world bear that we who believe should go and say, I am in Christ, and you are lying in that wicked one? Not that I would say it, but it would show them their real place. Now Christ comes to us and says, "I have chosen you out of the world."

While in the world I may speak against it as much as I like. Once on Christ's side, the world will be up in arms. The felt presence of the Holy Ghost gives a consciousness of guidance which makes me go on happily and cheerfully. I am led along every step without thinking for myself.

Words of Truth: Volume 2, Thoughts on Various Passages

How much blessing is lost by souls from being occupied with some action, or blessing, from Christ, instead of making Himself the aim and object of the heart. Now, in John 14, in a striking and beautiful way, he, pre-supposes that nothing can cheer the heart here during His absence but Himself—that the blank caused by it never can otherwise be filled. He therefore promises to come for us! No sweeter word in parting could be than this, "I will come again!" It was a promise pregnant with every joy to the widowed hearts of those he was leaving behind. But there is more—He adds (v. 18), "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." He promises to come for us; and while we await this moment He will come to us. What more could the heart desire? It is very precious "I will come for you," and, "I will come to you." One in person, the other by the Holy Ghost He was about to send. But "Come" is the word by which he would cheer and sustain the heart. The heart which knows most of His coming to us, will most truly desire and look out for His coming for us.

O, for more personal affection for Him. One may admire and feel their need of Him without the sense of leaving everything here, out of personal love to Christ Himself. This is devotedness—it is the heart seeing such worth in Christ, that it lays aside as weights those things which hinder the soul's enjoyment of Him. Ex. 16:14.

There was no strength necessary in gathering the manna. A strong right arm was of no use the thing was too delicate for man's strength to come in and destroy. To gather it delicately, with the weakness of man, was needed. So that the soul can say, that which I have gathered up of Christ today, I found it to be strength made perfect in my weakness. It was "when I am weak, then I am strong."

Words of Truth: Volume 2, Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled

It is of importance that we should note the cause of the sorrow to which the. Lord Jesus addresses Himself in these precious words for the comfort of the troubled ones; for, as I am persuaded, they will lose their deepest significance and blessing for any who have not known as their own the sorrow that is the occasion of them. For it is no ordinary sorrow that is here, such as abounds for every child of God in his path through this evil world. It is not any and every sorrow that here finds itself in presence of the Lord for sympathy, whose heart has still upon the throne of God its kindred throb for every throb of ours, and comfort, too, to the full: but the very special sorrow of any who know Jesus well enough to miss Him in a scene out of which He has been cast by the' unanimous consent of man. Brighter and more blessed things, it is true, have resulted to us from the cross of Christ, in the wondrous grace of God, that could make this culminating point of man's hatred the moment and place of the brightest display of that grace. But this does not lessen the guilt of the world in putting Him there, nor the sense of His rejection by it in our hearts as we pass through it. And so it is that Paul can say, "By the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Beloved, let us put it to our hearts, do we miss Him? We have known His work for salvation but have we gone on to know Himself for love? Has His work, with all its known results in our blessing, served in any feeble measure to attach us to Him who has accomplished it, and we do not miss Him in this world? Impossible that it should be so! For us, as for Mary, if He is gone, then all is gone that was of any value for our hearts here; and henceforth, in all this world's scene, there is a blank that nothing can fill. It is stained with the blood of our murdered Lord; His cross blights it in our eyes; our hearts can never dissociate the world from His cross that judged it, and we only live to show forth His death in it, while, as strangers and pilgrims, we pass on to our home above. Beloved, do our hearts know enough of Jesus to be desolate in a place where, He is not? Ah, then, we know the disciples' sorrow, and to us as well as them belongs the comfort of the words of Jesus.

And see how He counts upon the disciples' love and consequent sorrow: for He has no sooner broken it to them in gentle words, that only "yet a little while" He can be with them, than He adds, "let not your hearts be troubled." Precious fruit of His own love that, wherever it is known, detaches hearts from the world without Him, by attaching them to Himself. Yes; He whom they had known, and loved, and followed on earth in such precious intimacy was about to return to the Father, and they would now no longer know Him after the flesh; yet He was only going to take the same place as the unseen God, where He would be still known by faith, and in all the deeper revelations of the glory of His Person that would result from that place. So that He will even prove that it is expedient for them that He goes away: "Ye believe in God, believe—also in me." And as we shall see, these deeper, revelations of Himself will form the very staple of the comfort ministered to us in His words. Where else could comfort be found for hearts that have known Him ever so feebly? All joy is treasured up for us in the knowledge of Christ. There can be no different joy, but only deeper measures of the same joy; and this is just what He brings us into by going away.

But will He enter alone into His joy, and leave us in our wilderness desolation? No; He only goes to prepare a place for us there too, and to wait for the moment when He can come and fetch us into it. Beloved, He speaks to us of home; and if you say it is of His home, I answer, not more His than yours with Him now: for He has never left us until He has accomplished a work in the world on the ground of which He has introduced us into the very same relationship that He Himself stands in to God. "Go to my brethren," says He, from the mouth of His open and empty grave, "and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Henceforth, His Father is our Father,—His God, our God,—His home, our home. And if there are in it "are many mansions," His love has already set apart the place for each individual object of it: for such I take to be the force of the words, "I go to prepare a place for you." None but the one for whom each place has been prepared by Jesus can fill it for his heart. How precious to be still and ever the 'objects of such love! Now, in His absence, we need the assurance of it, and He gives it to us.

But observe well where it is He gives us our home,— "In my Father's house." Oh, beloved, have our hearts entered into the blessedness of this! The Jewish hopes of the disciples were filled with the displayed glory of the kingdom, as was natural, from prophecy; but the time for that display, depending as it did upon the presence of the Messiah, was not come yet, as was evident from Jesus' words, "Yet a little while I am with you." And when all seemed lost to their disappointed expectations in His going away, He unfolds to their faith what prophecy never thought of—the Father's house,—and gives them and us our home there, in a love that is beyond all the glory, for the glory can be displayed

the love, never. What rich comfort for our hearts, troubled in this world at the absence of Jesus.

