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COMING TO
CHRIST

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

HENRY ALTEMUS

PHILADELPHIA







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HENRY ALTEMUS, MANUFACTURER,
PHILADELPHIA.

COMING TO CHRIST.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

A GENTLE SPIRIT, a temperament alive to all innocent joys, to all the harmonies of life and literature, a deep and earnest faith, a loving self-surrender to the Saviour who was the object of that faith—these are the qualities which make Frances Ridley Havergal a character of exceptional interest, not only to professing Christians, but to all who recognize and revere the spirit of the Gospel teachings. For having the gift of expression—a simple and pellucid style through which the soul poured itself out in either prose or verse—the qualities which endeared her to the friends who knew her in person won her a world-wide circle of friends among those who only knew her through her published writings.

Miss Havergal was born December 14th, 1836, and died June 3d, 1879. She was the daughter of Rev. William Henry Havergal, famous as a writer of sacred music. The story of her life, as revealed

(iii)

to us in the "Memorials" edited by her sister in 1880 seems uneventful enough in incident. Its landmarks are two heavy bereavements, and the changes in outward circumstances ensuing therefrom. One might think that the first of these epoch-marking bereavements was the death of her mother, which occurred in 1848. Yet Frances herself confesses that this event "did not make at first the impression upon me which might have been expected." We must not take her too literally, however. It is undoubtedly from this period that we may roughly date the kindling of that intense religious enthusiasm which burns in all her life and poetry, and which remained unquenched to the last. At the same time, the first poignant and crushing grief that she experienced was the sudden death of her father at Easter, 1870. His widow (for he had married a second time) continued to live at Leamington with the daughters; and the main support of the family devolved upon Frances, who had already won wide fame as a hymn-writer. In 1878 the death of Mrs. Havergal broke up the little circle, and Frances, with her sister Maria, afterwards her biographer, removed from Leamington into Wales, but she outlived her beloved second mother only a little over a year.

This life—tranquil as it seems on the surface—was disturbed in its inner depths by many conflicting currents of religious feeling. "I am quite sure," she tells us in her Autobiography, "that *nothing* in the way of earthly and external trials could have been to me what the inner darkness and strife and utter weariness of spirit, though the

greater part of these years, have been. Many have thought mine a comparatively thornless path; but often when the path was smoothest, there were hidden thorns within, and wounds bleeding and rankling." Evidently she had, in a less morbid degree, that extreme sensitiveness of conscience which drove Cowper mad. Through a life of the utmost purity and even sanctity, a life devoted to good works, to philanthropical endeavors of all sorts, she was disturbed by the sense of continual back-slidings. "I remember," she tells us again, "I remember longing to be able to say 'O God, my heart is fixed' in bitter mourning over its weakness and wavering."

It is pleasant to know that these dark shadows were eventually lifted. In her maturer years the early disquiet was succeeded by a calm trust and confidence, thus faithfully mirrored in the prelude to "Under His Shadow."

So now, I pray Thee, keep my hand in Thine
 And guide it as Thou wilt. I do not ask
 To understand the "wherefore" of each line:
 Mine is the sweeter, easier, happier task
 Just to look up to Thee for every word,
 Rest in thy love and trust and know that I am heard.

Miss Havergal's verses were collected and reissued in two volumes in 1884. But hitherto her prose writings have been strangely neglected by publishers.

In these prose writings, even more than in her poems, Miss Havergal has shown us her best and truest self. Simple and direct as they are in method, they go straight from the heart to the heart. The author's tenderness, reverence and humility, her

ardent love for her Lord and for her neighbor are all reflected in her prose. Independently of their religious value, these writings have a distinct literary interest as revealing the inner workings of a unique and winning personality. It is no wonder that in this country alone they have sold to the extent of some half a million copies.

COMING TO CHRIST.

FIRST DAY.

The Giver of the Invitation.

‘Come unto ME.’—MATT. xi. 28.

THIS is the Royal Invitation. For it is given by the King of kings. We are so familiar with the words, that we fail to realize them. May the Holy Spirit open our ear that we may hear the voice of our King in them,¹ and that they may reach our souls with imperative power.² Then, ‘they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak.’³

‘Lord, to whom shall we go?’⁴ Not ‘to *what* shall we go.’ For the human heart within us craves a personal, living rest and refuge. No doctrines, however true; no systems, however perfect; nothing mental, moral, or spiritual, will do as the answer to this question of every soul that is not absolutely dead in trespasses and sins.⁵ As surely as you and I are persons, individualities, real separate existences, so surely must we have a Person, no less real and individual, to whom to go in our more or less conscious need of salvation. And so

¹ John x. 27.

⁴ John vi. 68.

² 1 Thess. i. 5.

⁵ Eph. ii. 1.

³ Isa. lii. 6.

the great word of Invitation, Royal and Divine, is given to us, 'Come unto ME!'

'Unto *Me*.' Just think what that one word means! Seek out all the great and wonderful titles of Christ for yourself, and write after each one—'And *He* says, Come unto *Me*!' Unto Me, 'the mighty God,'¹ nothing less than that! 'Mighty to save'² and 'ready to save me.'³

Then seek out all the exquisitely winning beauties of the character and words and ways of Him who went about doing good,⁴ till you 'have heard Him and observed Him'⁵ all through those years of patient and perfect ministry, and recollect all the time that it is *He* who says to you, 'Come unto *Me*!'⁶ Unto Him, the man Christ Jesus,⁷ full of compassion, and tender yet royal grace.

Then look at the great central scene of the universe,—the central moment not of a world's history only, but of eternity;—look at the Saviour, who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree,⁸ bowing His bleeding head under that awful burden,⁹ because His faithfulness was unto the death,¹⁰ and His love was strong as death!¹¹ 'Behold your God,'¹² and 'Behold the Man,'¹³ who loved you and gave Himself for you;¹⁴ hear His own touching call, 'I said, Behold Me, behold Me!'¹⁵ Look away from all the 'other things,' look at the Crucified One, and, as you gaze, remember that *He* says, 'Come unto Me!'

¹ Isa. ix. 6.

⁴ Acts x. 38.

⁷ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

¹⁰ John xiii. 1.

¹³ John xix. 5.

² Isa. lxiii. 1.

⁵ Hos. xiv. 8.

⁸ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

¹¹ Cant. viii. 6.

¹⁴ Gal. ii. 20.

³ Isa. xxxviii. 20.

⁶ Matt. xx. 28.

⁹ Isa. liii. 6.

¹² Isa. xl. 9.

¹⁵ Isa. lxxv. 1.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,¹ that both from the depth of sorrow and from the height of glory this Royal Invitation comes to you?

For it is the call not only of Jesus Crucified, but of Jesus Reigning and Jesus Coming. 'See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh,'² for He is coming to judge the quick and the dead.³ He is reigning now, and there are no neutrals in His kingdom.⁴ All are either willing and loyal subjects, or actual rebels,—those who have obeyed the King's call, and come, and those who have 'made light of it,'⁵ and *not* come.

Which are you?

Think of the day when the great white throne is set,⁶ and when the Son of man shall come in His glory;⁷ when all will be gathered before Him, and He shall separate them one from another,⁸ and know that it is 'this same Jesus'⁹ who now says to you, 'Come unto *Me!*'

Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

¹ Lam. i. 12.

⁴ Luke xi. 23.

⁷ Matt. xxv. 31.

² Heb. xii. 25.

⁵ Matt. xxii. 5.

⁸ Matt. xxv. 32.

³ Acts x. 42.

⁶ Rev. xx. 11.

⁹ Acts i. 11.

SECOND DAY.

What is 'Coming'?

'Come unto Me.'—MATT. xi. 28.

'**B**UT what is "coming"?'

One's very familiarity with the terms used to express spiritual things, seems to have a tendency to make one feel mystified about them. And their very simplicity makes one suspicious, as it were, that there must be some mysterious and mystical meaning behind them,¹ because they sound *too* easy and plain to have such great import. 'Come' means 'come,'—just that! and not some occult process of mental effort.

What would you understand by it, if you heard it to-day for the first time, never having had any doubts or suppositions or previous notions whatever about it? What does a little child understand by it? It is positively too simple to be made plainer by any amount of explanation. If you could see the Lord Jesus standing there, right before you, and you heard Him say, 'Come!'² would you say, 'What does "come" mean?' And if the room were dark, so that you could only hear

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

² Matt. xiv. 29.

and not see, would it make any difference? Would you not turn instantly towards the 'Glorious Voice'?¹ Would you not, in heart, and will, and intention, instantaneously obey it?²—that is, if you *believed* it to be Himself.³ For 'he that cometh to God must believe that He is.'⁴ The coming so hinges on that, as to be really the same thing. The moment you really believed, you would really come; and the moment you really come, you really believe. Now the Lord Jesus is as truly and actually 'nigh thee'⁵ as if you could see Him. And He as truly and actually says 'Come' to you as if you heard Him. Fear not, believe only,⁶ and *let* yourself come to Him straight away! 'Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.'⁷ And know that His answer is, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'⁸

Do you still feel unaccountably puzzled about it? Give a quiet hour to the records of how others came to Him. Begin with the eighth of St. Matthew, and trace out all through the Gospels how they came to Jesus with all sorts of different needs, and trace in these your own spiritual needs of cleansing, healing, salvation, guidance, sight, teaching. They knew what they wanted, and they knew Whom they wanted. And consequently they just *came*. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you want and Whom you want, and you will talk no more about

¹ Isa. xxx. 30.

⁴ John vi. 35.

⁷ Hos. xiv. 2.

² Jer. iii. 22.

⁵ Deut. xxx. 14.

⁸ John vi. 37.

³ Heb. xi. 6.

⁶ Luke viii. 50.

what it means, you will just *come*.¹ And then you will say, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world;'² and you will say, '*My Lord and my God*.'³

THIRD DAY.

All Things are Ready.

'Come; for all things are now ready.'—LUKE xiv. 17.

ALL things! God the Father is ready to save you.⁴ Jesus Christ is ready to receive you.⁵ The Holy Spirit is ready to dwell in you.⁶ Are you ready?

All things. The 'great salvation' is ready for you.⁷ The full atonement is made for you.⁸ The eternal redemption is obtained for you.⁹ Are you ready?

All things. The cleansing fountain is opened for you.¹⁰ The robe of righteousness is wrought for you.¹¹ The way into the holiest is consecrated for you.¹² Are you ready?

All things. All things that pertain unto life and

¹ John xii. 32.

⁴ Isa. xxxviii. 20.

⁷ Heb. ii. 3.

¹⁰ Zech. xiii. 1.

² John iv. 42.

⁵ John vi. 37.

⁸ Rom. v. 11.

¹¹ Rom. iii. 22.

³ John xx. 28.

⁶ Rom. viii. 9.

⁹ Heb. ix. 12.

¹² Heb. x. 19, 20.

godliness are given you by His Divine power.¹ Exceeding great and precious promises are given you.² The supply of all your need is guaranteed to you.³ Strength and guidance, teaching and keeping, are provided for you. Even the good works in which you shall walk are prepared for you.⁴ A Father's love and care and a Saviour's gift of peace are waiting for you. The feast is spread for you.⁵ All these things are ready for you.⁶ Are you ready for them?

Even if you did not heed nor believe any other words of Jesus, could you—*can* you—doubt His dying words? Surely they are worthy of all acceptance!⁷ What are they?

'IT IS FINISHED!'⁸

What is finished? 'I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.'⁹ And what is that work? Simply the work of our salvation. That is the reason why all things are now ready, because Jesus has finished that all-inclusive work. When a thing is finished, how much is there left to do? The question sounds too absurd with respect to ordinary things. We hardly take the trouble to answer, 'Why nothing, of course!' When Jesus has finished the work, how much is there left for you to do? Do you not see? *Nothing*, of course! You have only to accept that work as really finished, and accept His dying declaration that it is so.¹⁰ What further assurance would you have? Is not this enough? Does your heart say Yes, or No?

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

⁴ Eph. ii. 10.

⁷ 1 Tim. i. 15.

¹⁰ 2 Tim. ii. 13.

² 2 Pet. i. 3, 4.

⁵ Isa. xxv. 6.

⁸ John xix. 30.

³ Phil. iv. 19.

⁶ Matt. xxii. 4.

⁹ John xvii. 4.

‘Do ye now believe?’¹ Settle that; and then what follows? Hear another word of the Faithful Witness.² Remember, it is no less true than the other. The Holy Lips that spoke that grand truth on the cross spoke nothing that could deceive or mislead. ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.’³ What does this mean? Just what it says, and nothing less! It means that even if you never believed before—even if you never had a spark of faith or glimmer of hope before—yet if you have now given your heart-assent to Jesus and His finished work, you have now everlasting life!⁴ That heart-assent is believing;⁵ and ‘he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.’⁶ And this ‘believing’ is ‘coming;’⁷ and thus coming you shall find for yourself that all things are indeed ready.

What now? Shall praise be the only thing not ready? Will you not now prove your acceptance of the great gift of eternal life⁸ by pouring out your thanks⁹ at once for it, and prove your trust in the finished work¹⁰ by praising the Saviour who died to finish it for you?¹¹

From the cross uplifted high,
Where the Saviour deigns to die,
What melodious sounds I hear,
Bursting on my ravished ear!
Love’s redeeming work is done;
Come, and welcome! sinner, come!

1 John xvi. 31; Mark ix. 24. 2 Rev. i. 5. 3 John vi. 47.
4 Acts viii. 32-39. 5 John iii. 16. 6 John iii. 36.
7 John vi. 35. 8 Rom. vi. 23; 2 Cor. ix. 15. 9 Cor. i. 12.
10 Isa. xii. 1, 2. 11 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Spread for thee the festal board,
 See with richest dainties stored ;
 To thy Father's bosom pressed,
 Yet again a child confessed,
 Never from his house to roam ;
 Come, and welcome ! sinner, come !

THOMAS HAWEIS.

FOURTH DAY.

Now.

'Come now.'—ISA. i. 18.

ALL things are *now* ready, therefore come *now* !

Experience does not run on rails laid regularly down, and readers do not always go hand in hand and heart to heart with the writer. I only wish they did. Then we might try to lead on more quickly, instead of reiterating the one call, in the hope that it may, first or last, be heard and obeyed.¹ Please do not imagine, because there are twenty-seven more chapters on the same subject, that there is any sort of slow necessary progress, any set of ideas and feelings to be gone or got through, gradually working up to the climax of 'coming.' This is all cut short by the simple word, 'Come *now* !' Nothing can be plainer. Therefore, if you postpone coming, you are calmly disobeying God. When we bid a child to 'come,' we do not

¹ Isa. xxviii. 10.

count it obedience unless it comes at once, then and there. It is not obedience if it stops to consider, and coolly tells you it is 'really thinking about coming,' and waits to see how long you will choose to go on calling it.¹

What right have we to treat our holy Lord as we would not think of letting a naughty child treat us?² He says, 'Come now.' And 'now' does not mean to-morrow.³ 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'⁴

Put it to yourself, what if *this night* God should require your soul of you,⁵ and you had not 'come?' What if the summons finds you still far off, when the Precious Blood was ready, by which you might have been made nigh?⁶ You do not know what a day may bring forth.⁷ There are plenty of things besides immediate death which may just as effectually prevent your ever coming at all if you do not come now. This might be your last free hour for coming. To-morrow the call may seem rather less urgent, and the 'other things entering in'⁸ may deaden it, and the grieved Spirit may withdraw⁹ and cease to give you even your present inclination to listen to it, and so you may drift on and on, farther and farther from the haven of safety¹⁰ (into which you may enter *now* if you will), till it is out of sight on the horizon. And then it may be too late to turn the helm, and the current may be too strong; and when the storm of mortal illness at

¹ Rom. x. 21.

³ Jas. iv. 14.

⁶ Eph. ii. 13.

⁹ Eph. iv. 30.

² Jer. vii. 13; Isa. lxxv. 2.

⁴ Heb. iv. 7.

⁷ Prov. xxvii. 1

¹⁰ Ps. li. 11.

⁵ Luke xii. 20.

⁸ Mark iv. 19.

last comes, you may find that you are too weak mentally or physically to rouse yourself even to hear, much less to come. What *can* one do when fever or exhaustion are triumphing over mind and body? Do not risk it. Come now! And 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'¹

FIFTH DAY.

Coming into the Ark.

'Come thou, and all thy house, into the Ark.'—GEN. vii. 1.

NO need to repeat the story! We knew it all at six years old. To-day the words are sent to you, 'Come *thou!*'

We are either inside or outside the Ark. There is no half-way in this. Outside is death, inside is life.² Outside is certain, inevitable, utter destruction.³ Inside is certain and complete safety.⁴ Where are you at this moment? Perhaps you dare not say confidently and happily, 'I am inside;' and yet you do not like to look the alarming alternative in the face, and say, 'I am outside!' And you prefer trying to persuade yourself that you do not exactly know, and can't be expected to be able to

¹ Isa. i. 18.

³ John iii. 36.

² Deut. xxx. 15-19.

⁴ 1 John v. 12.

answer such a question. And you say, perhaps with a shade of annoyance, 'How *am* I to know?'¹ God's infallible Word tells you very plainly, 'If any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'² 'A very severe test!' you say. I cannot help that; I can only tell you exactly what God says. 'I cannot reverse it,'³ and you cannot alter it. So then, if old things have *not* passed away in your life, and if you are *not* a new creature,⁴ 'born again,'⁵ altogether different in heart and life and love and aim,⁶ you are not 'in Christ.'⁷ And if you are not '*in* Christ,' you are *out* of Christ,⁸ outside the only place of safety.

'Come thou *into* the Ark!' It is one of the devices of the destroyer to delude you into fancying that no very decided step is necessary. He is very fond of the word 'gradually.' You are to become more earnest—gradually. You are to find salvation—gradually. You are to turn your mind to God—gradually. Did you ever think that God never once uses this word nor anything like it? Neither the word nor the sense of it occurs in any way in the whole Bible with reference to salvation.⁹ You might have been 'gradually' approaching the Ark, and 'gradually' making up your mind to enter; but unless you took the one step *into* the Ark, the one step from outside to inside, what would have been your fate when the door was shut?¹⁰

¹ 1 John v. 13.

⁴ Gal. vi. 15.

⁷ Eph. ii. 12, 13.

¹⁰ Gen. vii. 21, 22.

² 2 Cor. v. 17.

⁵ John iii. 3.

⁸ Acts iv. 12.

³ Num. xxiii. 20.

⁶ 1 John iii. 14.

⁹ Prov. xviii. 10.

‘Come *thou* into the Ark!’ I want the call to haunt you, to ring in your ears all day and all night, *till you come.*¹

For at this moment, if you are not *in* the Ark, you are in more awful danger than you can conceive. Just because you know it is so awful, you shut your eyes and try *not* to think of it! But there it is, all the same. Any moment the door may be shut for you.² Any hour may be the sunset of your day of grace, with no twilight of possibilities of salvation beyond.³ And then, as the tree falleth, so it lieth.⁴ As death finds you, so the judgment will find you.⁵ Where it finds you, inside or outside the Ark, there the day of the Lord will find you, ‘in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.’⁶ What will you do then,⁷ when neither heavens nor earth afford even a standing place for you?⁸

But ‘come *thou into the Ark!*’ Jesus is the Ark. He is the hiding-place⁹ from that fiery tempest. ‘I flee unto Thee to hide me’¹⁰ ‘from the wrath to come.’¹¹ ‘Thou art my Hiding-place.’¹²

He who brings the flood¹³ has provided the Ark. And the door is open. It *will* be shut some day—it may be shut to-morrow. What will you do if you find yourself not shut *in*,¹⁴ but shut *out*? Whose fault is it if you do not enter in and be saved?

1 Heb. xii. 25.

4 Eccl. xi. 3.

7 Jer. v. 31.

10 Ps. cxliii. 9.

13 Gen. vi. 17.

2 Matt. xxv. 10.

5 Rev. xx. 12.

8 Rev. vi. 17.

11 Matt. iii. 7.

14 Gen. vii. 16.

3 Luke xiii. 25-28.

6 2 Pet. iii. 10.

9 Isa. xxxii. 2.

12 Ps. xxxii. 7.

Noah did not put it off. He and his family entered the self-same day into the Ark.¹ I wonder if any of Noah's acquaintances were thinking about coming when the flood overtook them, and even coming 'gradually' nearer! We are told that 'Noah *only*² remained alive, and they that were with him *in* the Ark.' Then, once more, 'Come thou into the Ark,' that when the 'great and terrible day'³ comes, you may be 'found of Him in peace,'⁴ 'found *in* Him.'⁵

The rising tempest sweeps the sky,
 The rain descends, the winds are high;
 The waters swell, and death and fear
 Beset thy path, no refuge near;
 Haste, traveller, haste!

Oh, haste! a shelter you may gain,
 A covert from the wind and rain,
 A hiding-place, a rest, a home,
 A refuge from the wrath to come:
 Haste, traveller, haste!

W. B. COLLYER.

1 Gen. vii. 13.
 4 2 Pet. iii. 14.

2 Gen. vii. 23.
 5 Phil. iii. 9.

3 Joel ii. 31.

SIXTH DAY.

Drawn into the Ark.

‘Thou shalt come into the Ark.’—GEN. vi. 18.

YOU would like to take this great step out of danger into safety; but you find it very hard, though it sounds very easy. You feel as if you had spiritual nightmare,—seeing the danger, and not able to stir hand or foot to escape it.¹

Perhaps every one who comes to Christ has this sense of utter helplessness about it.² This is because the Holy Spirit must convince us that the whole thing is God’s doing, and not ours, so that He may have *all* the glory of saving us from beginning to end.³ It is not at all because He is not willing to save us, but just because He *is* willing, that He lets us find out for ourselves that our own will is so numb that it cannot rouse and move without the fire of His love and grace.⁴

Now just trust His promise, ‘Thou shalt come into the Ark;’ in other words, believe that His power and love are even now being exerted upon

¹ Rom. v. 6.

³ Isa. xlii. 8; ib. lix. 16.

² Deut. xxxii. 36.

⁴ Eph. ii. 1.

you, and that your sense of helplessness is only part of His wonderful way of drawing you to Jesus. God the Father is 'not willing that any should perish,¹ but that all should come to repentance.'²

Then why do any perish? Simply because they *won't* come; because they will not yield to the winning love and the 'drawing' power which is now being put forth to save you, if, as you read this, you *want* to be saved. There is no sadder word in the Bible than 'Ye *will* not come to Me, that ye might have life.'³ But if you are saying, ever so feebly and faintly, 'I will,' God meets it with His strong and gracious 'Thou *shalt*.'⁴

Do not fear to take the '*Thou*' to yourself. Remember the great 'Whosoever will,'⁵ and look up at this star of promise in the dark, 'Thou shalt come into the Ark.' Jesus said, 'All that the Father giveth Me *shall* come to Me.'⁶ And the Father says, 'I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto Me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me?'⁷ Whose heart? Is it not yours? You would hardly be reading these pages, if your heart were not at all engaged to approach unto Him. And if it is so engaged, who engaged it? Who but the God from whom alone *all* holy desires do proceed?

