Philippians - Commentaries by George Vicesimus Wigram

Christian Truth: Volume 30, Philippians 3:8

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

There is something very full in the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ." It is the revelation of an object in heaven, one that man despised on earth; He it is who is there. He is there showing His perfect acceptance, saying the whole question of sin is settled, and here I am occupied with you. Do you know that Christ as a living Person in the glory as Paul did? Is your knowledge of Him the fruit of your intelligence merely, or is it in a God-given power beyond nature?

Is it Jesus you see there, who loved you and gave Himself for you, and allows your heart to be twined around Him as a person to be loved?

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Beauty of Going Down to the Very Bottom, The

Phil. 3:1-16

I have read a part of Phil. 3, desiring to look at it as bringing before us what were the principles of the life of Paul and of the Christians of his day. We see here, if we turn to the early part of the epistle, what the circumstances were in which he lived upon these principles, the extent to which he carried them out, and the contrast between his doing it imperfectly, and the One who did it perfectly – the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is remarkable the very bold claim he makes in the first three verses of this chapter, as to himself and those he calls his brethren being the only true worshippers of God, and that in contrast to certain other persons. Those he calls his brethren were those who were looking out for the Lord Jesus Christ; and those who walked not like Him, were those whose religion began and ended with themselves.

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." God was before them, and they so saw the Lord Jesus as to be able to rejoice in Him; and Paul so saw Him as to make him appeal to these Philippians to rejoice in Him, and that by the power of the Spirit sent into their hearts. There was a class of people, who, instead of having everything connected with another world, and finding all their joy in God, were just occupying themselves with things down here. He says of them, " Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." That is the distinct contrast between religion of the Spirit and in truth, and the Ritualism of today. Then be takes up himself, as one who had a right to speak on the subject, and he says as to religion, " Can anyone come forth and measure himself by me?" That is what my pretensions might be as to confidence in the flesh. " Though I might also have confidence in the flesh," &c. All these things were connected with the man down here. Verse 5. Things that give something to myself, all gain to me; I was the person on whom they were all strung. He says, " I have something that you have not, and it is gain to me. But I saw a Person on whom all glory was strung, on whom it was all heaped up." Well, what follows that? Who took all the beauty out of what he was esteeming and glorying in? A certain Person in heaven – truly despised and rejected by men down here, whom men by wicked hands had crucified and slain. God placed Him in heaven, and He called Saul of Tarsus, and now he says, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." "I could not stand connected with Christ, and have all those things that were gain to myself; I became a prey to Christ. He took possession of me when I was striving with all my might to blot out the name of the Nazarene. He appeared to me, and I was glad to suffer the loss of all things for the beauty of Christ."

Oh, what is it when the Lord Jesus reveals Himself to Saul; that One who had, perhaps, only been known to him as a character in history I He knew there was such a Man as Jesus of Nazareth. When that Man in heaven lets the light of His own glory in on a soul, what is it? Well, Paul had no difficulty in saying what it was to him. He said, " I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him." The doctrine of Peter on the day of Pentecost was, that they should draw near to the throne of God, on which Jesus was sitting; they should receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, but they must come in the name of Jesus. As though God had said, "You, found no beauty in Him; but see what His thoughts are. I have raised Him from the dead; and now anybody who draws near in His name shall receive forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost." God vindicates His own conduct. If God was obliged to hide His face from the Son of His love on the cross, He now does something that stands out in bright contrast: " Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." When Paul saw Him, everything he had as a man was gone. He saw Christ in heaven, and he got thoroughly cleared out of all things – natural religion, &c. – and thoroughly filled with the thought of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Now, what was it that struck the apostle? Was it merely that the Son of God had been given to be the sin-offering – to put sin away? or was it, in addition to that, that God had presented His righteousness to him? Far, far more than that: his soul was taken possession of by the Spirit of God, giving him a sight of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the One who had emptied Himself and brought out this moral glory. The principle of mail

is to get as high as he can; that is the principle which Adam and Eve acted on. God's principle is exactly the contrary. That of the Lord Jesus Christ was to go down to the bottom, and accomplish certain things at the bottom; but that was not all, He showed out the mind of God. It struck the apostle as something worth imitating – as something worth following out. "That I may know Him," – not merely the forgiveness of sins – not merely the righteousness of God – but he was caught with the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he takes that as his principle, as something to act on, to mold and fashion his life.

As the Lord presented Himself, there was everything to attract the poor sinner. There was the Lord living, sitting upon the throne of God. I see Him coming down to bear our sins. He bore the curse for MC, and do you say, " I do not see any beauty in that One coming down from heaven

to become a Man, and bear the wrath of God for me"? Not see any beauty in it! I could not say that, if I only saw my own benefit by it – forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost; but there is far more than that – there is the beauty of the conduct of the Lord in taking this place. That is called the moral glory – the beauty of the ways of God. I often say, Supposing the Queen were passing down one of our streets, and everyone was bowing to her, as surely all ought to do; some little child, in its anxiety to see her, falls down – and she stoops and picks it up. A thrill passes through the crowd, every heart is touched, not so much because of the greatness of the person, as of the way she does it. She thinks of her own children – she has a mother's heart. It is not so much the person man admires, as the way in which she acts. The apostle Paul says, " If Christ has gone down to the bottom, I cannot go there, but I will go down as low as I possibly can. He had taken the bottom place, I will try and stand next to Him in humility."

