Altogether Lovely!

Hugh Brown, 1896

"His mouth is sweetness itself. Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, this my Friend!" Song of Songs 5:16

PREFACE

My heart is gushing forth a good matter — I write of things touching the King! Whatever the reader may think of my writing — he can find no fault with my Theme, for He is "the chief among ten thousand" — and His "name is above every name!"

I can write nothing new concerning Him, for all that can be revealed to human minds and hearts in this life has been written by the Holy Spirit, whose delight it has been to delineate through type and shadow, in prophecy and song, by narrative and doctrine, "the beauty of the Lord" — the surpassing excellencies of Him Whom the angels worship, Whom the saints adore, Whom the Father loves with a love that knows neither beginning nor ending — Him Who for our sakes "humbled Himself" — but has now sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens.

I can only invite my readers to come with me into this garden of delights while we discourse together of His sweetness and His loveliness, His majesty and might, of the riches of His glory, and the glory of His grace! Oh, that the Holy Spirit may Himself be our Guide, opening our eyes to see, and our ears to hear! Oh, that our eyes may behold the face of our Beloved, that our ears may be attentive unto His voice, that our hearts may burn within us while He talks with us along the way!

So shall we see the King in His beauty, our souls will be refreshed and our hearts declare that "His mouth is sweetness itself. Yes, He is altogether lovely!"

Behold the Man!

"Yes, He is altogether lovely!"

What is man? Where did he come from? Where does his pathway lead? So fearfully and wonderfully he is made; so great — and yet so little; so noble — yet so base; a feeble spark of life — yet having an eternal destiny. Alas! we only know man in his fallen state, not as God created him; man with the crown fallen from his head, a rebel against his Maker, the slave of sin, a willing subject of Satan; man in his weakness, compassed with infirmity, the prey of many diseases, "of few days and full of trouble," a bearer of burdens with a heritage of sorrow. Though sometimes in his youth, life may seem bright while he eagerly hunts after pleasure — how soon the flowers fade, the bubble bursts, and he is left with emptiness in his heart, and learns by sad experience the truth of God's word: "Truly every man at his best estate is altogether vanity!"

We know man also in his sinfulness with a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," torn by conflicting passions, in the vile bondage of iniquity, sin reigning within and without, proud, arrogant, self-seeking, vain, making the earth a habitation of of vice and cruelty!

Yet man was the crowning piece of God's workmanship, made in His own image, given dominion over the works of His hands. What he was when first he came from the hands of his Maker, we cannot tell — only we are told that when God "laid the corner stone" of this earth there was an outburst of delight among the heavenly hosts, for "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

And even now in his fallen state, the image of God in ruins, he bears traces of his pristine glory, giving evidence of his descent from "Adam, who was the son of God." His faculties, though dwarfed and perverted through sin — are yet marvelous; his eye scans the heavens and calculates the distances from star to star; he peers into the secrets of nature, and discovers marvels of God's handiwork; he lays his hands upon the forces of nature and binds them for his service. His mind ranges throughout the universe, and stores up treasures of knowledge.

Moreover, by his speech he can communicate his thoughts to great assemblies and stir the hearts of multitudes; he can uphold the right, his anger can burn against wrong, and, highest of all, he is gifted with the Divine faculty of love.

This is the might of man — yet how it is mocked by his impotence, for "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass!" Isaiah 40:6-7

We also know *redeemed* man; the awful burden of his guilt taken away, the power of sin over him broken; the "new man," which, by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, "is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him." But though we are now the sons of God, being born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever" — yet, alas! the divine life of our inward man is too often of but feeble growth, and the lineaments of the image of God in our souls is sometimes hard to trace.

To the heavenly host who witnessed the creation of this earth, "the sons of God" who "shouted for joy" when He laid the cornerstone thereof — it may have seemed as if God's glorious purpose was frustrated and His handiwork destroyed — when they beheld His image in man broken and effaced, sin reigning, and the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together.

But God's purposes can never be frustrated, either by the malice of Satan — or the weakness of man. Adam was but a type, and even in his best estate but a faint shadow of God's Man upon earth, the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the fullness of the time had come, the angelic hosts again were summoned — ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands — to celebrate the advent of the "Son of Man" — and again "the morning stars sang together" their song of praise, "Glory to God in the highest" — and again, "all the sons of God shouted for joy" when the Heavenly Babe was born in Bethlehem.

For thirty-three years Jesus lived upon this earth, in childhood, youth, and manhood, the perfect Man, "without spot or blemish, or any such thing." In Him, and in Him only, we see that grand ideal of creation; the marvelous beauty of a true Man "made in the image of God."

In all things God decreed for man, Jesus fulfilled every requirement. Man was created to render a perfect obedience, and Jesus said, "Lo, I come, I delight to do Your will, O God; yes, Your law is within My heart!" Man was made to endure and withstand temptation — and Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are — yet without sin." Man was made to have dominion over the works of God's hands — and "we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor" — and "set on the right hand of the Throne of the majesty in the heavens." Yes, in all these, man was created to be "the image and glory of God" — and Jesus was indeed "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person."

True, He was not Man only, but GOD INCARNATE. "God manifest in the flesh" — but in His earthly life His Godhead was veiled, and only His human nature was seen; they could not have looked upon the intense radiance of His Deity, but "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Now from the Throne of Heaven there comes a call to all the universe to "BEHOLD THE MAN," whose wondrous life is recorded by Him who alone could write it — the Spirit of the living God.

And what manner of Man is it whose portrait is set before us in the four Gospels? Imagination has delighted to portray Him in manly beauty, but the Holy Spirit gives no indication of what His features were, except to say "There were many who were appalled at Him — His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness!" Isaiah 52:14

The eye of the natural man, then, as now, "sees no beauty in Him." It is to the spiritual vision alone, when the eyes of the soul are opened and "anointed with eye salve" by the Holy Spirit, that "the beauty of the Lord" is revealed.

In all things He was the very opposite of what the mind of fallen man would naturally conceive — and in this, the Divine character of the record, as well as of the life, is manifest. Born in a village inn, of a lowly mother, whose life was lived in a despised town in a conquered country — His early life was spent amidst obscure surroundings, and the only record of thirty years is that at twelve He was "about His Father's business" — that He was subject unto His parents, and that He "grew in stature and in favor with God and man." In earthly position He never rose above this low estate, but, as He said to one who desired to become His disciple, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests — but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." "The world was made by Him" — yet the world had nothing for her Maker, but a cross and a grave!

He was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Oh, what Divine pathos lies in these words There is no depth of human woe He did not fathom in His own experience. Hunger, thirst, and weariness were His portion. He was despised, forsaken, hated, and those who He sought to bless — went about to kill Him!

He was alone in an awful loneliness. Even His own chosen disciples understood Him not; they were men of another spirit and could not enter into the depths and heights of His soul. Yet He could say, "I am not alone, for My Father is with Me" — and in solitude at night upon the mountain, He sought communion with His Father.

But with what sweet majesty He bore it all! Not an angry word escaped Him, not a sign of impatience. He "sighed" — but not for Himself. He "wept" — but it was for others' woe. He toiled for others' gain. He "suffered the contradiction of sinners" — yet "all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth!" He "took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses" — and His whole soul went out in one great flow of compassion towards the sinful and the lost.

Yet His life was a life of intensest purity and burning holiness. He had pity and pardon for the sinner — but no compromise with sin. It was for this He was hated and rejected then — and it is for this He is hated and rejected now. As He said Himself, "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" — while "in Him there is no darkness at all."

With infinite meekness and gentleness, He bore all wrong done to Himself, but He burned with zeal for His Father's honor.

Oh! marvelous Life of Jesus, the "Son of Man" — so patient, so meek, so holy, so pure; such compassion for the lost; such tenderness to the penitent; such immeasurable love to those who put their trust in Him. As in spirit we *gaze* into those eyes from whose depths, there beams the light of love divine; as we mark the *feet* that ever sought the weary, the sorrow laden, the sin oppressed, and the hands that were ever ready to heal and lifted up to bless; as we listen to the words of Him who "spoke as never any man spoke" — surely we must exclaim, "You are fairer than the sons of men, grace is poured into Your lips!" "He is the chief among ten Thousand! Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

This is My Beloved Son

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" Matthew 3:17

Jesus, the Son of Man, is also Christ the Son of God. God has many sons — Adam, the holy angels and redeemed men — but Jesus Christ is His "only *begotten* Son," the only One "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" — and "in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," the only one eternal Son who "in the beginning was with God."