Then go on a few verses farther, and see the word of the Lord to you. 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; *therefore* with loving-kindness

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

⁴ Jer. iii. 19.

⁷ Jer. xxx. 21.

² 1 Tim. ii. 4.

⁵ Rev. xxii. 17.

³ John v. 40.

⁶ John vi. 39

have I drawn thee.¹ Now do not wrong, and wound, and insult that tremendous love by refusing to believe it. He is at this moment giving you the personal proof of it, by 'drawing'² you even for these few minutes. Do not resist the half-formed wish to come to Jesus. It is very solemn to realize that this is no less than the Father's own drawing of you to His dear Son.³ Without it you could not come, because you know you would have refused to come;⁴ but with it, if only you yield to it, 'thou shalt come into the Ark.'

When the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and returned to Noah because the waters were on the face of the whole earth, 'then he put forth his hand, and took her and pulled her in'⁵ (margin, 'caused her to come') 'unto him into the Ark.' What a beautiful picture is this little helpless tired dove⁶ of our helplessness and weariness, and the kind Hand, strong and tender, which does not leave us to flutter and beat against a closed window, but takes us, and *pulls* us '*unto Him, into the Ark!*'

So we have the willingness of the Father⁸ in one part of the type,⁹ and the willingness of the Son in another part,¹⁰—willingness to receive you into safety and rest.¹¹ Then 'Come *thou* into the Ark!'¹²

¹ Jer. xxxi. 3.

⁴ Luke xiii. 34.

⁷ Luke xiv. 23.

¹⁰ Luke xv. 2.

² Gen. xi. 4.

⁵ Gen. vi. 9.

⁸ Ezek. xviii. 23.

¹¹ John xii. 32.

³ John vi. 44.

⁶ Isa. lx. 8.

⁹ 2 Cor. vi. 17.

¹² Gen. vii. 1.

SEVENTH DAY.

Coming for Rest.

‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’—MATT. xi. 28.

‘THIS is *not* your rest.’¹ God says so, and therefore it is no use seeking or hoping or trying for it.² You may as well give up first as last. The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot till she came to the ark;³ and neither will you. And the end of the dreary vista of unrest all through the years of a life without Christ, is, ‘They have no rest day nor night.’⁴

‘The people shall weary themselves for very vanity.’⁵ Do you know anything about that? ‘They weary themselves to commit iniquity.’⁶ ‘Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way.’⁷ Do these words come home to you? Or, ‘But now He hath made me weary; Thou hast made desolate all my company?’⁸ Whether it is the weariness of sin or of sorrow, of vanity or of desolation (and sooner or later the one must lead into

¹ Mic. ii. 10.

⁴ Rev. xiv. 11.

⁷ Isa. lvii. 10.

² Eccl. ii. 17-20.

⁵ Hab. ii. 13.

⁸ Job xvi. 7.

³ Gen. viii. 9.

⁶ Jer. ix. 5.

the other), the gentle call floats over the troubled waters, 'Come unto Me all ye that labor' (or 'are weary') 'and I will give you rest.'

But stay; you may, or rather you must, put in a double claim to the promise. You may not be consciously, particularly weary or labouring; but whether conscious of it or not, you *are* heavy laden, unless the one great burden of sin is taken away from you.¹ It is a fact, whether the Holy Spirit has convinced you of it or not as yet,² that unless your iniquity is taken away by personal washing in the only Fountain,³ you are in the position described in the 38th Psalm, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.'⁴ So much too heavy for you, that if you do not accept Christ's offer of rest from that burden,⁵ you will never be able to find or follow the path of life.⁶ —But why bear it one minute longer when Jesus says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'?

'He hath given us rest by *His* sorrow, and life by His death;' 'rest from *thy* sorrow and from thy fear, and from thy hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.'⁷ Come and take the gift! It is gloriously real. It is no mere slight and temporary sense of relief. 'We which have believed *do* enter into rest.'⁸

And He gives us 'rest on *every* side,'⁹—complete rest, guarded and sheltered all round.¹⁰

¹ Isa. i. 4; ib. liii. 6.

³ Zech. xiii. 1; 1 John i. 7.

⁵ Ps. lv. 22; Ezek. xxxiii. 10.

⁷ Isa. xiv. 3.

⁹ Chron. xxii. 18.

² John xvi. 8, 9.

⁴ Ps. xxxviii. 4.

⁶ Ps. xvi. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 24.

⁸ Heb. iv. 3.

¹⁰ 1 Kings v. 4.

It is not only rest *from* all the weariness and burdens, but rest *in* Himself. Jesus is spoken of in type as 'the Man of Rest,'¹ 'and His rest shall be glorious.'² It is this, His own Divine rest, that He will give.

'This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest.'³ Is it not worth having? Will you not come for it? You *cannot* have it without coming to Jesus;⁴ but only come, and it shall be yours—for there stands His word—and 'in returning and rest shall ye be saved.'⁵

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Come unto Me and rest;
 Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast.'
 I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary, and worn, and sad;
 I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad.

DR. H. BONAR.

¹ 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

² Isa. xi. 10.

³ Isa. xxviii. 12.

⁴ Hos. xiii. 9.

⁵ Isa. xxx. 15.

EIGHTH DAY.

Want of Will.

‘Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.’—JOHN
V. 40.

IT is almost certain that some whose eyes glance over these pages will be conscious that they do not very much care to come to Christ, for this is at once the commonest and the most fatal hindrance. You cannot honestly say that you *want* to come. You perhaps go as far as to say, with momentary seriousness, ‘I wish that I wished!’ but no farther. In your inmost heart you would rather be ‘let alone,’¹ not considering that *that* is the most terribly certain beginning of doom. You are not perfectly comfortable, but you are not so uncomfortable as to feel inclined to make any effort. And as long as you can keep from thinking about it, you *say* you are ‘very happy.’ Now believe me, yours is a ten times worse and more dangerous state than if you were a condemned murderer, knowing his doom, realizing his sin and *therefore* seeking the

¹ Hos. iv. 17.

Saviour and coming to Him 'with all the desire of his mind.'¹

For so long as you are not willing, *i.e.*, not actually and actively willing to come (for that is the meaning of the original), of course you cannot come. And without coming to Jesus you cannot have life.² And if you do not have life, there is nothing but death for you,—the second death with all its unknown terrors, into the realities of which any moment may plunge you.³ Your not believing this makes no difference to the fact.⁴ Your doubting it makes no difference to its certainty. I assert it on the authority of the Word of God. 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death. Therefore choose life.'⁵ For in not willing life, you are willing death, and 'why will ye die?'⁶

Why? Is it not utterly unreasonable? Would any but a lunatic walk with mirth and fun over the thin crust which hides unknown depths of boiling lava? Would you enjoy a picnic in the midst of it? Yet this is less mad than what you are doing.

Then you will say, 'I can't help it! I can't make myself care!' Exactly so; and just in this fact lies, not your excuse, but your one hope and help. You cannot make yourself care to flee from the wrath to come.⁷ You cannot rouse yourself to be willing to come to Christ for salvation. But One can.⁸ And you may and can ask for the Holy

¹ Deut. xviii. 6.

⁴ Rom. iii. 3, 4.

⁶ Ezek. xviii. 31.

² 1 John v. 12.

⁵ Deut. xxx. 19; Jer. xxi. 8.

⁷ Matt. iii. 7.

³ Rev. xxi. 8.

⁸ Hos. xiii. 9.

Spirit to make you willing. You can say, 'O God, give me Thy Holy Spirit to make me willing to come, for Jesus Christ's sake.' God makes no condition whatever as to giving this. The Blessed Spirit is promised most simply and unconditionally 'to them that ask Him.'¹ *This* promise says nothing even about desiring or thirsting; it premises absolutely nothing, but comes to the lowest depths of sin-paralyzed will—it is only and simply, 'Ask.'

Remember that one spirit or the other is now working in you. It is very awful to read of 'the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;'² and what is more direct disobedience than not coming when Jesus calls? Therefore 'ask,' and ask at once, for the other spirit, the Holy Spirit, who can make you 'willing in the day of His power,'³—God the Holy Ghost, who 'worketh in us to will.'⁴

Think of Jesus saying, 'How often would I, 'but ye would not.'⁵ *He* is willing.

May He give you 'one heart to do the commandment of the King!'⁶

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers!
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours!

DR. WATTS.

¹ Luke xi. 9-13.

⁴ Phil. ii. 13.

² Eph. ii. 2.

⁵ Luke xiii. 34.

³ Ps. cx. 3.

⁶ 2 Chron. xxx. 12.

NINTH DAY.

The Call of the Spirit.

‘And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.’—REV. xxii. 17.

HAVE you thought about ‘the love of the Spirit’?¹ Have you realized that God’s ‘loving Spirit’² says to you, ‘Come’? Are you conscious that if you refuse to listen to this gentlest call, you are ‘grieving’³ the Holy Spirit of God, —‘vexing’⁴ Him by the rebellion to which this refusal really amounts,—‘resisting’⁵ the Holy Ghost, whose power alone can work⁶ in you the holiness without which you can never see the Lord?⁷

Every ‘Come!’ in the Bible is the call of the Spirit. For ‘all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,’⁸ and the ‘holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’⁹ And every time that a still small voice in your heart says ‘Come,’ it is the call of the Spirit. Every time the remembrance of the Saviour’s sweetest spoken word floats

¹ Rom. xv. 30.

⁴ Isa. lxiii. 10.

⁷ Heb. xii. 14.

² Ps. cxliii. 10, P. V. B.

⁵ Acts vii. 51.

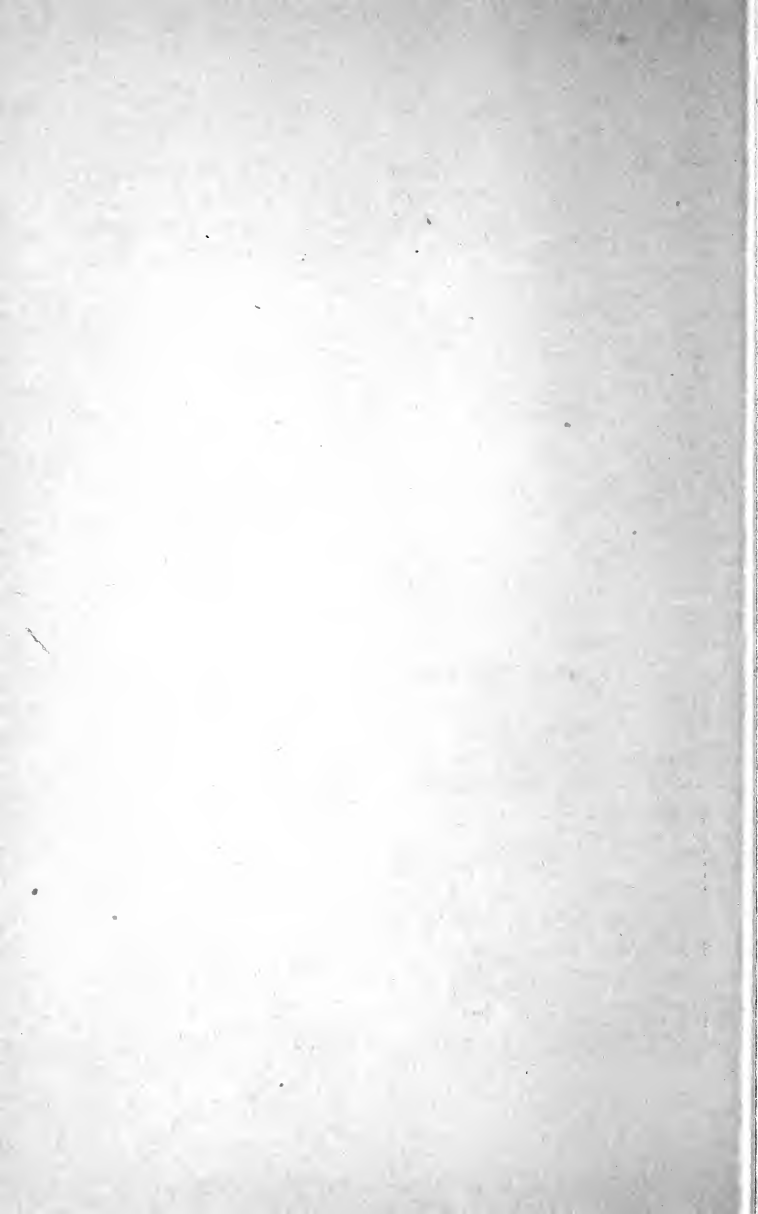
⁸ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

³ Eph. iv. 30.

⁶ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

⁹ 2 Pet. i. 21.





across your mind, it is the Holy Spirit's fulfilment of our Lord's promise that 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'¹ Last time those words, 'Come unto Me,' came into your mind, whether in some wakeful night hour, or suddenly and unaccountably amid the stir of the day, did you think that it was the very voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in your heart? Or did you let other voices drown it, not knowing that the goodness of God was leading you by it?²

Every time an ambassador of Christ³ bids you come, and every time that any one who loves Him tries to speak a word for Jesus to you, it is the call of the Spirit and the Bride; for the Bride is the Church of Christ,⁴ and she is the privileged instrument through which the clear music of the call is oftenest heard.

What makes you take the trouble to read this book? Why is there any attraction at all for you in the subject? Is it not that the Holy Spirit is causing your heart to vibrate, it may be but very feebly as yet, at the thrill of His secret call? Your awakening wish to come is the echo of that call. If you stop and listen, it will be heard more distinctly and winningly. The call will grow fuller and stronger as you turn and yield, and follow it. And the same blessed Spirit will give you power to do this.⁵ He will show you your need of Jesus, and He will testify of Jesus to you, so that you shall be

¹ John xiv. 26.

² Rom. ii. 4.

³ 2 Cor. v. 20.

⁴ Eph. v. 25-32; ² Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.

⁵ 1 Thess. v. 24.

willing to come.¹ Do you feel very helpless about it?² Do you wish you had the mighty aid of the Almighty Spirit, so that you might rise and come while Jesus of Nazareth passeth by?³ Then why do you not ask for it? Who is to blame if you do not have what is to be had for the asking?⁴ Christ Himself has put the promise in the very plainest words: 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' and 'Every one that asketh receiveth.'⁵ What could you wish Him to say more? What could He possibly say more? Clearly, if you have not, it is because you ask not.⁶ But if you *are* asking for the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus, you have already the earnest of the Spirit,⁷ and you shall have more and more.⁸ So take courage!

But it is no light thing to put away a holy desire, however feeble; because it sprang not from your own heart, but is the voice of the Spirit saying, Come! It will not always speak, if not obeyed. Turn back from Revelation to Genesis, and you find the shadow of the bright light of the winning call in the unchanged warning note: 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.'⁹ Not *always*, dear, unknown friend, whom I would fain win for my Lord,—not *always*! But He is striving now, He is calling now, 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice.'¹⁰ Listen, yield, come!

¹ John xv. 26.

⁴ Luke xi. 13.

⁷ 2 Cor. i. 22.

¹⁰ Heb. iv. 7.

² John v. 7.

⁵ Matt. vii. 7, 8.

⁸ Matt. xiii. 12.

³ Mark x. 47-49.

⁶ Jas. iv. 2.

⁹ Gen. vi. 3; Prov. xxix. 1.

TENTH DAY.

Come and See.

'He (Jesus) saith unto them, Come and see.' 'Philip saith unto him, Come and See.'—JOHN i. 39, 46.

WHEN Jesus had found Philip, Philip *knew* that he had found Him. And the next thing to knowing that 'we have found Him' is to find some one else, and say, 'Come and see!' I say it now to you, dear friend, known or unknown, 'We have found Him!'¹ 'We see Jesus!'² If you only knew the irresistible longing,³ the very heart's desire⁴ that you should find and see Him too, you would pardon all the pertinacity, all the insistence, with which again and again we say, 'Come and see!' The woman of Samaria left her water-pot, and went her way into the city with the same message: 'Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did.'⁵ And we to whom Jesus has said, 'I that speak unto thee am He,'⁶ cannot do otherwise or less.

¹ John i. 45.

⁴ Rom. x. 1.

² Heb. ii. 9.

⁵ John iv. 28, 29.

³ 2 Cor. v. 14.

⁶ John iv. 26; 1 Cor. ix. 16.

It is not always very easy to say it. You little know how much it sometimes costs us! ¹ You do not know that though the few words seem so easily spoken, and you take them as a matter of course from us, because you know we are of 'that way'² of thinking, they may have cost us not a little wrestling with God for faith and courage to utter them, and an effort which will leave us weary and exhausted. But 'we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;'³ 'we also believe, and *therefore* speak.'⁴ We have seen Jesus,⁵ and therefore we must tell you of the sight, and entreat you to 'come and see.' Understand or misunderstand us as you will, we must 'say, Come!'⁶

But what is it that we are so burningly eager for you to see? Very likely you suppose it is just that we have a certain set of views that we have taken up, and we want you to hold the same. You think it is merely that we want to bring you over to our opinions, and that we want to have the satisfaction of getting you to agree with us! Oh, how wide of the mark! It is no such thing. We are not speaking of what we think, but 'we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.'⁷ We have seen by faith⁸ the only sight that is worth gazing upon, the sight that satisfies the angels,⁹ the sight that is enough for the joy and satisfaction of immortal vision throughout eternity. One thing we know, that, whereas we were blind, now we see.¹⁰

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 13.

⁷ 1 John iv. 14; John iii. 11.

¹⁰ John ix. 25.

² Acts xix. 9; ib. ix. 2.

⁵ 1 John i. 3.

⁸ Heb. xi. 27.

³ Acts iv. 20.

⁶ Rev. xxii. 17.

⁹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

We see Jesus, as our Lord and our God.¹

We see Him as the very Saviour we need, and the very Friend we craved.

We see Him as 'the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.'²

We see Him wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;³ our Substitute and our Sin-bearer.

We see Him, too, crowned with glory and honour,⁴ and we rejoice in His glory and beauty;⁵ we make our boast of Him.⁶

If you say to us, 'What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?'⁷ we reply, 'My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand. Yea, He is altogether lovely.'

It is not at all only for your own sakes that we want you so very much to come and see. We do want you to look and be saved.⁸ But our earnestness has a stronger spring than even that. We love our Lord, so that we cannot bear Him not to be esteemed aright. We cannot bear Him to be thought little of, and to be misunderstood;⁹ it is pain, real pain, to us when He is not appreciated and loved and adored,¹⁰—when all that He has done is treated as not worth whole-hearted gratitude and love,¹¹—when His great and blood-bought salvation is neglected.¹² For His own beloved sake, for His own glory's sake, we want you to come and see, that you may love and bless and glorify Him!

¹ John xx. 28.

⁴ Heb. ii. 9.

⁷ Cant. v. 9, 10, 16.

¹⁰ Isa. liii. 3.

² Gal. ii. 20.

⁵ Zech. ix. 17.

⁸ Isa. xlv. 22.

¹¹ Lam. i. 12.

³ Isa. liii. 5.

⁶ Ps. xxxiv. 2.

⁹ 1 Pet. ii. 4.

¹² Heb. ii. 3.

But, remember, this is not only our feeble human entreaty; it is Jesus Himself who first said, and still says, 'Come and see!' *He* says, 'Behold Me, behold Me!'¹

I know what you will say when you have come. You will say, 'Howbeit, I believed not their words *until* I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me.'² Thou exceedest the fame that I heard!'³

O Master, blessed Master, it is hard indeed to know
That thousands round our daily path misunderstand Thee so!
Despised and rejected yet, no beauty they can see,
O King of glory and of grace, beloved Lord, in Thee.

O Saviour, precious Saviour, come in all Thy power and
grace,
And take away the veil that hides the glory of Thy face!
Oh, manifest the marvels of Thy tenderness and love,
And let thy name be blessed and praised all other names
above.

¹ Isa. lxx. 1.

² 1 Kings x. 7.

³ 2 Chron. ix. 6.

ELEVENTH DAY.

The Safe Venture.

'Bid me come unto Thee. . . . And He said, Come.'—MATT. xiv. 28, 29.

IF Jesus says, 'Come!' don't you think you may venture?

Perhaps it is night in your soul,¹—as dark as ever it can be. It would not be so bad if you could even distinctly see the waves of the troubled sea² on which you are tossing. You do not know where you are. All seems vague and uncertain and wretched and confused.³ And though the Lord Jesus is very near you, though He has come to you walking on the water, and has said, 'It is I, be not afraid,'⁴ you cannot see Him, and you are not at all sure it is His voice;⁵ or if it is, that He is speaking to you. So of course you are 'troubled.'⁶

And if, in this trouble, you go on trying to steer and row for yourself, these same waves will prove

¹ Ps. cvii. 14.

⁴ Matt. xiv. 25.

² Job. xvi. 16.

⁵ Matt. xiv. 27.

³ Jer. xvii. 9.

⁶ Matt. xiv. 26.

themselves to be awful realities, and you will be lost in the storm. Do not venture that; but venture out through the darkness and upon the waves at the bare word of Jesus.

You do not need even to say, 'Lord, bid me come to Thee!' for He has done that already. Jesus *has* bid you 'Come!' ¹ and the bidding would be no more real if He opened the heavens, and said it again to you from the right hand of the throne of God. So the only question is, Will you venture?

True, it is but a word, but think Whose word! ² Could the word that Jesus Christ Himself uttered be a vain deceit? ³ Is not the Person the guarantee of the word? ⁴ 'The word only,' ⁵ of the Son of God has proved enough for every one of the great multitude that no man could number, ⁶ and it will be enough for you.

It does not matter in the least that you cannot see, and that you cannot feel, and that you cannot hear or distinguish anything else at all. ⁷ It does not matter in the least that you feel miserable and confused, and that you don't know what will come next. ⁸ It does not matter in the least that you cannot exactly understand how this simple coming can result in calm, and peace, and safety, and finding yourself at the land. ⁹ It does not matter in the least that the waters are casting up all the mire and dirt ¹⁰ of all the sinfulness of heart and life, the 'old

¹ Matt. xi. 28.

⁴ Num. xxiii. 19.

⁷ Isa. l. 10.

⁹ John vi. 21.

² Matt. xxiv. 35.

⁵ Matt. viii. 8.

⁸ Isa. ix. 5; ² Chron. xx. 12.

¹⁰ Isa. lvii. 20.

³ John xii. 48.

⁶ Rev. vii. 9.

sins,¹ and the besetting sins.² It does not matter in the least that all the winds of doubt seem let loose upon you, boisterous and blowing from every point to which you turn.³ All this, and everything else that is 'contrary,'⁴ is only so much the more reason for the simple venture. Just only you 'come!' And even if in the very act of coming you are afraid,⁵ and think you are beginning to sink, come on with the cry, 'Lord, save me!'⁶ and immediately Jesus will save you, and with the strong grasp of His hand the unanswerable question will come, 'Wherefore didst thou doubt?'⁷ You need not say, 'If I perish, I perish,'⁸ for you will not perish, and cannot perish, in this blessed venture of your soul upon His word.⁹ He 'will cause you to know His hand and His might';¹⁰ 'He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; *He* will rest in His love,'¹¹ and *you* shall rest in His love, now and for ever.