I want to look at that, for I am in a world in which everyone is selfish. If you get to God as Scripture presents Him, you see, " in the beginning was the Word." There was Father, Son, and Holy Ghost before creation. There was creation in heaven – angels were created. When you think of God as Creator, bringing everything into existence, taking the dust of the earth and building a man – do you not see the very principle of condescension coming down? Did He want the world for Himself? All creation is a display of the condescension of God. Why does not the earth reel to and fro? Because Someone holds up the pillars thereof. God comes down in providence. All the little things are connected with condescension. The Lord Jesus knew all about it; He said, "Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without your Father." Look at the world, always rebelling against God, and yet He still keeps things in check; the whole process of His government is condescension. If I look at the Lord, there was Messiah to come, and that One is seen in Dan. 7 in the presence of the Ancient of days. But I see Him in the gospel, born in a manger, not in the palace of Herod. Was it not the same principle? I find it comes into Scripture in one place in a remarkable way. Rom. 5:7: " For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." If you were to point out a man to me, and say, " That is a very righteous man, he would not be in debt to anybody;" I should say, " I expect he is, a very self-righteous man." It would not move my affections at all. But if you show me another man, and say, " That is a very tender-hearted man; if he hears of distress anywhere, he delights to go and relieve it," my heart would warm towards him directly. When I look into the whole heart of man, who is the one my whole heart goes out to? Not the people who are climbing up, but those who are willing to go to the bottom. I would say more if I could of the earthly relationships of the heavenly family – parents counting themselves nothing for children. The father of a family and the mother, how constantly they are going to the bottom. If you find a father with half-a-dozen sons, five of them are likely to get on in the world, but the other has a heart, and when he sees anything going wrong between his brethren, will not rest until it is put right. That is the one who gets the father's heart.

Let me just call attention to the apostle Paul. He says he is the offscouring of all things – a model man in that respect. He gives an account of his sufferings as surpassing all of his day – the man set forth to show how far the principles shown out in the life of Christ could be carried out in a man of like passions with ourselves; and were there ever men like those apostles, through whom came all these blessings? Paul had seen the beauty of it in Christ – seen it, no doubt, in two forms. First, the only way in which blessing could come to the sinner, was by Christ's coming down lower than the sinner, when He bore the curse! I have never borne the curse – if I do not believe in Christ, I shall. He bore it, and went so low that Satan could say nothing. Paul saw that, but he saw more than that – he saw the beauty of the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do let me ask, whether you see the beauty of those ways? Is it saying, " Oh, I see He went down, and I suppose I must go down – I suppose I must take up the cross?" There is that verse, " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross:" does it mean as little of the cross as possible – let the heaviest end be upon Him? Is it merely "He went down, I must?" That was not Paul: he had another feeling than "must" – more than "needs be." God took up Paul, and he was resolutely set; he would go down to the very bottom. “I mean to follow His ways, I will be like Him in my walk, He came down to the very bottom, and I mean to follow that beauty." In this world while he was here, he was never seeking his own, always the things of Christ, and what comes out? In this world he followed Him, and by-and-by he will have Christ as his gain. When the Lord Jesus comes for His own, there will be no self-denial any longer.

Do you see any beauty in that conduct of Christ's? Could I say to Christ, " Lord, there was a needs be for the curse to be borne by some one, and it was good of Thee to bear it, but what a pity it was the occasion of bringing Thee so low; there is no beauty in Thy coming so low." No, I could not say it.

For height nobody like Him, for depth, nobody like Him And has He given me of His Spirit, and do I see no beauty in that? and have I got, like the apostle Paul, a desire for fellowship in His sufferings? Not as some people make out, that it does not mean literally what it says: "Filling up that which was behind in the sufferings of Christ." Paul never had anything to do with making atonement for sin; Christ had done all that, but Paul did think of having fellowship in Christ's sufferings in his care for the Church – carrying his life in his hand – he counted everything that belonged to himself as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Well, he will one day be in the presence of his Lord – a very sweet thought to his and to the believer's heart now. If he had been apprehended for something, Christ had apprehended him: " I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Do you know what it is to look at the Lord Jesus now in heaven, and say, " Lord, thou knowest all the glory which God the Father gave Thee to bring to me: Thou hast done a work on the cross, and I am clean every whit: and Thou hast given me the Spirit, guarding and guiding all my life down here; and Thou knowest exactly what it will be when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality, and when this vile body shall be made like Thy glorious body, and Thou shalt have subdued all things to Thyself?" Do you ever think of what is the thought of the Lord Jesus in the glory? It would be like the potter working on a vessel, but what is in the mind of the potter? Here has the Lord been dealing with me all these years, but what has been in the mind of the Potter all that time? It has been no haphazard work. He knew where He would conduct me. The Son could say, " I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." The Father had perfect delight in Him, and has He not let me already into the Father's heart? And does not the Son know that I am predestinated to be conformed to Himself? We cannot see Him with our eyes, or hear Him with our ears; when He intercedes we cannot hear Him; but that Lord, as He looks down upon us, has His thoughts about His glory in us: He will have us in the Father's house, and what is His glory all the way through? This blessed way of humiliation. There is all the difference possible between this and a voluntary humility, that is, making yourself the center of everything. The Lord says, "Lo, I come to do thy will, 0 God." The Colossians said, " Touch not; taste not; handle not;" " do not touch this and that," and that is what is called a voluntary humility. That is not Christ taking up the Father's pleasure, who is saying, " Now sin is come in, it will cost Thee a great deal to clear their way to Me, and Mine to them – there will be a deal of trouble in bringing them home; but then there is all the blessing and glory after – the value of it in the joy of having them here." The Church is the vessel to hold the glory of the Lamb. Is it not condescension on the part of Christ to dwell in such poor creatures as we are? To be sure it is, and the principle I want to press is the giving up of all human thoughts about what is great and praiseworthy, and taking up God's thoughts. Wherever we find Him, He is always stepping

down to such poor things as you and me, bringing us up to Himself.

Let us turn to chapter 1; it brings out in a special way the circumstances in which Paul was living out the life of Christ. He was a prisoner in Rome, probably chained to a soldier, many trying to increase his troubles. They were the circumstances of a martyr really. What does he say about them? " Do not be troubled about things, about these people trying to add affliction to my bonds; it will all turn to my salvation, and Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." If I had heard that from anyone, I should have said, " That is too sharp. What? Christ made bigger by you! The Lord of all glory be magnified in you! How can you speak of the Lord being magnified whether you live or die?"

Christ was made to appear a great deal more plainly by the circumstances Paul passed through here. He is in spirit above the clouds with Christ, and has got such a love for the One who is always occupied with him, looking at him, that he does not care about anything; whether he lives or dies, Christ will be magnified. Then he puts it into a very concise form, " To me to live is Christ, to die is gain." My life as a Christian is Christ; certainly it includes more than Christ being the object.