But there is more; and more there must be to meet the necessities of those to whom, by these very revelations, Jesus is becoming more precious every day. Is this separation to last forever? No; He could not bear it anymore than we. And, coupled with the home presented to our faith to enjoy, He gives us just what He knows hearts that truly love Him could not do without the promise, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself: precious hope for us, beloved, till hope shall be lost in the consummation of it, and we shall see Him face to face. Nor is it only that we shall all be with Him for, “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord,” and thus in death we go to Him—but His word is, “I will come again and receive you unto myself,” and the promise is as sure today for our hearts as when first He gave it to us.1 Beloved brethren, is the coming of our Lord more than a doctrine among us? Is it a deep spring of joy even in hope? Is it a living power in our souls? But the promise goes on, “that where I am there ye may be also;” and this tells us that the necessity of our hearts is His own; that, not for our joy only but for His, we must be where He is. And, beloved, that is the heaven of the Christian’s hope. Man’s imagination has a heaven of its own, well suited to it, no doubt; but not the least suited to the desires of Christ for us. Scripture has but little about heaven, for all desire, all joy, all hope, is summed up for any who know Jesus ever so feebly, in that “where I am” of His. His presence is the very heaven of heaven to up.

But we are only approaching the kernel of joy for us, and comfort, while we wait, in the absence of Jesus, for the fulfillment of such bright hopes. And this is contained in what follows-ushered in by the words, “and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” He was going to the Father, of whom on earth He had been personally the full revelation before their eyes: “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” So then they knew where He was going, and the way, in the very revelation that He was of the Father— “I am the way.” He is “the truth” also, consequent as truth is on the revelation of God: for the truth about anything is its relation to God, which can only be known as God is known. Thus it was that when Jesus came into the world, all was tested and revealed in its true character. Then it was known that all that is of this world was one vast gigantic lie! Jesus alone, the Truth, who thus testing and judging it, was rejected by it. Men “loved darkness rather than light.” But He is also “the life:” for, if any found in Jesus the full disclosure of their lost condition by nature, they found also in Him the full revelation of God in grace and truth, and “this is eternal life to now thee-the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Moreover, if God is known in the Son, He is known in the character of this relationship—or, in other—words, as Father. “If ye had known me, you should have known my Father also.” And this is truly blessed. He died “to bring us to God;” but having come by Jesus, the only way (v. 6), we find we know the Father. Thus, we not only know our future place in His Father’s house, but we know His Father, and we know Him as our Father. And this is needed to complete the consciousness that our home is there. Well may Philip say, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” What joy could go beyond the knowledge of the Father? But then Philip ought to have known the Father as manifested in the Sun: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;” and “from henceforth,” says Jesus, “ye know Him and have seen Him.” This, beloved, is our portion of blessing in our Lord’s absence. The disciples enjoyed the presence of the Lord Jesus amongst them; in another day the Son of Man will come in His glory, and the blessing of the earth in the kingdom will depend upon the manifestation of His glory. But, oh, beloved, far beyond all in the richness of blessing is the way in which He is revealed to our faith now, as hid in God. Lost to the outward eye, it is only that He has taken His place according to the intimate nearness of His relationship with the Father; and in this wondrous intimacy we are given to know Him: “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” What is the displayed glory of the kingdom to be compared with the home circle of Divine relationship and love into which such words introduce us? And this is our blessing. Power to grasp the full blessedness of such a revelation is another thing, and we are not left without this also, as we shall see. But such is the revelation, which is the strength of our comfort in the absence of Christ, He is not lost to us, blessed be God, but revealed to us, all the more fully, from the place He has taken in His oneness with the Father,—so that we know Him in the Father, and the Father in Him, and “ our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Surely this is privilege beyond all that was ever heard of before in the wondrous dealings of God in grace with His people,—beyond all that—will be enjoyed by Jew or Gentile, blessed in the Millennium in the personal presence and manifested glory of the Messiah; nay, beloved, privilege that depends upon the very place that the absent One has taken with God, having first fully declared Him in the world. Oh, for hearts duly to estimate it, and to take our place accordingly in the sweet and precious fellowship with the Father and the Son to which we are now consciously and intelligently brought as our privilege and joy. Well may the Holy Spirit say, instructing us in these very things, in 1 John 1, “These things write we unto you that your joy may be full.”

Having said this much, beloved brethren, as to the character of our blessing in the absence of the Lord Jesus, I pass over intervening verses, however important in their Connection, to note pest, the power by which alone we can enjoy such a revelation of God. This is promised us in verse 16, “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth..... at that day (namely, when He is come) ye shall know that I am in the Father.” Thus has the Holy Spirit been given to dwell within each of us, that by His power we may grasp the present revelation of the Son in the Father—the power by which, though still in the circumstances of the wilderness, we may ever walk above them, in full unclouded fellowship with the Father and the Son. But more than this is known, now that the Spirit has come: for verse 20 goes on to unfold to us (oh, amazing blessedness!) that we are associated with Jesus in all the nearness and intimacy of His place in the Father: “At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” Beloved, can anything be added to such blessedness? The whole of our position here lies before. While Jesus is withdrawn from the eye of the World that cast Him out, to come back again for the display of His power and glory—in the kingdom, the Holy Spirit has come down, sent from the very place the absent One has taken in the Father, to be the power by which our souls are brought into the Divine intimacy and fellowship of such a place, and of our association with the Son in all the wondrous blessedness of it. It will be easily seen, then, that, if our blessing is only to be fully enjoyed by the power of the Spirit of God, it is above all things essential to such enjoyment that nothing should be allowed to grieve Him in our walk. Hence it is that verse 15 occupies the place it does in this instruction: “If ye love me keep my commandments.” Nothing grieves the Spirit more than when self-will is allowed to work. Obedience is the very opposite to this. Here, then, comes the third point in the Lord’s instruction, as He tells us of the path and order in which alone the joy of these wondrous links with heaven and with God can be entered into and maintained. How blessedly the power of an ungrieved Spirit was illustrated for us in the cloudless joy of the desolate path of Jesus on the earth. And the secret of it is unfolded to us in His words, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.... my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.” Thus it is, only as every thought of our hearts is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, that our portion of divine intimacy be enjoyed by the power of the Spirit. And this is a joy absolutely apart from, and independent of, all earthly circumstances; it springs from the links that connect our hearts with the Father’s presence, and the place that the Lord Jesus has taken there in the interval of His rejection by the earth. Oh, that nothing may be tolerated for a moment that would enfeeble the power of such associations in our souls. But the happy spring of this obedience is found in the words of the Lord Jesus, “If ye love me.” It is as though He said, Dry up your tears at the thought of my