What the nature is of this eternal Fatherhood and eternal Sonship — it is beyond the power of finite beings to comprehend. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us — it is too high, we cannot attain unto it. But the blessed Spirit who knows the deep things of God has revealed this glory in Holy Scripture, so that we may know according to the measure of our capacity.

As we read and ponder these Scriptures of Divine truth, we seem to stand upon the shore of that ocean of infinite and eternal love, and listen to the reverberations as "deep calls unto deep." We seem to hear faint, far-away echoes in human love, "Take now your son, your only son ISAAC, whom you love!" Or as David mourns over the death of his rebellious Absalom, "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for you!" Such is the tenderness of human love, the treasure in poor broken potsherds of the earth — feeble, struggling rays of that ineffable glory, the great unfathomable love between God the Father and God the Son.

We hear it in the counsels of eternity concerning this great universe, when we learn that for Christ all things were created. It was for the glory of the manifestation of the Son, that God brought all things into being.

Men often ask in perplexity, "Why did God create all things?" We have the answer here: "From the seraph before the Throne — to the meanest worm that crawls upon the earth; from the mightiest star that shines in the heavens — to the tiny glow-worm that feebly sparkles on the pathway; from the center of creation — to the uttermost bounds of this vast universe all, all were formed by infinite wisdom in eternal love for "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father."

The fulfillment of God's purpose has not yet appeared; God is painting the picture, and oh! there are dark, dark colors there — as well as lines of living light. We know not why, but God knows — and at the right time He "will make it plain."

Meanwhile, we know that "God is love" — boundless, all-embracing love; and we can leave with Him the vindication of His wisdom and righteousness and truth.

GOD IS LOVE! What delight He takes, as the Bible reveals to us, in all the works of His Hands! "*For His pleasure* all things are and were created" — to minister joy to Him whose joy it is to make all things the recipients of His love and care.

But, alas! *sin* has come and *woe* has followed wherever the *terrible poison* has penetrated. Again we say we know not how nor why, but we know that the holy God could not, even in thought or design, be the Author of sin. And still His love flows on to the meanest creature that breathes and to the souls whom He has made.

But oh who could adequately receive or reciprocate His infinite and eternal love? No finite created being, not angels nor archangels, were sufficient for this. It needed One who was equal with God — who, though born of a woman, was yet the Son of the Highest.

On Him, the Father could lavish all His measureless love! In Him, He could find infinite delight! Unto Him, He could commit the vindication of His honor, the glory of His name. In the clear crystalline depths of His sinless soul, in the marvelous and mysterious union of His Divine and human nature, in His tested righteousness and unsullied perfections — the Father found an Object worthy of His love! One with whom He could hold high and holy communion! One alone of whom He could declare to the assembled universe, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And as is the Father's love to the Son — so was the Son's love to the Father. With what tender pathos did He so often speak of *"My Father."* In the one glimpse which is given us of His early days, can we not picture His far-away look and the light of Heaven that shone in His eyes as He said, "Don't you know that I must be about My Father's business?" And we may well imagine how, while fulfilling the allotted task of the lowly life He had chosen, He would delight to read and ponder His Father's Word concerning Himself until every line was inwrought in His soul.

And all throughout His great mission, from the Baptism in Jordan — to the Cross on Calvary, He delighted to show how every Scripture was in Him fulfilled. "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" He said in holy anger, as He drove from the temple those who bought and sold in its sacred courts; and the disciples then remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has consumed Me!"

Although as God He could say "I and My Father are one," as the Son He could also say "My Father is greater than I" — and He delighted to give honor unto His Father in Heaven. Although, as God, He knew all the mysteries of God — yet, as the Son of God, He took upon Him the subordinate place, and when thanking His Father, "The Lord of Heaven and earth," because in His wisdom He had hidden His righteous dealings from the wise and prudent and had revealed them unto babes — He taught us the lesson of *sweet dependence* in the words, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good unto You."

In the fourth Gospel, which is specially the record of His life as the Son of God, with what sweet resonance do the endearing words *"My Father!"* ring out again and again.

"I have come in My Father's name."

"My Father works hitherto."

"My Father gives you the true bread."

"As My Father has taught Me, I speak."

"I speak that which I have seen with My Father."

"I honor My Father."

"My Father honors Me."

The greatest assurance He could give of the eternal security of His sheep was this, that "My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand!"

All through His earthly ministry, He dwelt in spirit alone with God. And when He came down from the high and holy solitudes of communion with His Father — it was by word and deed to reveal that Father unto men.

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed Him." His Father's love, His Father's will, His Father's honor, His Father's power, His Father's glory — these vibrated in every chord and filled every moment of His life with the music of Heaven!

When His soul was troubled, His prayer was "Father, glorify Your name!" At the last supper He spoke of His Father's Kingdom; in the agony in Gethsemane He prayed, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me unless I drink it — may Your will be done!" And shortly after, when seized by ruffian hands, and one of His disciples drew a sword in His defense, what a depth of tenderness were in the words when He said with calm, sweet dignity, "Put your sword away; the *cup* which My Father has given Me — shall I not drink it?" On the terrible cross, His first word was *Father* when He prayed for His enemies, and His last word was "Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit." And on the resurrection morn almost the first words He spoke to human ears were, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them: I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God!" John 20:17

Oh! wondrous words which link us with our Lord in divine Sonship, and give us a right to look up into the face of God and say, *Abba Father!* — for we have no sonship but in Him. Our birthright was lost in Adam — but it is given to us again only in Christ! Oh, blessed truth! this glorious new birthright will never fail while all the eternal ages run!

In His great High Priestly prayer, with what infinite delight He dwells on the thought, seven times repeated, that *His redeemed people were His Father's gift to Him*! He has told us that His joyful greeting to His risen saints will be, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father — inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

Then His Father's name will be seen written on their foreheads, and He will grant them, He says, "to sit down with Him on His Throne, even as He also will sit down on His Father's Throne."

Thus the Son glorifies the Father, and the Father glorifies the Son, and the Holy Spirit delights to glorify both.

Into the deep secret communion of the Triune God, we may not enter — but from what the Spirit has revealed, the whole Church of God, as they gaze upon the face of His beloved Son, can unite in saying in the inspired words of the Song of Songs, *"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"*

Behold My Servant!

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights!" Isaiah 42:1

The *Son* of God was also pre-eminently the *Servant* of God. *Sonship* is ever linked with *service*. There may be service without sonship — but there cannot be true sonship without faithful service.

If God has many *sons* — so also has He many *servants*. The whole creation obeys His high behests! All the forces of nature are not only subject to His will, but actively carry out His decrees, "Fire and hail, snow and clouds — stormy wind, fulfill His word!" Psalm 148:8

He speaks — and the thunder rolls!

He directs — and the lightning flashes!

He commands — and the whirlwind goes upon its appointed track!

He says, "Peace — be still" — and in a moment there is a great calm, the sunlight breaks through the parting clouds, and the wavelets ripple upon the shore.

And oh! what peace it gives to the child of God, to know that even the minutiae of his daily life, as well as the greatest events in God's vast government — are all made up of the countless ministries — seen or unseen, conscious or unconscious — of God's innumerable servants, willing or unwilling! For even wicked men, and Satan himself, with minds set on rebellion, foaming out their rage against the God of Heaven — have to bend to His almighty will, and when He chooses they must, like Balaam, speak and do only what He commands!

As we rise in the scale of being, so we rise in the honorableness of service until we come to the company of the redeemed, to the prophets and apostles, to the holy angels "who excel in strength and do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word," to all the hosts of the Lord — those "ministers of His who do His pleasure" — up, up to the burning seraphim who stand before the presence of His glory, with folded wings covering their faces and their feet, waiting upon Him continually!

But as of all God's sons, there is but One only begotten Son — so among all God's servants, there is but One towering over the heads of all the others, of whom God can say, "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights!" And as true *sonship* and true *service* are indissolubly united — so it needed the Eternal Son of God to be the *perfect* Servant.

For the perfect servant of God must also be equal with God — God's Fellow, one who knows God, not by revelation through another, but of Himself; one who is able to comprehend God, and who is one with God.

What was the wondrous service on which Jesus the Christ was sent? First it was . . .
to reveal God to man,
to reveal to man the *mind* of God,
to reveal to man the *will* of God,
to reveal to man the *heart* of God.

To do this perfectly, He needed to have *infinite knowledge* of the infinite God. Then He had to fulfill all the requirements of God's eternal and inviolable law, and to do this perfectly He needed to have *almighty power*.