The life to live is Christ. The first impression on my heart when converted was, " Enoch walked with God "that was my start. " Now, then," I said, " I will walk with God." Beautiful as far as it went, but I very soon found, as Luther said to Melancthon, " You will find old Melancthon stronger than young Philip." I came to my wits' end; for I wanted a fund whence to draw, so as to live it out. You are unable to live out of resources in yourself; you must not act as though your life is separate; Christ must be the fountain. They say there are springs in Thermopyhe, exactly the same as those written about two thousand years ago; they have been gushing up two thousand years, and are the same as ever. That is nothing to the life of Christ, and the waters there. If a believer bets to this – "To me to live is Christ" – he must think of Christ not merely as the end of all he does, but as the fountain. God must put us back to learn this. In all the actings of life I want the present help of Christ. Who is the noble man down here? A man always living to himself, perhaps giving money to charitable purposes, or the man living to Christ? Not merely that Christ is the fountain, but the principle on which our life is led. Whether eating, drinking, waking, or sleeping, doing all as to the Lord. How can it be otherwise? How can I live independent of the life in my body? It is all connected with the life of Christ in me. We have eternal life; how can this life be independent of Christ?

" To me to live is Christ." Do I see Him by faith there in heaven? He is there in God's presence, saying, " I died for you, that in grace you might come up here. I gave you forgiveness of sins; now I want your services, the services of every believer." It is the secret of everything as to liberty and power. Paul saw it and clave to the living Christ. The Ephesians saw and rejoiced in it; but in after years they forgot the living Christ, and were exceedingly busy with their own duties as to being a candlestick, not only as to the living Christ, but in all the busy diligence of being a candlestick down here. They had forgotten their first love; they lost immensely by it. While down here the eye of faith must be fixed on a certain Person all beautiful and glorious, all excellent in glory, whose heart is jealous that you should live to Him in every minute particular.

In chapter 3 he shows you his boast. You say, " How confident!" Here I am Christ's gain, and I have Him before me as my gain. Persons may say, " That is too strong." "No;" he says, " I will show you One (chap. ii.) not like myself, but who walked this path with a whole heart perfectly – the One I am following." He passed right down to the cross. But who has placed Him in heaven, rewarding Him for all He has done? " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him," &c. He puts Him into a place as Man there. How came Jesus there? He came from the home of the Father – from the throne eternal, to show God's character on earth, and He did it perfectly. If I am following Paul, I find myself perfectly free. I often feel myself called upon to see how Paul carries out his doctrine – be failed, I always see, on the side that people do not fail upon now. He was devoted beyond discretion sometimes-a devotedness that was not always quite discreet. He spoke to the people from the stairs! Nowadays, people look well before they put their foot down on the mud, or on a flint, even in the path they ought to follow. The blessed Lord was perfect. He was the Man with one idea, one thought – "Lo, I come to do thy will." His meat, to do His Father's will, and He did it perfectly. I see in Him two things – the spirit of obedience and dependence.

What a marvelous person a Christian is, if he be really dependent on Christ! Paul's heart was stolen away by Christ. Are your hearts dependent on that living Person? A Christian is a wonderful person if dependent on Christ; lie knows he has nothing down here to do but to be dependent on Him. He tells me His own mind, I tell Him mine. The Lord and I understand each other well. He knows how to minister that for which I am dependent on Him. Are you dependent in spirit? And then is there this obedience of spirit that takes notice of what God Himself is, stooping down as He does? In highest light, which no man has seen, or can see, yet goes down into the depths, and tells us all that He has done for us 1 The glory came out from down-stooping, in which He presented His moral glory.

Lecture on Philippians, Looking for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior

Salvation, in this epistle, is always looked at as a future thing, " Whence we look," &c. The ground of that is expressed in the 12Th verse, " Not as though I had." If the Lord Jesus Christ has taken possession of me for a certain thing, the question is, whether I have got it. The soul's confidence is not shaken by a future salvation when I look at Christ and say He has taken possession of me and what is it for? the answer is in His mind, there has been no shadow over it, nor thoughts of turning in His mind, for 1800 years. Have I got it yet? No! Shall I have it? Yes! as certainly as that I am His. People do not see that Christ is the one to whom they belong, the one to whom the Father gave a people, before the foundation of the world. When was that understood? In the garden of Eden? No! God's great dealing in the old Testament was proving that from first to last, the creature was so completely ruined, he could not hold any good thing in his hand, and often the very magnitude of the failure caused the good thing to be given. The Lord was pleased to bring out the question of will in the creature, and when this came out, sentence was pronounced against him, and from that time the creature was on the round of being completely ruined. Christ was not affected by it. He was the only perfect will-less man He met Satan, and Satan found nothing in Him. He went through the world absolutely perfect, before God. You are not the same; you are ruined; and the ruin is seen first of all within you, in self-will and the want of subjection to the will of God, and in not having any intelligence as to what the mind of God is.

In the word, I find (as one who has life in Christ) that before the foundation of the world, God gave me to Christ. He did not come till 4000 years afterward, and having accomplished the work, to open the way into heaven. He went back to heaven, and sent down the Spirit, and He reveals God's thoughts about things in heaven before the world was created. He had got a heaven which He purposed to fill with a people

chosen and accepted in His Son, and given to that Son as a heavenly bride. The sons and daughters He would bring in there, were seen as clearly in His mind, without a cloud, before the foundation of the world, as when they existed on earth. Paul could say, He apprehended me for that glory, as clearly as possible. He saw Paul and each since that time, and each particular individual who is to make up the complement of that body, of which His Son is head. Each distinct member was ever before the Divine mind like the tabernacle, not a stitch not foreseen and worked out. He might have closed up the whole thing in Peter. From the time He took possession of you, the Father could say, that person belongs to the Son of my love, not a shade between Him and the angels, in their seeing Him occupied with poor things down here. We do not get occupied, as we ought, with God's thoughts in heaven. In all the actings of Christ to Saul, He did just as He would to any other sheep down here. Principalities, and powers, and angels, have not been stupid observers of all the marvelous dealings of God with man. They saw Him who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, down here for thirty-three years, they knew Him in the three years and a-half of His ministry, and at the last, in that wondrous work, on which the security of redemption hangs.