leaving you—albeit, these tears were precious in His sight,—and prove your love, if it is true and real, by the more practical path of my obedience. And when the heart is taken up with Christ as its object, how easy and natural obedience to His commandments becomes: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” But if Christ is not our simple and all-controlling object, there is nothing that is more distasteful than this obedience. Ah, such is the treachery of these hearts of ours, that we would be serving with unwearied zeal, according to our own thoughts of what He would like, throwing every energy, every power, into such service, rather than yield Him the unreserved obedience that is, for this very reason, the test of true love. Not that I would depreciate service in its own place, beloved brethren; but true service to Christ is rendered in the path of obedience, or else it will want, as Martha’s did, that which would make it most sweet and acceptable to Him. As the loving eye of the Lord Jesus rests upon each one of His in the earth, it is not they who seem the busiest and most active and zealous for Him, who most meet His approval, for this suits too well restlessness and pride of nature; but the quiet unobtrusive walk of one, little noticed, it may be by any other, but governed in every detail of it by the commandments of Christ: “he it is that loveth me.” And love for Him, thus manifesting becomes, as it were, a fresh bond between us and the Father, for Jesus is the object of the Father’s love; and. thus we are found to have an object of love in common with the Father. And what a bond is formed between hearts by some common object of love: that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.” Not that there is any difference in the love wherewith all of us are loved. For, as to the Father’s love, we are each “accepted in the Beloved,” and the world shall know in another day that “thou hast loved them AS thou hast loved me; and if we would know the only measure of the love of Jesus for any of us, He gives it us in John 15:9, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.” But the obedient one only can enjoy this love, which yet knows no change.

The disobedient child misses all the caressing’s of love; albeit he is not loved the less. But more, “I will manifest Myself unto him.” Does the Lord call us by His obedience to a path that few have courage for, there—it may be—to walk alone? Not alone, beloved, for HE is with us in it; and will any heart that knows the Lord dare to say that it will be lonely then? To yield up my own will at His command may bring upon me the frown of all, but if I know the smile and approval of Jesus,—is it not enough? Are we listening for the voice of the Lord to take us, according to His promise to us in verse 3, to be where he is, and is His presence to us the deepest joy of heaven? What shall we say of these manifestations of Himself to any who will but obey Him? It is heaven’s deepest joy in character brought down to my heart below!

But would you ask with. Judas (not Iscariot) what this private manifestation of Himself to one, and not to another, means,—so foreign as such a thought was to Jewish expectations, that waited upon the public manifestation of the Messiah to all, and how it is to be enjoyed while he is hidden to the eye of sense? Then you must learn the meaning of the Lord’s answer, “If a man love me; he will: keep my words.” This is more, beloved, than keeping the commandments of Jesus. Obedience to his expressed commands leads me into a place of ever-deepening intimacy with Himself. To this place of deeper intimacy belong His “words.” I do not command my intimate friend; my mind is expressed in my words, and he knows my mind, and acts accordingly, by the very intimacy and fellowship he enjoys. A little word has ten thousand times greater weight with him, than my command has upon one at a distance. The servant gets his commands, and obeys them, but he knoweth not what his lord doeth; my friend walks with me in intelligence of my deepest thoughts. Oh, beloved, are we walking in this intimacy with Him who has not called us “servants,” but “friends,” and, hanging upon the precious words of His lips, are we getting into deeper intelligence of His mind? How many at a distance find their excuse for doing their own will, in that they have no express command from the Lord Jesus! Is it thus with us, or has every little word of His its irresistible sway over us? This, again, is the expression of truest love, and what an answer it receives! Is it joy to us to think of being received to Jesus just now in the mansions of the Father’s house? But the promise in verse 23, brings the Father and the Son down to make their mansions (for the word is the same) in the path with ‘any Who only thus love the Lord.

Beloved, I can say no more. What more could be given to encourage and sustain the heart in faithfulness to our absent Lord? Has God resources beyond what are here revealed for our joy? Oh, to be filled with the Spirit that we may comprehend the full blessedness of our portion, and have capacity to enjoy it. Well, well may He say, “I will not leave you comfortless.” When he only goes away to reveal Himself from His place in the Father’s presence, in oneness with the Father, in the full brightness and joy for our hearts, all that He is, even while we tread the path of this dark world. “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you;” and so faith enjoys His presence still, and knows Him in the Father as it never could have known Him while He was in the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit given to us: and all that is wanting to the full consummation of our joy, is to see Him face to face, and be like Him, and with Him forever. J. A. T.

Words of Truth: Volume 1, Keeping His Words

I think I can say, I love a personal breathing after Jesus, and the consciousness of His nearness to us. If we did but ponder it duly, what a precious mystery it would be in our esteem, that before we go to His place to be with Him, He comes to our place to be with us. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, has come, and now dwells in us, manifesting the Father and the Son—and soon we shall go to the Lord to dwell with Him, and see Him as He is. And this is more than visiting; it is dwelling and abiding—He with us now—we with Him ere long-and both of these dwellings or abidings are declared to be “forever.”

These manifestations of the Father and the Son, through the Spirit, are but poorly enjoyed by us, if one may speak for others. We want a closer dealing of the soul with Christ. A more real, vivid, personal communion. The enjoyment of these manifestations, the Lord connects with a keeping of His words (John 14:21-23), and I think I have seen that in some souls. For there is a generation of true, fervent, simple spirits, who greatly outrun the most of us. It is not that they are so much in the study of the Bible. No; it is not that. But they have His words stored up in the memory of their hearts, and they draw them thence for varied, living, affectionate use through the day. They know Christ, and in a way far beyond what the constant mere study of the Bible would give them. Indeed, such study, if alone, is not in the divine sense a keeping of His words; and has no manifest action of Him accompanying it. And, again, this having of the words of Christ, is something beyond the obeying of precepts.

These words or sayings (see John 14:23,24) may be and more properly are, revelations of Himself, than enunciations of His will. More telling us what He is—than what we ought to be.

A proof that the disciples were wanting in this comes out in the same chapter, John 14 The Lord had been telling them of His going away. Had they heard Him as they should, they would have kept this saying of His, and they would have rejoiced, (verse 28) Even among ourselves, we may say, this keeping of sayings or words is the proof of love. It tells another that He is in the memory of our hearts.

In the tenth chapter of John the Lord is presented to us as the Shepherd, leading out of the Jewish things, and, by dying, bringing His people into the new place, obtaining the flock, the sheep, for Himself; securing them in a blessed enclosure, where they are characterized as going in and out, and finding pasture. He is seen, of course, as laying down His life, that He might have these sheep.

In the eleventh chapter He is represented as “the resurrection,” not only as laying down His life, and obtaining the sheep, but as “the resurrection and life” Himself, with power in Him to raise His own from the dead.