Then He had to carry out the glorious purpose of God's infinite and eternal love, and for this He needed to be "filled with all the fullness of the Godhead!" So none but He who could truly say, "I and the Father are one" — could be the Perfect Servant.

But to be a servant, He who was equal with God had . . .
to lay aside His glory,
to divest Himself of His omnipotence,
to link Himself with the creature, and
to be as completely dependent upon the Creator.

Hence the mystery of the Incarnation, wherein true God was joined with perfect man. Man in everything but sin — man in . . .
his weakness and his weariness,
his hunger and his thirst,
his utter helplessness in himself,
his absolute dependence for everything upon God!

So God said of Him "Behold My servant whom I uphold!" for He so "emptied "Himself that He, as we, needed to be upheld by the power of God.

The words He spoke — were His Father's words;
the works He wrought — were His Father's works;
the glory He manifested — was His Father's glory. He did not glorify Himself — but left it to the Father to glorify Him.

How He delighted in taking the place of subordination to the Father! How He loved to tell that He was "sent!" Yes, it was His food to do the will of Him who sent Him, and to finish His work — so that even with the dreadful cross in view He panted to do the will of God, as He said, "I have a baptism to undergo — and how distressed I am until it is completed!" Luke 12:50

And it is through the infinite merits of His finished work, of His completed service, of His perfect obedience, "unto death, even the death of the cross" — that all our service as redeemed sinners is acceptable unto God. Oh, what wonderful honor is given to us in that we too are made "servants of the most high God!"

Service has the highest place of honor in the Kingdom of God. In the kingdoms of the world, "men strive for the mastery" — and those who are great exercise authority. "But in the Kingdom of Heaven," as Jesus taught us, "whoever among you will be the chief — shall be servant of all." It is not the greatest "gifts," the most brilliant "talents" — but the lowliest and most loving service, which wins the highest honor with God.

We can never descend lower or rise higher than the Master did, when "knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and went to God," He took a towel and girded Himself, and poured water into a basin, and washed His disciples' feet, and wiped them with the towel with which He was girded!

Oh, how surpassingly sweet is the service of God! We are His "slaves." Bondage on earth has become in evil thing, because of sin; but without sin, slavery is the most blessed form of service — for if the servant is bound to the master, so also is the master bound to the servant. In ancient times it was the hired servant who was the poorest and weakest and basest of all, for he did his day's work and received his day's wage, and then he went away and had no one to care for him — no one but God, who commanded, "Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy. Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin." Deuteronomy 24:14-15

But the slave remained with the master, and while he and all that was his belonged to the master, the master was bound to the utmost of his power and wealth to protect and provide for the servant. And oh, how sweet to be the slave of Christ, bound up in the bundle of life with Him, bound with the holy bonds of the love and of the power of God! On the one hand, "all I am and all I have" is surrendered to Him — and on the other hand, all He is and all He has, is pledged to supply all my needs!

Like the Roman soldier to whom Paul was chained — I cannot go without Him; and wonder of wonders! — He cannot go without taking me.

But at best we are "unprofitable servants" — that is, that when we have done all — even if we could render a perfect service — God is not our debtor; we have put Him under no obligation to us. We are the work of His hands — He made us, gave us every power, every faculty that we possess — so that when we render unto Him our service, we only give Him back His own. And doubly so, for when we had sold ourselves into bondage, "in His love and in His pity He redeemed us!" — so that both by right of *creation* and of *purchase,* we belong to God.

Yet after all, we are also *hired servants*, for God will be no man's debtor, and though we can earn nothing — yet the grace of God will repay us for all our service, "full measure, pressed down and running over!"

"Does Job fear God for nothing?" sneered Satan; and though he missed his mark, it was the truth he spoke. Job did not serve God for nothing — and none of us do. Every little service rendered — such as giving a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, though it be but giving God back His own, and not even that — shall have its full reward in *present joy* and *future glory!* "My servants shall sing for joy of heart," says the Lord. This joy they have now, and hereafter when they enter into glory "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face!" Then we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is! No, no; we do not serve God for nothing, for though we can claim nothing — yet God of His free grace will count that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed toward His name."

Now in all these things Christ, and Christ alone, is the perfect Servant. He is the perfect Bond-servant.

In Exodus 21, the law of the Hebrew bondsman is given, that if when the time of his release had come he said, "I love my master — I will not go out free," then the master was to bore his ear through with an awl to the door-post, and he was to be bound to him forever. This law was given as a type and shadow of Him who was to come — God's Bond-servant, of whom it is written in the prophetic Psalm (Psalm 40.) "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire — My ear have You pierced." The bonds were those of love and willing service: "I love my master, and will not go out free" — but they were sealed with a bleeding ear and a suffering body, so when the Holy Spirit claims these words for Christ, He alters them to "a body have You prepared Me," a body capable of enduring pain, of suffering death with the shedding of blood.

"I love My Master; I will not go out free." Just so, by the indissoluble bonds of eternal love, Jesus was the willing Bond-servant of God His Father, and would not go out free until He had accomplished all that His Father had sent Him to do. "Do you think," He said to Peter who impetuously but feebly tried to defend Him, as the last dread ordeal was coming upon Him, and cup of awful woe was about to be pressed to His lips, "Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" Nay; He needed no legions of angels — no man took His life from Him, He laid it down of Himself, as He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." But this commandment He had received from His Father, and no power in Heaven or earth or Hell could turn Him aside from doing the Father's will.

All of God's other servants are unprofitable — that is, they can bring Him nothing that He has not first Himself given. But Christ is the one Profitable Servant. All He had was His own by eternal uncreated right. He voluntarily laid aside His glory, He voluntarily "took upon Him the form of a servant." Of His own free will, He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law." Therefore — with all reverence be it said — He has made God the Father His debtor! He has yielded to Him a voluntary obedience, He has given to Him an eternal delight. He has vindicated the honor of His law, fulfilled to the uttermost the requirements of His holy will, and brought to Him a new resplendent glory — the glory of redemption!

But God the Father will be debtor to no one — not even to the Son. His beloved Bond-servant, His inestimably Profitable Servant — He will also make His glorious Hired Servant. As the Son has glorified the Father, so the Father will glorify the Son. It was "for the joy that was set before Him" that He "endured the cross, despising the shame." That joy He shall have to the very full, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many," says the Lord. The Father will keep through His own Name, those whom He has given Him; and when the great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stand before the Throne clothed with white robes and palms in their hands — then will be fulfilled the marvelous petition of Him, who, though a Servant, was yet equal with God: "Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world!"

Into the fullness of the meaning of these words we cannot enter — before the ineffable glory we stand with reverence and with holy joy, for we shall hereafter be partakers thereof. But as we meditate upon the infinite perfections of the Servant of God, we add this humble tribute to His praise, "Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

The Word Was Made Flesh

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14

The Word of God — what is it? We are so familiar with the expression that, perhaps, we do not adequately take in its marvelous import. It is the uttered thought of the Eternal. God speaks in nature, He utters His voice in creation and providence. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament show His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge." All created things speak of Him and bear witness to His glory and majesty, His wisdom, power, and goodness; but none of these tell us the thoughts of God or reveal Him to our souls.

A notable scientist, but an unbeliever, said that he had studied all science and examined all Nature, but he found no room for God. And, O vain man, God Himself taught us the same thing long ago by his inspired penman, "Can you by searching find out God? Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Neither nature nor science nor philosophy can give to us the knowledge of God. Although we might have seen the evidences of His handiwork, we had never known God.

The pre-eminence of the Bible over all other literature, ancient or modern, consists not merely in its high moral teaching. Many people, even professing Christians, are so blind to the glory of the Word of God that they gather out of the *rubbish heaps of ancient philosophies* a few stray gems of moral teaching, or find in the dense darkness of heathen religions, a few pale gleams of human virtue, and, comparing these with the teachings of Christ, tell us that He was only better in degree. These utterly fail to apprehend the true character of the Word of God. Neither can the *written* Word be at all compared with any of the writings of men; nor can He who is the *Living* Word be compared with the sons of men. They both occupy a place of Divine isolation from all others as the Revelation of God to man.

When we read the Bible with the eyes of our understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and our hearts touched with living fire by the Spirit of God — as we listen, we hear two voices, as deep answering to deep: God speaking to man, and man speaking to God.