They saw the law despised; and the Jews having murdered their Messiah, they saw Him then quietly in heaven sending first to those Jerusalem murderers, and from that time waiting quietly till the time when He will come and take all up. The angels see us and know His dealings with us. He loves the whole family with the same love. Not only that love came out to the eleven, washing their feet, but He lets it come out to all. But if He does so love all, He has not got them with Him yet, but He means to get them where 'He will say, " Behold I and the children," &c, and they will be like Him He will " fashion these bodies of humiliation like unto His own glorious body." Is that done yet? No, but it is as sure as if done; but we have to wait. The guardianship of the Shepherd over the greater part of the flock is ended, but He has not yet brought all in. He waits to bring them, every one, in; and then He will come to take all up. In this chapter the first Adam was the center of the system of Saul of Tarsus, and he discovered that there was a Center in heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ—and in Him was eternal life.

Christ came down, but did not take the place of Life-giver till smitten, and He has power to produce in believers the very eternal life He had before with the Father. He is the giver of it to us, as the smitten rock, whence eternal life flows down to us here. We get the character of it in the Apostle Paul getting a taste in the wilderness of that which is of all things the most precious, saying, As the Lord Jesus has taken possession of me, I shall have possession of Him one day. I shall run up to the goal, and see him at the end. The glorious body is to be given, but much more precious the blessing connected with what I get here, than what will be mine at the end. The heart of the Father will never be more set on me than now, but when I get to heaven I shall have a glorious body. Will it be the beauty of that or the Father, that I shall be occupied with? if the Father 1 have the best part already. Paul with that eagle gaze saw Christ up there. Did he think that when he should get there, the best part of it would be a glorified body? or being with Christ? Ah! He loves me—it's not the glory but Himself—but then my body will be the medium to reflect Him better than this poor body. Here evil 'comes in, and this body wants a thorn to guard it. Not so in my glorified body. Do you not say, if you find a thorn, Oh Satan has done this. Paul saw that it was Christ's love that permitted it; but when He brings you to heaven there will be no more thorns needed there, there will be no joint in the harness to gall the flesh; there, no heaviness. Poor Daniel sick, and John falling as dead at Patmos, but the body will become the medium of tasting perfectly what that Christ is, that followed with unwearied love the course of each down here. Is it the thought of any, that in the glory they shall be nearer Him than some then, or brighter than others. A h that is something for yourself. Paul won't be among the eleven apostles. Will he say, Oh 1 what a place they have got!

Paul has no place in Revelations 21:14. But if the Son takes him by the arm, and he walks into the glory, leaning on the Lord, or the Lord says to him, You Paul, get behind that pillar and look at the people you brought into the glory. Ali I Paul, I am the one that you alone desired to look at. Yes! Lord, Thou art the Lord who knew how to heap up things upon me, who kept pulling the vessel down into the waters and filling it up. A large vessel holds more than a smaller, but it is Himself, only Him, and Paul says I shall see Him one day and run right up in a glorious body, to be with Him (v. 18). It is a solemn thing, that these were not gross evil livers; there is not the question of putting them out, but certain ones of whom His heart stood in doubt. It is a searching! thing to all hearts. If I have Christ as the center of the system I am in, I have communion with Him, in the power of the eternal life He has given me, and I have to walk as one whom Christ knows to be in communion with Himself. People take the power of the Spirit to be marked by the manifestation of joy in a believer; so it is, but connected with it will be the fullness of self judgment. if near Christ, I shall see the utter contrast between Him and self, and self-judgment will be followed by fullness of joy in Him. The Church, as a system, is set up on earth, and soon there comes in corruption, and corruption of the highest thing is always the most disgusting. A sweet flower may become corrupt, but the corruption of that would be far less than the corruption of the body of a beautiful child. The corruption of Satan, as one of the highest angels, was far more dreadful than that of a subordinate creature. God chose a people, first of all before the foundation of the world; but second, there is the exercise of His grace and power in calling and bringing them out as His own people; as in the ease of Israel—God takes a people out of Egypt. When the power of God is put forth in revivals, people go out, but God passes them into difficulties. If He choose us, to bring us out, so He looks to see, afterward, whether we choose Him, and are separated from things down here, to go with Him He says I picked you up for the Son of my love to take you to heaven, and if so, you take care to go after Him. He sees all ruin in me, but He says you have not walked as you ought, but you are mine and I mean you to be there. If. God has given me salvation, He lays claim to me, as His own property. The way He shows His sovereignty you get in the call of Saul of Tarsus. Had not He a right to put two extremes together? Enemies of the Cross, they could hardly be inside the Assembly if they rejected Christianity, but they would not have the Cross between them and the world. The life of Christ was a life of humiliation. He came out of the Divine glory, down to the death of the cross, and if I have His life, I ought to want to carry that cross. I ought to want to have the same mind that He had. He came from off the throne eternal, from the highest to the lowest place, and I want His life in me, to act as His, I want it ta be a life of humiliation.

Rome, as the system of corruption, sits as queen of the earth: and in Protestantism the monarchs of the land became nursing fathers of the Church. Henry VIII. became independent of Rome because he could not marry another wife: and if we look around, where shall we find the Cross and Nazariteship amidst the miters and jewels and costly things of those who are living like princes, in many instances, I doubt not, feeling it a painful duty to do it—but where shall we find all that in connection with the Cross of Christ,? And when we come to individual! believers, do we find the Cross coming in to separate them, from earthly things? Do many, so see the beauty of the Son of God coming down, making it manifest through His whole course, that He was not of this world, and ending it in the death of the Cross, that they are saying, Oh! I want to be like that blessed One. I want to reflect that meekness, that lowliness, and if so, what a crowding of other things saying, and in such and such a thing I want to be like my Master, showing Christ's mind in everything,—all starting away and dropping off from you, that is not like Christ, minding God and the Father; on the other side everything crowding upon you in which to be like Christ in all you are passing through down here. How blessed that man up there, who has been most like Christ down here.

Then, the next blessed thought is, "our citizenship. &c." We are there already in spirit, and we look for Him to come, that we may be there, body, soul, and spirit.

There is something exceedingly beautiful to my own soul, that God gives us so little about to-morrow, except as connected with the coming of Christ. If translation could take place now, the expectation of it would take me off waiting for Christ to come as the Resurrection and the life, to fill up every part of me with the fullness of the power of eternal life. He soon shall come out of heaven to fill up every one now waiting for Him, and He shall bring them home as vessels filled up. He only is to do it. Something so sweet in God's thought, waiting till His Son has gathered the last of the people given Him by the Father, before the foundation of the world.