In the twelfth chapter (I just mention these leading points in the chapters) we find something far more blessed. He is there represented as the “corn of wheat” that “falls into the ground and dies,” that it may bear much fruit. His own are really there associated with Him; seen as the very fruit of this precious grain that has fallen into the ground. It has borne fruit, the corn of wheat itself, and they are seen as part of that very corn-part of its preciousness and beauty. It falls into the ground and dies alone, but it does not come up to be alone; it comes up bearing fruit.

It seems to me that in this thirteenth chapter the Lord is bearing all this in mind. He is here seen with His eye on the sanctuary, and on the things of God—the precious things of God. He is here the mighty High Priest, the Eleazar with the javelin in His hand. His first thought is God, His next, the things of God.

What He is presenting is plainly what is going on now. The hour is come that He should depart out of the world unto the Father. It was either the world or the Father with Him. It was where the Father was that marked the place where He was going, and which also marked His own in a very peculiar way, not only as His sheep, but as His in a divine, peculiar way. It gives us the value of the fact, not only that they belong to Him, but that the very perfection of the grain itself is seen upon those who are His in this world.

He goes up on high, and takes His place between the sanctuary and the world, where His own are. He is seen as the laver, which stands between the sanctuary and the brazen altar, and which is approached after the brazen altar has done its work. He is looking at them with all the results of that upon them most truly, but they are still in the world. He says, ‘You are bathed, you are perfectly washed.’ But then He is leaving them here, and He puts Himself as guardian over them, and as guardian, too, of the sanctuary, and not only over them. He says, ‘I have bathed you,’ but it is a question of service here. And thus He stands with a drawn sword, saying, Are you for God or for the adversaries?’ I cannot allow you to enter there until you have not only been bathed, but until you have submitted your feet to my care—until you have submitted your—walk to me. ‘Do you desire to enter there?’ ‘Not until you have washed your feet.’ But, you say, ‘The work has been finished!’ Yes, so it has, but there is your walk.’

How blessed it is to see the Lord thus with His eye upon the Most Holy, and His eye upon us! There may be nothing of this world about us—nothing of these selfish thoughts. You are not to go in there with these. He must look after the sanctuary. He must guard the things of God; and what is more, He must care for you. He cannot disconnect in their thoughts that sanctuary and His poor people down here. He cannot be satisfied without having them in there.

But, you say, ‘Have not I a right to be in there?’ Of course you have. But you have also a right first to have your feet in His hands, that you may go in there with priestly garments, with priestly walk, and with priestly discernment. How blessed it is to know, however careless you and I may be in this way, as to God’s requirements, that here is One who stands with His sword drawn, and will not let anything enter in that is not fit for God’s presence.

There is a twofold aspect of this. The place is so beautiful, so fitted for His own; and then they are so fitted for it! That is how He cares for them. It is those who are already washed that, by His priestly care, He looks after in this way. And what is so blessed in it all is, interested as the Lord is in us, He is still more interested in the sanctuary. if His interest took the form of mere love and graciousness it would lose sight of what God’s truth is, and it would lose sight of those for whom God has done everything, and shown them that they are really part of that corn of wheat that has come up and borne fruit.

And the Lord says all this; sets it before us, beloved friends, as our example. He says, if we call Him Lord and Master, He has given us an example that we should do as He has done, and that the servant is not greater than his Lord. You see service comes in—service. And, as He says elsewhere, though we are not greater, it is enough that we be as. That is to say, that we have the same place given to us that is given to Him—that place of service that is between the sanctuary and those who are “His own”—those who have received from God’s hands all the benefits of that altar. You end I have the privilege offered to us of standing as servants there, between that sanctuary and those who have come to the altar of standing in the way of those who would seek to pass that laver, without submitting themselves, and everything connected with their walk, to the hands of that Lord whom that laver typified.

How one sees it is so! See Moses, who comes forth from the presence of God with the Tables of the Law in his hand, and finds things as they were. Mark his holy zeal according to the presence of God—according to what he had seen there—what it was to him to come out from that presence, and see things as they really were down here. Mark his zeal for the tabernacle, that it should be taken away and put outside of that which was so contrary to it, so that those who went out to it should go in a manner suited to the One who dwelt there.

The Lord presents Himself here as the blessed Kohathite bearing the vessels of the sanctuary—every one of them blessed because they belong to it. And He puts us into the same place as those who have to bear the burdens of the sanctuary. Do you know what it is to bear the burdens of the sanctuary? Oh, you say, I have plenty of burdens to bear Yes; but do you know what it is to bear the burdens of the sanctuary? Do you know what it is to cover it up from the rude gaze of the world?

You say, Oh, I do not know such an one! I cannot get on with him! Well, you have lost an opportunity of bearing the burdens of the sanctuary. It is one thing to detect flesh in any one; but is not the vessel beautiful? Wherever it has got practically, wherever its feet are, it may not be submitting them to the washing of that blessed One. Still, do you know how to be like Him, always ready? He never takes His eye off the saint. He is always ready. The moment you take your eye off the saint, and get your eye on the people, you have lost the sense of what God has

made them, and consequently you are not fitted to deal with them as those who have got at heart the testimony of the Lord—the claims of God. Having lost your ground you come down, and show perhaps a sentimental care for them, but you will find you have lost your true place.

It is a question here, too, not only of the Lord's priestly service, but of ours. For you know how it is said of the seed of Aaron, that they were not to have any blemish; if they had, they were not to come nigh to offer-a question it was of offering, not of eating. It is a question of your being used. And surely we see it in the Lord himself, What was it with Him? You say, Well, He had a few precious things, and He knew what it was to spread His wing over them, and protect them. And so He did, but He had His eye always on high whilst He did so. He never took his eye from that place that He knew so well. Never!

If He went into the temple, He said, as it were, This the temple! This the house of prayer! I know better than that! His priestly eye discerned it at once, and He did not shrink to denounce it.

Nor did His love to His own—precious as they were to Him, but only precious in a divine way—shut His eyes to what they were. Do you think He could have allowed his love to be blind to their defects—blind to their faults?

And then, in the end of the chapter, He presents Himself to them as going away. He says, You cannot follow me now; you shall seek me, and you shall not find me, for you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterward. He is showing that our love here, one for another, is in connection with going where they could not follow Him then, but where we can follow Him now. Unless we know what it is to have followed Him, gone with Him where He is gone now, how can we know the sort of love to display one to another? It is a question of going inside the evil. When we get there we see the sort of place it is; we see what is suited to it; we know the character of love that is worthy of the place.

Peter had no thought of God's love, of God's glory, of God's place. His love to the Lord was such as to actually blind Him to what God's glory claimed. What could be more subtle? It was his love which led him to be really devoted, and yet his eyes were closed to that character of devotedness that was needed. He did not know what it was to put his feet into the Lord's hand.