For the Bible is at once a revelation of the mind, the thoughts, the heart of God — and a Divine revelation of the mind, the thoughts, the heart of man. There is not a human thought, be it good or bad, not a cry of a human heart, but finds its echo here. Through failing to understand this, how often do men err in their interpretation of Scripture! Because they find something written in the Bible, how often do they take it for a Divine announcement, whereas *it may only be a Divine revelation of the thoughts of a man or the Divine record of his ways.*

Take for instance, the book of Ecclesiastes, which for the most part is filled with the mournful complaint of a weary, world-worn heart, an answer beforehand to the question of our Lord, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Solomon "gained the whole world," or at least all that there was in the world to gain, and his answer was, I have tried all things — knowledge and riches and pleasure, wisdom and madness and folly — and it is all a weary, weary round, nothing but "vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the sun." This was the cry of the heart-sick king, and God caused him to write it down.

For no one can tell what is in man, but God alone. There is the great mystery of the human *will* which none but God can penetrate, the deep mystery of the *human* heart which none but He can fathom, the strange entanglement of human *thoughts* which none but God can unravel. As man cannot understand, still less reveal, his own heart — then how much less could he understand the heart of another? "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked — who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the thoughts." It was one of the marks of our Lord's Divinity that "He knew what was in man."

And if God alone can reveal what is in man — then how much more can God alone reveal Himself! His holiness, His righteousness and love, the greatness of His power, the glory of His majesty, and above all things the thoughts of His heart! "No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whoever the Son will reveal Him."

For even in the revelation He desired to make He was straitened in the written Word — not straitened in Himself, but in us. To reach our small understanding, He had to use human language, human forms of thought. But words are finite — and God is infinite. How can the finite comprehend the infinite? The ocean cannot be compressed into a cup, but the cup may be full of the water from the sea. So the infinite mind of God cannot be comprehended by the finite mind of man, nor fully expressed in the words of man — yet the words of man and the mind of man may be filled with the fullness of God.

So God's revelation was committed to writing through men inspired by the Holy Spirit — and we have the Divine character, the Divine plan, and the Divine commands set forth with Divine authority in the written Word.

Truly, the Bible is a wonderful book — marvelous in its character, marvelous in its power, marvelous in its history. How strange is that history — the whole world has risen up against it, crying in their hearts as they cried concerning the Incarnate Word, "Away with it, away with it!"

The *mirror* has been too true! They could not bear to look into it — so they have striven to get rid of it. Had it been of this world — then the world would have loved its own; but because it was not of this world, therefore the world hated it. Yet all the rage of men and devils against it has been of no avail. Today the Bible is mightier upon the earth than ever it was before. How wonderful is that power! Its very haters have been made subject to it, and have cherished it as their chief treasure. The hearts of kings have melted before it, the mighty intellects have bowed to its authority, the vilest of sinners have been reclaimed! High and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, young and old — have joyfully owned its sway. Wherever its power is felt, it brings life and light, and joy and peace, and is *the master-key that fits every lock in the human heart!* Nay, more, it is itself instinct with life — eternal life — and filled with the presence of God.

If this Book were of man, the marvel would be too great; the only thing that causes our wonder to cease, is the knowledge that it is the handwriting of the Living God. Yet men could not read that handwriting until He came, who is the Sum and Substance, the Center and Circumference of the Book — whose Divine Personality, in all His glorious perfections, lights up the whole Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.

Take Christ out of the Scriptures, and they lose all their meaning; study any portion of the Bible without reference to Him — and the glory is all gone. Yet we must not fall into the error that some do — of depreciating the written Word and thinking that it is no longer needed, or that it occupies a lower place than Christ Himself. It is only through the Scriptures, that Christ is revealed to us. As He said, He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. He came not to supersede the written Word, but as Him of whom all the Scriptures testify. He is the Foundation and the Head Cornerstone — the Life, the Light, and the Glory of the Word of God.

Yet at the same time He taught no truths that were not already found in the Old Testament — He expounded, illumined, and made manifest those truths. Gathering them all together in one, He showed the height, and the depth and the length, and the breadth of the glory that filled them.

In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, God has completed His revelation to man, and it is through this medium alone that the Holy Spirit, by enlightening the eyes of our understanding, reveals to us Jesus. Without the *written* Word, we would have never known Christ, the *Living* Word — and without Christ we had never known God.

But though God had purified human language "seven times" — given it a new meaning and made it transparent with the the light of Heaven — yet He needed a greater, a better, a purer — yes, an altogether perfect medium through which to utter His thoughts and reveal Himself to the creatures whom He had made.

So "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us!" God revealed Himself in the person of His eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, "and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "No man has seen God at any time, nor can see Him but in Christ, and in that written Revelation, of which He is the warp and the woof. For Christ not only gives us the Word, He is Himself the Word, the Divine utterance, the full and perfect manifestation of God — yet veiled in the flesh that *men might look upon Him and see God.*

And when we see Him, how totally different is He from all the thoughts of men! As far as the east is from the west — so far has man misunderstood God. They thought He was altogether such a one as themselves — and they think so still, even though they dwell in the midst of Christian light. For until their eyes are opened, until they give up trusting to their own thoughts and submit themselves to the Word of God, their ideas of His character are as false and delusive — though, perhaps, not so gross — as are the thoughts of those who dwell in the midst of heathen darkness.

Since man lost the image of God, he has ever sought to make for himself a god after his own image, and even many who call themselves Christians still do so in the present day. But when a man is willing to be taught of God, to listen to His voice, to sit humbly at the feet of Jesus — then what radiance pours in upon his soul! He rises above the mists of his own poor thoughts, and receiving "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" — he learns that God is holy, and cannot look upon sin. He learns that He is righteous, and can by no means clear the guilty — yet that He has found out a way whereby He can be just, and yet the Justifier of him, and of him alone, who believes in Jesus — that in Him, and through Him, His grace is boundless as infinitude and endless as eternity.

O poor sinner, if there is one reading these lines who does not know the joy of forgiven sin — hearken to the voice of Jesus, who Himself gave His life, a ransom for many, whose blood was shed for the remission of sins, and who bids you come, saying, "Him who comes to Me, I will never cast out."

Thus He speaks to the penitent sinner, uttering the thoughts of God concerning salvation, proclaiming pardon full and free. But what wondrous things do we learn of the riches of His grace, of the greatness of His power and the multitude of His mercies — as we listen to the voice of Jesus, and see the beauty of the Lord, until our souls exclaim, "How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand!"

Still we listen — and our ears are more and more entranced. Still we look — and our eyes are more and more enlightened as we behold His glory. More and more we learn of His infinite majesty and His infinite tenderness — that He who decks the heavens, also clothes the lily of the field; that He who upholds all things by the word of His power — also hears the raven's cry and marks the sparrows fall; and by Him the very hairs of our head are all numbered.

So we love to listen, and our hearts burn within us as He talks to us along the way. And through the eternal ages we will listen still, for has He not said, "I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it!" And as He leads us to the living fountains of water, and we hear the heavenly music of His voice and see His face — we shall exclaim both now and evermore, "His mouth is sweetness itself. Yes, He is altogether lovely!"

Behold the Lamb of God!

"Yes, He is altogether lovely!"

"When John saw Jesus passing by, he said: Behold, the Lamb of God!" John 1:36

O my soul! now are you brought face to face with . . .
the glory of glories,
the mystery of mysteries,
the marvel of all marvels!

Human *language* has not words enough to tell,
human *thought* has not power to compass, nor
have human *hearts* the capacity to gauge the depth and the height and the length and the breadth of this all-surpassing manifestation of the holiness and righteousness and boundless grace of God! With the Psalmist, we are forced to exclaim, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers — the moon and the stars, which You have ordained — What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" Psalm 8:3-4

As we gaze into illimitable space and see the signs of a vast array of mighty worlds which God has created, and which He alone can number, amidst which this earth is but a tiny speck; and when we consider the littleness, the frailty, the sinfulness of man — how inconceivable is the thought that the Almighty should "be mindful of him" and should "visit him!"

Yet the Divine Revelation makes it abundantly clear, not only that sinful man has occupied the eternal thought of God — but that his redemption and the everlasting blessedness and glory of the redeemed in and with Christ, is the great end of all His wonderful works! This is "the glory that excels," for out of the rebellion and sin and misery of man — God has wrought so mighty a redemption, and has so marvelously manifested forth His glory, that all other glory of creation and providence, of wisdom, goodness and power pales before it like the light of the glow-worm before the rising sun!