'They shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak; behold, it is I.'¹²

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
 Lost and ruined by the fall;
 If you tarry till you're better,
 You will never come at all.
 Not the righteous,
 Sinners Jesus came to call.

Lo! the incarnate God, ascended,
 Pleads the merit of His blood;

1 2 Pet. i. 9.

4 Matt. xiv. 24.

7 Matt. xiv. 31.

10 Jer. xvi. 21.

2 Heb. xii. 1.

5 Mark v. 33.

8 Esth. iv. 16.

11 Zeph. iii. 17.

3 2 Tim. ii. 13.

6 Matt. xiv. 30.

9 John x. 27, 28.

12 Isa. lii. 6.

Venture on Him, venture wholly,
 Let no other trust intrude.
 None but Jesus
 Can do helpless sinners good.

JOSEPH HART.

TWELFTH DAY.

Coming Boldly.

‘Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.’
 —HEB. iv. 16.

‘**T**HEREFORE!’ because we have ‘such an High Priest,’¹ touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and in all points tempted like as we are;² because He is ‘a Priest upon His throne,’³ ever living, with His royal power to save to the uttermost,⁴ and His priestly power to make intercession; ‘let us *therefore* come boldly unto the throne of grace.’⁵

Boldness and faith go together; fear and unbelief go together.⁶ ‘If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.’⁷ It is always want of faith that is at the bottom of all fear. ‘Why are ye fearful?’ is the question for those ‘of little

¹ Heb. vii. 26.

⁴ Heb. vii. 25.

⁷ Isa. vii. 9.

² Heb. iv. 14, 15.

⁵ Heb. iv. 16.

³ Zech. vi. 13.

⁶ Rev. xxi. 8.

faith.'¹ So, in order to come boldly, and therefore joyfully, all we need is more faith in the Great High Priest who sits upon the throne of grace.

Now, do not sigh, 'Ah, I wish I had more faith!' It will not come to you by languid lamentations about your want of faith. 'It is the gift of God.'² And if thou knewest this gift of God,³ and who it is that only waits to be inquired of,⁴ that He may give it thee, surely thou wouldst ask of Him! For He giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not,⁵ —not even with all your neglect of Him and His gifts. Just *ask!* and he says, 'It shall be given you.'⁶ 'Ye have not, because ye ask not.'⁷ And let the least glimmer of dawning faith in your heart lead you to go on asking, and to pray continually, 'Lord, increase our faith.'⁸ Then you will be able to come boldly; for 'in Christ Jesus our Lord . . . we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.'⁹

People do not come for what they do not want. Until the Holy Spirit shows us our need of mercy, and puts reality into the Litany prayer, 'Have mercy upon us miserable sinners,'¹⁰ we shall never come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy.

'He that into God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door.'

So, if you have never yet felt that you could sincerely say, 'God be merciful to *me* a sinner'¹¹ (or,

¹ Matt. viii. 26.

⁴ Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

⁷ Jas. iv. 2.

¹⁰ Ps. li. 1.

² Eph. ii. 8.

⁵ Jas. i. 5.

⁸ Luke xvii. 5.

¹¹ Luke xviii. 13.

³ John iv. 10.

⁶ Matt. vii. 7.

⁹ Eph. iii. 11, 12.

as the Greek has it more emphatically, 'to me, *the sinner*'), and therefore have never yet felt particularly anxious to come to the throne of grace to obtain it, I would urgently entreat you to pray, 'Lord, show me myself!' When the Holy Spirit answers that prayer, you will be eager enough to come and obtain mercy! It will be the one thing¹ then that you will be particularly anxious about.

Obtaining mercy comes first; *then* finding grace to help in time of need. You cannot reverse God's order. You will not find grace to help in time of need till you have sought and found mercy to save. You have no right to reckon on God's help and protection and guidance, and all the other splendid privileges which He promises to 'the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ,'² until you have this first blessing, the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; for it is '*in*' Jesus Christ that all the promises of God are yea, and Amen.³ But He is 'rich in mercy,'⁴ and 'delighteth in mercy.'⁵ All who have come to the throne of grace for it 'are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.'⁶ And then no less surely will they, and do they, 'find grace to help in every time of need.'⁷

'Let us therefore come boldly!'

Behold the throne of grace!
The promise calls me near;
There Jesus shows a smiling face,
And waits to answer prayer.

1 Luke x. 42.
4 Eph. ii. 4.
7 Heb. iv. 16.

2 Gal. iii. 26.
5 Mic. vii. 18.

3 2 Cor. i. 19, 20.
6 1 Pet. ii. 10.

My soul, ask what thou wilt,
 Thou canst not be too bold ;
 Since His own blood for thee He spilt,
 What else can He withhold ?

JOHN NEWTON.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

A Hindrance.

‘First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.’—MATT. v. 24.

IT is a strange gift that we have to bring,—so strange, that it is in one sense ‘nothing,’ and yet in another sense everything. He asks us for it, saying, ‘Give Me thine heart ;’¹ and this heart of ours, this gift that we are to bring, worthless and yet priceless,² is one mass of sins and burdens.³ Jesus asks for it just as it is, with all the sins and all the burdens ; and the moment it is given over to Him, the sins are cleansed and the burdens are borne for us.

Do you wish to come to Him with it, and yet find that there seems something preventing you from really doing so? If so, the verse at the head of this chapter may throw God’s light upon the secret obstacle. ‘Is there any secret thing with *thee*?’⁴

¹ Prov. xxiii. 26.

³ Matt. xv. 19.

² Jer. xvii. 9.

⁴ Job xv. 11.

Christ will either accept the gift altogether, or not at all.¹ If there is something which you do not really mean to do right about,—some sin which you have no real intention of giving up,—it will be a fatal barrier. He forgives all or none. If you are but willing, His precious blood shall cleanse you from *all* sin.² But He does not save by halves; and if there is a sin knowingly kept back, then ‘ye are yet in your sins,’³ and ‘thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; *for* thy heart is not right in the sight of God.’⁴

This may seem a very stern way of putting it; but when such tremendous issues hang upon it, is it not folly to shrink from looking the matter straight in the face? The Lord says, ‘First be reconciled to thy brother, and *then* come and offer thy gift.’

This may be literally your case. Some one may have somewhat against you,—an old quarrel, or a fresh misunderstanding,—and you are too proud to acknowledge your fault, or your share of it;⁵ or you are too timid, or even too idle to do so. When there are faults on both sides, it is pretty often the one most in fault who is the least ready to forgive. Now do look into the matter, and see if you are truly⁶ ‘in love and charity with all men.’⁷ It is no use trying to explain away your daily words, ‘Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,’⁸ for Christ Himself has explained and emphasized them. He said, ‘But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your

1 Hos. x. 2.

4 Acts viii. 21.

7 2 John iii. 10, 15.

2 1 John i. 7.

5 Jas. v. 16.

8 Matt. vi. 15.

3 1 Cor. xv. 17; ib. iii. 3.

6 Heb. xii. 14, 15.

Father forgive your trespasses.' There is no evading this. There is absolutely *no* forgiveness for you, if you do not forgive; for 'who can forgive sins but God only?'¹

And it is no use saying, 'Well, I will forgive, but I can't forget!' You know quite well in your heart that the very tone in which you say that, shows that you are not really forgiving, and God knows what is at the bottom of your 'can't forget!'

Don't turn round fiercely, and say, 'But if I can't, I can't!' For 'the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.'²

Read the 45th of Genesis, and see how Joseph forgave;³ and remember that the same Spirit of God which was in him is freely promised to you for the asking.

And then look at the still greater example of perfect forgiveness,—hear the smitten King in His lonely death-agony saying, 'Father, forgive them!'⁴ 'For He knew that forgiveness would raise them to the very level of His throne; so He must have literally loved His murderers with the love where-with His Father loved Him.'⁵ Oh, it is hard to forgive anything, when one looks away to the forgiveness of Jesus.⁶

Then come and offer thy gift.

¹ Mark ii. 7.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 34.

² Luke xviii. 27.

⁵ John xvii. 26.

³ Gen. xlv. 1-15.

⁶ Eph. iv. 32.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The Entreaty to Come.

‘Come near to me, I *pray* you.’—GEN. xlv. 4.

‘**T**HERE stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brethren. And he wept aloud.’¹ They had hated him, conspired against him to slay him, very nearly killed him, sold him into exile and slavery, and here was the brother’s recompense for all this—love! No such exquisite story of love and forgiveness was ever imagined by any writer; no such climax of tenderness as Joseph’s words through his tears, ‘Come near to me, I pray you.’ Only one thing surpasses the type, and that is the antitype.

Our Elder Brother was more than ‘very nearly killed.’ He poured out His soul unto death.² We are not innocent of His blood;³ for ‘He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities.’⁴ ‘Christ died *for our sins*.’⁵ Mark that,—not merely ‘for us,’ but ‘*for our sins*,’

¹ Gen. xlv. 1.

⁴ Isa. liii. 5.

² Isa. liii. 12.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 3.

³ Zech. xiii. 6.

for yours. And where has been the love and gratitude that you have owed Him all this time?¹ Where has been the mere acknowledgment of what He has suffered for your sins?² He did this for you, and because of you. And what have you done for Him, and because of Him?³

And what could you now expect from Him? What did Joseph's brothers expect after their behavior to him? Well may the Lord say, 'I know the thoughts that I think towards you—thoughts of peace, and not of evil.'⁴ For just as Joseph's words to his brethren were not, 'Go away, I will have no more to do with you,' so the Lord Jesus 'upbraideth not,' but says, 'Come near to Me, I *pray* you.'

His whole life says it. It is the epitome of all He said and did,—winning, beseeching, entreating the far-off to come nigh, giving His own blood that they might be made nigh.⁵

What is the eloquence of 'those wounds in Thine hands?'⁶ Are they not always saying, 'I *pray* you'? For 'all day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.'⁷

'All day long,' while you are dressing, and eating, and talking, and laughing, and working or amusing yourself, Jesus is stretching forth His hands to you, calling you, waiting for you, looking for the first little thrill of recognition from you, saying, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,⁸ whom thou neglectest, whom thou grievest.'

¹ Ps. cxvi. 12; ² Cor v. 15.

³ Phil. iii. 8.

⁶ Zech. xiii. 6.

⁴ Jer. xxix. 11.

⁷ Rom. x. 21.

² 1 Pet. iii. 18.

⁵ Eph. ii. 13.

⁸ Acts ix. 5.

Joseph's brethren were troubled at his presence.¹ Do *you* reply, 'Therefore I am troubled at His presence; when I consider, I am afraid of Him'² Would you, honestly, rather flee from His presence?³ Stay and listen.

'Come near to Me, I pray you.'

There is forgiveness with Him;⁴ will you not come and receive it?—Forgiveness for you, though every sin of yours that is forgiven had to be borne in His dying agony.⁵ His love has not changed from the moment when He said, 'Father, forgive them.'⁶ What must that love have been! And what must it be for you and me, for whom He cannot make the gracious excuse, 'They know not what they do!'

Come *alone* to Him, and Jesus will make known Himself⁷ and His forgiving love to you.

One there is above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once His kindness prove
Find it everlasting love.

JOHN NEWTON.

¹ Gen. xlv. 3.

⁴ Ps. cxxx. 4.

⁷ Gen. xlv. 1.

² Job xxiii. 15.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

³ Ps. cxxxix. 7.

⁶ Luke xxiii. 34.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

The Command to Come.

‘Come unto me. . . . Now thou art commanded, this do ye, . . . and come.’—GEN. xlv. 18, 19.

WE are too much inclined to forget that ‘Come’ is not merely an invitation, but a command. An ordinary invitation can be accepted or refused; but a Royal Invitation¹ is always a Royal Command, giving no option, but requiring obedience. Therefore, just so long as we are hanging back, just so long as we have not come to Jesus, we are living in a state of actual disobedience to Him.

Joseph, whose dealings with his brethren are among the most beautiful types, was to say to them not only, ‘Come unto me,’ but ‘Now thou art *commanded*, this do ye,—and come!’

The Lord Jesus, the King of Glory, has said the very same words, ‘Come unto Me!’² to you and me. And so we *are* commanded. There is no excusing ourselves by any uncertainty about it.

¹ Matt. xxii. 2, 3.

² Matt. xi. 28.

The very moment that 'Come'¹ first fell on our heart, the command was upon us, and we were responsible for obeying it. And every moment since, we have been disobeying the plainest and sweetest word of command that ever fell on mortal ear, unless we have really and truly 'come to Jesus.'

So it is not at all a light thing, but a heavy and tremendous sin in which we are living,—the sin of direct and continued disobedience to Christ.

If one *single* and *sudden* act of disobedience was enough to lose Paradise² and lead to incalculable consequences of misery,³ what about this persistence in refusal⁴ to obey this strong and gentle command, clearly understood, continually reiterated, and unmistakably personal, Christ's personal command to you personally? 'Death without mercy' is as terrible a punishment as can well be imagined; but what must be the 'much sorer punishment' than *that*, which is denounced by the Word of our God on those who, instead of merely 'despising Moses' law,' have 'trodden under foot the Son of God?'⁵

We must not and dare not leave out of sight, the awful revelation that it is the Lord Jesus Himself,⁶ the very same tender Saviour who now bids you 'Come,' who will take vengeance in flaming fire on them 'that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,'⁷ who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.⁸

¹ Deut. xxx. 11, 14.

⁴ Prov. i. 24-26.

⁷ 2 Thess. i. 7-9.

² Gen. iii. 24.

⁵ Heb. x. 28, 29.

⁸ Matt. xxv. 41, 46

³ Rom. v. 19.

⁶ Acts i. 11.

When I began to write this little book, I never meant to say all this. I only wanted to win you by the sweet, sweet music of my Master's call. I only meant to tell you of His patient, forbearing love,¹ waiting so long for you, wanting you to come to Him.² But what can I do? Half a truth is not 'the truth.' You may not like it; but I dare not speak to you only smooth things,³ I dare not shun to declare unto you the whole counsel of God⁴ in this matter. 'I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do *less*.'⁵ I should come under the awful condemnation of those who 'take away from the words of the book,'⁶ if I did not tell the whole message. The Lord has said, 'Diminish not a word,'⁷ and so I entreat you to look for yourselves at the passages I have quoted, and '*hear* the word of the Lord' in them.

Oh, 'see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh!'⁸ If you do not obey the 'Come unto Me,' there remaineth nothing for you but the 'Depart from Me.'⁹

Life alone is found in Jesus,
 Only there 'tis offered thee,—
 Offered without price or money,
 'Tis the gift of God sent free:
 Take salvation,
 Take it now, and happy be.

ALBERT MIDLANE.

¹ Rom. x. 21.

⁴ Acts xx. 27.

⁷ Jer. xxvi. 2.

² Rom. ii. 4.

⁵ Num. xxii. 18.

⁸ Heb. xii. 25.

³ Isa. xxx. 10.

⁶ Rev. xxii. 19.

⁹ Matt. xxv. 41.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Royal Largesse.

‘Come unto Me : and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. . . . Also regard not your stuff ; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.’—GEN. xlv. 18, 20.

‘IF I become a Christian, I shall have to give up so many things!’¹ Spoken or unspoken, this is the invariable thought of every one who has not found Christ. The presence of this thought is an actual test as to whether you have come to Him or not ; for the moment you have really come, you will know better !

‘Giving up’² this, that, and the other, is a downright *unfair* way of putting it ; unless, indeed, the magnificent gain is distinctly set against the paltry loss. As well talk of an oak tree ‘giving up’ the withered leaves which have clung to the dry twigs all the winter, when the sap begins to rise fresh and strong, and the promise of all the splendour of summer foliage is near !

¹ Matt. xix. 22.

² Phil. iii. 7.

The sons of Jacob were called away from their famine-stricken fields by their brother, that they might be 'nourished'¹ by him, and share his prosperity, and dwell 'in the best of the land';² receiving from his hand a place and possessions far beyond what they had 'given up.' Of course they could not have all this till they had actually come to him! Before they came, they had only his bare word for it.³ But they considered his word enough, and they came; and he kept his word to the full.⁴

Not less, but infinitely more, does the Lord Jesus, our Lord and Brother, hold forth to you. Is His word worthy of less belief? Over and above the unspeakable gift of eternal life,⁵ He promises to those who leave anything for His sake that they 'shall receive an hundred-fold *now, in this time!*'⁶ Do you suppose He did not mean what He said?

Listen again to the twin promises, negative and positive, in their all-inclusive simplicity: 'No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly';⁷ and 'The Lord will give that which is good.'⁸ And yet your secret feeling is, that if you come and give yourself up to Him, you will have to go without all sorts of things that you fancy are good and nice and pleasant, and that you will find yourself let in for all sorts of things which do not seem to you 'good' at all!⁹ Is this fair, when he has said positively just the opposite?

¹ Gen. xlv. 11.

⁴ Gen. xlvii. 11, 12.

⁷ Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

⁹ Ps. xxxiv. 10.

² Gen. xlvii. 11, 27.

⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 15.

⁸ Ps. lxxxv. 12: Matt. vii. 11.

³ Gen. xlvi. 31.

⁶ Mark x. 30.

Listen again to what He says to those who *have* come, and who are His own: 'Whether . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; *all are yours!*'¹ What do you make of that? It is not figurative, but perfectly true and literal. Only you will never be able to understand it, until the next verse is true of you: 'Ye are Christ's.'² *Then* another verse will be true of you: 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things which are freely given to us of God.'³ Ask for that blessed Spirit of God, and you will receive it,⁴ and *then* you will understand.⁵

Knowing what he was purposing to do for them as soon as they came, Joseph naturally said to his brethren, 'Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.'⁶ Take this advice, 'regard not your stuff!' However much you have or may have to give up for Christ, oh, *do* believe the words of His prophet: 'The Lord is able to give thee *much more* than this!'⁷

Can you not instinctively feel what a thrill of deep triumphant joy there is in St. Paul's words: 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!'⁸ Did you ever feel anything like as glad as that? Christ Jesus my Lord is willing and waiting to give that same fulness of gladness and blessing to every one who will take Him at His word and come to Him.

1 1 Cor. iii. 22.

4 Luke xi. 13.

7 2 Chron. xxv. 9.

2 1 Cor. iii. 23.

5 Prov. xxviii. 5.

8 Phil. iii. 8.

3 1 Cor. ii. 12.

6 Gen. xlv. 20.

Yes, to *you* !

Oh, the happiness arising
 From the life of grace within,
 When the soul is realizing
 Conquests over hell and sin !
 Happy moments !
 Heavenly joys on earth begin.

On the Saviour's fulness living,
 All His saints obtain delight ;
 With the strength which He is giving,
 They can wrestle, they can fight.
 Happy moments,
 When King Jesus is in sight !

JOSEPH IRONS.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Tarry Not.

'Come down unto me, tarry not.'—GEN. xlv. 9.

IT is just this 'tarrying' that is hindering so many from coming to the Saviour. What reason could there be for Joseph's brethren to 'tarry,'¹ and go on starving a little longer in their own land, when Joseph was waiting to settle them and their father and their whole families in the land of Goshen 'in the best of the land?'² And what reason can

¹ Gen. xliii. 1, 2.

² Gen. xlvii. 11. '

there be for you to tarry, and go on starved and unsatisfied a little longer, when the Lord Jesus is waiting to receive you into the 'pleasant land'¹ of His all-satisfying love? Why tarry in the 'far country'² with the husks and the heart-loneliness? 'Ye shall haste!' said Joseph, for his heart was eager to do great things for them.

If you grant the reality of Christ's love at all, do you not see that delay in coming down to Him, and hesitation in letting Him save you in His own way (and there is no other), and putting Him off from day to day, must be wounding His love?³

Why *do* you tarry? Have you any reason whatever to give Him? 'What wilt thou say?'⁴ Do not flatter yourself that all this delay and putting off is any preparation for coming, much less any part of coming to Him. There are no steps in coming to Jesus. Either you come, or you do not come. There is only the 'one step, out of self, into Christ.' There are no gradations of approach marked out in His Word. If you think there are, search and see; do not take my word for it; look for yourself, and see what is the Lord's word about it.⁵

You have nothing to gain, but very much, perhaps everything, to lose by 'tarrying.' You are accumulating the guilt of disobedience. You are, it may be very unconsciously, hardening your heart,⁶ and making the great step more and more difficult. Instead of being in a better position for coming to-morrow, you will be in a worse one.⁷

¹ Ps. cvi. 24.

⁴ Jer. xiii. 21.

⁷ Heb. iii. 7, 8.

² Luke xv. 13, 16.

⁵ Acts xvii. 11, 12.

³ Cant. v. 2, 6.

⁶ Acts xxiv. 25.

While you are doing nothing, the enemy is very busy strengthening his toils around you, and they will be stronger to-morrow than to-day.

While you are, as you fancy, only lying still, you are drifting fast down the stream into the stronger current, nearing the rapids, nearing the fatal fall.

It is a question of life and death. 'Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain.'¹ It is the old story of

'If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.'

I do not know any one promise in all the Bible for the lingerers. And if you put yourself out of the sphere of God's promises, what have you to found any hope at all upon?

'Tarry not!'² Oh, if I could but reach you and rouse you!

'And if I care

For one unknown, oh how much more doth He!'³

For one who perishes through straightforward refusal, there are probably thousands who perish through *putting off*.⁴ 'How shall we escape if we *refuse*—no, if we merely *'neglect*—so great salvation?'⁵

Yet there is room! The Lamb's bright hall of song,
With its fair glory, beckons thee along.

Yet there is room! Still open stands the gate,
The gate of love; it is not yet too late.

¹ Gen. xix. 17.

⁴ Matt. xxii. 3, 5.

² Heb. iv. 7.

⁵ Heb. xii. 25; Heb. ii. 3.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Pass in, pass in ! That banquet is for thee ;
That cup of everlasting love is free.

Ere night that gate may close, and seal thy doom ;
Then the last, low, long cry,—‘ No room, no room ! ’
DR. H. BONAR.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

Without Christ.

‘At that time ye were without Christ.’—EPH. **ii. 12.**

I COULD not do without Thee,
O Saviour of the lost !
Whose precious blood redeemed me
At such tremendous cost.
Thy righteousness, Thy pardon,
Thy precious blood—must be
My only hope and comfort,
My glory and my plea.

I could not do without Him !
Jesus is more to me
Than all the richest, fairest gifts
Of earth could ever be.
But the more I find Him precious,
And the more I find Him true,

The more I long for you to find
What He can be to you.

You need not do without Him,
For He is passing by ;
He is waiting to be gracious,
Only waiting for your cry.
He is waiting to receive you,—
To make you all His own !
Why will you do without Him,
And wander on alone ?

Why will you do without Him !
Is He not kind indeed ?
Did He not die to save you ?
Is He not all you need ?
Do you not want a Saviour ?
Do you not want a Friend ?
One who will love you faithfully,
And love you to the end ?

