

Lord Jesus with you. "I *am*" is neither "I was" nor "I will be." It is always abreast of our lives, always encompassing us with salvation. It is a splendid, perpetual "*Now*." It always means, "I am with you *now*," or it would cease to be "I am" and "always."

Is it not too bad to turn round upon that gracious presence, the Lord Jesus Christ's own personal presence, here and now, and, without one note of faith or whisper of thanksgiving, say, "Yes, but I don't realize it?" Then it is, after all, not the presence, but the realization that you are seeking--the shadow, not the substance! Honestly, it is so! For you have such absolute assurance of the reality put into the very plainest words of promise that Divine love could devise, that you dare not make Him a liar, and say, "No! He is *not* with me!" All you *can* say is, "I don't feel a *sense* of His presence." Well, then, be ashamed of doubting your beloved Master's faithfulness, and "never open thy mouth any more" in His presence about it. For those doubting, desponding words were said *in His presence*. He *was there with* you, while you said or thought them. What must He have thought of them? As the first hindrance to realization is not believing His promise, so the second is not *recollecting* it, not "keeping it in memory." If we were always recollecting, we should always be realizing. But we go forth from faith to forgetfulness, and there seems no help for it. Neither is there in ourselves. But "in Me is thine help." Jesus Himself had provided against this before He gave the promise. He said that the Holy Spirit should bring all things to our remembrance. It is no use laying the blame on our poor memories, when the Almighty Spirit is sent that He may strengthen them. Let us make real use of this promise, and we shall certainly find it sufficient for the need it meets. He can, and He will, give us that holy and blessed recollectedness, which can make us dwell in an atmosphere of remembrance of His presence and promises, through which all other things may pass and move without removing it.

Unbelief and forgetfulness are the only shadows which can come between us and His presence; though when they have once made the separation, there is room for all others. Otherwise, though all the shadows of earth fell around, none could fall between; and their very darkness could only intensify the brightness of the pavilion in which we dwell--the secret of His presence. They could not touch what one has called "the unutterable joy of shadowless communion."

What shall we say to our Lord to-day? He says, "I *am* with