Soon He will come. He is to gather up all the sheaves, fitted by Himself, to go into the barn, and they will then know all His delight in them.

As we look at these poor bodies saying now, I have a body where I have a thorn, where the law of sin and death remains, but I do not mind it, He meant it to be so till He come, and then what a blessed deliverance! What a thought of that Lord, before taking me home making this body like His own, by the working of " His mighty, power subduing," &c. Was dragging His people out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea, All? No! He was going to take them into a land flowing with milk and honey, and He led them all the way. That is His thought, and He will not come till the work is done.

He does not call Sauls and leave them to walk alone No! He is watching them day and night. But when He gets those people into the Father's house, He will not be able to add anything whatever to them. The Father, saying of those people, after they are brought home, you are the fruit of my Son's work, and His glory is to be displayed through you. It is a very blessed thing to feel as those to whom Christ has given the light of eternal life, that not only all our springs are in Him who died to give it to us, but that the light is so to shine out, that the path of each one, however humble, may be marked by the spark of eternal life shining out the whole way.

Lecture on Philippians, Christ Jesus Our Pattern

Notes of G. V. W.; Lecture on Phil. 2

I WAS looking last, time at the 1St chapter, as presenting the measure in which, by a man of like passions as we, eternal life was exhibited down here. This epistle being a sort of practical commentary of that word in the Gospel of John, "I in you." We find the power of eternal life in Christ dwelling in and being manifested down here in a man (Paul), and Paul could get into circumstances to write a letter to his beloved Philippians, and let out most strikingly this eternal life dwelling in him. In chapter i. verse 20, he says, " In nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." In circumstances where everything might be supposed calculated to bow down the heart, but no! The only thought in that heart was, that Christ might be in him, magnified.

We find in chapter i. the principle of eternal life-" For to me to live is Christ; " and in the 2nd chapter the pattern of the eternal life in the blessed Son Himself. Here very remarkable words are used. It is not English to say " To me to live is Christ." Here it points to what was that life of the Son, in the 1St chapter, the power of Paul in manifesting that life. He could say truly " To me to live is Christ." As the hands of a clock tell of that which is working inside, so Paul's life told of what was in his heart. He couldn't have said " To me to live is Christ " without the throbbing of that life in his soul.

Verse 1St. "If there be any," etc. Here he teaches notes well known to himself and these Philippians, calling on them to answer by a walk becoming the servant of Christ. He is a man full of the anointing, seeing everything in the presence of. God. " Fulfill my joy;" " Consider one another." Let' every one be the mark of another, not occupied with self, but with those who are the objects of Christ's love; If I see you' trying to build one another up, it is the joy of my heart.,,

Verse 5. " Let this mind," or, let this be minded by you. People read this, as if' it referred to the power of God in the mind., but it, is very different; it is the power of intelligence as to' the mind of God. He, has a 'mind of His own-man has not that mind, but he can understand the things of God. He has given us eternal life, we have the principle, and, are to exercise it as Christ did. From first to last, Christ was the servant, the Sent One, doing God's will-" Let this mind be' in you." It is the thinking, as Christ thought-not the mind of God-but the principle he has given, and what He is, ever sustaining. 'His name be praised, Christ's whole heart was set on His Father's mind. God had not two thoughts. He carried out the one, thought of -the Father's mind, and to, do it, had to come down here, to the death of the Cross. If I want to be thoroughly ashamed of self, it is when reading this chapter, contrasting self with that Divine. One, He who_ through His whole course never had a will. Every day, as a saint, I find I have a will that' must be kept under. Paul does not care what he suffers, or what becomes of him, so long as Christ be magnified in his body-he attained to an immense extent like-mindedness with Christ. We do not illustrate that eternal life Chris. It has given us, as did Paul, looking at the character of the glory of the Son here; it is not the humiliation only of the Son of man (the. Spirit of God, is very guarded) He being in the form of God, verses 7, 8. Who was that babe in the manger? Ah! that manger' was a good place, by way of contrast with the glory of the titles brought out there. Who was that babe? The one over whom angel's sung, the only begotten in the bosom of the Father. He came down and lay in a manger-the one who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He emptied Himself, He did make Himself of no reputation, washing His disciples' feet. This blessed One laid everything aside. All the divine power was in Him. He, the one by whom God made all things, 'when He came down and died, He laid it all in abeyance. I could not do that; if I tried to lay aside anything that distinguished me from others, it would be sure to come out, just when I did not want it to betray me, but He had perfect, absolute self control over Himself. I could not trust to your patience or forbearance with me, but I can trust God's perfect patience. Where should you find a man that would willingly abide under a yoke? The will tosses there, and Christ has to put His children there, to break that will down, saying " Now, I have done that, you can walk under my yoke and find it easy." Who but God could have gone on 4000 years with man, finding nothing but sin, sin, sin, till His Son came, the only one without sin and (He having been put to death) going on again 2000 years longer, and at the end, still unwearied in patience and goodness. What a heart the Lord Jesus must have after 6000 years of nothing but man's sin and the failure of His people, saying at the end, "Behold! I come quickly." He has a heart not like ours, but the contrast of all that we are. Adam's desire was "to become one of us (Gen. 3:22.) The blessed Lord was the Son, and the object of all worship, not a thing to be snatched at. He was it. "Being obedient unto death," going to the cross, with the consciousness that He was the Son of the Father, in whom all the Father's eternal counsels stood, and saying, " Lo, I come to do thy will." He could go down even to the death of the cross. He

said, " I have power to lay down my life," etc. I do not bring in the thought of atonement there; it is the perfection there of obedience, spewing how entirely His mind was subject to God and the Father. Everything He did He did as the servant of God. We can turn to Him and say, there is One whom we Can trace from the manger to the cross, and never find but on two occasions the expression of a will of His own, and that expression each time was perfect. The first-when anticipating drinking the cup the Father had given, and it would not have been perfect unless thus..Was it nothing to that holy One to think of all the billows and wrath He was going to bear for sin? The Gnostics said he did not suffer at all-it was a dreadful heresy. If not there as sin-bearer, all the fruits of His having died would have been at an end. He would not take the cup from man's hand, but at God's. The second expression of His will is in John 17th, " Father, I will," &c. What a blessed expression of perfect satisfaction in those poor things. He was soon going to leave them, and He could say, " Father, I have kept them in thy name," and I am coming for them, " and will that they should be with me where I am." He would not be alone in glory, He would have them sharers of it.