The cross of Christ, that awful depth of humiliation and woe to which our Savior descended — has become the foundation and the head corner-stone of all God's works, and the very effulgence of His glory! It is the keynote of Revelation, the epitome of the music that comes from Heaven to earth, the chord that runs through the whole message from God to man, the great glad tidings "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the story of creation in Genesis, the cross of Christ is shadowed forth. In the Garden of Eden, before the sun went down and night closed in upon man's sin — it was proclaimed. In the shed blood of Abel's "firstling of the flock" — is seen the "more excellent sacrifice" of the Lamb of God. From Noah's burnt offering ascends the "sweet savor of rest" — a fragrance from Calvary. In the land of Moriah, as Abraham journeys with his son to the mountain which God told him of, when Isaac asked his father "Where is the *lamb* for the burnt offering?" he unconsciously uttered the one great need of guilty man. And when Abraham replied, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," he — it may be unknowingly — prophesied of Him who would take away the sin of the world.

And so on through the centuries before Christ came — the Passover, the Day of Atonement, the morning and evening sacrifice, and the unending holocaust of victims whose blood stained the altar — all bore witness first to the fact that sin had raised a great barrier between man and God, which all the blood of bulls and goats could not take away — and also to the glorious promise of a coming One who would satisfy the claims of Divine justice and open the way back to God.

At length He came, and as His herald John looked upon Him as He walked in lowly majesty, and cried, by inspiration, "Behold the Lamb of God!" — he uttered wondrous words, the fullness of whose meaning God alone can comprehend, but which will be the theme of adoration by saints and angels throughout the ages of eternity.

The *incarnation* of Christ — God manifest in the flesh — is an unfathomable mystery and an unspeakable glory — but it is not His birth, but *His sacrificial death*, on which all the Scriptures hinge! The Holy Spirit sums up the whole matter when He tells us that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Yet in the strange perversity of sin, there is nothing which unregenerate man hates to hear more than this. Satan knows well that without atonement, no man can be saved from his terrible power. Playing upon the pride of men's hearts, the god of this world easily "blinds the minds of those who do not believe — lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Under his devilish inspiration, men show the utmost ingenuity in trying to explain away the only possible meaning of His sacrificial death. Their words are so specious, their demeanor so devout, that sometimes they appear almost like "an angel from Heaven," while they preach "another gospel" — so that unwary souls are easily led away.

They point us to the life of Christ, and bid us follow His example. They profess to put Him upon a pinnacle of glory — while they do despite to the Spirit of God by teaching that the rest of the Scriptures are but the doctrines of men. At the same time they ignore His own plain teaching concerning the Atonement for sin He had come to make.

They speak truly enough of His tender love and pity, of His great compassion for the sinner, of His unwearying toil for the poor and needy, and of His stern rebukes to the proud and the false. But there their admiration ends, and when they speak of His *death* — it is only as the climax of a life of self-sacrifice, an example for us to follow, so that "by works of righteousness which we have done" — we may find our way back to God.

True, they speak of the redemption of the world and reconciliation with the Father, but it is a redemption to be wrought out by us — an impossible reconciliation between guilty sinners and a holy God, without satisfaction of the claims of His righteous law. Alas! these things are put forth by the *secret enemies* of Christ. They call themselves by His name and say, "Hail, Master!" — while they betray Him with a kiss! They preach a false Christ after their own imagination, not the Christ of Scriptural revelation. It was not for this that He was called "The Lamb of God."

Oh, what solemn depths of meaning lie in those words of our Savior: "For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness — even so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life!" Why that terrible "must," that burdened the soul of our blessed Lord through all the years of His life on earth? True, it was "for the joy set before Him, that He endured the cross, despising the shame." But before the joy, there was the bitterness of death — and of such a death to pass through, when He was to "bear our sins in His own body on the tree" — and, though up-borne by the mighty power of God, His human soul quivered before the dreadful ordeal.

Why, then, that fearful "must"? What awful necessity was laid upon the Savior to bear the dreadful stroke?

First, the GLORY of God demanded it. Man was created that he might yield a perfect and a willing obedience to his Maker. Man failed, but still God's purpose could not be thwarted. Therefore a Man must keep God's law, and perfectly obey His will, so that "by the obedience of One, many might be made righteous." Because now that sin had entered, and death by sin, the "Righteous Servant" who was to "justify many "had to be "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"

When Moses came down from the mount carrying the two tables of the law, when he heard the sound of the music and dancing round the golden calf, and knew that the people had sinned — he cast down the tables of stone and broke them — a sign that the law of the Lord was broken. But when God would write His law anew, He told Moses, (who had meantime acted as a mediator between God and Israel) to hew two tables of stone, and to make an ark in which to place them, that they might never again be broken. What a light is thrown upon this by the Psalmist's prophetic words: "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me — I delight to do Your will, O my God. Yes, Your law is within my heart!"

God had made man to be His king upon earth, but the crown had been vilely cast away, and the dominion handed over to Satan, who was now "the Prince of this world." The crown had to he regained and the usurper cast out — and this could only be done by the Son of Man being "lifted up."

Man had also been made in the image of God, but the image was lost until He came, who was "the express image of His person," to redeem a people who would once more be conformed unto His image, and bear the likeness of God. So the glory of God demanded the cross of Christ.

Second, the LOVE of God necessitated it. This is taught us in those wondrous words of Jesus, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!" So great was the love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, that He could not leave the souls whom He had made to perish if by any means they might be saved. Thus the wondrous, wondrous love of God to poor sinners necessitated the cross of Christ!

Third. The RIGHTEOUSNESS of the law required it. God loved us, but in righteousness He could not save us until the penalty of sin had been paid "to the uttermost farthing," because justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. Therefore the law of God — which is holy and just and good — required for our salvation the cross of Christ.

And though His human soul seemed to quail before the terrible "baptism," yet He swerved not, nor turned aside for one moment from His straight course to Calvary. When His soul was troubled with the dark prospect, His prayer was, "Father, glorify Your name!" How calmly at the supper did He break the bread and take the cup and "give thanks." As He walked toward Gethsemane, how sweetly He discoursed with His disciples — all His care being for their comfort, not His own

Behold Him in Gethsemane! The Holy Spirit has drawn a veil over the awful conflict He there passed through — but some indications have been given us of its nature and terrible character. We are told how He craved for the human sympathy of His disciples, which nevertheless failed Him in that dread hour; how, as He parted from them for a little space, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and then, staggering forward a few paces, fell upon the ground; how, being in an agony, He sweat great drops of blood. Does not His thrice-repeated prayer, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done" — give us some indication of the nature of the conflict? The awful horror of Calvary lay before Him; not the nails, the crown of thorns, nor the spear; not the physical pain, which indeed was terrible — but the horror of . . .
bearing of our sins in His own body,
the shutting out of the face of God,
the being made a curse for us!

What that meant to His holy human nature, God alone can comprehend — but His whole being shrank, and quaked, and trembled before the dreadful ordeal! And not only so, for this was the hour and power of darkness when the whole army of Hell was arrayed against Him.

The devil's first temptation of our Lord in the wilderness was as nothing, compared with this His last temptation in the garden. Then the Savior had held him at arm's length as it were, and driven him back with holy scorn; now in the hour of His human weakness and trembling, and sore distress, Satan renews the attack, and uses all his malignant power and ingenuity to cause Him to swerve from doing His Father's will and drinking the bitter cup. He was "without sin" — yet how terrible the conflict was, the great drops of blood bear witness. Was there not a tender touch of fellow-feeling in the words with which He excused His worn-out disciples who could not watch with Him one hour: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak"? Listen to the prophetic Psalm: "The sorrows of death encompassed me, the pains of Hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow."

But we are told that He was heard in that He feared; He cried unto God — and the Lord saved Him. We must not forget that in His humiliation, He made Himself as completely dependent upon God as is the weakest believer on earth. It was "in the name of the Lord" that He triumphed. Then did the words of the Hallel Psalm (118) find their fulfillment: "They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off. They swarmed around me like bees, but they died out as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off. I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me. The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." Thus the mighty Victor, "in the name of the Lord," triumphed over the powers of darkness.

Fellow sinner, it was for you and me, for the love He bore to us — that that battle was fought and that victory won.

Now the conflict is over forever; henceforward peace, perfect peace, reigned in His soul. The storm was gathering round Him, the sky overhead was growing in inky blackness, the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, the cup of God's wrath was being filled to the brim, ready to be pressed to His lips, the iniquity of us all was about to be laid upon Him — yet within all was perfect calm. His cheek did not blanch, His eye did not quail, we detect no tremor in His voice, we see no shadow flit across His brow. With what quiet dignity He went forth to meet His base betrayer and the armed band! What tender, loving submission lies in His gentle rebuke to His disciple, who drew the sword in His Master's defense: "Put up your sword into its sheath; the cup which My Father has given Me to drink — shall I not drink it?"