Surely it is a wonderful thing to submit our feet, our walk, into His hands; our feet being, of course, looked at as that with which we walk on this earth. Do we know what it is to have the Lord Jesus really wash our feet? to handle them as one who has got God's interest at heart? He will not for a moment forego His claims, however much he may compassionate us in our need.

And we, too, are called thus to be priests inside; as He says, our joy is connected with this —with our doing these things. But how little we know what it is to regard one another in connection with God, and so we lose sight of that wondrous beauty that the Lord has put upon His people! How little fitted we are in that way to bear the burdens of His people! Do you know anything of what it is thus to bear the burdens of others as having fixed your eye upon that which is precious and perfect, because it is part of Him? To bear them in that sense? —not merely bearing them as far as sympathy goes, but because they are vessels of the sanctuary? Do I know what it is to be a Kohathite? If we lose the sense in our own souls of what the Lord has made His people; if we lose sight of the sanctuary, we must lose sight of what the vessels are; our estimate of them must be according to the sanctuary. Can we, whatever the enemy comes in to do, lose sight of the fact that the only ones fit to adorn that sanctuary are those whom Christ has taken up as His own? Would the Lord be ashamed of His own? Could the Lord do a work for His people that would do any less than make them answer to the brightness of the sanctuary itself? —that would not put upon them the brightness and the perfectness of the Being who was going to bring them there where He was Himself-who was going to introduce them to it? Let an accuser, a Balaam, say what He likes. No, says the Lord, 'They are mine, and I will not hear a word against them.'

Of course, if there is a refusal of the heart to submit its walk to the Lord, then He will deal with it; but still He looks upon us in our preciousness, and it is one thing to look upon a saint because he is precious, and another thing because he has flesh. I go to deal with a saint, not because he has failed, but because he is perfect. Otherwise our care for each other will become a sort of twilight thing. But if we are in the light, if we have submitted our feet, our walk, to that Blessed One, how jealous we are to be first for that sanctuary, and next for those whom He has made fit to be in it; and if there is flesh in any way working, rather to help them away from it, by showing them the beauty of what they are called to. How interestedly we should then learn to look at them, instead of regarding them as that which is a trouble to us, we should find they would make us learn the activity of the priestly place in which He has set us.

And as to our walk, He lets us know, however little we may think about anything, He thinks about it. He cannot trust you to get through it, however small, but you must put your feet into His hands, and then He will pass you through in such a way that it shall be worthy of the sanctuary. And if you are thus jealous of the walk of others, surely you will be more jealous of your own.

May the Lord lead us to think more of this! May He make us know what it is to be a Moses, an Eleazar—what it is to guard the sanctuary—what a thing it is to have God's truth in our hands! In Moses it was the sense of the truth—it was the sense of the importance of the testimony—it was because his soul was so connected with the sanctuary that he never could grow lax in his care of the people. Lose the truth and you must lose the care—you must lose the love:

May He give us, whatever form things are taking here, to remember that we are standing to guard the sanctuary—to keep our eyes on those precious things that belong to it, so that our love and care, one for the other, may be really divine.

Words of Truth: Volume 3, Love Unto the End

It is plain that Jesus is here addressing Himself to those who were then around Him, but what we see here of Jesus attracts the soul to Him. That which attracts the sinner, which gives him confidence, is what the Holy Ghost reveals of Jesus.

I desire that we should be occupied with what we find in the first verse—that is the unchangeableness of the love of Christ—a love which nothing has slackened nor enfeebled. If we think of what the disciples were, of what the world was, and of the adversaries, we shall find that Jesus had a thousand reasons to lead him to give up loving. We see around Him three sorts of people—the disciples, those who were indifferent, and the adversaries. These last are more especially the children of the Devil, those who, seeing that the lord was about to take the kingdom and reign over all things, said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." There are some who have in the depths of their hearts

the certainty that Jesus is the Christ, and who will not have Him. The adversaries can draw the indifferent along with them. All that was in this world tended to destroy the love of Jesus, had it not been perfect and unchangeable; for nothing wounds love more than indifference. By nature we love sin, and we desire to use all that God has given us in order to satisfy our lusts. Jesus saw all that; He saw the vile condition of the world, and He said, “How long shall I suffer you?” When we are in the light of God we judge of sin thus.

What parents would not wish their children to avoid the corruptions they know themselves? Because Jesus knew the sad condition of man, grace constrained Him to come and deliver him out of it God sees everything. In His compassion He takes cognizance of everything in order to meet our necessities. But what does He meet?” Indifference of heart. The heart of the natural man sees something contemptible in Jesus; he cannot acknowledge his condition, and he will not be indebted to God to draw him out of it. He prefers to remain indifferent to the God who loves Him; and let us remember that nothing disheartens love like indifference.

Jesus met with hatred also. All who did not love the light, because their deeds were evil, hated Jesus. Pride, carnal confidence, self-will, everything in man, repelled God! There was nothing in pollution, in indifference, and in hatred, which could attract the love of Jesus. This love might have been driven to despair, when Jesus saw, for example, that Judas was betraying Him.

If any one were to betray us, we should be too much self-occupied to think of those who were not betraying us-not so with Jesus. Although iniquity abounded, Jesus displayed all His love, but at last His disciples forsake Him also. Those who loved Him were so selfish, and so enslaved by the fear of man, that Jesus could not reckon on them. Man’s heart is such that, even if one loves Jesus, still his heart is worth nothing. Jesus had to love in presence of a hatred which was never slackened. He loved us even when we were covered with pollution, indifferent, filled with hatred to the light, and having refused it thousand times. He who knows himself best knows best how true this is. If we treated a friend as we treat Jesus the friendship would not last long! What a contrast we shall find if we consider how different what Jesus found our earth was from what He enjoyed in Heaven. There He had the love of the Father, and in presence of that perfect love the purity of His own could not be manifested, because there were no obstacles. But here, below, remembering what He has left, He loves His own, even in their pollution; nothing disheartens Him, but this pollution draws upon them His compassion. The object of grace is iniquity and evil. The indifference of His own showed to Jesus all the extent of their misery, and the need they had of Him. Man’s hatred only proved that he was lost. God came down to seek man, because man was incapable of seeking God. How much God has borne with! What indifference, what treachery, what denials! People would be ashamed to act toward Satan as they act toward the Lord! Nevertheless nothing stops Jesus. He loves His own “even unto the end.” He acted according to what was in His heart, and all the evil of man only afforded Him an opportunity to manifest His love. The Lord has done everything necessary to place the soul in relation with God. Sinners as we are the grace of God has come to seek us. Righteousness and the law demand that sin and the sinner be taken out of the way. John the Baptist demanded repentance—that was a beginning of grace, but pure grace far from saying to man, “Leave thy condition to come to me, comes itself to man in his sin, in order that God may be manifested as He never could have been had there been no sin. Grace applies what is in God to the necessities produced by the ruin in which we are Jesus loves “unto the end.”