Why will you do without Him ?
The word of God is true :
The world is passing to its doom,
And you are passing too.
It may be, no to-morrow
Shall dawn for you or me,
Why will you run the awful risk
Of all eternity ?

What will you do without Him
In the long and dreary day

Of trouble and perplexity,
When you do not know the way;
And no one else can help you,
And no one guides you right,
And hope comes not with morning,
And rest comes not with night?

You could not do without Him,
If once He made you see
The fetters that enchain you
Till He hath set you free;
If once you saw the fearful load
Of sin upon your soul,—
The hidden plague that ends in **death**
Unless He makes you whole!

What will you do without Him
When death is drawing near,
Without His love—the only love
That casts out every fear;
When the shadow-valley opens,
Unlighted and unknown,
And the terrors of its darkness
Must all be passed alone?

What will you do without Him
When the great White Throne is set,
And the Judge who never can mistake,
And never can forget,—
The Judge whom you have never here
As Friend and Saviour sought,
Shall summon you to give account
Of deed, and word and thought?

What will you do without Him
When He hath shut the door,
And you are left outside, because
You would not come before ;
When it is no use knocking,
No use to stand and wait,
For the word of doom tolls through your
heart,
That terrible ' Too late ' ?

You cannot do without Him !
There is no other name
By which you ever *can* be saved,—
No way, no hope, no claim !
Without Him—everlasting loss
Of love, and life, and light !
Without Him—everlasting woe,
And everlasting night.

But with Him—oh ! *with Jesus !*—
Are any words so blest ?
With Jesus—everlasting joy
And everlasting rest !
With Jesus—all the empty heart
Filled with His perfect love !
With Jesus—perfect peace below,
And perfect bliss above !

Why should you do without Him ?—
It is not yet too late ;
He has not closed the day of *grace*,
He has not shut the gate.

He calls you!—hush! He calls you!—
 He would not have you go
 Another step without Him,
 Because He loves you so.

Why will you do without Him?
 He calls and calls again—
 ‘Come unto Me! Come unto Me!’
 Oh, shall He call in vain?
 He wants to have you with Him;
 Do you not want Him too?
 You cannot do without Him,
 And He wants—even you!

NINETEENTH DAY.

Come Away.

‘My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.’—CANT. ii. 10.

WHAT a loving call! What astonishing condescension, that the Heavenly Bridegroom should use such words to—whom? Would you not like to be able to fill up that blank, and say, ‘My Beloved spake, and said unto *me!*’

Perhaps you think this is too much for *you*. You feel too sinful and unworthy to be so loved,—too defiled to be called ‘my fair one.’ If so, will you

turn to a wonderful picture of those upon whom He sets His love,¹ and of what His love does for them, asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes while you read it, that you may behold wondrous things out of it.²

I will not quote it here, because I want you to go to His own Book for it. See in it how the Lord Jesus goes down to the very depths, and begins at the very beginning.³ Your case is not deeper than those depths; for it is even when we are *dead*⁴ in sins that the great love wherewith God loved us reaches and raises us.⁵ He says, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise *from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light.'⁶ You cannot be worse than 'dead;' and the very sense of sin and death working in you⁷ 'is a proof' that He has said unto you, 'Live!'⁸

The call to arise and come away is a proof that He is passing by.⁹ And when Jesus passes by, He looks upon you, though you are not yet able to see Him. And He says that when He does this, it is 'the time of love.'¹⁰ And oh, what *that* implies! What will He not do, when the bright, warm, powerful rays of the love which passeth knowledge¹¹ are focussed upon you, and He says even to you, 'My love!' giving you the glorious right to respond, 'My beloved!'¹²

Read on, and see what He will do 'then!' 'Then' the 'thoroughly' washing¹³ and the anointing which

¹ Ezek. xvi. 5, 14.

⁴ Eph. ii. 1.

⁷ Rom. vii. 13.

¹⁰ Ezek. xvi. 8.

¹³ Ps. li. 2.

² Ps. cxix. 18.

⁵ Eph. ii. 4, 5.

⁸ Ezek. xvi. 6.

¹¹ Eph. iii. 19.

³ Ps. xl. 2.

⁶ Eph. v. 14.

⁹ Luke xviii. 37

¹² Cant. ii. 16.

prepares you for the delight of the King.¹ 'Then' the clothing, the girding, and the covering, each with their treasures of significance.² Then 'also' the decking and the crowning, and the being made 'exceeding beautiful' and 'perfect through My comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God!'³ When He puts the beauty of the Lord our God upon us,⁴ then He can indeed say, 'My fair one!'⁵ 'Fair' *only* with His comeliness;⁶ otherwise the fairest natural character that was ever seen is 'black as the tents of Kedar,'⁷—those miserable goats'-hair tents, which are to this day the very type of the filthiest blackness. Yet with it, whatever your natural character, and whatever your added deformity through having been 'accustomed to do evil,'⁸ you will be 'comely as the curtains of Solomon,'—the type of all that is costly and beautiful in colours and workmanship.

Let Him do all this for you!⁹ Rise up and come away from all that pollutes and separates you from Him. 'Shake thyself from the dust, and arise!'¹⁰ 'Arise, shine, for thy Light is come!'¹¹ 'Though ye have lien among the pots, yet' (when you come to the Light that is come so close to you), 'yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,'¹² shining and gleaming as you rise and come away, resplendent in the beams of the Sun of righteousness.¹³ 'Rise, He calleth thee!'¹⁴ 'Come away!'

1 Esth. ii. 12-14.

4 Ps. xc. 17.

7 Cant. i. 5.

10 Isa. lii. 2.

13 Mal. iv. 2.

2 Isa. lxi. 10; Ps. xlv. 13.

5 Cant. iv. 7.

8 Jer. xiii. 23.

11 Isa. lx. 1.

14 Mark x. 49.

3 Ezek. xvi. 14.

6 Rom. viii. 7.

9 Phil. ii. 13.

12 Ps. lxviii. 13.

TWENTIETH DAY.

Coming after Jesus.

‘Come and follow Me.’—MATT. xix. 21.

FOLLOWING is the only proof of coming.¹ There is hardly a commoner lamentation than this: ‘I do not know whether I have come or not!’² And nobody ever says that with a happy smile. It is always with a dismal look; and no wonder! When so much hinges upon it,—poverty or riches, safety or danger, life or death,—uncertainty must and will be miserable. Now, do you really want to know whether you have come or not? Our Lord gives you the test, ‘Come *and follow Me!*’³

If you are willing for that, willing with the will that issues in act and deed, then the coming is real.⁴

If you are not willing to follow, then you may dismiss at once any idea that perhaps you have come or are coming: there is no reality in it, and there is nothing for you but to go away sorrowful,

¹ Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

³ John x. 27.

² 1 Kings xviii. 21.

⁴ Matt. xx. 34.

as the rich young man did, who 'came,' but would not 'follow.'¹

The following will be just as real and definite as the coming, if there is any reality in you at all; and if you are not deluding yourself with a deceitful cloudland of sentimental religion, without foundation and without substance, which is but a refuge of lies which the hail shall sweep away.² Do not sit down in this most serious state of uncertainty, but 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure.'³

But you say, 'How am I to know whether I am following?' Well, following is not standing still. Clearly it is not staying just where you always were. You cannot follow one thing without coming away from something else.⁴ Apply this test. What have you *left* for Jesus?⁵ What have you left off doing for His sake?⁶ If you are moving onward, some things must be left behind. What are 'the things which are behind'⁷ in *your* life? If the supposed coming has made no difference in your practical daily life,⁸ do not flatter yourself that you have ever yet really come at all.⁹ Jesus says, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.'¹⁰ What light does that saying throw upon your case? Be honest about it; all true coming *to* Jesus must issue in thus coming *after* Him.¹¹

¹ Matt. xix. 22.

⁴ Rom. vi. 2, 4, 13, 22.

⁷ Phil. iii. 13.

¹⁰ Matt. xvi. 24.

² Isa. xxviii. 17.

⁵ Matt. iv. 18-20.

⁸ Matt. vii. 21.

¹¹ Luke xiv. 27.

³ 2 Pet. i. 10.

⁶ Matt. ix. 9.

⁹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

Then look at it from the positive side. He has left us 'an example that ye should follow His steps.'¹ As the beautiful collect puts it, 'Give us grace that we may daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life.'² Now, what are those steps? Perhaps you are not even looking to see what they are, let alone following them! Following the *steps* is quite a different thing from thinking to follow one's own idea of the general direction of a course. If you would only take one Gospel, and read it through with the earnest purpose of noting, by the Holy Spirit's guidance, what the steps of Jesus are, you would soon see clearly whether you are following or not,³ far more clearly than by reading any amount of books about it, or consulting any number of human counsellors. Take for to-day only one indication of what those steps were. 'Who went about doing good.'⁴ Do your steps correspond with that?⁵ It is not, 'went about doing no harm,' but actively and positively 'doing good.'

Oh, dear friends, they are 'blessed' steps in all senses of the word! For His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace.⁶ Once fairly and fully entered, the paradox is always solved, the self-denial is lost in the greater joy of pleasing Him,⁷ the cross becomes a sceptre in the hand of His 'kings and priests.'⁸ Then you

1 1 Pet. ii. 21.
4 Acts x. 38.
7 Phil. iii. 7.

2 John xiii. 15.
5 1 John ii. 6.
8 Rev. i. 6.

3 Matt. xi. 29.
6 Prov. iii. 17.

shall 'continue following the Lord your God.'¹ And the end of the following is, 'that where I am, there shall also My servant be.'²

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Coming with Jesus.

'Come with Me.'—CANT. iv. 8.

'COME away'³ is not all that the Lord Jesus has to say to us. 'Come unto Me'⁴ and 'Come after Me,'⁵ only lead up to the even more gracious invitation, 'Come *with* Me.'⁶

'Ye see your calling;'⁷ it is nothing less than to come *with* Jesus. The enviable privilege of the twelve whom Jesus ordained 'that they should be with Him,'⁸ is freely offered to you. Will you avail yourself of it? Will you come with Jesus, walking with Him⁹ from this day every step of the way? Will you accept Him as the Guide with whom you will go, the Friend with whom you will commune by the way?¹⁰ It will be no dreamy or nominal coming with Him, if only you are willing to come. You will find it very real in all respects.

You can never be so *really always* with any earthly friend as you can be with Jesus, and as you

1 1 Sam. xii. 14.

4 Matt. xi. 28.

7 1 Cor. i. 26.

10 John vi. 68; Ex. xxxiii. 14.

2 John xii. 26; Rev. xiv. 4.

5 Matt. xvi. 24.

8 Mark iii. 14.

3 Cant. ii. 10.

6 2 Sam. xix. 33.

9 Rev. iii. 4, 21.

will be, if you accept the invitation.¹ For there are two sides to that 'with.' If you will but *come with Him*, He will come unto you and *abide with you*.² Your natural fear lest, even when you consent to come to be with Him, you might not remain with Him, is met and completely settled by His promise, 'I will never leave thee.'³ And of course if He *never* leaves you, you will always be with Him. And if He has *said* that, of course He will do it.⁴ So do not let *that* objection come up again!

It is a very common experience in great things and small, that the person or thing we most want is not there just when we most want him or it. Never shall we have to complain of this as to the promised perpetual presence of our Lord;⁵ for He says, 'I will be with him in trouble.'⁶ 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.'⁷ And in the deepest need of all, in the valley of the shadow of death, the soul that has yielded to the present call will be able to say, 'Thou art with me.'⁸

I do not think we consider enough how we disappoint the love of Jesus when we refuse to come with Him.⁹ For He does truly and literally desire us to be with Him.¹⁰ Would He have made it the very climax of His great Prayer, representing it as the very culmination of His own rest and glory that His people should be *with Him*,¹¹ if He did

1 Prov. xviii. 24.

4 Num. xxiii. 19.

7 Isa. xliii. 2.

10 Cant. v. 2.

2 John xiv. 23.

5 Matt. xxviii. 20.

8 Ps. xxiii. 4.

11 John xvii. 24.

3 Heb. xiii. 5.

6 Ps. xci. 15.

9 Luke xiii. 34.

not so very much care about it, and was only seeking and saving us out of bare pity? No, it was in His *love* as well as in His pity that He redeemed us!¹ And love craves nearness. This is the very thing that differences love from the lesser glow of mere pity, or kindness, whatever their degrees or combinations. The Lord Jesus would not say, 'Come *with* Me,' if He did not feel towards us something far beyond any degree of pity and kindness. It is the Royal Invitation of His kingly love.

But now, what are you going to do about it? Hearing it, and thinking it very gracious, and all that, is not enough. You must come to a point about it.² You must give as definite an answer to this as mere common courtesy demands to any earthly invitation. Giving *no* answer is an acknowledged insult. Will you treat the King thus? And if not what shall your answer be? You must give it yourself. Christ Himself is waiting for it.³

There is a beautiful type⁴ which tells us how a maiden was chosen to be the bride of the son of a 'mighty prince'⁵ in a far-off land. She was to answer for herself about it, and so 'they said, We will call the damsel and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, *I will go.*'⁶

Shall this be *your* answer to-day?

¹ Isa. lxiii. 9.

⁴ Gen. xxiv.

² 1 Kings xviii. 21.

⁵ Gen. xxiii. 6.

³ John vi. 67.

⁶ Gen. xxiv. 57, 58.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The Living Water.

‘If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.’
—JOHN vii. 37.

THE Invitation could not have been given in any wider form. Neither could it have been given in any form which so certainly concentrates all its light and warmth on one point, that point yourself!

First, there is the grand sweep of the ‘*any*’ man. Instead of amplifying this into a list of all possible varieties of ‘rich or poor, old or young,’ and so on, just never mind about these usual human phrases, which may or may not seem to include you, and come face to face with the magnificently simple word of our Lord, ‘Any!’ and know that it means ‘*you!*’ for you cannot possibly get outside of this great circle, described by the hand of Infinite Love. You cannot possibly say it does not include you. Words mean nothing, if this word does not mean that you, whose eyes now rest upon it, are included and intended. To you the Lord Jesus says, ‘Let him come unto Me.’

But another word is appended which seems at first sight to be a limitation. ‘If any man *thirst*,

let him come.'¹ Is it a limitation? Ask your own heart! Is there *any* one who does not thirst?² In other words, is there any one who can say before God who searches the heart,³ 'I am satisfied. I have no sense of thirst, no nameless craving'? Are *you* satisfied? I do not mean, are you tolerably contented and comfortable on the whole and in a general way when things are at their best? But, *satisfied!*—the deep under-the-surface rest and complete satisfaction of the very heart, the filling of its emptiness, the stilling of all its cravings; and this not during the false frothing of excitement or business, but when you are alone, when you lie awake in the night, when you are shut away from any fictitious filling of your cup, and when the broken cisterns have leaked out,⁴ as they will, and do, and must,—are you satisfied then? Verily, He who knew what was in man⁵ knew that He was not narrowing the invitation when He said, 'Let him that is athirst, come!'⁶

Did you ever think *why* it is so utterly hopeless and useless to try to quench that inner thirst with anything but the living water, 'the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ'?⁷ He has said plainly and positively that you shall not succeed!⁸ He hath said, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water *shall* thirst again.'⁹ You see there is no chance for you, for His word cannot be broken, and He says you '*shall* thirst again.'¹⁰ There are only two issues of that

¹ Rev. xxi. 6.

⁴ Jer. ii. 13.

⁷ Phil. i. 19.

¹⁰ John x. 35.

² Ps. cvii. 5.

⁵ John ii. 25.

⁸ John vii. 39.

³ Ezek. xi. 5.

⁶ Rev. xxii. 17

⁹ John iv. 13.

perpetual thirst. One is the unanswered entreaty for a drop of water, only so much as the tip of a finger may bear, not to quench the unquenchable thirst, but only to *cool* a flame-tormented tongue.¹ The other, the *only* other, is, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.'²

— And lest our slow perceptions should fail to grasp the fact in the figure, the Lord Jesus repeats the promise, and says, 'He that believeth on Me shall never thirst.'³ Never! for 'He satisfieth the longing soul.'⁴

'Let him come *unto Me*, and drink.'⁵ You see there is only this one way of drinking of the living water: you must come to Jesus Himself, personally and really. Knowing all about it is not enough. Consulting Christian friends, and reading good books, and doing any amount of religious duties and exercising any amount of self-denial, will not stay the more or less conscious heart-thirst. The Lord says not a word about any channels; He only says, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.' And 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.'⁶ Will not *you* come?

¹ Luke xvi. 24.
⁴ Ps. cvii. 9.

² John iv. 14.
⁵ John vii. 37.

³ John vi. 35.
⁶ Rev. xxii. 17.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The Bread and Wine.

‘Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.’—PROV. ix. 5.

IN several chapters of Proverbs the Lord Jesus Christ is beautifully described under the figure of Wisdom. For He is ‘the Wisdom of God,’ and He is ‘made unto us Wisdom.’¹

In this verse He gives a double Invitation,—to eat of His bread, and drink of His wine. These are the symbols of life and joy—His life and His joy.

‘Come, eat of My bread.’ ‘Feed on Him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.’ For Jesus Himself is the true Bread from heaven.² And he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever. For He is the Bread of Life, life-giving and life-sustaining.³

How shall we eat? It is the old story,—only coming, only believing! For ‘he that cometh to Me shall never hunger,’⁴ and ‘we are made *part-takers* of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.’⁵

¹ 1 Cor i. 24, 30.
⁴ John vi. 35.

² John vi. 51.
⁵ Heb. iii. 14.

³ John vi. 48; Gal. ii. 20.

It is not a mere tasting or a bare subsisting to which Christ invites us. He says, 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.'¹ For 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly;'² fulness and vigour of life, abounding pulses of vitality, fresh and strong; life that shall not and cannot fail, for 'He ever liveth;'³ and 'because I live, ye shall live also.'⁴

How often we have sung, 'He hath filled the hungry with good things!'⁵ Are you hungry?⁶ Come, eat of His bread, leaving the husks and ashes, and you shall know what it is to be filled with good things.⁷ For 'He filleth the hungry soul with goodness.'⁸

It is not only the solid life-need of bread that is provided at the feast which the Lord has made for us, but Wine, the symbol of joy, 'that maketh glad the heart of man.'⁹ 'Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,'¹⁰ because the price is already paid for it. His sorrow was the price of the joy offered to us. He poured out His soul unto death,¹¹ that He might pour out His joy into our lives.¹² He emptied the cup which His Father gave Him,¹³ that He might fill ours till it runs over.¹⁴ Without price to us,—but oh, the price to Him!

The Lord Jesus says it is wine which He has *mingled*. Not all one kind, but mingled by Divine care and skill into a perfect draught of manifold

1 Cant. v. 1.

4 John xiv. 19.

7 Jer. xxxi. 14, 25.

10 Isa. lv. 1.

13 John xviii. 11.

2 John x. 10.

5 Luke i. 53.

8 Ps. cvii. 9.

11 Isa. liii. 12.

14 Ps. xxiii. 5.

3 Heb. vii. 25.

6 Luke xv. 16; Isa. xlv. 20.

9 Ps. civ. 15.

12 John xv. 11.

gladness: 'If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.'¹ *That* is the heritage of the servants of the Lord!² Did you think it was so pleasant? Did you know that He meant you to spend your years in pleasures *here*,³ as well as to give you the pleasures for evermore hereafter?⁴ 'Come, drink of the wine that He has mingled,' and you will find out what these pleasures are, and how exceedingly real they are! No wonder you are a little skeptical about it! for 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; *but*,' notice now exactly what is said, '*God HATH revealed them unto us by His Spirit.*'⁵ So, unless or until God reveals them to you by His Spirit, you cannot see or conceive what these pleasures are which He has prepared for those who love Him,—what this wine is which He has mingled for those who come to Him. Oh taste and see!⁶ Come and put your trust under the shadow of His wings;⁷ and *then* you shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house,⁸ and he shall make you drink of the *river* of His pleasures.

¹ Job xxxvi. 11; Ps. xc. 14.

³ Ps. iv. 7; Prov. iii. 17.

⁵ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

⁷ Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8.

² Isa. lxxv. 13, 14.

⁴ Ps. xvi. 11.

⁶ Ps. xxxiv. 8.

⁸ Ps. lxxiii. 5.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Will You Not Come?

'Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also.'—Ps. lxxviii. 18.

WILL you not come to Him for life?
 Why will ye die, oh why?
 He gave His life for you, for you!
 The gift is free, the word is true!
 Will you not come? oh, why will you die?

Will you not come to Him for peace—
 Peace through His cross alone?
 He shed His precious blood for you;
 The gift is free, the word is true!
 He is our Peace! oh, is He your own?

Will you not come to Him for rest?
 All that are weary, come!
 The rest He gives is deep and true;
 'Tis offered now, 'tis offered you!
 Rest in His love, and rest in His home.

Will you not come to Him for joy,—
 Will you not come for this?
 He laid His joys aside for you,

To give you joy, so sweet, so true!
Sorrowing heart, oh drink of the bliss!

Will you not come to Him for love—
Love that can fill the heart,
Exceeding great, exceeding free?
He loveth you, He loveth me!
Will you not come? Why stand you apart?

Will you not come to Him for *all*?
Will you not 'taste and see'?
He waits to give it all to you;
The gifts are free, the words are true!
Jesus is calling, 'Come unto Me!'

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Come Near.

'Come ye near unto Me.'—ISA. xlviii. 16.

'SHE obeyed not the voice; . . . she trusted not in the Lord, she drew not near to her God.'¹ What was her portion? 'Woe to her!'²

'But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, though we thus speak.'³ For Jesus says that if He is lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him.⁴

¹ Zeph. iii. 2.

² Zeph. iii. 1.

³ Heb. vi. 9.

⁴ John xii. 32.

And it is the Lord Jesus Himself (see context) who says, 'Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this!'¹ No matter how far off you may be, this call of peace is to you who are far off.² And if you hearken, then shall your peace be as a river.³ And if you have already come to Jesus, still He says to them that are nigh, 'Now ye have consecrated yourselves to the Lord, come near,'⁴—nearer still, closer and closer to the Lord who loves you.

There is only one way of coming near or being made near, but that way is open for you. Not into the outer court of religious profession, but 'into the Holiest,' into the reality of most sacred nearness to your Lord, you may enter 'by the blood of Jesus.'⁵ The moment you claim by faith the power of that precious blood,⁶—the moment you let your Great High Priest put it upon you,⁷ that moment 'ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.'⁸ Then, having this High Priest,⁹ and having this one blessed and unfailing means of access, 'let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.'¹⁰

Do not be discouraged from coming near because you feel far off. Take that rather as your very claim to be included in the call, for He says, 'Hear ye that are far off, what I have done!'¹¹ and take it as your very reason for coming; come just because you *are* 'a great way off,' for He says, 'They that are far off shall come.'¹²

¹ Isa. xlviii. 16.

² Isa. lvii. 19.

³ Isa. xlviii. 18.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxix. 31.