With what sweet majesty He stood before the earthly high priest and the earthly judge, while His enemies raged upon Him and gnashed their teeth! How patiently He carried the *cruel cross* which was to become His altar pile, until His mortal frame sank beneath the weight! He was no victim led to the slaughter. He was the mighty Victor willingly laying down His own life — that He might take it again, giving His life for the life of the world.

True, He was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent — so He opened not His mouth;" but His was a willing sacrifice. So, with His *face* set like flint towards Calvary, His *mind* stayed on God, His *heart* surcharged with pity for a lost and ruined world, for the souls whom He had made, bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, not His own — we behold the Lamb of God treading with unfaltering steps the thorny path that led to the last dread hour, the awful baptism of agony and shame and woe, the terrible portals through which the great Sin Bearer must pass — that He may open to us the way of life, and redeem us to God by His blood.

And as we gaze with reverential awe upon that sublime spectacle, with hushed voices we breathe out the Words: "Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

That Sight!

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

"When all the people who had gathered to witness *that sight* saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away." Luke 23:48

There have been . . . upon the earth,
many wonderful sights
many sad and sorrowful sights,
many grand and awe-inspiring sights
— but never before or after in all the world's history, such a sight as was seen by the group that gathered around the cross. What a strange and motley group it was! How many kinds of sinners were represented there!

There were the hardened Roman soldiers who gambled for His vesture, then "sitting down, they watched Him there." There were the mockers, the revilers, the chief priests and scribes who hated Him — the rulers who derided Him — the people who wagged their heads saying, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

There were also the weeping women, the trembling disciples, and — best of all — the penitent thief who trusted in Him for salvation in that dread hour, and gave Him a sweet foretaste of the "joy that was set before Him," for which "He endured the cross, despising the shame."

Other spectators also, unseen by human eyes, were doubtless there — Satan and all his hosts, the Victor's baffled foes, watching Him with malignant hate; the holy angels, too, looking on with silent awe; and God Himself, Who was about to "bruise Him and put Him to grief" and "make His soul an offering for sin" — Whose voice even then shook the deep, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd and against the Man who is My Fellow!"

As Moses took his shoes from off his feet, when he drew near to see the burning bush — let us also with reverence and adoring love, now turn aside and see this great sight!

That was a sight of **WONDER**. What do we see!

The Lord of glory — put to open shame!

The Creator of Heaven and earth — nailed to a cross of wood!

The King of kings and Lord of lords — treated as the vilest malefactor!

The holy Son of God — crucified!

He who was the very Fountain of life, whose life was the light of men — dying!

And *why* did He die? "The wages of sin is death" — but He had no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. His absolute sinlessness, His perfect holiness — was proclaimed from Heaven; earth bore witness to the truth of it — and even Hell echoed back the proclamation.

Why then did He suffer the sinner's doom? God is righteous — so why did He allow His Holy One to perish? There is but one answer, the answer which God Himself has given. "He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all!" Isaiah 53:5-6

Ah! though there was no accusation found against *Him*, neither in Heaven nor earth nor Hell — the accusation was found against *us*, and "He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!" "Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross!"

How difficult do many find it to take in this glorious truth, that Christ died for us, bore our sins, and in His own blessed Person paid the penalty to the full — so that nothing now remains to be done in the way of works of righteousness to ensure our salvation. Eternal life is "the gift of God" — not the reward of good deeds nor the culmination of reformed character. If you are but willing to be saved, and saved by Him alone, and come to Him in simple faith, trusting in His Word — then you are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus!" This is an instant and eternal salvation which will never be taken from us; not a completed salvation — that is yet to come — but a secured salvation, irrevocably secured to us by the blood of Christ and by the faithfulness of the living God. Poor trembling sinner, what more would you have to rest upon? Is not the Word and oath of God, a sufficient anchor for your soul?

But again let us behold,

That was a sight of **SORROW**. We live in a world of sorrow, a valley of tears. "Man who is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." "Man is born to trouble — as the sparks fly upward." "The whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now."

But, of all men, Jesus was "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." The sorrow of the world lay heavily upon Him — and added to that, was a sorrow which the world could not share. How intense must have been His grief for the sin, the unbelief; the hardness of heart, that continually surrounded Him! He saw His Father's law broken, His Father's name dishonored, His Father's love despised. "Rivers of water run down My eyes — because they keep not Your law." How His soul must have turned with loathing from the defilement in the midst of which He walked, while His heart was bursting with pity for the sinners He had come to save!

But now was the culmination of His woe. His holy nature shrank from the slightest touch of sin — yet now "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree" — and what that meant, God alone can tell. Intensely He yearned for human love, the love of the souls whom He had made — but the surging multitude around Him rejected and despised His love. "They compassed me about with words of hatred, they fought against me without a cause. For my love — they are my adversaries. They have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love."

He looked up to God Who had ever been His Refuge, but the sin of the world had risen like a thick cloud between Him and His face, and we hear the terrible cry of amazement and agony, "My God, My God! Why have You forsaken Me!" How appropriate are the words of the prophet here: "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, with which the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger."

That was a sight of **SIN**! What is sin? Its very essence is revolt against the Most High God. And here we see the crowning manifestation of this revolt. God's law had been broken, His commandments disobeyed, His name dishonored by a rebellious world, but never was the enmity of the human heart so intensely shown as when they crucified His beloved Son!

True, it was ordained of God that Jesus should give His life for the life of the world; but oh, the malignant hate with which sinners cried "away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him!" The awful wickedness with which they closed around His cross, "breathing out cruelty!" The madness that cried in effect "We will not have this Man to reign over us!" "Not this Man but Barabbas!" They mocked, they wagged their heads, they railed, they scoffed, and in their puny impotence, defied the God of Heaven!

O my soul! see here the exceeding sinfulness of sin — your sin, for yours was there. The sinners gathered round the cross had no monopoly of wickedness, they only represented the whole world, "guilty before God." "The carnal mind is enmity against God" — this is the very core and essence of sin, and here was but the culmination, the manifestation of the very apex of man's rebellion. O my soul! weep bitter tears of shame and grief as you remember that your sin was there.

That was a sight of **WRATH**. If the crucifixion of the Son of God, was the most awful manifestation of the sin of man — so was also the cross the most terrible revelation of divine wrath — the righteous wrath of a holy God. Not all the woe of the lost, not the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, of which God in His compassion warns us in His Word, not all the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth of those upon whose heads God's righteous judgments fall — can reveal to us, as does the cross of Christ, the attitude of God toward sin.

Here we see the burning holiness of God, Who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and cannot look upon evil." Here we see the inviolable righteousness of God, who "can by no means clear the guilty." And here we see the terrible fierceness of His anger, the sword of His justice, the tempest of His wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day" — but here the whole of His wrath against sin was gathered up and burst forth with relentless fury!

But, hearken! against whom did that anger burn?

Against whom did that sword awake?

Upon whose head did that storm burst?

Not upon the heads of the guilty sinners — but upon the sinless One, the Holy One, the spotless Lamb of God! "But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." He who died for them has said, "He who hears My words and believes on Him who sent Me — has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death unto life."

That was a sight of **LOVE**!

What pen can write,
what tongue can tell,
what heart can comprehend —
the love of God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, shown forth in all its fullness — when "Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God"? Behind the awful wrath and righteous judgment — was the eternal love. Back in the counsels of eternity "God so loved the world." Why, we cannot understand; only we have heard of "the great *love* with which He loved us" — and we know of the great *redemption* which He planned for us.

Yes, it was out of the infinite depths of that deep, mysterious love for the souls whom He had made, that the cross of Christ grew. So great was that love, so wonderful, that Jesus Himself tells us, "Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again."

Behold the love of God the *Father* who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all!"

Behold the love of God the *Son* who "loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood!"

And the love of God the *Holy Spirit*, through Whom the offering was made, and whose joy it is to reveal this love to the sons of men!

And what were *we* on whom God set His love, for whom He gave this costly gift? Hear His own verdict: "God looks down from Heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good — not even one!" Psalm 53:2-3. Such were the sinners for whom Christ died.

That was a sight of **POWER**! This looked like the hour of His weakness; and poor, puny man triumphed maliciously at the thought of God's impotence. The passers-by derided Him, wagging their heads, saying, "Ah! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" The rulers joined in, "Let Him save Himself — if He is the Christ, the Son of God." The soldiers too mocked, "If You are the King of the Jews — then save Yourself!" And the malefactors cried, "If You are Christ, save Yourself and us!" Ah! how little they guessed the truth that because He saved others — Himself He could not save.