What a comfort to know that Jesus is everything we need for all that we are! This places us in the light, and leads us to confess the evil that is in us, and not to hide it. Grace alone produces sincerity. A man who has a part to play likes to appear strong, even when he is weak. Grace produces truth, and makes us confess our weakness and infirmity.

In Peter’s place we should have acted as he did, if we had not been kept. Jesus loves His own “in the world,” in their pilgrimage, in their circumstances, in spite of their misery, their selfishness, and their weakness. All Satan’s efforts, and all that was in man, were well calculated to hinder the love of Jesus, nevertheless, “He loved them unto the end.”

Can you say, “I have a share in this love, notwithstanding my weakness. I have understood the grace and the manifestation in Jesus of the love of the invisible God.” Have you confessed that it was necessary that Jesus should come into the world in order that your soul should not go where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth? Have we made up our minds to acknowledge ourselves to be what we are? This is unpleasant to the flesh; it is like Paul’s “thorn;” there was something which is telling him constantly, “Thou art weak;” and this is exactly why God allows it to remain. Is the flesh so mortified in us that we are satisfied that Jesus should be everything, and we nothing; and that we rejoice to see our weakness since it must manifest the power of God in us.

Jesus has forgotten none of our necessities. The heart which is freed from selfishness thinks only of the things which love desires to do. Thus, Jesus on the cross does not forget His mother, but commends her to the disciple whom He loved.

Words of Truth: Volume N1, John's Gospel, Some Thoughts on

AT v. 26 we see that to serve Him means to follow Him; and if I walk with Him I will find myself at length with Him in glory. Parents are sometimes a hindrance in the way of following Jesus: they demand obedience, and it is true that we owe them obedience, because God has given them this authority; but if they will use this authority to make us disobey God, we must appeal to God and return to the highest obedience. So much for the obedience we owe to authority. At v. 27 Jesus realizes death, His soul feels how bitter is the cup of the wrath of God; but He scarcely shows His horror of this death when, turning His thoughts to God, He submits immediately. He did not give time for reflection as to the bitterness of the cup, but He glorifies the Father’s name. To be entirely subject to the will of God is the means of having greater revelations and blessings; so here the Lord, immediately being subject, finds that the cup was the only means of drawing men to Him (v. 32). We have a similar example in Matt. 11; there Jesus submits

Himself to the Father’s will, saying, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight;” because the Father had hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. But from this submission He derives the consciousness of a greater glory and blessing, viz., “All things are delivered unto me of my Father.” The same is true also of us; if we are subject, we shall have greater and better blessings.

It is a good and useful thing to realize in our souls the sufferings of Christ: one understands better how He cannot suffer again, and that we are fully saved, and then the heart has a greater horror of the sin, on account of which Christ suffered so much; and we know too, better the love of God which moves me to love Him. At v. 31 The Lord says, that “Now is the judgment of this world”—this judgment did not then follow,

it was only pronounced. Man having failed in both ways, under law and without law, Christ was presented to him, but having rejected Him, judgment was pronounced on this world. He who does not believe is already condemned-now. Satan is the god and prince of this world, and he is cast out; i.e., in principle, though God permits him still to try and tempt men to see if they will follow Christ or the world. Up to this point He was putting man to the proof, but now the trial is over, and man is declared lost. This v. 32 is very solemn for the world.

At v. 32 Jesus speaks of the moment when He will be outside the world on the cross between earth and heaven to draw men unto Him. The world has not the least idea that it is judged, and therefore it goes on towards the judgment without giving itself any thought. In the words that Jesus quotes from Isaiah (vv. 38-41) we see the perfect long-suffering of God in waiting on the people for repentance, because these words that contain the judgment had been pronounced many centuries before; and though the Lord confirmed the sentence, the execution of it has still been suspended during this time; because Paul repeated them to the dispersed Jews. Ver. 41 is a bright testimony to the divinity of Jesus, if the 6th Isaiah, quoted by the Lord, be examined. There Isaiah speaks of Jehovah, and here the Holy Spirit tells us that Isaiah spake of the glory of Jesus.

At vv. 42 and 43 it is said that many of the chief rulers believed on Him, but, preferring the praise of men, they would not confess Him. Paul in Rom. 10 tells us that two things are necessary for salvation, to believe with the heart, and to confess with the mouth. And Jesus says, “Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:33). At v. 47 the Lord says that He is not come to judge, but to save; nevertheless He will judge one day, for judgment is given into His hands. With this chapter all connection in His ministry with the Jews ends absolutely: in chapter 13. He commences His work, which He will complete in heaven.

Words of Truth: Volume 3, Counsel of Man and the Purpose of God, The

When the devil entered the garden of Eden he professed himself to be man’s friend. When the Lord Jesus was on earth He was called in derision the sinner’s friend. The devil told Eve as her friend what she ought to have, and how to get it. The Lord Jesus told sinners what they wanted, and how they could enjoy it. Was the devil’s profession of friendship true? Is not the character of the Lord Jesus as the sinner’s friend, fully manifested? This chapter shows it out, and is enough to settle the doubt, if any could exist, in the mind of a single individual.

Lazarus had died, and the Lord raised him up from the dead. Thereupon the rulers of Israel were stirred up to put Jesus to death. But why did death exist at all? Sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Lazarus who deserved death had been recovered from the grave, the Lord who was holy was to enter into it. At the grave the Lord showed Himself as the sinner’s friend, who could reverse the righteous doom that man deserved. He had the power to kill as well as make alive. The devil had the power of death, but he could not recover a single individual from it. He could kill, and he desired to do it, even to kill Him who had raised up Lazarus; but resurrection was beyond his power, foreign to his designs. Who then was man’s friend?

He who had received the power of death, and delighted to exercise it, or He who could kill, but could also recover man from the just consequence of his guilt?