You and I have wills that are constantly working. You should get your will judged by the contrast between you and Christ. Get the beauty of Christ coming cloven, without any will, saying, " Lo, I come to do Thy will, and but for that will having been perfectly fulfilled, you would have been writhing eternally in hell.: Adam snatched. after what he thought would better' his circumstances, and he got Satan to be his patron, to get some thing for self. Christ walked down here perfectly will-less. Man had done what he liked, hut God had stood behind and given the cup (that was what man. would not see). The cup was not what He met with from the hand of, man, but from God. It was the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that He should die, and that as a man, because of carrying out all the counsels of God, he should go up to the highest place-everything in heaven; and earth to bow down to Him. Oh, how just God is! Did you ever snatch at a thing which God would have given you? Paul had a will, he would go to Jerusalem and had to go to Rome, but the Lord said, I shall go with you. Now will-less, I am as Christ, whose will it was to be the subject servant of God, nothing else, and there He is in the glory now, still in this character.

How little one's heart thinks of Him. Paul thought a great deal of Him. When could He get water enough, even to „turn that wheel? Water enough to keep his heart fresher and fresher as lie went on? Oh! It was the person of. Christ revealing 'Himself, that and only that, kept his heart fresh. That one, now on the Throne, in the highest place, because of His most perfect subjection: what a thought, that He is the eternal lover of souls, and all that I, have is in. Him; and it is all given me by the Father, and He will keep it.. The Holy Ghost sent down by. Him, seals it upon our heart, so that we can say, we know whose we are, that we are loved by Him-" God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." He would have a people, with all the freshness of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ for them. If God is working in us, there: is no distance between the potter and the vessel; it is in the potter's hand fashioning it and his hand is very close to the clay.

It is very blessed to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, but we must take care to remember that it is God who is molding and working in us, as He did in Paul, that Christ may be magnified in these bodies, whether by life or by death. There is not a thing I may be doing, that is bright to me now, that will continue to look bright in heaven unless Christ be the object of it. It is the expression of the life of Christ in a person that must be made manifest, one may be in bed sick; another running over the earth preaching, another in prison, no matter where it be, if Christ be in him, that set of circumstances he is in, is just the place where the life of Christ is to break forth and to shine most brightly. If a believer bad to take to his bed, for six weeks, and came to Christ, saying " Lord fill this chamber with Thyself," what brightness theft:, would be You do not find with many now, that Christ is first, Christ second, Christ third, not the rock, whence all supplies are to be drawn, not all handed up to Him, as the one teaching His child to read. You do not find likeness to Christ coming out, not like a seal with a good engraving; from which; if you gave me wax, I could make a good impression. Let Christ be inside and Christ will shine out; but if you let your heart be filled with care and trouble Christ cannot shine out, you will know what joy is when He can shine out; " Work out your own salvation," and when Christ has revealed Himself to me as a Savior, and ''I know the question of sin is settled, having eternal life, God says, " Now I shall teach you what a win you have, how unlike you are to 'my Son." God 'wants to have this body, soul, and spirit, all for Hiinself. If you see any beauty in Christ, and say "Ii would desire to have that," God' will work it in you.

In verses 15 and 16, we have a picture of what Christ

was down here. Christ shined forth all through His course. We are called to follow Him-" to be blameless," &c. Paul adds, " that I may rejoice," &c. There is one thing very sweet, and that is the communion of the saints in glory. Paul could say, " I shall meet you in the glory, and I want your walk to be such now, that you may be my joy and crown of rejoicing in that presence." If Paul stand there, with those beloved Philippians and Thessalonians as his crown of rejoicing, the great principle is brought out, that everything done down here for Christ will then shine out, and people will have the joy of it coming out there. The real question of sin is, the wanting to have a will of your own. Christ had none. He never found anything to be bitter, because He took it all from the Father's hand. We fret because we think things are so cruel, and complain because Satan has got such power; but all is under the hand of God, and there you get God's love, God permitting these things for blessing afterward, as in the case of Job. When I have looked back, at trials, and I have seen how I wanted that process, and if inclined to glory in gifts-how God took away things to strip self of everything-that one might find Him enough, I got down on my face and there I found He was enough.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Christ Magnified, Whether by Life or by Death

Phil. 1:18-20

IT is the practical experience of the apostle's heart in connection with Christ that is so marked in verse 20. The heart of a believer attentive to the Spirit's teaching, must feel that one cannot read this verse, without seeing that Paul had a practical connection with the Nazarene in heaven, that he believed in a Christ who was not in heaven only, but in his own soul, so that he could think of nothing, but only of this Christ. They were very remarkable circumstances bringing out his connection with Christ to his soul in such a way, that afterward, led by the Spirit, he labors to show it forth. What would not be joy to the heart of Christ, he as a believer in Christ could not joy in; yet whatever had Christ for its object could not do otherwise than turn to his salvation, through prayer and the supply of the Spirit. His only thought in everything was, that " Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death." He could say, " The laborers are one thing, and the field of labor is another; if I cannot rejoice in them, I can in the Lord, who will make all turn to my salvation, through the supply of His own Spirit." Then in verse 20, he goes on to give a beautiful picture of what occupied his whole heart; and you and I may realize it as much as he did.

Can I say that my earnest desire, and that on which my heart is set as the only thing, is that Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death? Ah, Paul, that desire was not thine, but God's thought; and if thine, only thine because Christ's Spirit was in thee, leading all in thee captive to that Christ. Paul was led and sustained by another-Christ. Can you and I say that we have only one simple desire, i.e. that through us Christ should be magnified? We should shrink from saying so, lest it should not be truth. Paul did not shrink, for it was truth. We should fear lest not desiring it as a reality. He could not; for he desired it as a real thing, and it was everything with that man, picked up by Christ, that Christ should be magnified through him. To magnify' anything is to make it appear larger than it is; that could not be so in connection with Christ. But Paul wanted all to shine out in him, so that Christ should be magnified through him; so shine out, that all should be able to say, " What a marvelous thing! there is a man so spending his life for Christ, that he does not care to live if he can but magnify Christ by his death! What a marvelous Person that Christ must be!"

