

God's wise and blessed purposes, was made to enjoy in an extraordinary and special manner. In that, flesh and mortal nature had no part, nor ever can, though *we* (as alive in Christ) have, while in that nature, whatever be the degree of our realization of it. Paul was allowed to know it, so that while enjoying it in the highest degree in the new man, in his life in Christ, ("the life hid with Christ in God," the "not I but Christ living in him,") he had no consciousness of that other mortal part which yet burdens by its very nature (as well as by sin if will works) the new and heavenly man in us. He could not tell if he was in or out of the body: he knew, on re-entering his ordinary state of conscious existence that he had this body; but he could not tell whether he was in or out of it when in the third heaven; he was unconscious of it altogether.

The reader will remark too, how carefully the apostle distinguishes between the man in Christ, and himself as he had the practical experience of himself down here, having indeed the life of Christ and the Spirit which united him to the Head, but having also the flesh in him, though he was not in the flesh. Of this Paul, of which he was practically conscious down here, he would not glory; but he had been given to be in the enjoyment of his place as a man in Christ with entire abstraction, as to his consciousness of it, of anything else—of such a one he would glory. And so can we: though we may never have been in the third heaven to realize fully the glory and privileges of the position we are