The death of Lazarus was an event which awakened the sympathies of many; the resurrection of Lazarus was an event which aroused the fears, and stirred up the enmity, of the rulers in Israel. Told by those who witnessed it what had taken place, they summoned a council to consider what should be done. “What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” Satan, who had counseled Eve to her ruin, led on these misguided men to carry out, as, far as possible, not their wishes, but his. They wished to save their national existence, he wished its extinction, and led them to take steps to that end. They owned that Jesus did miracles. This fact should have made them ponder their actions. They had forgotten God’s provision to keep Israel from being led astray by false prophets. His miracles should have called attention to this, which would have kept them from the evils of the devil. “If thou shalt say in thine heart how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken! When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the things, follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously.” (Deut. 18:21-22.) Such were God’s directions to which, had they given heed, they would have been saved from the sin of compassing the death of His Son. The Lord had declared beforehand that Lazarus would be raised up. He told His disciples of it before they re-entered Judge. He told Martha of it when she met Him, though she misconstrued the meaning of His words. He announced it publicly, when, to her remonstrance at the grave’s side, He answered: “Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.” He thus intimated beforehand what He would do, and He did it. The glory of God was seen when Lazarus walked out of the tomb.

The resurrection of Lazarus accomplished, the death of the Lord Jesus was decided on—if now left alone all will believe on Him. That could not be suffered by Satan, for his power over the people would be annulled. It could not be suffered by the Jews, for the Romans would be alarmed, and their national existence be jeopardized. Such was their reasoning; plausible to them, fallacious and worse. Little did they think whither they had drifted. Little knew they how entangled they had become in the meshes of the enemy. For who were they who had thus spoke, and what was it they said? They were the descendants of those whom God had redeemed and brought out of Egypt. They formed part of God’s earthly people. What language for them to use, what reasoning for them to adopt! They had forgotten that God was their Redeemer, and they had abandoned the ground of being part of His redeemed people. Truly against the Romans they had no strength: but what strength had their Father against the hosts of Egypt or the iron chariots of the Canaanites? What a victory Satan had gained, when such reasoning could pass current among the descendants of the conquerors of Canaan. Had any asked them who they were, would they not have maintained they were the people of God? Yet they had practically surrendered that ground, when they met in council, shut out God from their thoughts, and devised for themselves a plan of conciliating the Romans to preserve their nationality and land.

Where was Satan’s friendship for man? He was leading on the Jews to their destruction under the specious guise of preserving their place and city; and as he acted then, so we may trace his acts now, as the distinctive truths of Christianity are surrendered or ignored by those who profess to be members of the Church of God. Redemption accomplished, salvation known, the Lord Jesus abiding in glory, the Holy Ghost abiding on earth, are truths distinctive of Christianity. Are not these ignored or practically denied by many? And what is the characteristic of the movement around us but the onward sweep of that wave of error, which is really antagonistic to these cardinal articles of our faith.

To return, the chief priests felt something must be done, but the High Priest it was who told them what they should do. “It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” Neither he nor they understood the real meaning of his words. As High Priest he prophesied. The words he uttered were not his own, though he affixed his own meaning to them. Could they have crucified the Lord if they had known the object of His death? They thought only of offering him up as a holocaust to appease the Romans; the words of the High Priest really shadowed out the offering up of Himself to God.

From the counsels of man we are turned to the counsels of God, for, being High Priest that year, Caiaphas was the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost. Observe the language of Caiaphas, “one man;” and the language of the Evangelist, “Jesus.” Caiaphas spoke of the need of a death, whilst pointing to the Lord as the one to be sacrificed; the Evangelist interprets his words, and tells us that the death of Jesus alone could suffice. The High Priest thought of preservation from a Roman war, John points out that it was deliverance from God’s just wrath. There was the need for his death that God should deal in mercy with the people; there was no need for any sacrificial death that their enemies should be overcome. They looked only to man. God had respect to their sins before Him.

But what an admission this was, that Jesus should die for that nation, an admission which should sink into the heart of every self-righteous soul, for it proclaims in language clear and forcible the impossibility of man obtaining an unchallengeable standing before his God by anything that he can do. Had any been able to make good their standing before God it would have been the nation of Israel. For fifteen hundred years they had been in possession of God’s law, and for centuries had the daily burnt offering ascended up from the brazen altar—yet a man to die for them, even Jesus, was needed; for all their sacrifices, however perseveringly offered up, could never put away sin. What their sacrifices could not accomplish they really needed. Jesus must die for the people. They required a sacrifice, they required a substitute. They required one who was without sin, and in Him alone could the requisites be found. Of their real need, however, they were ignorant, so thought only of the Romans. God knew it, and in His goodness provided for it.

To preserve their national existence they decided Jesus must die. To continue in possession of the land they compassed His death. He died. They carried out their will, and found themselves exiles, wanderers, homeless, country-less; the objects of the world’s scorn; the subjects of Gentile oppression. It was needful that Jesus should die to preserve the nation for a future day. God’s holiness they left out of account, but He could not. God’s protection they renounced, but He did not cast off the people. He would save Israel, not from the Romans, but from His just wrath to preserve them as His people on earth, and a future day will disclose to that nation the absolute necessity of that death, and how impossible it was for their forefathers by that to be shielded from the power of Rome. Their plans will be proved to have failed, God’s counsels will yet take full effect.

But further, He died not for that nation only. There was a positive need of His death for Israel, as made apart from the general character of His atonement. The efficacy, however, of His death extended beyond them. “Not for that nation only,” says John, “but that also He should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.” Seeing the multitude attracted to the Lord, they decided on removing the head, in order that the ever-increasing crowd of followers might disperse. Dispersion they aimed at; gathering together God proposed. Never did man more miscalculate the effect by his actions. His counsel came to naught, his devices proved to be of no effect. Nothing that he hoped for was affected by the death of Christ. Nothing that God intended by it could be frustrated. Gathering, not scattering, resulted from it, such a gathering as never before had been witnessed. Satan hoped to destroy the nation, and to stop the spreading. The Jews hoped to conciliate the favor of their rulers. Both were signally confounded. God’s purpose for Israel, however, will be surely made good.

But here the thought comes in, Do souls practically own God’s designs for his saints now? “to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” In glory this will be displayed, on earth now this should be owned, for by the death of Christ it was brought about. Shall we wait for the glory ere we own it? At Pentecost and after, believers manifested it; at the Lord’s table believers declare it (1 Cor. 10:17). No failure on man’s part can hinder the reality of it. Christ died for this end; but failure on his part to own it hinders the manifestation of it. God has declared His purpose of gathering together into one the children of God scattered abroad. Shall we own this, and help forward the manifestation of it, or, like the Jews, shut God out of our thoughts, and devise desires for ourselves, and form unities of our own, on ground of our own choosing? As nothing that the Jews hoped to effect by their act did really come to pass, so nothing that man can devise against the Church of God can really remain steadfast. But God has counseled and executed His counsel. Shall we enter into His mind-wish to carry it out? How cheering to witness the unchanging of God about His people about His saints. Nothing diverted Him from His purpose, nothing could mar or annul His counsels. —C. E. S.