" According to my earnest desire," &c. Not a person desiring a certain thing only, but calculating that it would be so. Paul had this expectation, that through him Christ should be glorified now in the wilderness, that now Christ should be magnified. The love of Christ constrained him, drew him along in the path after Christ. Oh, what manifestation of Christ it is, when the display of His handiwork is seen in a Saul of Tarsus; the oil of anointing so flowing down to the servant, that it could be said of that servant, " Like Master, like servant!" What a blessed servant this servant of Christ is in a dungeon, not knowing whether lie was to live or die, occupied only with the one thought of glorifying Christ there, of being a fellow-helper with Him down here! Whether his feet are in fetters or not, lie could say, " It is Christ I have for my portion in this dungeon; and whether I am here for life or death, it is my earnest expectation and hope that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death."

Paul in prison had God's thoughts to carry out. Oh, do let us see how far the anointing that made the soul of Paul in prison so full of joy, whether cast there for life or death, has made us fellow-workers with Paul! How far is that anointing enabling us to maintain our Nazariteship, enabling us to live out Christ, so that, whatever our circumstances, the power of the life of Christ in us may be seen as in Paul? How far is seen in us, from day to day, the mind of Christ? The same mind that led Him clown, even to the death of the cross, is the mind that we ought to have. We are the Lord's free men; man could not bind Paul. I beseech you let that example, that specimen of what it was to have every desire and hope of the heart fixed on Christ, let it, I say, be ever before your souls. Not saved only, but how far, as Christ's eye rests on you, can He say, as He could in respect of Paul, " Well, there is an individual who has but one desire, but one hope, to magnify Me, whether by life or by death." Could He say of any here that all their thoughts and actions, in their own little circle, are all for Him? We are to let the power of the grace that found us, and gave us life, tell its own tale by the manifestation of that life in all our circumstances in our wilderness path.

Lecture on Philippians, For Me to Live Is Christ

Notes of G. V. W., Lecture on Phil. 1

THE definite notice we find in the beginning of this chapter relative to the former order of the Church at Philippi is remarkable, because the epistle is all about eternal life in the believer, and the heart of Paul laboring in prayer for these Philippians; and there he takes up the subject of the epistle-eternal life-displayed on earth so that people could see it; he was the servant of God in prison, and the eternal life shining brightly.

I would refer to John 14:20-" At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father," &c. It is not feeling but knowing that I want faith leading to action. Three things ye shall know "at that day "-1, "I am in my Father; " 2, " Ye in me," " I in you,"" and for their sakes I sanctify myself," &c. If Christ had not gone up, there could be no sanctifying for us now. Of all truth He " in the Father " is the most important. It is most brought out in Colossians and " Ye in me;" in Ephesians and " I in you; " in Philippians " I am in the Father," is the most important, and " I in you " next. Paul begins with " I in you." There is very little of that in the teaching of the present day, i.e., a person walking down here; by Christ being in him and the Holy Ghost taking the direction; and 2nd, " I in him." People say responsibility must not be pressed. Truly, as descendants of Adam the first, you cannot give account of self, it would be low if so, but if you say God has no claim over a believer, and if you strip him of it, you cripple him. " Be ye holy," &c., not as a man could I do it, but as a command, in connection with light in me.

, A believer says, when light comes on anything, shall not do that; it is not holy." The question of sin being entirely settled, God says, I have not a word against you as to that, but if you do a single thing Contrary to me you shall hear of it. It is a word that comes to a child from the Father-as one with the blood on me, I am to walk not as the world walks.

Paul is in prison. Paul in this position is hedged up, everything against him, and yet how bright is his heart 1 If any saw it so in me, in sorrow or trial, might they not say, that is not what belongs to me as an individual?: The Lord knew Paul as Saul, and Paul was as unlike 'Saul as light is unlike darkness. There he is, and if surrounded by all the wickedness of men and of false professors, he cannot get his eye off Christ; that is not like Saul of Tarsus, it is a great deal too like Christ, to be like Saul of Tarsus! he says "the things that happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." What! to account being in bonds a good thing? Yes! it has stirred up the courage of believers without, who even passed through deeper waters than Paul 1 He was a model Man; he said, do not pity my bonds! It is for Christ's sake I wear them. I have got the mark on me of following Him, and these bonds stir up the courage of others to witness for Him. If I get suffering here, I shall get glory with Christ. If trying, as is said, to walk to heaven in silver slippers, you will not have the thought of glory, as, had Paul. What! give up that, or the other! don't say a word of it,—when Christ died and is up there, don't say a word of all you can give up, when He is up there, saying, "if your shoulder is worn with the harness, mine was-that is the path 'I Passed through, and like master like servant." It is joy, not sorrow, if His gospel is ours, and we have to suffer for it. In times of persecution the gospel has been talked of; in the ears of those opposed to it-what then, " in every way," etc. Paul wanted the name of Christ to be announced by every means and everywhere.

How is it your hearts are not full of Christ? thinking of Him in everything? He, the one eternal lover of your souls, who has borne with your bad manners, in the wilderness! the One, who is coming for you, on the cloud; now on the throne, occupied with you, and can you say, how could Paul be so full of this Christ? We think of paying out for Christ, instead of dwelling on what He paid in for us, up there divinely. When God calls a soul, He reveals Himself as entirely for that soul. Salvation is connected with three distinct things. We have the "soul" saved now, but not the body-that will (if the Lord do not come first) go into the dust; the purchase-money has been paid, but the application of life-giving power to the body not yet till Christ conies to raise the dead and change the living. Now, a process is. going on, God working to make me like Christ,

and sorrows and trials are not only like sand and grit used to polish a stone, but that I shall be made to taste, through the troubles, what Christ is to me. The twentieth verse is very sweet-Paul's " earnest expectation and hope " here, not the coming of the Lord, but another hope. He could count a place, where all were in darkness and the power of Satan rampant, a place of blessing if Christ might there be magnified in his body; and what ought a believer to be doing now if not magnifying Christ? Paul wanted his circumstances to make Christ much more tangible, and so it was: the anointing was so perfect on his eye he could not see anything but Christ, and in connection with those persecutors and false professors Paul said, it is Christ I want them to see; I want to be like a lens, to magnify Christ. It was what Christ was to Paul that is seen here. It is very important to let what I am taught of God and of Christ appear before men-because of teaching them what God and Christ are to me. Paul had Christ, in the power of His eternal life, so ruling every desire. and thought, that, with a chain on his foot and hand, all he thinks of, is, that Christ should be magnified; he wants Christ to be known. It was Christ he was suffering for, and he knew His heart was -hearing him; he, felt His love, he tasted it, he could say, did He not come and tell me He would go with me to Rome? Did He not give me a word, when all were in despair, to make all the people in the ship know that my God was everything to me?