Yes, He was crucified through weakness, but "the weakness of God is stronger than men" — and even now was the hour of "the greatness of His strength." The Lamb of God was also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Now He was binding the strong man and spoiling his goods; now He was destroying the works of the devil. Through death, He was destroying him that had the power of death. Now He was making atonement for sin, opening up the way for sinners into the holiest — a new and a living way — bursting the gates of brass to set the captives free.

The power of the Cross reaches back to the beginning of man's history — and shall never cease until the last of that "great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," stand "before the Throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands!"

Fellow-sinner, would you be one of that great multitude? There is nothing to hinder. He Himself has declared that "Whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" — and the Holy Spirit has proclaimed, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely!"

But oh! beware of how you neglect so great salvation, for if "He who despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses — then of how much severer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" For all such, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, "for our God is a consuming fire!"

"That sight" on earth is glorious, but still more glorious will be "that sight "in Heaven, when the angelic hosts shall unite with the whole of the redeemed in "saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing! And every creature shall say: Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power — be unto Him who sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

JESUS!

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely"

"The name which is above every name!" Philippians 2:9

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear."

"Sweetest note in seraph's song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest music ever sung:
Jesus, blessed Jesus!"

"Your name is as ointment poured forth" — and may we not say of the House of God that "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment!" To the hearts of all God's people, the name of Jesus is exceeding precious, and the songs of the Church are full of its fragrance. No comparisons can be made between the different names and titles of our adorable Lord, but each has its peculiar glory, and this name — His human name — *Jesus*, seems to enter into the inner sanctuary of the heart!

His divine title, the Christ, the Anointed of God — shows forth the most excellent glory of the New Covenant:
Christ in us — and we in Him;
Christ our Righteousness;
Christ our Life, our Hope, our Glory;
Christ our Bridegroom;
Christ our Head, "in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" — and "in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

But in the name of *Jesus* there is a sweetness, a tenderness, that thrills our inmost soul, a close yet holy endearment . . .
the sound, as it were, of a human voice,
the touch of a human hand,
the beating of a human heart.

This Name by itself is mainly confined to the four Gospels, where we read the story of the earthly life of the Son of Man as He walked and talked with His disciples, holding familiar yet holy converse with them — yes, even receiving sinners and eating with them. It brings us into touch, as it were, with His blessed Person, His loveliness, His lowliness — and brings down Heaven to earth, God to man.

For every needy soul who came to Him at any time, *Jesus* was "moved with compassion."

The loathsome lepers-He "touched,"
the hungry--He fed,
the "sinners"--He "called to repentance,"
the penitent--He forgave.

Multitudes brought to Him their sorrows. When the disciples of John had buried their beloved master, they "went and told *Jesus*." When mothers brought their little ones, and the disciples would have sent them back, *Jesus* took them up in His arms and blessed them. Thus His daily life was one of patience, gentleness; of holy beauty, "full of grace and truth."

And He is still the same, "yesterday, today, and forever." As we read of Him in the upper chamber with His disciples: "Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He would depart out of this world unto the Father — having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

JEHOVAH of the Old Testament is JESUS of the New Testament, and in Him both Jew and Gentile are made one; so whether we look into the Old Testament or the New — "the name of the Lord" is the one great Name that is "far above every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come."

As God made a new revelation of Himself to Israel, when He brought them out of Egypt, and was then first known to them by His name JEHOVAH — the God of their redemption; so He again made a new revelation of Himself, the fullest, the greatest revelation, when He gave the command to Joseph, concerning Him who was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. "You shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins!" And it is worthy of note that this name was given not in the *Hebrew* form — Joshua, or Jehoshua — but in the *Gentile* form, "Jesus" — as if to indicate that "His people" were no longer to be confined to the nation of Israel, but to be gathered "out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation!"

True, during the time of His earthly life He was "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" — but it was not by His incarnation, but by His death and resurrection that He brought salvation from sin. Then it was that the power and glory of the "better covenant" broke forth; then the forms and ceremonies, the types and shadows, vanished away, and gave place to "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man" — then the way into the holiest was made manifest "by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" — then the command was given, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," "that men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called — says the Lord, who does all these things."

"And His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

And with that glorious Name, the mighty power of God has gone forth "conquering and to conquer." Sin, sorrow, and the fear of death flee away before it. What millions upon millions of stout-hearted rebels have been conquered by the name of Jesus, and have "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven!" What multitudes held captive by the devil have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son! At the name of JESUS devils tremble, unclean spirits cry out and leave their prey, and many signs and wonders are done. In spiritual things His name, through faith in His name, has made the lame to walk and leap as an deer, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the dead to be raised to life again!

His name is mighty to **save** all who come unto Him, from the least even unto the greatest! His name procures the pardon of every sin, and the salvation of every sinner who in faith makes mention of it at the Throne of Grace. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved!"

His name is mighty to **keep**. "May the name of the God of Jacob defend you." Satan and all his hosts may encompass the child of God, but the gates of Hell shall not prevail against him, for "the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and is safe." Oh, how precious is this truth that our "keeping" does not lie in our own feeble hands! If it did, not one of us — not even an apostle — would stand; but the very weakest believer, the most tried and tempted one who looks to Jesus, is "kept by the power of God." "I give unto My sheep eternal life," He says; "and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand!"

So then, we do not have to go on hoping — yet fearing, lest some great wave of temptation dash us from our Savior, and after all we may be lost. True, our salvation is not yet completed, and will not be until we be delivered from the *presence* of sin, and enter into the *glory* to be forever with our Lord; but it is already secured by the Word and oath of God, by the blood of Jesus, and by the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

What an incentive is this, and what strength it gives for holy living! For it is the resting soul that goes "from strength to strength," the resting heart that gains the victory.

His Name is mighty to **bless**. It opens to us all the treasures of Heaven — and is the channel through which we receive all the riches of His grace and the riches of His glory, and brings to our aid the whole power of God as He said, "Whatever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;" and it is the seal of the fulfillment of all the "exceeding great and precious promises."

But is it not the wondrous sweetness of His Name, its heavenly fragrance, that most fills the soul of the believer and binds his heart to JESUS. The Christian mother loves to train her infant's tongue to lisp that Name, that almost from its cradle it may know the name of Jesus. It nerves the Christian warrior in the conflict with evil, it brings support to the tempted and tried, comfort to the weary and heavy-laden, healing balm to the wounded in spirit, joy in sorrow, rest in trouble, and heavenly music in the hour of death.

His Name is **holy**. At least twenty-five times in the Bible, this is declared. Is there not sometimes a danger of forgetting this, and of making too light and familiar mention of His Name? My soul, let me ever meditate with reverential awe upon this wondrous, precious Name, for it is holy! Never let me forget that, though of His Grace He is to His loved ones "Familiar, patient, condescending, free" — nevertheless He is God, the mighty God, "the holy One, who inhabits eternity!"

Of His Grace He walks with me and talks with me. Of His grace He bids me lean on Him and lay my head upon His bosom. Of His grace He encircles me with His arms of love and bids me rest. But let me never forget that He is holy — and I am not; He is God — and I am man.

And as we meditate . . .
upon His holy Name,
upon its greatness and its sweetness,
upon its inexhaustible wealth of love and power and grace,
as it brings us into most blessed communion and fellowship with our risen and exalted Savior — do we not answer in the gladness of our hearts, "Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

My Lord and My God!

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

"Thomas said to Him: My Lord and my God!" John 20:28

An idiot boy, living in a shepherd's hut on a hill side in Scotland, was far removed from the ordinary means of grace. The minister could only visit this distant part of his parish occasionally — but on one occasion, touched with the boy's condition and filled with a yearning desire to endeavor to teach him some simple heavenly truth, he took the little lad on his knee, and taking his hands in his own, with the forefinger of the right he touched in succession the fingers of the left, getting the boy to say after him, "The — Lord — is — my — Shepherd." He repeated this again and again, until the little fellow was able to do it himself, and he told him to continue repeating it every day. On his next visit he found the boy had remembered the lesson, so taking him again on his knee, and going over the same plan, he caused him to rest his finger awhile on the one that stood for "MY," thus teaching him to say, "The Lord is MY Shepherd." His next visit to the hut, was to conduct the funeral of the little boy, for the Lord had called him home, and to comfort the weeping parents.