⁵ Heb. x. 19.

⁶ Heb. xiii. 12.

⁷ Lev. xiv. 14; Heb. ix. 13, 14.

⁸ Eph. ii. 13.

⁹ Heb. iv. 14.

¹⁰ Rom. v. 9; Eph. iii. 12; Heb. x. 21, 22.

¹¹ Isa. xxxiii. 13.

¹² Zech. vi. 15.

If you feel very powerless about it, plead and claim the promise of His enabling grace, 'I will cause him to draw near.'¹ And then you will find that 'blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto Thee ;'² and your experience will be, 'It is good for me to draw near unto God.'³

He who causes you to come near will keep you near. Joseph did not only say to his brethren, 'Come near to me,'⁴ in that moment of tenderest love when he made himself known to them, but his promise was, 'And thou shalt be near unto me.'⁵ This is your calling. Never to be far off any more ! Never any more distance and separation!⁶ Never any more wandering in the far country⁷ without God,⁸ but henceforth to be 'a people near unto Him !'⁹ 'No more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,'¹⁰ having found the very home of the weary heart, from which you shall no more go out.¹¹

¹ Jer. xxx. 21.

⁴ Gen. xlv. 4.

⁷ Luke xv. 13.

¹⁰ Eph. ii. 19.

² Ps. lxxv. 4.

⁵ Gen. xlv. 10.

⁸ Eph. ii. 12.

¹¹ Rev. iii. 12.

³ Ps. lxxiii. 28.

⁶ Rom. viii. 35-39.

⁹ Ps. cxlviii. 14.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

To the Uttermost.

‘But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.’—HEB. vii. 24, 25.

‘**A**ND suppose I do come, what then? Suppose I do receive all this blessedness to-day, what about to-morrow?’ Something like this thought is very often in the minds of those who see the lions not only outside but inside the doors of the House Beautiful. But it is all met by that wonderful word, ‘to the uttermost.’

This does not only mean that the Lord Jesus is able to save out of the uttermost depth of need and misery and sin, and that He is able to save from the uttermost regions of distance and despair. It means all that, but more besides. It is not only bringing you up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, but setting your feet upon a rock, and establishing your goings.¹

The word is one of those remarkable compound ones for which we have no equivalent. It means that He is able to save unto all completeness, unto the total perfection of saving.²

¹ Ps. xl. 2.

² Eccl. iii. 14; Isa. xlv. 17; Jer. xvii. 14.

Suppose I were drowning, and you drew me out of the deepest water, just in time to save my life, but then left me wet and shivering and exhausted on the bank, to run the more than risk of wretched after-effects of cold and rheumatism, from which I might never entirely recover! That would not be saving 'to the uttermost' in this sense of the word. But if you did the thing completely,—carrying me home, and doing everything necessary to restore me, and avert ill effects, and that effectually; never relaxing in care and effort, nor letting me go, till you had me safe and well, however long and difficult it might be, then you would have saved me 'to the uttermost,' in the true meaning of it.

This is what Jesus is able to do for you. Your first coming to Him is only like letting Him grasp you in your terrible danger, and draw you out of the fatal depths. But 'because He continueth ever,'¹ always the same loving and faithful Saviour, He will complete what He begins.² For we are 'confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'³ Having saved you from destruction, His very name⁴ is the guarantee that He will not leave you to struggle helplessly with your sins, much less to 'continue'⁵ in them, but that He shall save you from them.⁶ You will find it a daily continual salvation, by which He will keep you by the power of God through faith,⁷ unto the consummated salvation of body and soul, 'ready to be revealed in the last time.'⁸

1 Heb. vii. 24.

4 Matt. i. 21.

7 2 Pet. i. 4.

2 1 Thess. v. 24.

5 Rom. vi. 1.

8 1 Pet. i. 5.

3 Phil. i. 6.

6 Ps. ciii. 3-5.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

The Proof of Christ's Ability to Save.

'Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.'—HEB. vii. 25.

SEE what is the proof that the Lord Jesus Christ is able to save you thus, 'to the uttermost.' It is that He ever liveth to make intercession. For whom? For them 'that come unto God by Him.' Or, as He Himself said, in that wonderful prayer when He lifted the veil from His own Divine communing with the Father, and let us hear His mighty intercession: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word,'¹—thus again identifying 'coming' with believing. Then, if you come, the perpetual intercession of our ascended High Priest will be for you, always for you.² Only think that this is what Jesus is now living for,—'liveth to make intercession'³ for you! Should we ever have dared to imagine such grace and love? Should we ever have conceived that such a privilege could be ours?

¹ John xvii. 20.

² Heb. iv. 14.

³ Rom. viii. 34; Heb. ix. 24.

Only think what security there must be in it! If the Lord Jesus is praying for you, can you perish?¹ If He is praying for you, will not the Father's answer of blessing be beyond anything you would ask for yourself? Is not this enough to answer all your misgivings as to what you will find and how you will get on when you have come?

There is a solemn side to it. He not only says nothing about making intercession for those who do *not* come, but He plainly and positively says, 'I pray *not* for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me';² the proof of having been *given* to Christ being the *coming* to Him, for 'all that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.'³ Then face the terrible position which is yours, if you will not come! Christ will *not* pray for you! you shut yourself out from the prayer of Him whom the Father heareth *always*.⁴ He prays *not* for all alike, but only for those who receive His words. He says 'I pray for them; I pray *not* for the world.' You dare not and cannot explain this away. It is no mere inference, no question of differing 'views,' but spoken by Him whose words can never pass away.⁵ Will you not 'come,' and share in this unspeakable privilege of Christ's intercession?

We must not overlook the fact that it is for those who 'come unto God by Him.' Your coming to Jesus is also coming to your Father. In our right earnestness to have clear views of the Trinity, we are liable to forget the *Unity* of the Godhead. 'I and My Father are one,'⁶ saith the Lord Jesus; and

¹ John x. 28.

⁴ John xi. 42.

² John xvii. 9.

⁵ Luke xxi. 33.

³ John vi. 37.

⁶ John x. 30.

this blessed and glorious unity is our key to many an apparent difficulty. Yet there is a Divine order in the approach which we invert at our eternal peril. It must be 'by Him,' or it is no coming at all. For He hath said, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.'¹ The redemption of Christ is for them 'who *by Him* do believe in God.'² You *cannot* be made nigh to God except by the blood of Christ.³ You *cannot* reach the Father except through the Son, for it is through Him and in Him that we alone have access.⁴ You *cannot* offer thanks, any more than prayer, to God, except in the same way, for it is 'by Him' that we are to offer it.⁵ In one word, you cannot be saved any other way at all, except by Jesus,⁶ and it is no use talking about being simply saved by God's mercy, for God's own Word says, 'There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,'⁷ so that fallacy is disposed of forever. So 'diminish not a word ;'⁸ do not venture to leave out the words 'by Him,' but come in God's own appointed way, and you shall be saved in His own grand and perfect way, 'to the uttermost !'

¹ John xiv. 6.

⁴ Eph. ii. 18.

⁷ Acts iv. 12.

² 1 Pet. i. 21.

⁵ Heb. xiii. 15.

⁸ Deut. xii. 32.

³ Eph. ii. 13.

⁶ Rom. v. 9, 10.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Continual Coming.

‘To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up, a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’
—I PET. ii. 4.

‘**T**O whom *coming*.’ Here is the secret of advance in the narrow way, after we have entered by the Strait Gate.¹ It is not the having come once and to begin with, but the coming continually to Jesus. When we have once really come to Him, it is not only our privilege, but our constant joy, to come to Him about everything—to go on drinking at the fountain. It is a beautiful paradox which is realized and reconciled in the experience of those who come, that we may be continually coming afresh without ever going away,—always *at* the fountain-head, and yet always *coming* to it.

As the first coming to Jesus gives us the true and only foundation,² so by the very same coming, continued with ever fresh peace and joy, we shall be built up in Him.³ It is *as* we have received Christ Jesus the Lord that we are to walk in Him, and

¹ Matt. vii. 14.

² 1 Cor. iii. 11.

³ Col. ii. 6, 7.

then we shall be rooted and built up in Him.¹ Think what this building up implies! Coming to Him, you individually, as well as all who come collectively, shall be builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit,² that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,³ that your bodies may be the temple of the Holy Ghost.⁴ Coming to Him, you shall no longer be a loose stone, lying about and getting weatherworn, but you 'shall be built in the midst of My people,' saith the Lord.⁵

Coming to Him, you shall also be built up as a holy and royal priesthood.⁶ For He that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, hath made us kings and priests unto God.⁷ What does this priesthood involve, which the Lord has 'given unto you as a service of gift'?⁸ Does it not involve the very point on which you had a misgiving, namely, 'if I do come to-day, what about to-morrow?' for the priests had everything provided for them.⁹ When they were set apart to the priest's office, they did not need to have a thought or a care about their maintenance in it all the rest of their lives.¹⁰ When once this 'service of gift' was theirs, they were joined unto the high priest himself, and shared his privileges and his provision; they were given to him, and he was given to them.¹¹ This provision for them was 'all the *best* of the oil, and all the *best* of the wine, and of the wheat, and the first-fruits,' besides 'all the *best* thereof' of other

1 1 Pet. ii. 5.

4 1 Cor. vi. 19.

7 Rev. i. 5, 6; ib. v. 10.

9 Num. xviii. 9, 14.

11 Num. xviii. 2, 4.

2 Eph. ii. 22.

5 Jer. xii. 16.

10 Ezek. xliv. 28-30; 2 Cor. vi. 10.

3 Eph. iii. 17.

6 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

8 Num. xviii. 7.

things;¹ 'for it is your reward for your service.' And the Lord says, 'I will satiate the soul of my priests with fatness.'³ They shall be abundantly 'satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house.'⁴ For 'His divine power hath given unto us *all* things that pertain unto life and godliness.'⁵

Coming to Him, you shall 'offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'⁶ You will offer by Him the sacrifice of praise continually;⁷ and what can the angels do more? Continual praise *must* be continual gladness.⁸ And when you are able to say, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me; behold, God is my salvation;' then, and '*therefore*, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.'⁹

This is what is before you, as soon as you come to Jesus. Thenceforth it shall be continual coming, and that will be continual rest, continual peace, continual joy.¹⁰

1 Num. xviii. 12.

2 Num. xviii. 29, 31.

3 Jer. xxxi. 14.

4 Ps. xxxvi. 8, P.B.V.

5 2 Pet. i. 3.

6 1 Pet. ii. 5; Rom. xii. 1.

7 Heb. xiii. 15.

8 Ps. lxxi. 6, 14; ib. xxxiv. 1.

9 Isa. xii. 1-3.

10 Phil. iv. 4, 6, 7.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Fellowship and Cleansing.

‘Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.’—
ISA. ii. 5.

IT is not only the Spirit but the Bride who says, ‘Come.’¹ And it is remarkable that the Bride is never found saying ‘Come’ without including herself. ‘Come with us;’² ‘Come, and let us join ourselves unto the Lord;’³ ‘Come, and let us return unto the Lord;’⁴ ‘Let us come boldly.’⁵ It is always ‘us,’ expressed or implied, though the speaker be patriarch, prophet, or apostle. And you may be very sure that those who venture to ‘say, Come’ to you, are truly and deeply feeling the need of continual coming for themselves. If the Master’s call were not sounding very fresh and sweet in their own hearts, they would not be constrained to sound it out to you.⁶

‘Come ye,’ then, ‘and let us walk in the light of the Lord.’⁷ This is one of the blessed results and tests of true following, as following is of coming. For the Lord says, ‘He that followeth Me shall not

¹ Rev. xxii. 17.

⁴ Hos. vi. 1.

⁷ Isa. ii. 5.

² Num. x. 29.

⁵ Heb. iv. 16.

³ Jer. l. 5.

⁶ 2 Cor. v. 14.

walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."¹ And the results of this walking in the light are fellowship and cleansing; and these, when fully accepted, are all that we can need for the brightest, happiest pilgrim course. 'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'² This is not merely fellowship with other Christians, though that, with all its warmth and pleasantness, is no doubt included.³ But scholars tell us that the true meaning is that we and the Lord have fellowship *with each other*—a marvellous mutual interchange of sympathy, interest, and love. 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.'⁴ Fellowship implies a good deal more than even friendship; the word is really 'communion,' in its widest and yet closest sense. It is literally having all things in common. It is the Lord saying, 'Thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine.'⁵ It is our responding, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.'⁶ It is, 'All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'⁷ It is the present fact, which yet we cannot fully apprehend,⁸ till 'at that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.'⁹ 'Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord,' that this glorious fellowship may be ours.¹⁰

But there can be no fellowship without the cleansing. For how 'can two walk together, except they

¹ John viii. 12.

⁴ 1 John i. 3.

⁷ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

¹⁰ Isa. ii. 5; Gen. v. 22; Rev. iii. 4.

² 1 John i. 7.

⁵ Luke xv. 31.

⁸ Phil. iii. 12.

³ 1 John iii. 14.

⁶ Cant. ii. 16.

⁹ John xiv. 20.

be agreed?'¹ And sin is the one great obstacle to this agreement. God never makes peace with sin.² No armistice, no truce, no compromise is possible! If you would read through Jeremiah or Ezekiel with your eyes open to observe what God thinks of sin, you would be perfectly startled. It leaves the impression that no language can convey His indignant loathing of 'this abominable thing which I hate.'³ But this one precious promise shows it all in a moment. 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin!'⁴ If anything less than the blood of His own Son *could* have cleansed us, would He not have spared Him?⁵ Nothing shows us the exceeding sinfulness of sin like this one word.

But oh, thank God for the 'all'! As nothing less than the blood of Christ is needed for one single sin, so nothing more is needed for *all* sin.⁶ Ask the Holy Spirit to open out this one word to you.⁷ 'All' the sin cleansed by it,⁸—'all' that separated between you and God put away by it,⁹—you yourself made nigh by it, and sanctified by it,¹⁰—the fellowship will be unbroken, the light will be unclouded, the following will be faithful,¹¹ and the coming will be sealed.¹²

¹ Amos iii. 3.

⁴ 1 John i. 7.

⁷ Ps. cxix. 19.

¹⁰ Heb. xiii. 12.

² Ps. lxvi. 18.

⁵ Rom. viii. 32.

⁸ Isa. lix. 2.

¹¹ Eph. v. 8.

³ Jer. xliv. 4.

⁶ Heb. ix. 22.

⁹ Eph. ii. 13.

¹² Zech. x. 12.

THIRTIETH DAY.

The Perpetual Covenant. 7

‘Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.’—JER. 1. 5.

THIS is no external joining of church or congregation. ‘He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.’¹ To this we are invited,²—to be so joined that nothing shall separate;³ to be made one with Christ in blessed and eternal union.⁴ The instrument, so to speak, of the joining, is our consent, in faith and obedience, to the perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.⁵

Herein lies the answer to all the distressing doubts about persevering in which we ‘err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.’⁶ For see what the terms of the new covenant are! ‘I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.’⁷ This seems all one-sided. It is all what God undertakes to do. Not a word about what we undertake to do. How different from any human covenant!

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

² Num. xviii. 2.

³ Rom. viii. 39.

⁴ Eph. v. 30; John xvii. 23.

⁵ Jer. 1. 5.

⁶ Matt. xxii. 29.

⁷ Heb. viii. 10.

Ah, the Lord tried us with the other way, and we failed; and so the old covenant of works came to naught.¹ It was not only the children of Israel who 'continued not'² in God's covenant; we have done just the same. We have proved in our own experience that we cannot keep any one condition of it, let alone the whole!³ And so the Lord makes a new covenant, in which the marvellous terms are that He undertakes our part as well as His own, by promising to put His laws into our minds and write them upon our hearts, so that we may keep them and really obey them.⁴

And when He says He will be to us a God,⁵ He has promised in that one word more than mortal thought or mortal desire can reach. And when He says we *shall* be to Him a people,⁶ He guarantees us all the safety and happiness, and all the privileges and blessings, in all certainty and perpetuity, which He promises to His people.⁷ He knows our total weakness,⁸ and our utter inability to persevere,⁹ and so He stoops to undertake the whole thing for us, if we will only 'come, and join ourselves to the Lord,' consenting to His perpetual covenant, and accepting these wonderful provisions in simple faith.

But remember, there is no such thing as drifting into this covenant. We shall never 'happen' to find ourselves included in it by waiting to see what turns up, or by dint of admiringly contemplating it. We must '*come*;' and we must join ourselves to

¹ Jer. xxxi. 32.

⁴ Isa. xxxviii. 14.

⁶ Deut. xxxiii. 29.

⁹ Jude 24.

² Heb. viii. 9.

⁵ 2 Cor. vi. 16; Rev. xxi. 3.

⁷ 2 Cor. i. 20.

³ Rom. iii. 19, 23.

⁸ Ps. ciii. 14.

the Lord in it by our own voluntary act and deed. Each must 'subscribe with his hand unto the Lord.'² This covenant requires the free individual signature of each participator, so that each shall be able to say, 'Yet hath He made with *me* an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.'³ Do you ask for some proof that you *may* thus come and share its blessedness?—some distinct evidence that the covenant is meant for you? The Lord, who has given all the rest, has given this too. You know the freeness of the call, 'Ho, *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.'⁴ That is only the beginning of the Invitation. It goes on, without a break, still to *every one*,—'Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with *you*.'⁵

Oh, happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

'Tis done! the great transaction's done.
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to obey the Voice Divine.

DODDRIDGE.

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 5.
⁴ Isa. lv. 1.

² Isa. xlv. 5.
⁵ Isa. lv. 3.

³ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.





THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

The Consummation of the Invitation.

‘Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’—MATT. xxv. 34.

‘**T**HEN!’ when the sure but as yet unseen hope of the Church is fulfilled, and Jesus comes in His glory:¹ ‘then!’ when all are gathered before Him, and ‘He shall separate them one from another:’ ‘*then* shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come!’²

The King—‘this same Jesus,’³ who now says, ‘Come unto Me,’ ‘whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another’⁴ (margin, *not a stranger*)—He shall utter with His own gracious lips⁵ the same sweet call; and we shall hear it, no longer by faith, but literally.

The call will be no longer, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden;’⁶ for the weariness and the burdens that have been cast upon Jesus will be at an end for ever.⁷ It will be, ‘Come, ye

¹ Tit. ii. 13.

³ Acts i. 11.

⁶ Matt. xi. 28.

² Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; ib. xxv. 32.

⁴ Job xix. 27.

⁷ Ps. lv. 22; ib. xxxviii. 4.

⁵ Luke iv. 22.

blessed !' Not 'blessed' then for the first time, but 'ye' whose position already is that of 'the blessed of the Lord.'¹ Every one who comes to Jesus takes that glorious position, and possesses all its manifold privileges.² If you are only come to-day for the first time, 'thou art *now* the blessed of the Lord,'³ and you shall be among the blessed ones who stand in their lot at the end of the days.⁴ You are *now* made kings and priests unto God by Him who loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood ;⁵ and *then* the King will call you to 'inherit the kingdom.' For 'by faith in Christ Jesus' (which is the same thing, in other words, as coming to Christ), you are 'the children of God.'⁶ 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.'⁷ He will make you inherit the throne of His glory, and grant you to sit with Him in His throne,⁸ for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.⁹ Confess now, that this is doing for you exceeding abundantly above all you asked or thought!¹⁰ To be permitted just to escape the terrible doom of 'everlasting punishment,'¹¹—just to get inside the door of the palace,¹²—a sort of standing afar off, even in heaven,—is about as much as you really thought of! But look at the grandeur of *His* thought, and the riches of His love for you! He has prepared not only 'a place,'¹³ and 'a city,'¹⁴ but a kingdom for you, and that not since you began to pray for salvation, but from the foundation

1 Ps. cxv. 15.

4 Dan. xii. 12, 13.

7 Rom. viii. 17.

10 Eph. iii. 20.

13 John xiv. 2.

2 Eph. i. 3.

5 Rev. i. 5, 6.

8 Rev. iii. 21.

11 Matt. xxv. 46.

14 Heb. xi. 16.

3 Gen. xxvi. 29.

6 Gal. iii. 26.

9 Luke xii. 32.

12 Ps. xlv. 15.

of the world.¹ And all this time this splendid and amaranthine inheritance has been reserved in heaven for you,² and you are being kept by the power of God for it!³ Have you thanked Him for this? It is not too soon to do so.

This is indeed the consummation of the Royal Invitation,—the King on the throne of His glory inviting you to come and reign with Him!⁴

And ‘this same Jesus’ says to you to-day, ‘Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.’⁵

Still shall the keyword ringing, echo the same sweet ‘Come!’
 ‘Come’ with the blessed myriads, safe in the Father’s home;
 ‘Come!’ for the toil is over; ‘come!’ for the feast is spread;
 ‘Come!’ for the crown of glory waits for the weary head.

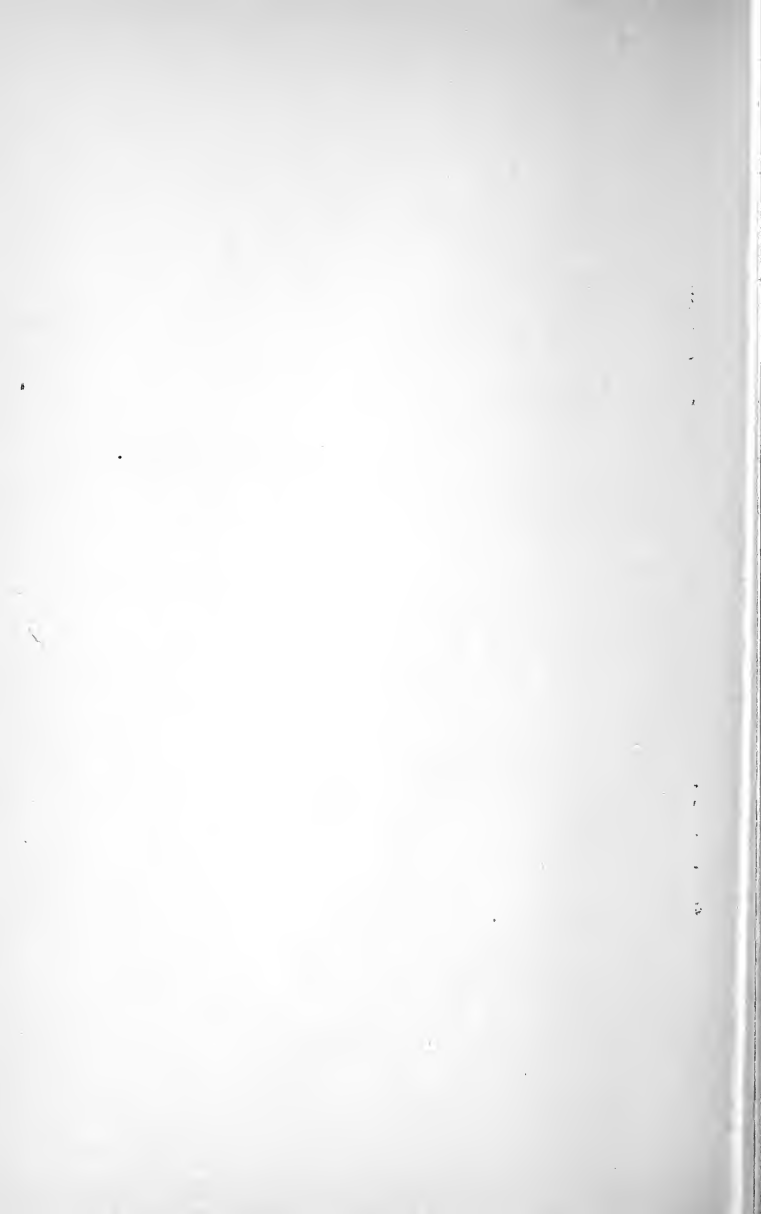
¹ Matt. xxv. 34; Eph. i. 4.

