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It is a wonderful thing that we should be let into the thoughts of the Apostle, wherein he innocently tells us about himself. He was taken up with Christ, and could say, "To me to live is Christ." He thought of nothing but Christ; if it was a question of himself, to him to die was "gain." But he did not think of himself at all; he left everything to the Lord. If we think of ourselves, and take ourselves in hand, we take upon ourselves the responsibility which God keeps Himself if we leave all to Him. The vantage ground of the Christian is, that he has not to think of himself. The Apostle could say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Some have tried to say that on a deathbed, but they left out the first part altogether. He was "in a strait"; he was sorry he had to stay, though he was willing to stop a little longer for their sakes; to die was positive gain to him. Nor did he speak of going to a place; it was a Person he was going to. Nor was it a relief, as some say, when the body is racked with pain (even a worldly man can say that); it was no relief to him, but positive gain, to be with that Person, though, even then, not yet in the state of perfection, for that would not be till he had his glorified body.

Which of us could say that? We have not only an example to follow in Christ, but to follow a man with like passions as ourselves. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).