Which of you could say, there is that singleness of eye, that earnest desire to live Christ, saying, till Christ comes I want Him to be shining out? Some say it more than others. The Lord some day will have to put many into the furnace, to destroy what is of the world. You could not be a bit the same as Christ: He was holy and undefiled, you have the law of sin and death in your members: you can walk like Christ, but not be like Him. Paul could say, "follow me as I follow Christ." Paul had every evil in him (as we have), he takes care to show he was what we are on the bad side, let us take care to spew we are what he was on the good side. How blessed if any were -so walking that persons could say-looking at the walk of that one-I see more of Christ than I ever before knew.

But if conscious of being under the eye of. Christ, one knows that He is taking notice of everything. Paul had to face persecutors and false prophets, but he knew the eye of One to be upon him, whose love would not let a single circumstance pass unnoticed (not even a gray hair); and that becomes the molding process of His love on me. If I live or die, in the act of departing I should find Christ there. In everything about me, I have the blessed consciousness of Christ being there. " To me to live," etc. Not a single thing that should not be the means of bringing out Christ. "To me to live is Christ," takes in more than the outshining of Christ into the heart, as the smitten one, whose blood flowed, to wash away all sins; to all who have faith in that blood light flows; one spirit with the Lord takes in all, not the question of my having life in Christ, but of manifesting it, as a saint. Have you a little stock of your own, to trade upon; or, saying no! nothing of my own; "to me to live is Christ " to-day. There is. a certain power of life in Christ, that is to be told out, in a very precious way, in each one of His own; "Having loved them, He loves them to the end." I am His; He had owned me as His, in all my wanderings, and He will love Me to the end. If an angel were to come to my bed-side, to tell Inc Christ was occupied with me, as a member of His body, should I be more certain of that love, than I am? It is no delusion, but a fact, that Christ loves me, and will love me right on to the end. He won't cease making me to know it, till He gets me into the Fathers' house, to be forever in the full fruition of it. He is in heaven now as our advocate with the Father. If occupied with the outgoings of self, it 'is like a great mountain of snow, but if I get into communion with Him, self cannot come in. You cannot say " To me to live is Christ," if you have not got the motive love to Him. If pleasing your father or mother, without a thought to please Christ, it is nothing, but if doing it, because of its being part of life in Christ, that you would manifest, it would be quite different

Christ stands with His people. If you take up a thing in His name, you may be quite sure, He is near you, and will carry you through it, by His sustaining. power. If I were to die to-morrow morning, Christ would be in it. He puts us to school, and does not take us out till He leas done His work in us; then " to me to die is gain." We get a beautiful picture in the way in which the eternal life, which Christ had with the Father, before the world was, was brought out in the life of Paul. His eye ever fixed on Christ above, his whole soul knit up with Him in heaven; ever drawing: power out of that Christ, to live to Him. What a happy people we should be, if we were mirrors; reflecting Christ in the perfect consciousness of all our weakness, but looking at Christ in heaven, bearing up amidst all the evil coming in like a flood, because He is in the glory with God in heaven. Instead of gathering up all the imagery on earth, to be magnifying Him in these bodies, whether by life, or by death, ever our happy condition.

Christ for the Heart: October 2007, To Me to Live Is Christ

The mind of the Spirit for you and me today is that we should be channels for the flowing forth of the eternal life that is in Christ, in the midst of the world. He would have a stream flowing forth from us, telling of the God who is its source and of the Christ who supplies it.

For what reason does Christ show that all He possesses is ours? Merely that we should be saved? No! He might then have waited till the eleventh hour before He had called us. No, He wants the eternal life to be told out in a world where Satan is master, so that He can point angels, principalities and powers to the church, to learn in us the manifold riches of God’s grace. As children of the Father’s house, who have known the bosom of the Father, who are members of the body of the glorious Head in heaven, let me ask you if the character of the Head is seen in you? Are you seeking to make the wilderness resound, not merely with the name of the Lord Jesus, but with lives conformed to His character and to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven? God has His wishes for His saints, and shall not my heart respond to His desires? See to what an extent Paul carried this. To some it seems a strange thing to press the life of Christ on people, but of what value is a beautiful watch without hands? And what is a saint if not showing forth Christ, or a vine if it bears no grapes?

The Apostle could say, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). What was Paul about when he wrote that word? He felt that he was for Christ, and Him only, whether in life or in death. He could say, “I have only one object — Christ. And I have only one desire — that Christ should be magnified in my body.” If, therefore, they had beheaded Paul, would he have lost anything? No! Christ would have been magnified in his body still. What sort of testimony was that in Caesar’s court? A Roman knew how to face death as a display of courage. However, to go forward to it in the thought that death was gain, because there was a Jesus who had been crucified between two thieves, who was the joy of a man’s heart, a natural Roman could not have understood. Let me ask you: Since you have known Christ, Christ’s heart, Christ Himself your treasure, your life, Christ everything that God could give you — has your thought been, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”? It is our privilege while passing through this scene. How it changes death, if to die is gain, Christ being magnified in it! That is what a life of communion with God gives to a man. He is ennobled by God, most truly. If the life of Christ is flowing out through me, I am like the hands of a clock through which the life of the works within shows itself. Is that bondage? Is it legality for Christ to say, “Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and I expect you to show it”? If this is bondage, would to God there were ten thousand times more of it. G. V.

Wigram, adapted

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