³ 1 Pet. i. 5.

⁴ Rev. v. 10.

² 1 Pet. i. 4, Gr.

⁵ John vi. 37.



CHRIST—MY KING



FIRST DAY.

The Source of the Kingship.

‘Because the Lord hath loved His people, He hath made thee king over them.’—2 CHRON. ii. 11, ix. 8.

CHRIST said to His Father, ‘Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.’¹ At that mysterious date, not of time, but of everlasting love, God ‘chose us in Him.’² Before the world began, God, that cannot lie,³ gave the promise of eternal life to Him for us, and made with Him for us ‘a covenant ordered in all things, and sure.’⁴ The leading provisions of that covenant were, a Lamb for our atonement, and a King for our government—a dying and a living Saviour. This God the Father did for us, and His own divine interest is strongly indicated in the typical words, ‘God will provide *Himself* a Lamb,’⁵ and ‘I have provided *me* a King.’⁶ So the Source of the Kingship of Christ is God Himself, in the eternal counsels of His love. It is one of the grand ‘thoughts of God.’⁷

¹ John xvii. 24.

⁴ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

⁷ Ps. cxxxix. 17.

² Eph. i. 4.

⁶ Gen. xxii. 8.

³ Titus i. 2.

⁶ 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

Having provided, He appointed and anointed His King: 'Yet have I set (margin, anointed) my King upon my holy hill of Zion.'¹ What a marvellous meeting-place is thus found in the Kingship of Jesus for God's heart and ours! He says in His majestic sovereignty, 'I have set *my* King;' and we say in lowly and loving loyalty, 'Thou art *my* King.'²

God has appointed His King 'to be ruler over Israel *and* over Judah.' Thus He gives His children a great bond of union. For 'one King shall be King to them all,'³ and He shall 'gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.'⁴ 'Satan scatters, but Jesus gathers.' Shall we then let the enemy have his way, and induce us to keep apart and aloof from those over whom our beloved King reigns also? Let us try this day to recollect this, and make it practical in all our contact with His other subjects.

Why has God made Jesus King? Who would have guessed the right answer? '*Because* the Lord loved His people.' So the very thought of the Kingship of Christ sprang from the everlasting love of God to His people.⁵ Bring that wonderful statement down to personal reality,—'His people,' that is, *you and me*. God made Jesus King over you, because He loved you, and that with nothing less than the love wherewith He loved Him.⁶ Which is the more wonderful—the love that devised such a gift, or the gift that was devised by such love! Oh, to realize the glorious value of it!

¹ Ps. ii. 6.

⁴ John xi. 52.

² Ps. xlv. 4.

⁵ Jer. xxxi. 3.

³ Ezek. xxxvii. 22.

⁶ John xvii. 26.

May we, who by His grace know something of God's gift of His Son as our Saviour, learn day by day more of the magnificent preciousness of His gift of His Anointed One as our King!

SECOND DAY.

The Promise of the King.

‘I will be thy King.’—Hos. xiii. 10.

HE knows our need of a king. He knows the hopeless anarchy, not only of a world, but of a heart, ‘without a king.’¹ Is there a more desolate cry than ‘We have no king’?²—none to reverence and love, none to obey, none to guide and protect us and rule over us, none to keep us in that truest freedom of whole-hearted loyalty. Have we not felt that we really want a strong hand over our hearts? that having our own way is not so good as another's way, if only that other is one to whom our hearty and entire confidence and allegiance can be and are given? Has there not been an echo in our souls of the old cry, ‘Give me a king’?—a cry that nothing can still but this Divine promise, ‘I will be thy king!’³

But the promise has been given; and now, if the

¹ Hos. iii. 4.

² Hos. x. 3.

³ Hos. xiii. 10.

old desolate wail of a kingless heart comes up in an hour of faithless forgetfulness, His word comes like a royal clarion, 'Now, *why* dost thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee?'¹ And then the King's gracious assurance falls with hushing power, 'I will be *thy* King.'

How glad we are that He Himself is our King! For we are so sure that He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself² in this inner kingdom, which we cannot govern at all. We are so glad to take Him at His word, and give up the government into His hands, asking Him to be our King in very deed, and to set up His throne of peace in the long disturbed and divided citadel,³ praying that He would bring every thought into captivity to His gentle obedience.⁴

We have had enough of revolutions and revolts, of tyrants and traitors, of lawlessness and of self-framed codes. Other lords (and oh, how many!) have had dominion over us.⁵ He has permitted us to be their servants, that now, by blessed and restful contrast, we may know His service.⁶ Now we *only* want 'another King, one Jesus.'⁷ He has made us willing in the day of His power,⁸ and that was the first act of His reign, and the token that 'of the *increase* of His government and peace there shall be no end'⁹ in our hearts.

Lord, be Thou my King this day! Reign more absolutely in me than ever before. Let the increase

¹ Mic. iv. 9.

⁴ 2 Cor. x. 5.

⁷ Acts xvii. 7.

² Phil. iii. 21.

⁵ Isa. xxvi. 13.

⁸ Ps. cx. 3.

³ Rom. vii. 19.

⁶ 2 Chron. xii. 8

⁹ Isa. ix. 7.

of Thy government be continual and mighty in me, so that Thy name may be glorified in me now and forever.¹

Reign over me, Lord Jesus!
Oh, make my heart Thy throne!
It shall be thine forever,
It shall be Thine alone!

THIRD DAY.

Allegiance to the King.

‘Thou art my King.’—Ps. xliv. 4.

FIRST, *can* I say it?

Is Jesus in very deed and truth ‘my King’? Where is the proof of it? Am I living in His kingdom of ‘righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost’ now?² Am I speaking the language of that kingdom? Am I following ‘the customs of the people’³ which are not His people? or do I ‘diligently learn the ways of His people’?⁴ Am I practically living under the rule of His laws? Have I done heart homage to Him? Am I bravely and honestly upholding His cause, because it is His, not merely because those around me do so? Is my allegiance making any practical difference to my life to-day?

Next, *ought* I to say it?

¹ 2 Thess. i. 12.

² Rom. xiv. 17.

³ Jer. x. 3.

⁴ Jer. xii. 16.

What! any question about that? The King, who came Himself to purchase me from my tyrant and His foe;¹ the King, who laid aside His crown and His royal robes, and left His kingly palace, and came down Himself to save a rebel;² the King, who, though He was rich, yet for my sake became poor, that I 'through His poverty might be rich,'³—*ought* I to acknowledge Him? is it a question of '*ought* I?' God has 'called me unto His Kingdom and glory';⁴ He 'hath translated me into the kingdom of the Son of His love';⁵ and shall the loyal words falter or fail from my lips, 'Thou art my King'?

Lastly, *do* I say it?

God has said to me, 'He *is* thy Lord, and worship thou Him.'⁶ Do my lips say, 'My Lord and My God'?⁷ Does my life say, 'Christ Jesus, *my* Lord,'⁸—definitely and personally, '*my* Lord'? Can I share in His last sweet commendation to His disciples, the more precious because of its divine dignity, 'Ye call me Master and Lord, *and ye say well*, for so I am'?⁹ Have I said, 'Thou *art my* King'¹⁰ to Jesus Himself, from the depth of my own heart, in unreserved and unfeigned submission to His sceptre? Am I ashamed or afraid to confess my allegiance in plain English among His friends or before His foes?¹¹ Is the seal upon my brow so unmistakable that always and everywhere I am known to be His subject? Is 'Thou art my King'¹²

¹ Acts xx. 28.

⁴ 1 Thess. ii. 12.

⁷ John xx. 28.

¹⁰ Ps. lxxxii. 15, margin.

² Phil. ii. 7.

⁵ Col. i. 13.

⁸ Phil. iii. 8.

¹¹ Matt. x. 32.

³ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

⁶ Ps. xlv. 11.

⁹ John xiii. 13.

¹² Acts iv. 13.

blazoned, as it ought to be, in shining letters on the whole scroll of my life, so that it may be 'known and read of all men' ?¹

Answer Thou for me, O my King ! 'Search me and try me,'² and show me the true state of my case, and then for Thine own sake pardon all my past disloyalty, and make me by Thy mighty grace from this moment totally loyal ! For 'Thou *art* my King.'³

FOURTH DAY.

Decision for the King.

'Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you. Now, then, do it.'—2 SAM. iii. 17, 18.

IN time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.'⁴ Chosen, anointed, given by God, continually leading and caring for us, yet not accepted, not crowned, not enthroned by us ;⁵ our real allegiance, our actual service, given to another !⁶ Self has been our Saul, our central tyranny ; and many have been its officers domineering in every department.'⁷

'Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you.' Well we might, for the bondage of any other lord was daily harder.⁸ Well we might,

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 2.

³ Ps. xxv. 11.

⁶ Rom. vi. 16.

² Ps. xxxviii. 15, P. B. V. ; ib. cxxxix. 23.

⁴ Sam. v. 2.

⁵ Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20 ; Isa. lv. 4.

⁷ Rom. vii. 23.

⁸ Isa. xiv. 3.

with even a dim glimpse of the grace and glory of the King who waited for our homage. We sought, first, only for something—we hardly knew what—restlessly and vaguely; then for some One, who was not merely ‘the Desire of all nations,’ but our own desire.¹ And yet we did not come to the point: we were not ready for His absolute monarchy, for we were loving and doing the will of our old tyrant.²

But ‘the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will’ of self—Satan—the world.³ We do not want ‘to live the rest of our time’ to any but One Will.⁴ We come face to face with a great NOW! ‘Now, then, do it!’⁵ ‘Now, then,’ let us, with full purpose of heart, dethrone the usurper and give the diadem to Him ‘whose right it is,’ a blood-bought and death-sealed right.⁶

He does not force allegiance,—He waits for it. The crown of our own individual love and loyalty must be offered by our own hands.⁷ We must ‘do it.’ When? Oh, now! *Now* let us come to Jesus as our King, *Now* let us, first in solemn heart-surrender, and then in open and unmistakable life-confession, yield ourselves to Him as our Sovereign, our Ruler.

What a glorious life of victory and peace opens before us when this is done! What a silencing of our fears lest the time to come should nevertheless be as the time past! ‘Now, then, do it: FOR the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of

¹ Hag. ii, 7.

⁴ 1 Pet. iv. 2.

⁷ 2 Sam. v. 2.

² 1 Kings xviii. 21.

⁵ 2 Sam. iii. 18.

³ 1 Pet. iv. 3.

⁶ Ezek. xxi. 26, 27.

my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.'¹

Now, do not let us 'take away from the words'² of this promise, and merely hope that our King *may* save us from *some* of our enemies. The Lord hath said, '*will* save from *all*.' Let us trust our true David this day to fulfil the word of the Lord, and verily we shall not fail to find that according to our faith it shall be unto us.³

FIFTH DAY.

The First to Meet the King.

'For thy servant doth know that I have sinned; therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to meet my lord the king.'—2 SAM. xix. 20.

YES, I have sinned. I *know* that I have sinned. Whether I feel it more or less does not touch the fact: I *know* it. And what then? 'THEREFORE, behold, I am come the first this day of all . . . to meet my Lord the King.'

Just because I *know* that I have sinned, I come to Jesus. He came to call sinners,⁴ He came to save sinners,⁵ so He came to call and to save me. 'This is all my desire.'⁶

¹ 2 Sam. iii. 18.

⁴ Matt. ix. 13.

² Rev. xxii. 19.

⁵ 1 Tim. i. 15.

³ Matt. ix. 29.

⁶ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Just because I know that *I* have sinned, I may and must come 'the first of all.' Thousands are coming, but the heart knoweth his own bitterness.¹ So, not waiting for others, not coming in order, but 'first of all,' by the pressure of my sore need of pardon, I come. There is no waiting for one's turn in coming to Jesus.

'The first of all,' because it is against '*my* lord the King' that I have sinned. I am His servant, so I have the greater sin.² 'The first of all, because I have so much to be forgiven, and have already been forgiven so much, that I must, I do, love much;³ and love, even of a sorrowing sinner, seeks nearness, and cannot rest in distance.⁴

'Therefore,' also, 'I am come *this day*.' I dare not and could not wait till to-morrow. No need to wait, even till to-night! Now! He is passing by,⁵ and I must 'haste to meet' Him.⁶ 'While he is near,'⁷ I will tell Him all.

I am come to *meet* Him, not merely to *go* to Him;⁸ for He is always coming to meet us. He was on His way before I had said, 'I will arise and go.'⁹ I come, because He comes to me.

Yet I could not come with this terrible knowledge that I have sinned, but that I know something more. I know that He hath said, 'Come unto me.'¹⁰ I know that He hath said, 'Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.'¹¹ This is enough; therefore I am come to my Lord the King.

Not to His servants, but to Himself. Even those

¹ Prov. xiv. 10.

⁴ Col. ii. 13.

⁷ Isa. lv. 6.

¹⁰ Matt. xi. 28.

² Ps. cxvi. 16.

⁵ Matt. xx. 30.

⁸ Zech. ix. 9.

¹¹ John vi. 37.

³ Luke vii. 47.

⁶ 2 Sam. xix. 16.

⁹ Luke xv. 18.

who stand near Him may accuse and condemn, but the King Himself will receive me graciously;¹ for with Him there is forgiveness, and mercy, and plenteous redemption.²

And though the oath of an earthly sovereign may be broken, my King (in glorious contrast to the imperfect human type) 'keepeth His promise for ever.'³ His covenant will He not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of His lips.⁴ Therefore the eternal life which He hath promised me is secured to me forever, for He hath said,⁵ 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'⁶

SIXTH DAY.

The Condescension of the King.

'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.'—ZECH. ix. 9.

THAT our King should let us come to Him is condescension indeed. But have we praised Him for His still more wonderful condescension: 'Thy King *cometh unto thee*'?⁷ 'Unto *thee*,' rebel, traitor, faithless subject, coward and cold-hearted follower; for where is the life that has not fallen

¹ Hos. xiv. 2.

⁴ Ps. lxxxix. 34.

⁷ Isa. xlviii. 8.

² Ps. cxxx. 4, 7.

⁵ 1 John ii. 25.

³ Ps. cxlvi. 5. (P. B. V.)

⁶ John x. 28.

under these charges, when seen in the double light of the King's perfect law and the King's great love? Yes, he cometh unto *thee*, and it is enough to break our hearts when we get one contrasted glimpse of this undeserved grace and unparalleled condescension.

His great promise has had its first fulfilment 'unto thee.' It is a finished fact of sevenfold grace. Thy King has come, and His own voice has given the objects of His coming,—'to do Thy will, O God ;¹ 'to fulfil' the law ;² 'to call sinners to repentance ;'³ 'to seek and to save that which was lost ;'⁴ 'that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly ;'⁵ 'a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.'⁶ What He came to do He has done, for 'He faileth not.'⁷ On this we may and ought to rest quietly and undoubtingly, for 'the Lord hath *done it*.'⁸

But you want a further fulfilment,—you want a present coming of your King. You have His most sweet word, 'I will come to you ;'⁹ and you respond, 'Oh, *when* wilt Thou come unto me?'¹⁰ Are you ready to receive the King's own answer now? Do you so desire His coming, that you do not want it postponed at all? Can you defer all other comers, and say in reality, '*Let my Beloved come*?'¹¹

He has but one answer to that appeal. Hush!

¹ Heb. x. 9.

⁴ Luke xix. 10.

⁷ Zeph. iii. 5.

¹⁰ Ps. ci. 2.

² Matt. v. 17.

⁵ John x. 10.

⁸ Isa. xliv. 23.

¹¹ Cant. iv. 16.

³ Matt. ix. 13.

⁶ John xii. 46.

⁹ John xiv. 18.

listen ! believe ! for the King speaks to you : ' I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.'¹ He *is* come. Do not miss the unspeakable blessing and joy of meeting Him and resting in His presence, by hurrying away to anything else, by listening to any outward call.² Stay *now*, lay the little book aside, kneel down at your King's feet, doubt not His word, which is ' more sure ' than even the ' excellent glory ' ³ that apostles beheld, and thank Him for coming to you. Commune with Him now of all that is in your heart,⁴ and ' rejoice greatly,' for, ' behold, thy King cometh unto thee.'

' Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing,
 Bringing news of sin forgiven ;
 Jesus comes in sounds of gladness,
 Leading souls redeemed to heaven.

' Jesus comes again in mercy,
 When our hearts are bowed with care ;
 Jesus comes again, in answer
 To an earnest, heartfelt prayer.'

GODFREY THRING.

¹ Cant. v. 1.

² 2 Pet. i. 19.

² Cant. ii. 3.

⁴ 1 Kings x. 2.

SEVENTH DAY.

The Indwelling of the King.

‘Is not her King in her?’—JER. viii. 19.

WAITING for a royal coming,—What expectation, what preparation, what tension! A glimpse for many, a full view for some, a word for a favoured few, and the pageant is over like a dream. The Sovereign may come, but does not stay.

Our King comes not thus: He comes not to pass, but to ‘*dwell* in the midst of thee;’¹ not only in His Church collectively, but in each believer individually.² We pray, ‘Abide with us,’³ and He answers in the sublime plural of Godhead, ‘We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’⁴ Even this grand abiding with us does not extend to the full marvels of His condescension and His nearness, for the next time He speaks of it He changes the ‘with’ to ‘in,’ and thenceforth only speaks of ‘I *in* you,’ ‘I in him,’ ‘I in them.’⁵

Now do not let us say, ‘How can this be?’⁶ but, like Mary, ‘How shall this be?’⁷ The means,

¹ Zech. ii. 10.

⁴ John xiv. 23.

⁶ John iii. 9.

² 2 Cor. vi. 16.

⁵ John xv. 4, 5; ib. xvii. 23.

⁷ Luke i. 34.

³ Luke xxiv. 29.

though not the mode, of the mystery is revealed for our grasp of adoring wonder: 'That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.'¹ It is almost too wonderful to dare to speak of. Christ Himself, my King, coming to me, into me! abiding, dwelling in my very heart! Really staying there all day, all night, wherever I am, whatever I am doing; here in my poor unworthy heart at this very moment! And this only because the grace that flowed from His own love has broken the bars of doubt, and because He has given the faith that wanted Him and welcomed Him. Let us pause a little to take it in!

The more we have known of the plague of our own heart,² the more inconceivably wonderful this indwelling of Christ will appear,—much more wonderful than that He chose a manger as His royal resting-place,³ for that had never been defiled by sin, and had never harboured His enemy. It is no use trying to comprehend this incomprehensible grace of our King,—we have only to believe His promise, saying, 'Amen; the Lord God of my Lord the King says so too.'⁴

There should be three practical results of this belief:—1. *Holiness*. We must see to it that we resolutely 'put away'⁵ all that ought not to be in His royal abode.⁶ 'Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'⁷ 2. *Confidence*.

¹ Eph. iii. 17.

⁴ 1 Kings i. 36.

⁷ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

² 1 Kings viii. 38.

⁵ Eph. iv. 31.

³ Luke ii. 7.

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

What does the citadel fear when an invincible general is within it? 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save.'¹ He is 'the wall of fire round about,' and 'the glory in the midst of her';² and 'he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.'³ 3. *Joy.* Yes! 'Be glad and rejoice with all the heart,'⁴ 'sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.'⁵

EIGHTH DAY.

Full Satisfaction in the King.

'Yea, let him take all, for as much as my lord the king is come again in peace to his own house.'—2 SAM. xix. 30.

IT is when the King has really come in peace to His own home in the 'contrite and humble spirit'⁶ (not before),—when He has entered in to make His abode there⁷ (not before),—that the soul is satisfied with Him⁸ alone, and is ready to let any Ziba take all else, because all else really seems nothing at all in comparison to the conscious possession of the Treasure of treasures.⁹

Sometimes this is reached at once, in the first flush of wondering joy at finding the King really 'come in peace'¹⁰ to the empty soul which wanted to be

¹ Zeph. iii. 17.

⁴ Zeph. iii. 14.

⁷ John xiv. 23.

¹⁰ Isa. xxxiii. 6.

² Zech. ii. 5.

⁵ Zech. ii. 10.

⁸ Ps. xxii. 26.

³ Zech. ii. 8.

⁶ Isa. lvii. 15.

⁹ Matt. xiii. 46.

‘His own house.’¹ Sometimes very gradually,—as year after year we realize His indwelling more and more, and find again and again that He is quite enough to satisfy us in all circumstances; that the empty corners of the ‘house’ are filled one after another; that the old longings have somehow gone away, and the old ambitions vanished; that the old tastes and interests in the things of the world are superseded by stronger tastes and interests in the things of Christ; that He is day by day more really *filling* our lives,²—we ‘count’ (because we really find) one thing after another ‘but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,’³ till He leads us on to the rapturous joy of the ‘Yea, doubtless,’ and ‘*all things!*’

Now, have we got as far as saying ‘*some things,*’ without being quite sure about ‘*all things?*’ Do you see that it all hinges upon Jesus coming into the heart as ‘His *own house,*’—*altogether* ‘His own’?⁴ For if there are some rooms of which we do not give up the key,—some little sitting-room which we would like to keep as a little mental retreat, with a view from the window, which we do not quite want to give up,—some lodger whom we would rather not send away just yet,—some little dark closet which we have not resolution to open and set to rights,—of course the King has not full possession; it is not all and really ‘His own;’ and

¹ Heb. iii. 6.

³ Phil. iii. 8.

² Eph. i. 23.

⁴ Acts xxvi. 29.

the very misgiving about it proves that He has *therefore* not yet 'come again in peace.' It is no use expecting 'perfect peace,'¹ while He has a secret controversy² with us about any withholding of what is 'His own'³ by purchase. Only throw open *all* the doors,⁴ 'and the King of Glory shall come in,'⁵ and then there will be no craving for other guests. He will 'fill this house with glory,'⁶ and there will be no place left for gloom.

Is it not so? Bear witness, tell it out, you with whom the King dwells in peace? Life is filled with bright interests, time is filled with happy work or peaceful waiting, the mind is filled with His beautiful words and thoughts, the heart is filled with His presence, and you 'abide satisfied'⁷ with Him! Yes, 'tell it out!'