Words of Truth: Volume N3, John 10:1-19, On

“He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.” Door there is God’s appointed way, through humiliation and death. He entered in by the door into the fold, that He might lead His own sheep out. Christ entered into the fold by God’s appointed way; then became the door Himself; was the appointed way for the sheep, to lead them out—lead them in, too; but out from the fold—Judaism. He goes before His sheep, not a sheep Himself, but treads the path first that they have to follow; He is the first to tread it, and the sheep know His voice and follow Him.

Who are the strangers? Those who rose up pretending to be beliverers like Theudas and Judas, that Gamaliel speaks of, but the sheep did not follow them. Some such pretended deliverers rose up continually, almost every year, and led away people to their destruction, working on their passions at being under a Gentile King. That is why they asked the Lord, seeking to tempt Him, if it were lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not. God had said they should not have a Gentile King to reign over them, they were under one now, for their sin, and such as Theudas and Judas rose up in rebellion.

Dependence and obedience marked the Lord’s path. Prayer and the Word are the expressions of these; prayer is the expression of dependence on God, and obedience to the Word is the expression of obedience to God. “By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer” (Psa. 17:4).

“It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

What is the meaning of “By me if any man enter in.” Enter in where? Oh, wherever He takes us. We go in by Him wherever He leads the way.

What is it to go in and out and find pasture? That is liberty. A Jew could not go out of the fold, the fold was the place of safety. You cannot get pasture in a fold, properly speaking, you must go out to find it. A fold really was like a prison to save them from wild beasts, with walls high enough to prevent the wild beasts from jumping over. So this verse 9 is salvation, liberty, and pasture.

What is having life more abundantly? Why, there is a great difference, is there not, between being quickened merely, and knowing that we are united to Christ, quickened together with Him, raised and seated with Him?

Do you think the Old Testament saints knew they had eternal life? No; I think this verse 10 is actually fulfilled in the difference between the Old and New Testament saints. He comes that they might have life, and then He says it is this abundant life they get through Him. But what about David and his expressions in Psa. 16? I think many of them, David, Job, Abraham, &c., had God as an object—trust in God, desire after His favor, obedience to God—all the elements of divine life, but I do not think they knew they had eternal life. Eternal life is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament, and both times in connection with the Millennium (Dan. 12, and Psa. 133). Life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. God quickened souls from Adam on, but that is a different thing from saying eternal life was revealed. We have authority to say it was brought to light by the gospel—did not begin with the gospel, of course. It is a different thing Christ quickening me, and my being quickened together with Him, my being dead with Him, and raised with Him as a man, and then identified with Him as a man in heavenly glory. I see Christ as a dead man, and God taking us both up and quickening us together, that is very different from Christ as God quickening me. He bore my sins, was laid in the grave; God could not leave Him there, and He brought me up with Him, because my sins were gone, for He had borne them, and God puts us in glory together.

The Jew could not go into God’s presence at all, because the veil was there, hence the Son comes, then relationship comes in, then it is there we get the authority to become sons. “When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Duties flow from relationships, the salvation that has made you safe has put you into relationship with God, and you must behave yourself as becomes that relationship. The Jew had not got the relationship, not merely was not enjoying it; many a Christian now is not enjoying it, but every Christian has it; eternal life is to know the Father; to know Jehovah was not eternal life; to know the Almighty God was not eternal life, but to know the Father sending the Son was eternal life.

God was dealing with the Jew on the ground of his responsibility to Himself; the law was the measure of this. I doubt not, for an instant, their being quickened—they could not be in the kingdom without—but in the Old Testament you never get the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. No doubt there was lust in the heart, and yet desires after God, and obedience to Him. Where they had faith they got hold of this that, “not to themselves, but to us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12).

Verses 14, 15. Our version has spoiled it here: the verses should read, “I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine, as the Father knows me and as I know the Father.” It means, I know My sheep and My sheep know Me in the same way as My Father knows Me and I know Him. In John you get the divine side of Christ, no agony in Gethsemane, no crying out on the cross, He gives up His life for the sheep, no man takes it from Him, He gives it up.

It is one flock and one Shepherd, not one fold. Other sheep I have, not of this fold, i.e., Gentiles. You never get the Church in John; the Church, properly speaking, are those that are united to Christ in heaven. You get the individuals who form the Church, but you do not get the Church, you never get them un-individualized!

Now, there is a wonderful verse, I think there is nothing like it in Scripture. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.” That is, in Christ’s laying down His life, and taking it again, there was such excellency that there was a motive for God’s loving Him; you get nothing like it in Scripture. No one could taste death to the extent that the Prince of Life could, and did. Here was One outside death, who goes into it for His Father’s glory, and gives a motive to God for loving Him—it is wonderful! In death, the very weakness of sin (death is absolute weakness—nothing else so powerless), in that there was such power, such excellency, that it gave God a new motive for loving Him. It is a wonderful thing when once we have got peace to see it as between God and Christ alone. The Lord had His own lot in it, as well as the people’s lot—our sins put away, too, blessed be God, that is one part, but it is the bringing out of all that God was in His perfect hatred against sin and perfect love to the sinner; that is only brought out on the Cross, and He gave Himself up to it; it was not insensibility—knowing it all, He gave Himself up. “This commandment have I received of my Father,” it was perfect obedience. You never get the Lord getting out of His perfect manhood in John; you see the divinity coming out of every sentence almost, but always in perfect obedience.

The only time that seems like going from it, is, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up,” but when He speaks of laying down His life and taking it again it is, “This commandment have I received of my Father” —you get the perfect obedience as well as the Divinity.

Words of Truth: Volume 3, Follow Me

In John we see the confidence and simplicity of love. Though he makes little noise, he always follows Jesus. He incessantly expects Him, and thus he recognizes Him even before Peter—the most zealous of disciples. It is only his intimate acquaintance with Jesus which gives him this advantage. Love is calm, and finds its enjoyment in its object. John passes through few painful experiences like those of Peter. The perfect love of Jesus banishes all fear from His disciple; it slays also the activity of the flesh, and keeps his heart engaged with its object.

John is neither jealous of Peter, nor restless about his brother who is on his way to death. Peter on the contrary disquiets himself about John; who in the meantime is occupied about Jesus, and remains perfectly calm and at rest even while following his master, whom he is accustomed to follow, and gaze upon, and listen to; Jesus needs not to say to John, “Follow me.”

clickbible.org