

ers all seeing nothing; the hinges move silently, and the doors are flung open. and the Apostle in the silence and solemnity of the night hears a voice—a voice that he well knows, a voice that stilled the waves on the sea of Galilee, that spoke to the cold, dead and decaying body in the sepulchre, that spoke to the blind and they saw, and that Paul remembered last to have heard on an occasion that made the deepest and most lasting impression on his heart, when, he being prostrate at the gate of Damascus, it had said, “Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?” This voice then spake to Paul, and his chains became lighter, and he felt that Christ’s promise, “Lo! I am with you always” was not a make-believe merely, but a truth.

Is there then, it may be asked, such intimacy now between Christ in Heaven and the believer upon earth? Why should there not be? The Bible was not written to intercept Christ’s visit to us, or to arrest the ascent of our aspirations to Him. Is it true that any one is guided now by a celestial impulse?—I have no more doubt of it than I have of my own existence. Have you not at times been in deep perplexity of spirit, and, suddenly, rest (you could not explain how) has been given you, and you have traced the Divine Hand in it, and found it has been all you could desire? Is it absurd then to say that He who visited the lonely prisoner in the damp, dark cell, still visits the perplexed spirit, and in a voice of love, says, “Be of good cheer.” Have you not at times been dejected and depressed—I do not speak now to the poor widows and orphans, or to the miserable children in our unions and ragged schools, but I speak to the richest and most highly favoured in this world of ours—have you not oftentimes been depressed, or dejected and melancholy, you could not say why? Have there not come over your hearts those feelings which made you feel most miserable and you did not know how? Possibly the evil one may have been tempting you? but is it not a fact? And if it be a fact is it assuming too much, or asserting too much, to hope that when in that deep depression the cloud is apparently rolled away, and you feel as if an overwhelming load had been taken off your heart—is it absurd, is it fanatical?—I protest it is not—to hope that there has been a visit of Christ to your heart, and the voice saying, “Peace: be still,” when the waves of passion were laid down, and the winds of prejudice were calmed. The Bible is the chart by which we are to walk, but it is not a substitute for Jesus. It is possible, I do not say to make too much of the Bible, but to put the Bible in the wrong place, and try to displace the Lord of the Bible by the book of which He is the Author. If then the Bible was not written to intercept such communications, why should we hesitate to believe that He frequently, to many a lonely heart makes sudden communications? And

what will these communications teach us?—That God’s word is indeed the chart—is indeed the lamp; but the Bible cannot save us, and all the Apostles together cannot save us—they can only tell us how to be saved.—The Saviour is Christ alone. And when you have heard that voice in your heart, and felt that electric spark in your spirit with authority and power, you then feel that Jesus of Nazareth was no mere historical person, as Socrates or Plato, but that he was Lord of the heart, and Lord of the conscience—that He was your life, your inspiration, your hope, your all in all.

Now the next thought suggested by this very interesting passage, is that the Apostle Paul was informed here that Christ had a work for him to do, and that his life would last until that work was accomplished,—“Thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem; thou must bear witness also at Rome.” With regard to Jerusalem that chapter is finished, and that leaf is therefore turned over and passed by, but there is work for you to do at Rome, and therefore you must be at Rome. It is quite possible to think too highly of ourselves, but it is just possible that we may think too poorly of ourselves. The meanest, humblest, and poorest has a mission to fulfil; the obscurest in life has a Divine lamp. The sparrow on the housetop has its mission, and it cannot fall to the ground without the permission of Him who gave it life. The eagle in its eyrie has its mission, and, until it has accomplished that mission, it will not die.—The dew-drop, the rose—those things that seem to us to be a part of the wastes and escapes of creation, has each a mission to fulfil, and when it has fulfilled it, it is not annihilated, but its incense ascends to the skies and swells the volume of the early and latter rain, and it shall fulfil its mission to the end. So the humblest individual has some mission, and his great care should be not to trouble himself about his wants, but to mind what is open to him. We have a very strange and dishonest habit of transferring the duty of to-day to to-morrow, and drawing upon to-morrow in care and anxiety—a very strange process—and the consequence is that as God gives us just grace sufficient for each day and no more, we take two days’ load upon our hearts by having drawn upon the morrow, when we have only one day’s strength to bear it. You need not be surprised then, that the mind gives way, that the brain founders, that the heart sinks. The secret of health—and it is a better secret than all the medicine that can be got—is to do with your whole soul the work assigned for to-day, and to leave to-morrow’s work to take care of itself. But when I say this, I have to say in regard to the gospel, if the heart is open for it, “Take no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink or wherewithal ye shall be clothed. Consider the lilies of the field how they