The human heart asks love; but now I know
That my heart hath from Thee
All real, and full, and marvellous affection,
So near, so human! yet Divine perfection
Thrills gloriously the mighty glow!
Thy love is enough for me!

There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast and broad,
Unfathomed as the sea;
An infinite craving for some infinite stilling;
But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling!
Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,
Thou, Thou art enough for me.

¹ Isa. xxvi. 3.

⁴ Rev. iii. 20.

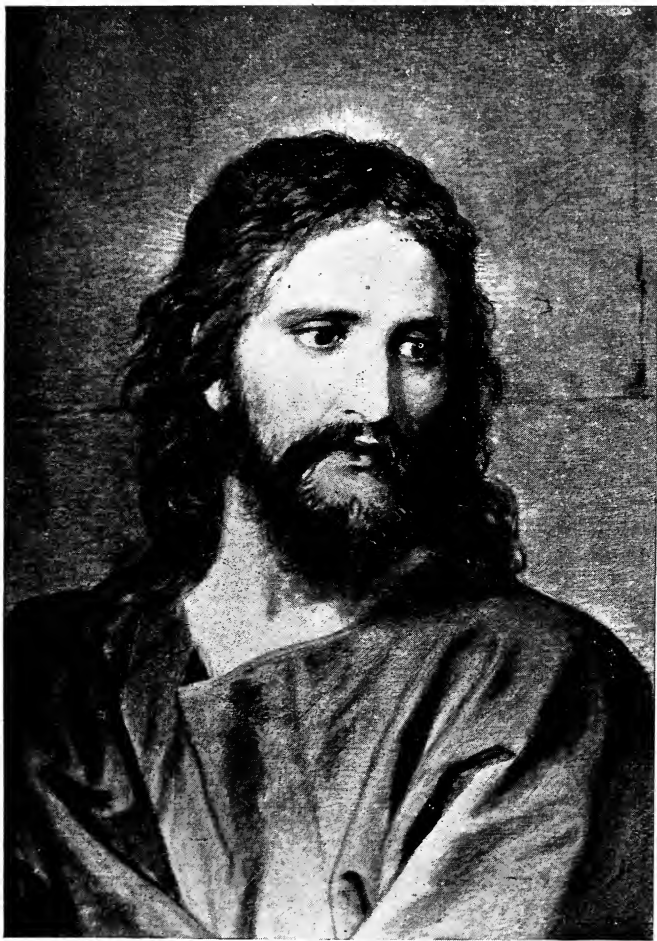
⁷ Prov. xix. 23.

² Mic. vi. 2.

⁵ Ps. xxiv. 9.

³ Acts v. 2.

⁶ Hag. ii. 7.





NINTH DAY.

The Sorrow of the King.

‘The king himself also passed over the brook Kidron.’¹—
2 SAM. xv. 23.

JESUS went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron.² How precisely the Old Testament shadow corresponds with the New Testament fulfilment! The King, in sorrow and humiliation, is here brought before us, passing from his royal home, from all his glory and gladness,—passing over into exile and unknown distresses.³

There is no need for imagination in dwelling on His sorrows. The pathos of the plain words is more than enough; no pen has power to add to it. Let us listen to them just as they stand,—not hurrying over them because they are only texts, and we know them all beforehand; they are the Holy Ghost’s sevenfold testimony to the sorrow of the King.

‘A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’⁴
‘I am poor and sorrowful.’⁵ ‘The sorrows of death

¹ Kidron means ‘obscurity’; Cedron is ‘black’ or ‘sad.’

² John xviii. 1.

³ 2 Sam. xviii. 20.

⁴ Isa. liii. 3.

⁵ Ps. lxix. 29.

compassed me.' 'The sorrows of hell compassed me.'¹ 'Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.'² 'He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.'³ 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.'⁴ Oh, stay a little that you may take it in! hear Jesus saying to you, 'Hear, I pray you, and behold my sorrow?'⁵

'Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.'⁶ The sorrows of the past, the very sorrow that may be pressing heavily at this moment; all yours, all mine; all the sorrows of all His children all through the groaning generations; all that were 'too heavy'⁷ for them,—Jesus bore them all. 'Is it nothing to you?'⁸ It is when the Lord says, 'Now will I gather them' (the rebels and wanderers), that He adds, 'And they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the King of princes.'⁹ Have we this proof that He has indeed gathered us? For 'all the people,' except the rebels, 'passed over with the king.'¹⁰ Do we know anything of this passage over Cedron, the brook of sadness, with Him? Possibly it seems presumptuous to think of sharing 'the fellowship of His sufferings,'¹¹ that mysterious privilege! But mark, it was not only the mighty Ittai and 'all his men,' the nobles and the veterans, that passed over, but 'all the little ones that were with him'¹² too. And so 'the little ones, the weak ones,'¹³ the least member of His body, may thus

¹ Ps. xviii. 4, 5.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 38.

⁷ Ps. xxxviii. 4.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. xv. 23.

¹³ 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. |

² Lam. i. 12.

⁵ Lam. i. 18.

⁸ Lam. i. 12.

¹¹ Phil. iii. 10.

³ Matt. xxvi. 37.

⁶ Isa. liii. 4.

⁹ Hos. viii. 10. |

¹² 2 Sam. xv. 22. |

‘continue with’¹ Jesus; and nothing brings one closer to another than a shared sorrow.

But look forward! Because He has drunk ‘of the brook in the way, therefore shall He lift up the head.’² Already the ‘exceeding sorrowful’³ is exchanged for ‘Thou hast made Him (the King) exceeding glad;’⁴ and when the ransomed and gathered of the Lord shall return with everlasting joy,⁵ ‘their King also shall pass before them.’⁶

TENTH DAY.

Going Forth with the King.

‘The king said, Wherefore wentest thou not with me!’—
2 SAM. xix. 25.

‘**W**ITH me!’⁷ To be with our King will be our highest bliss for eternity; and surely it is the position of highest honour and gladness now. But if we would always *be* with Him, we must sometimes be ready to *go* with Him.⁸

‘The Son of God goes forth to war’ now-a-days. Do we go with Him? His cross is ‘without the gate.’ Do we go ‘forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach’?⁹ Do we really go with Him every day and all day long, following ‘the Lamb whithersoever He goeth’?¹⁰ What

¹ Luke xxii. 28.

⁴ Ps. xxi. 6.

⁷ John xvii. 24.

¹⁰ Rev. xiv. 4.

² Ps. cx. 7.

⁵ Isa. xxxv. 10.

⁸ 1 Thess. iv. 17.

³ Matt. xxvi. 38.

⁶ Mic. ii. 13.

⁹ Heb. xiii. 12, 13.

about this week—this day? Have we loyally gone with our King wherever His banner, His footsteps, go before? ¹

If the voice of our King is heard in our hearts, 'Wherefore wentest *thou* not with me?'—thou who hast eaten 'continually at the King's table,' ²—thou who hast had a place among 'the King's sons,' ³—thou unto whom the King has shown 'the kindness of God,' ⁴ we have no 'because' to offer. He would have healed the spiritual lameness that hindered, ⁵ and we might have run after Him. We are without excuse.

It is only now that we can go with Jesus into conflict, suffering, loneliness, weariness. It is only now that we can come to the help of the Lord against the mighty ⁶ in this great battlefield. Shall we shrink from opportunities which are not given to the angels? Surely, even with Him in glory, the disciples must 'remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said' ⁷ to them, 'Ye are they which have continued *with me* in my temptations,' ⁸ with a thrill of rapturous thanksgiving that such a privilege was theirs.

There will be no more suffering with Him in heaven, only reigning with Him; ⁹ no more fighting under His banner, only sitting with Him on His throne. ¹⁰ But to-day we may prove our loving and grateful allegiance to our King in the presence of His enemies, by rising up and going forth with

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

⁴ 2 Sam. ix. 3.

⁷ Acts xx. 35.

¹⁰ Rev. iii. 21.

² 2 Sam. ix. 13.

⁵ 2 Sam. xix. 26.

⁸ Luke xxii. 28.

³ 2 Sam. ix. 11.

⁶ Judges v. 23.

⁹ 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Him,—forth *from* a life of easy idleness or selfish business,—forth *into* whatever form of blessed fellowship in His work, His wars, or, it may be, of His sufferings, the King Himself may choose for us.¹ We have heard His call, ‘Come *unto* me.’ To-day He says, ‘Come *with* me.’²

True-hearted, whole-hearted! Faithful and loyal,
King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be!
Under Thy standard exalted and royal,
Strong in Thy strength we will battle for Thee.

ELEVENTH DAY.

The Smiting of the King.

‘I will smite the king only.’—2 SAM. xvii. 2.

IT may be that this futile threat of a wicked man against the king was like the saying of Caiaphas,—‘not of himself,’³ but written for our learning ‘more about Jesus.’⁴ A deadly stroke was to be aimed at ‘the king only,’ for he was ‘worth ten thousand’ of the people;⁵ if he were smitten, they should escape. Do the words of David in another place tell of his great Antitype’s desire that it should be so? ‘Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Lord my God, be on me, . . . but NOT on Thy people.’⁶ ‘For the transgression of my people was

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 1; Phil. iii. 10. ² Cant. iv. 8. ³ John xi. 51.

⁴ Rom. xv. 4.

⁵ Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 31; 2 Sam. xviii. 3.

⁶ 1 Chron. xxi. 17.

the stroke upon Him ' ¹ (*margin*); therefore not upon us, never upon us. The lightning that strikes the conductor instead of the building to which it is joined, has spent its fiery force and strikes no more.

Not the hand of an impotent foe, but the sharp sword of the omnipotent Lord of hosts, was lifted to smite His Shepherd,—our Shepherd-king,² The Great,³ The Chief,⁴ The Good⁵ (and The Beautiful, as the original implies). Think of the words, 'stricken, smitten of God,'⁶ with their unknown depths of agony, and then of Jesus, Him whom we love,⁷ fathoming those black depths of agony *alone!* 'Jesus, smitten of God!'⁸ can we even *say* the words, and not feel moved as no other grief could move us? Do not let us shrink from dwelling upon it; let us rather ask the Holy Spirit, even now, to show us a little of what this awful smiting really was,—to show us our dear Lord Jesus Christ, in this tremendous proving of His own and His Father's love,—to whisper in our hearts as we gaze upon the Crucified One, 'Behold *your* King!'⁹

'The King *only*.' For, 'by Himself He purged our sins.'¹⁰ Certainly we had nothing to do with it then! Certainly no other man or means had anything to do with it! and certainly nothing and no one now can touch that great fact, so far out of reach of human quibbling and meddling, that Jesus, 'His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree.'¹¹ Is not the fact that He 'with whom

¹ Isa. liii. 8.

⁴ 1 Pet. v. 4.

⁷ 1 Pet. i. 8.

¹⁰ Heb. i. 3.

² Zech. xiii. 7.

⁵ John x. 11.

⁸ Isa. lxiii. 3.

¹¹ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

³ Heb. xiii. 20.

⁶ Isa. liii. 4.

⁹ John ix. 14.

we have to do,'¹ *was smitten of God instead of us*, enough? What else can we want to guarantee our salvation?

'The King *only*.' For the sorrow of our King is shared with His people; but in the smiting we have no part. We can only stand 'afar off,'² bowed and hushed in shuddering love, as the echoes of the awful stripes that fell on Him float down through the listening centuries, while each throb of the healed heart replies, 'For me! for me!'³

'I have trodden the wine-press *alone*, and of the people there was none with me.'⁴

TWELFTH DAY.

The Kinship of the King.

'The king is near of kin to us.'—2 SAM. xix. 42.

NOT only in the Prophet raised up 'from the midst of thee, of thy brethren,'⁵ and in the High Priest, 'thy brother,'⁶ 'taken from among men,'⁷ do we see the kinship of Christ; but in the divinely chosen King the same wonderful link is given—'One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.'⁸

¹ Heb. iv. 13.

⁴ Isa. lxiii. 3.

⁷ Heb. v. 1.

² Matt. xxvii. 55.

⁵ Deut. xviii. 15.

⁸ Deut. xvii. 15.

³ Isa. liii. 5.

⁶ Ex. xxviii. 1.

How very close this brings us to our glorious Lord! And yet, when we have exhausted all that is contained in the very full and dear idea of 'brother,' we are led beyond, to realize One who 'sticketh *closer* than a brother,'¹ because no earthly relationship can entirely shadow forth what Jesus is. And whatever relationship we most value or most miss, will be the very one which, whether by possession or loss, will show us most of Him, and yet fall short of His 'reality.' For we always have to go beyond the type to reach the antitype.

The King is so 'near of kin,' that we may come to Him as the tribes of Israel did, and say, 'Behold, we are Thy bone and Thy flesh;'² finding many a sweet endorsement of the type in His word. So near of kin, that He is 'in all things' 'made like unto His brethren;'³ and whatever is included in the flesh and blood of which we are partakers, sin only excepted, 'He also Himself likewise took part of the same.'⁴

So 'near of kin to us,' and yet God! Therefore every good thing that we find in near human relationships, we shall find in Jesus in the immeasurable proportion of the divine to the human. Is not this worth thinking out, each for ourselves?—worth seeking to enter into?

But will He acknowledge the kinship? He hath said, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.'⁵ 'How beautiful to be Christ's little sister!' said a young disciple. For of course

¹ Prov. xviii. 24.

⁴ Heb. ii. 14.

² 2 Sam. v. 1.

⁵ Matt. xii. 50.

³ Heb. ii. 17.

He really means it. Will not this make our prayer more fervent, 'Teach me to do Thy will'?'¹

If the King is indeed near of kin to us, the royal likeness will be recognizable. Can it be said of us, 'As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king'?'² Nor let us shrink from aiming at the still higher standard, 'The King's daughter is all glorious *within*.'³

We must not dwell only on a one-sided kinship. If 'He is not ashamed to call' us 'brethren,'⁴ shall we ever be ashamed to call Him Master? If He is ready to give us all that is implied or involved in near kinship, should we fail to reciprocate with all the love and sympathy and faithfulness which the tie demands on our side?

Also, if we do realize this great privilege, let us prove our loyal love to our Brother-King by 'looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day'⁵ of His return. Let us not incur the touching reproach, 'Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the King?'⁶

Joined to Christ in mystic union,
 We Thy members, Thou our Head,
 Sealed by deep and true communion,
 Risen with Thee, who once were dead.
 Saviour, we would humbly claim
 All the power of this Thy name.

Instant sympathy to brighten
 All their weakness and their woe,
 Guiding grace their way to lighten,
 Shall Thy loving members know,

¹ Ps. cxliiii. 10.

⁴ Heb. ii. 11.

² Judges viii. 18.

⁵ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

³ Ps. xlv. 13.

⁶ 2 Sam. xix. 12.

All their sorrows Thou dost bear,
All Thy gladness they shall share.

Everlasting life Thou givest,
Everlasting love to see;
They shall live because Thou livest,
And their life is hid with Thee.
Safe Thy members shall be found,
When their glorious Head is crowned!

THIRTEENTH DAY.

The Desire of the King.

‘So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.’—Ps **xlv. 11.**

CAN this be for us? What beauty have we that the King can desire? For the more we have seen of His beauty,¹ the more we have seen of our own utter ugliness. What, then, can He see? ‘My comeliness which I had put upon thee.’² ‘The beauty of the Lord our God upon us.’³ For ‘He will beautify the meek with salvation.’⁴ And so the desire of the King is set upon us.

Perhaps we have had the dreary idea, ‘Nobody wants me!’ We never need grope in that gloom again, when the King Himself desires us! This desire is love active, love in glow, love going forth, love delighting and longing. It is the strongest

¹ Isa. vi. 5.

² Ezek. xvi. 14.

³ Ps. xc. 17.

⁴ Ps. cxlix. 4.

representation of the love of Jesus,—something far beyond the love of pity or compassion; it is taking pleasure in His people;¹ delighting in them;² willing (*i. e.* putting forth the grand force of His will) that they should be with Him where He is, with Him now, with Him always.³ It is the love that does not and will not endure separation,—the love that cannot do without its object. ‘*So* shall the King desire thy beauty.’

He gave us a glimpse of this gracious fervour when He said, ‘With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.’⁴ With Gethsemane and Calvary in fullest view, His heart’s desire was to spend those few last hours in closest intercourse with His disciples. ‘*So*’ did He desire them.

Now, if we take the King at His word, and really believe that He thus desires us, can we possibly remain cold-hearted and indifferent to Him? Can we bear the idea of disappointing His love,—*such* love,—and meeting it with any such pale, cool response as would wound any human heart, ‘I do not know whether I love you or not!’

Oh, do let us leave off morbidly looking to see exactly how much we love (which is just like trying to warm ourselves with a thermometer, and perhaps only ends in doubting whether we love at all), and look straight away at His love and his desire!⁵ Think of Jesus actually wanting you, really desiring your love, not satisfied with all the love of all the angels and saints unless you love him too,—

¹ Ps. cxlix. 4.

² Isa. lxii. 4.

³ John xvii. 24; ib. xii. 26.

⁴ Luke xxii. 15.

⁵ Heb. xii. 2.

needing that little drop to fill His cup of joy! Is there no answering throb, no responsive glow?

‘Lord, let the glow of Thy great love
Through my whole being shine!’

Perhaps it is upon the emphatic ‘*so*,’ as pointing to the context, that the intensity of the emphatic ‘*greatly*’ hinges. It is when the bride forgets her own people and her father’s house,¹—that is, when her life and love are altogether given to her Royal Bridegroom,—that He ‘shall *greatly* desire’ her beauty. When His glorious beauty has so filled our eyes, and His incomprehensible love has so filled our hearts,² that He is first, and most, and dearest of all,—when we can say not merely, ‘The desire of our souls is to Thy name,’³ but ‘There is *none* upon earth that I desire beside Thee,’⁴—when thus we are, to the very depth of our being, really and entirely our Beloved’s, then we may add, in solemn, wondering gladness, ‘And His desire is toward me.’⁵

O love surpassing thought,
So bright, so grand, so clear, so true, so glorious;
Love infinite, love tender, love unsought,
Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious!
And this great love for us in boundless store;
Christ’s everlasting love! What wouldst thou more?

¹ Ps. xlv. 10.

² Eph. iii. 19.

³ Isa. xxvi. 8.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 25.

⁵ Cant. vii. 10.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

The Sceptre of the King.

‘The king held out the golden sceptre.’—ESTH. viii. 4.

JESUS is He ‘that holdeth the sceptre,’¹—the symbol first of kingly right and authority, and next of righteousness and justice. ‘A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom,’²—‘a right sceptre.’³ And yet the golden sceptre was held out as the sign of sovereign mercy to one who, by ‘one law of his to put him to death,’ must otherwise have perished, ‘that he may live.’⁴ Thus, by the combination of direct statement and type, we are shown in this figure the beautiful, perfect meeting of the ‘mercy and truth’ of our King, the ‘righteousness and peace’ of His kingdom.⁵

Again and again the Holy Ghost repeats this grand blending of seemingly antagonistic attributes, confirming to us in many ways this strong consolation.⁶

How precious the tiny word *and* becomes, as we read, ‘He is just, *and* having salvation.’⁷ ‘A

¹ Amos i. 5.

⁴ Esth. iv. 11.

⁶ Heb. vi. 18.

² Heb. i. 8.

⁵ Ps. lxxxv. 10; ib. lxxii. 2, 3.

⁷ Zech. ix. 9.

³ Ps. xlv. 6.

merciful *and* faithful High Priest.’¹ ‘A just God, *and* a Saviour.’² We do not half value God’s *little* words.

To ‘the King’s enemies’ the sceptre is a ‘rod of iron’³ (for the word is the same in Hebrew). They cannot rejoice in the justice which they defy. To the King’s willing subjects it is indeed golden, a beautiful thing, and a most precious thing. We admire and glory in His absolute justice and righteousness; it satisfies the depths of our moral being,—it is so strong, so perfect.

His justice is, if we may reverently say so, the strong point of His atoning work. The costly means of our redemption were paid for ‘at the full price.’⁴ He fulfilled the law. There was nothing wanting in all the work which His Father gave Him to do. He finished it.⁵ And His Father was satisfied. Thus He was just towards His Father, that He might be faithful and just to forgive us our sins.⁶ It is no weak compassion, merely wrought on by misery, but strong, grand, infinite, and equal justice and mercy, balanced as they never are in human minds. For only the ways of the Lord are thus ‘equal.’⁷

And oh, how ‘sweet is Thy mercy’! and just because of the justice, how ‘sure’!⁸ Esther said, ‘If I perish, I perish.’⁹ So need not we, ‘for His mercy endureth for ever.’¹⁰ And so, every time we come into the audience chamber of our King, we

¹ Heb. ii. 17.

³ Ps. xlv. 5; ib. ii. 9.

⁵ John xvii. 4; Isa. xlii. 21.

⁷ Ezek. xviii. 25.

⁹ Esth. iv. 16.

² Isa. xlv. 21.

⁴ 1 Chron. xxi. 24; Matt. v. 17.

⁶ 1 John i. 9.

⁸ Ps. cix. 20, P. B. V; Isa. lv. 3.

¹⁰ Ps. cxxxvi. 1.

know that the golden spectre will be held out to us, first 'that we may live,'¹ and then for favour after favour. 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'² Not stand afar off and think about it, and keep our King waiting; but, like Esther, 'let us draw near,'³ and 'touch the top of the sceptre.'⁴

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Cleaving to the King.

'The men of Judah clave unto their king.'—2 SAM. xx. 2.

FOR it is not a matter of course that coming is followed by cleaving. Even when the King Himself, in His veiled royalty, walked and talked with His few faithful followers, 'many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.'⁵ There was no word of indignation or reproach, only the appeal of infinite pathos from His gracious lips, 'Will ye also go away?'⁶

Let this sound in our ears to-day, not only in moments of temptation to swerve from truest-hearted loyalty and service, but all through the business of the day; stirring our too easy-going

¹ Esth. v. 2; iv. 11; viii. 3, 4.

² Heb. iv. 16.

³ Heb. x. 22.

⁴ Esth. v. 2.

⁵ John vi. 66.

⁶ John vi. 67.

resting into active cleaving; quickening our following afar off¹ into following hard after Him; rousing us to add to the blessed assurance, 'Thine are we, David!' the bolder and nobler position, 'and on *Thy side!*'²

For this cleaving is not a mere terrified clinging for safety,—it is the bright, brave resolution, strengthened, not weakened, by the sight of waverers or renegades, to be on His side, come what may, because He *is* our King, because we love Him, because His cause and His kingdom are so very dear to us.

We cannot thus cleave, without loosening from other interests. But what matter! Let us be noble for Jesus, like the men of might who 'separated themselves unto David,' and who 'held strongly with him in his kingdom.'³ Shall we be mean enough to aim at less, when it is *our Lord Jesus* who would have us entirely 'with Him'?⁴

It is, after all, the easiest and safest course. The especial friends and 'the mighty men which belonged to David,'⁵ not only did not follow the usurping Adonijah, but they were never tempted to do so. 'But me, even me thy servant, . . . hath he not called.'⁶ There is many a temptation, very powerful and dangerous to a camp-follower, which the enemy knows it is simply useless to present to one of the body-guard. Our Father leads us '*not* into temptation,'⁷ when He leads us closer to Jesus.