The mother then told him that she had noticed a strange thing during his illness — he was always putting the forefinger of the right hand on the third finger of the left, while his lips moved silently; and he continued this to the hour of his death. The minister explained the meaning to the mother, and rejoiced with her at the testimony given that the Holy Spirit had evidently caused the light to shine into the heart of her little idiot boy, and enabled him to claim the Good Shepherd as his own!

It was the same sweet power of appropriation which had caused Thomas to exclaim, "MY Lord and MY God!" Without this, all that we might know of the glories and excellencies of Christ, would be like gazing into Paradise from the wilderness outside. It is the lack of this which makes many of God's dear children so dull and weak and lifeless. God's children — such as are truly saved, justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus — may be divided into three classes:

First, those who have only a doctrinal knowledge of the "exceeding great and precious promises" — but have not entered into the rest of faith.

Second, those who occasionally enter into the joy of their Lord, like guests in a rich man's house, enjoying the dainties and leaving again.

Third, those who appropriate Christ in all His fullness to themselves, who are able to say from the heart, "MY Lord and MY God!" MY Savior, MY Shepherd, MY King.

It is the will of God that every one of His children should be able thus, by faith, and in their soul's experience, to appropriate Christ. If we do not, we are not straitened in Him, but in ourselves. It is the will of God that we be "rich," that our "joy may be full," that His love be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."

What is it that hinders? When first we came to Christ for salvation, we entirely surrendered ourselves to Him. Our only thoughts at the time may have been seeking deliverance from sin and its consequences — but if anything, however small, consciously at the time came between us and Christ — we had in our heart to yield it up, or there was no real turning to God. On our part, it was this full surrender with the blessed knowledge of sin "blotted out," that enabled us to rejoice with joy unspeakable when at the first we were "made near by the blood of Christ" and "accepted in the Beloved."

But, alas! how soon to many of us, this blessedness was lost. The enemy within us, our "old man," soon began to re-assert itself — the flesh lusting against the Spirit — and Satan was ever on the alert. We became unwatchful, and gradually slipped back, and lost our joy and strength. How many there are who are content to live in this dull, feeble, "dying state," mourning weakly at times over the fact, sometimes stirred up to higher aspirations, but lulled to sleep again by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is this which has led some to speak of a "second conversion," a "second blessing," or a "full surrender" as something that has come, it may be long after conversion — when anew they were aroused to seek the face of God and to cast down some *idol* which had again gotten power over them!

It is, however, but *a returning to their first love*, a higher realization, it may be, of the completeness of the surrender which was demanded of them when first they sought the Lord and yielded themselves to Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. To them, this is now no longer merely a doctrine to be understood, but a blessing to be experimentally enjoyed; yet the full surrender of *heart* and *will* must be permanently maintained "moment by moment" — or the blessed experience will again be lost.

We shall need to be *continually* on the watch-tower, for the *enemy* will still be on the alert, and continually new *foes* will be detected, new *hindrances* found, which must be overcome — idols seeking to find place in the heart which must be yielded up to Christ.

By what power is this warfare to be maintained? Not by our own, the power is of God. We are to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" — but while we leave the battle entirely to Him, and look to Him alone for victory — we are told to "put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

The conflict does not cease, but it is no longer a hand-to-hand battle down in the valley as if for dear life, sometimes winning, sometimes suffering defeat. Yet from the heights above, from the security of the watchtower, from the sunshine of His presence, in the power of His might — it is a continuous victory.

It is the life of complete surrender of heart and will when Jesus is in reality *MY LORD*, that is the victorious life, the blessed life, and as we yield up to Him one thing after another as we discover in them the least antagonism to Him and His claims — we enter more and more into the fullness of His joy. But full surrender not only means giving up everything we find to be contrary to His will — but willingly suffering all that He appoints, and seeking His direction in everything we do.

"My Lord and my GOD!" If we *obey* Him as LORD — we *worship* Him as GOD; and in this lies the very fullness of glory. In the face of Jesus Christ, we see the face of God, "the living God." "He who has seen Me," He said, "has seen the Father."

The worship of God is the great end of man's existence. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." How true is this. And until man, even redeemed and regenerated man, realizes this — he misses the purpose for which he was created. So long as one is taken up with one's own happiness, even with spiritual blessings — the heart will be restless and unsatisfied until he can say in truth, "My soul thirsts for God, the living GOD — when shall I come and appear before God?" "Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You." Then, but not until then — shall his soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.

Even the *service* of God, however sweet,
the *truth* of God, however precious,
the *blessing* of the Lord, however rich —
can never take the place in the soul of God Himself.

Worship is the high and holy privilege accorded only to holy beings. In worship we draw near to God, into the very holy of holies. Therefore it is only in and by Christ that we can worship God. Out of Christ, God is a consuming fire to the sinner; his righteousnesses are filthy rags, his sacrifices an abomination to the Holy God. In Christ, we may "draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith."

And as we listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, according Divine honor to "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see — to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen!" And to the voice of the Father, saying to the Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever!" — we each exclaim with reverence and holy joy, "MY Lord and MY God" — and as we yield to Him the Divine worship which is His due, a still small voice within us, like the tinkling of silver bells, whispers in holy adoration "Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

Behold, the Bridegroom Comes!

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"

"At midnight a cry was heard: Behold, the Bridegroom comes — go out to meet Him!" Matthew 25:6

The BRIDEGROOM of the church! O God! how wonderful, how surpassing wonderful, is this, this strange deep mystery, this holy union between . . .
Christ — and His Redeemed people,
Omnipotence — and impotence,
the Eternal One — and man whose breath is in his nostrils,
the Creator — and the creature!

This is a union for which God has deigned to ordain marriage as the most fitting type and shadow!

What mean those words: "For Adam there was not found an helper suitable for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, He made a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh . . . therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh!"

The Holy Spirit tells us the *mystic meaning*, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

This union has already been consummated between Christ and the individual soul, for we read, "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be *married* to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God." Romans 7:4

But the *glorious consummation* is yet to come when Christ, according to His promise, will come again and receive His people unto Himself. For "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, to make her holy — cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless!" Ephesians 5:25-27

That most blessed and glorious event is surely drawing near! We can almost hear the sound of His chariot wheels! The predicted signs of the end of the present age are thickening — the expectancy among His people is increasing. Multitudes are now "looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Savior Jeans Christ." Soon the wedding bells of Heaven will ring out, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him — for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

O Bride of the Lamb! are you making yourself ready? O my soul, are you making yourself ready? How shall we be ready? "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Not our beauty — but His beauty, His loveliness, and yet ours because it is His gift.

First the beauty of Christ's righteousness — a beauty so perfect that the eye of God can find no flaw in it, for it is the righteousness of God. This we already have, given us when first we believed in Jesus — a righteousness that shall never be taken away.

Then the "beauties of holiness," an inward and an outward beauty. "The King's daughter is all glorious within — her clothing is of wrought gold." There must be the beauty within — or we shall be like white-washed sepulchers. "The Lord desires truth in the inward parts." But if there is divine beauty within, "the fruit of the Spirit" — then there will be the outward beauty in the life, the "clothing of wrought gold."

The Bride of the Lord must have beautiful . . .
eyes — out of which the divine love and joy and peace shine,
ears — delighting to listen to His voice,
lips — joyful with His praise,
hands — diligent in His service,
feet — "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

"So shall the King greatly desire your beauty — for He is your Lord! Worship Him!"

But if the beauty of the *Bride* is such — then what is the beauty of the *King* Himself? None but the Holy Spirit can adequately describe it:

"You are the most excellent of men — and Your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Gird Your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe Yourself with splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let Your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath Your feet. Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has set You above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad!" Psalm 45:2-8

"His head and hair were white like wool — as white as snow; and His eyes were like blazing fire! His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance!" Revelation 1:14-16

While the Bride is waiting for her Lord, listening for the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom comes!" For though she sleeps, her heart wakes — she whispers in her soul with holy joy, "My Beloved is mine — and I am His!" And when she hears the challenge, "What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women?" She replies, "My Beloved is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand! His *head* is purest gold; His *hair* is wavy and black as a raven. His *eyes* are like doves by the water streams, washed in milk, mounted like jewels! His *cheeks* are like beds of spice yielding perfume. His *lips* are like lilies dripping with myrrh. His *arms* are rods of gold set with chrysolite. His *body* is like polished ivory decorated with sapphires. His *legs* are pillars of marble set on bases of pure gold. His *appearance* is like Lebanon, choice as its cedars. His *mouth* is sweetness itself! Yes, He is Altogether Lovely! This is my Beloved, this my Friend!" Song of Songs 5:10-16

"Yes, He is Altogether Lovely!"