The Bible never speaks of 'good resolutions,'

¹ Matt. xxvi. 58.

² Ps. lxiii. 8.

³ 1 Chron. xii. 18.

⁴ 1 Chron. xii. 8; 1 Chron. xi. 10, marg.

⁵ Cant. iv. 8.

⁶ 1 Kings i. 8.

⁷ 1 Kings i. 26.

⁸ Matt. vi. 13; 1 Sam. xxii. 23.

but again and again of 'purpose.'¹ And this is what we want, that 'with purpose of heart' we should 'cleave unto the Lord.'² Have we this distinct purpose to-day? Do we really *mean*, God helping us, to cleave to our King to-day? Do not let us dare to go forth to the certain conflicts and temptations of the day with this negative but real disloyalty of want of *purpose* in the matter. And 'if our heart condemn us,'³ let us at once turn to Him who says, 'I have *caused to cleave* unto me the whole house of Israel.'⁴ His grace shall enable us to cleave unto our King.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

The Joy of the King.

'David the king also rejoiced with great joy.'—I CHRON. xxix. 9.

DO not let us think of the joy of our King over His people as only future. While we cannot look forward too much to the day when He shall present us 'faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,'⁵ let us not overlook the present gladness which we, even we, who have so often grieved Him, may give to our King.

Elsewhere we hear of the joy of angels over

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 10.

⁴ Jer. xiii. 11.

² Acts xi. 23.

⁵ Jude 24.

³ 1 John iii. 20.

repenting sinners;¹ here we have a glimpse of the joy of the King of angels over His consecrated ones. Look at the whole passage,—it is full of typical light,—and let us take it ‘for our learning.’²

‘Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?’³ Silence is negative here: there must be a definite heart-response if we *are* willing. Are you? If so, when? The King’s question says nothing of some day, but of ‘this day.’ And the question *is* put to you: if never before, it is sounding in your ears now. Shall your service be His, ‘this day,’⁴ and henceforth? or *not*?

The result of willing consecration of ourselves and our service is always joy. ‘The people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly;’⁵ but was it not far more, far sweeter, that their king ‘also rejoiced with great joy’? How they must have felt when He said, ‘Now have I seen with joy Thy people which are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee!’⁶

For when a heart and life are willingly offered and fully surrendered to Him, He sees of ‘the travail of His soul’⁷ in it; it is a new accomplishment of the work which He came to do: and what then? He ‘is satisfied.’ If motive were wanting to yield ourselves unto Him,⁸ would it not be more than supplied by the thought that it will be satisfaction and joy to Him ‘who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood’?⁹ It seems just the one blessed opportunity given to us of being

¹ Luke xv. 10.

⁴ Josh. xxiv. 15.

⁷ Isa. liii. 11.

² Rom. xv. 4.

⁵ 1 Chron. xxix. 9.

⁸ Rom. vi. 13.

³ 1 Chron. xxix. 5.

⁶ 1 Chron. xxix. 17.

⁹ Rev. i. 5.

His true cup-bearers,¹ of bringing the wine of joy to our King; and in so doing He will make our own cups to run over.²

As our own hearts are filled with the intense joy of consecration to our Lord, a yet intenser glow will come as we remember that His joy is greater than ours, for He is anointed 'with the oil of gladness above' His 'fellows.'³

Shall not 'this day' be 'the day of the gladness of His heart'?⁴ Will you not consecrate your service to-day unto Him?⁵ For then 'He will save, He will rejoice over *thee* with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over *thee* with singing.'⁶

Take myself, and I will be,
Ever, *only*, ALL, for Thee!

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Rest on the Word of the King.

'The word of my lord the king shall now be for rest' (*margin*).—2 SAM. xiv. 17.

HERE is the whole secret of rest from the very beginning to the very end. The *word* of our King is all we have and all we need for deep, utter heart-rest, which no surface waves of this

¹ 1 Kings x. 5.

⁴ Cant. iii. 11.

² Ps. xxiii. 5.

⁵ 1 Chron. xxix. 5.

³ Ps. xlv. 7.

⁶ Zeph. iii. 17.

troublesome world can disturb.¹ What gave 'rest from thy sorrow and from thy fear'² at the very first, when we wanted salvation and peace? It was not some vague, pleasing impression, some indefinable hush that came to us (or if it was, the unreality of the rest was soon proved), but some word of our King which we saw to be worthy of all acceptance;³ we believed it,⁴ and by it Jesus gave us rest.⁵

There is no other means of rest for all the way but the very same. The moment we simply believe any word of the King, we find that it is truly 'for rest,'⁶ about the point to which it refers. And if we would but *go on taking* the King's word about every single thing, we should *always* find it, then and there, 'for rest.' Every flutter of unrest may, if we look honestly into it, be traced to not entirely and absolutely taking the King's word. His words are *enough* for rest at all times, and in all circumstances; therefore we are sinning the great sin of unbelief whenever we allow ourselves in any phase of unrest. It is not infirmity, but sin, to neglect to make use of the promises which He meant for our strong consolation and continual help.⁷ And we ought not to acquiesce in the shadows which are only around us, because we do not hear, or hearing do not heed, God's call into the sunshine.

Take the slightest and commonest instances. If we have an entire and present belief in 'My grace is sufficient for thee,'⁸ or, 'Lo, I am with

¹ Job. xxxiv. 29.

⁴ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

⁷ Heb. vi. 18.

² Isa. xiv. 3.

⁵ Heb. iv. 2, 3.

⁸ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

³ 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁶ Mark. ix. 23.

you always,'¹ should we feel nervous at anything He calls us to do for Him? Would not that word be indeed 'for rest'² in the moment of need,—'rest from the hard bondage' of service to which we feel unequal?³ Have we not sometimes found it so, and if so, why not always? I see nothing about 'sometimes' in any of His promises. If we have an entire and present belief that 'all things work together for good,'⁴ or that He leads us 'forth by the right way,'⁵ should we feel worried when some one thing seems to work wrong, and some one yard of the way is not what we think straightest?

We lean upon the word of the King for everlasting life,⁶ why not for daily life also? For it shall '*now* be for rest;' only try it to-day, '*now*,' and see if it shall not be so! When he says 'perfect peace,'⁷ He cannot mean imperfect peace. 'The people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.'⁸ Just so simply let us rest upon the words of our King, Jesus!

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

⁴ Rom. viii. 28.

⁷ Isa. xxvi. 3.

² Phil. iv. 19.

⁵ Ps. cvii. 7.

⁸ 2 Chron. xxxii. 8.

³ Isa. xiv. 3.

⁶ 1 John ii. 25.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

The Business of the King.

‘The king’s business required haste.’—I SAM. xxi. 8.

AND yet there is no other business about which average Christians take it so easy. They ‘must’¹ go their usual round, they ‘must’ write their letters, they ‘must’ pay off their visits and other social claims, they ‘must’ do all that is expected of them; and then, after this and that and the other thing is cleared off, they will do what they can of the King’s business.² They do not say ‘must’ about that, unless it is some part of His business which is undertaken at second-hand, and with more sense of responsibility to one’s clergyman than to one’s King. Is this being ‘faithful and loyal and single hearted?’³ If it has been so, oh, let it be so no more! How can ‘Jesus *Only*’⁴ be our motto, when we have not even said ‘Jesus *first*’?⁵

The King’s business *requires* haste. It is always pressing, and may never be put off. Much of it has to do with souls which may be in eternity to-morrow;⁶ and with opportunities which are gone

¹ Luke xiv. 20.

⁴ Matt. xvii. 8.

² Luke ix. 59, 61.

⁵ Matt. vi. 33.

³ Eph. vi. 5, 6.

⁶ Luke xii. 20.

for ever if not used then and there; there is no 'convenient season'¹ for it but 'to-day.'² Often it is not really done at all, because it is not done in the spirit of holy haste. We meet an unconverted friend again and again, and beat about the bush, and think to gain quiet influence and make way gradually, and call it judicious not to be in a hurry, when the real reason is that we are wanting in holy eagerness and courage to do the King's true business with that soul, and in nine such cases out of ten nothing ever comes out of it; but 'As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.'³ Have we not found it so?

Delay in the Lord's errands is next to disobedience, and generally springs out of it, or issues in it. 'God commanded me to make haste.'⁴ Let us see to it that we can say, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.'⁵

We never know what regret and punishment delay in the King's business may bring upon ourselves. Amasa 'tarried longer than the set time which he (the king) had appointed him,'⁶ and the result was death to himself. Contrast the result in Abigail's case, where, except she had hastened, her household would have perished.⁷

We find four rules for doing the King's business, in His word. We are to do it,—first, 'Heartily';⁸ second, 'Diligently';⁹ third, 'Faithfully';¹⁰ fourth, 'Speedily.'¹¹ Let us ask Him to give us the grace

¹ Acts xxiv. 25.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.

⁷ 1 Sam. xxv. 34.

¹⁰ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.

² Heb. iii. 13.

⁵ Ps. cxix. 60.

⁸ Col. iii. 23.

¹¹ Ezra vii. 21.

³ 1 Kings xx. 40.

⁶ 2 Sam. xx. 5.

⁹ Ezra vii. 23.

of energy to apply them this day to whatever He indicates as our part of His business, remembering that *He* said 'I *must* be about my Father's business.'¹

Especially in that part of it which is between Himself and ourselves alone, let us never delay. Oh, the incalculable blessings that we have already lost by putting off our own dealings with our King! Abigail first 'made haste'² to meet David for mere safety; soon afterwards, she again 'hasted and arose and went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.'³

Thus hastening, we shall rise from privilege to privilege, and 'go from strength to strength.'

What shall be our word for Jesus? Master, give it day by day;
 Ever as the need arises, teach Thy children what to say.
 Give us holy love and patience; grant us deep humility,
 That of self we may be emptied, and our hearts be full of
 Thee;
 Give us zeal and faith and fervour, make us winning, make us
 wise,
 Single-hearted, strong and fearless;—Thou hast called us, we
 will rise!
 Let the might of Thy good Spirit go with every loving word;
 And by hearts prepared and opened, be our message always
 heard!

¹ Luke ii. 49.

³ 1 Sam. xxv. 42.

² 1 Sam. xxv. 18.





NINETEENTH DAY.

The Readiness of the King's Servants.

'Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.'—2 SAM. xv. 15.

THIS is the secret of steady and unruffled gladness in 'the business of the Lord, and the service of the King,'¹ whether we are 'over the treasures of the house of God,'² or, 'for the outward business over Israel.'³

It makes all the difference! If we are really, and always, and equally ready to do *whatsoever*⁴ the King appoints, all the trials and vexations arising from any change in His appointments, great or small, simply do not exist. If He appoints me to work there, shall I lament that I am not to work here?⁵ If he appoints me to wait in-doors to-day, am I to be annoyed because I am not to work out-of-doors? If I meant to *write* His messages this morning, shall I grumble because He sends interrupting visitors, rich or poor, to whom I am to *speak* them, or 'show kindness'⁶ for His sake, or

¹ 1 Chron. xxvi. 30.

⁴ John ii. 5.

² 1 Chron. xxvi. 20.

⁵ Josh. i. 16.

³ 1 Chron. xxvi. 29.

⁶ 2 Sam. ix. 3.

at least obey His command, 'Be courteous' ?¹ If all my 'members'² are really at His disposal, why should I be put out if to-day's appointment is some simple work for my hands or errands for my feet, instead of some seemingly more important doing of head or tongue?

Does it seem a merely ideal life? Try it! begin at once; before you venture away from this quiet moment, ask your King to take you 'wholly' into His service, and place all the hours of this day quite simply at His disposal, and ask Him to make and keep you *ready* to do just exactly what He appoints. Never mind about to-morrow;³ one day at a time is enough. Try it to-day, and see if it is not a day of strange, almost *curious* peace, so sweet that you will be only too thankful, when to-morrow comes, to ask Him to take it also,—till it will become a blessed habit to hold yourself simply and 'wholly at Thy commandment' 'for *any* manner of service.'⁴

Then will come, too, an indescribable and unexpected sense of freedom, and a total relief from the self-imposed bondage of 'having to get through' what we think lies before us. For, 'of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen.'⁵

Then, too, by thus being ready, moment by moment, for whatsoever He shall appoint, we realize very much more that we are not left alone, but that we are dwelling 'with the King for His work.'⁶ Thus the very fact of an otherwise vexa-

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 8.

² Rom. vi. 13.

³ Jas. iv. 14.

⁴ 1 Chron. xxviii. 21.

⁵ 1 Kings ix. 22.

⁶ 1 Chron. iv. 23.

tious interruption is transmuted into a precious proof of the nearness of the King.¹ His interference implies His interest and His presence.

The 'whatsoever' is not necessarily active work. It may be waiting (whether half an hour or half a lifetime), learning, suffering, sitting still. But, dear fellow-servants of 'my Lord the King,' shall we be less ready for these, if any of them are His appointments for to-day? 'Whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.'²

'Ready' implies something of preparation,—not being taken by surprise. So let us ask Him to prepare us for all that He is preparing for us. And may 'the hand of God give' us 'one heart to do the commandment of the King!'³

'Lord, I have given my life to Thee,
And every day and hour is Thine;
What Thou appointest let them be;
Thy will is better, Lord, than mine.'

A. L. WARING.

¹ Ps. cxxxix. 5.

² 2 Sam. iii. 36.

³ 2 Chron. xxx. 12.

TWENTIETH DAY.

The Friendship of the King.

‘He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.’—PROV. xxii. 11.

‘**W**HO can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure’?¹ Who must not despair of the friendship of the King if this were the condition?² But His wonderful condescension in promising His friendship bends yet lower in its tenderly devised condition. Not to the absolutely pure in heart,³ but to the perhaps very sorrowfully longing lover of that pureness, come the gracious words, ‘The King shall be his Friend.’

Yet there must be some proof of this love; and it is found in ‘the grace of His lips.’ ‘For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’⁴ Here, again, we stop and question our claim; for our speech has not always been ‘with grace;’⁵ and the memory of many a graceless and idle word rises to bar it.⁶ How then shall the King be our Friend? Another word comes to our help: ‘Grace

¹ Prov. xx. 9.

⁴ Matt. xii. 34.

² Hab. i. 13.

⁵ Col. iv. 6.

³ Matt. v. 8.

⁶ Matt. xii. 36.

is poured into *thy* lips,'¹—grace that overflowed in gracious words,² such as never man spake,³ perfectly holy and beautiful; and we look up to our King and plead that He has Himself fulfilled the condition in which we have failed,—that this is part of the righteousness which He wrought for us, and which is really unto us and upon us, because we believe in Him;⁴ and so, for the grace of His own lips, the King shall be our Friend.

Who has not longed for an ideal and yet a real friend,—one who should exactly understand us,⁵ to whom we could tell everything,⁶ and in whom we could altogether confide,—one who should be very wise and very true,⁷—one of whose love and unflinching interest we could be certain?⁸ There are other points for which we could not hope,—that this friend should be very far above us, and yet the very nearest and dearest, always with us,⁹ always thinking of us, always doing kind and wonderful things for us;¹⁰ undertaking and managing everything;¹¹ forgetting nothing, failing in nothing;¹² quite certain never to change and never to die,¹³—so that this one grand friendship should fill our lives, and that we really never need trouble about anything for ourselves any more at all.¹⁴

Such is our Royal Friend, and more; for no human possibilities of friendship can illustrate what He is to those to whom He says, 'Ye are my friends.'¹⁵ We, even we, may look up to our

¹ Ps. xlv. 2.

⁴ Rom. iii. 22.

⁷ Rev. xix. 11.

¹⁰ Ps. xl. 17.

¹³ Mal. iii. 6.

² Luke iv. 22.

⁵ Ps. cxxxix. 2.

⁸ John xiii. 1.

¹¹ Isa. xxxviii. 14.

¹⁴ 1 Pet. v. 7.

³ John vii. 46.

⁶ Mark vi. 30.

⁹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

¹² Zeph. iii. 5.

¹⁵ John xv. 14.

glorious King, our Lord and our God, and say, 'This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!'¹ And then we, even we, may claim the privilege of being 'the King's companion'² and the 'King's friend.'³

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

The Light of the King's Countenance.

'In the light of the king's countenance is life.'—PROV. xvi. 15.

BUT first fell the solemn words, 'Thou hast set our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.'⁴ That was the first we knew of its brightness; and to some its revelation has been so terrible, that they can even understand how the Lord 'shall destroy' the wicked 'with the brightness of His coming.'⁵ Yet, though we feel that 'His eyes were as a flame of fire,'⁶ we found also that our 'King that sitteth in the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His eyes;'⁷ and that it was when we stood in that light, that we found the power of the precious blood of Jesus, the Anointed One, to cleanse us from all sin.⁸

¹ Cant. v. 16.

⁴ Ps. xc. 8.

⁷ Prov. xx. 8.

² 1 Chron. xxvii. 33.

⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 8.

⁸ 1 John i. 7.

³ 1 Kings iv. 5.

⁶ Rev. i. 14.

This gives new value to the promise, 'They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance;'¹ for it is when we walk in the light that we may claim and do realize the fulness of its power and preciousness,—not for fitful and occasional cleansing, but for a glorious, perpetual, present cleansing from all sin. Do not let us translate it into another tense for ourselves, and read,² 'did cleanse last time we knelt and asked for it,' but keep to the tense which the Holy Ghost has written, and meet the foe-flung darts of doubt³ with faith's great answer, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth (*i. e. goes on cleansing*) us from all sin.'

Thus the light of His countenance shall save us. Look at Ps. xlv. 3, where we see it as the means of past salvation,⁴ and then at Ps. xlii. 5, where the Psalmist anticipates praise for its future help;⁵ while the two are beautifully linked by the marginal reading of the latter, which makes it present salvation: 'Thy presence *is* salvation.'

Then follows peace. The waves are stilled, and the storm-clouds flee away noiselessly and swiftly and surely, when He lifts up the light of His countenance upon us, and gives us peace.⁶ For this uplifting is the shining forth of His favour,⁷—the smile instead of the frown; and as we walk in the light of it, the peace will grow into joy, and we shall be even here and now 'exceeding glad with Thy countenance,'⁸ while every step will bring us nearer to the resurrection joy of Christ Himself,

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 15.

⁴ Ps. xlv. 3.

⁷ 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

² Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

⁵ Ps. xlii. 5.

⁸ Ps. xxi. 6.

³ Eph. vi. 16.

⁶ Num. vi. 26.

saying with Him, 'Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance.'¹

So we shall find day by day, that in the light of the King's countenance is cleansing, salvation, peace, joy;—and do not these make up life, the new life, the glad life of the children of the King?

'Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us'² this day, and in it let us have life, yea, 'Life more abundantly.'³

'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'⁴

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The Tenderness of the King.

'And the king commanded, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.'—2 SAM. xviii. 5.

EVEN with Absalom! Even with the heartless, deliberate traitor and rebel.⁵ We must recollect clearly what he was, to appreciate the exquisite tenderness of David in such a command to his rough war captains in such untender times. For the sake of his people and his kingdom, he must send them forth against him, but the deep love gushes out in the bidding, 'Deal gently for my sake.'

It was no new impulse. When Amnon was mur-

¹ Acts ii. 28.

⁴ John viii. 12.

² Ps. iv. 6.

⁵ 2 Sam. xv. 2-11.

³ John x. 10.

dered, the king 'wept very sore,' and 'mourned for his son every day,'¹ and yet, when the fratricide had fled, 'the soul of King David longed to go forth unto him,'² and 'the king's heart was toward Absalom.'³ And when God's own vengeance fell upon the wicked son, David's lamentation over him is perhaps unparalleled in its intensity of pathos among the records of human tenderness.⁴

Turn to the Antitype, and see the divine tenderness of our King. Again and again it gleams out, whether He himself wept, or whether He said, 'Weep not,'⁵—whether in the tender look, the tender word, or the tender touch of gentlest mercy. The Gospels are full of His tenderness. There is not room here even for the bare mention of the instances of it; but will you not give a little time to searching quietly for them, so that, reading them under the teaching of the Holy Spirit,⁶ you may get a concentrated view of the wonderful tenderness of Jesus, and yield your heart to be moved by it, and your spirit to be so penetrated by it, that you may share it and reflect it? Remember that in such a search we learn not only what He did and said, nor only what He was, but what He *is*; and in all His recorded tenderness we are looking into the *present* heart of Jesus, and seeing what we shall find for ourselves as we have need. For He is 'this same Jesus'⁷ to-day.

Then let us glance at the volume of our own experience. Who that has had any dealings with

¹ 2 Sam. xiii. 36, 37.

⁴ 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

⁶ John xiv. 26.

² 2 Sam. xiii. 39.

⁵ Luke xix. 41; ib. vii. 13; ib. xxii. 61.

⁷ Acts i. 11.

³ 2 Sam. xiv. 1.

Christ at all, but must bear witness that He has indeed dealt gently with us. Has not even suffering been sweet when it showed us more of this?¹ What if He had ever 'dealt with us after our sins'!² But He never did, and never will.³ He hath dealt gently and will deal gently with us, for His own sake, and according to His own heart, from the first drawings of His loving-kindness, on throughout the measureless developments of His everlasting love.⁴ Not till we are in heaven shall we know the full meaning of 'Thy *gentleness* hath made me great.'⁵

May we not recognize a command in this, as well as a responsibility to follow the example of the 'gentleness of Christ'?⁶ Perhaps next time we are tempted to be a little harsh or hasty with an erring or offending one, the whisper will come, 'Deal gently, for My sake!'

Return!

O erring, yet beloved!

I wait to bind thy bleeding feet, for keen
And rankling are the thorns where thou hast been,
I wait to give thee pardon, love, and rest.

(Is not my joy to see thee safe and blest?)

Return! I wait to hear once more thy voice,
To welcome thee anew, and bid thy heart rejoice!

Return!

O chosen of my love!

Fear not to meet thy beckoning Saviour's view;

Long ere I called thee by thy name, I knew

That very treacherously thou wouldst deal;

Now I have seen thy ways,—yet I will heal.

Return! Wilt thou yet linger far from Me?

My wrath is turned away, I have redeemed thee!

¹ Lam. iii. 32.

⁴ Jer. xxxi. 3.

² Ps. ciii. 10.

⁵ Ps. xviii. 35.

³ Job xi. 6.

⁶ 2 Cor. x. 1.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

The Token of the King's Grace.

'To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.'—2 SAM. xiv. 22.

AN answered prayer makes us glad for its own sake. But there is grace behind the gift which is better and more gladdening than the gift itself. For which is most valued, the 'engaged ring,' or the favour of which it is the token? Setting aside judicial answers to unspiritual prayers,¹ which an honest conscience will have no difficulty in distinguishing, the servants of the King may take it that His answers to their requests are proofs and tokens of His grace and favour,²—of His real, and present, and personal love to themselves individually.

When they are receiving few or none, they should search for the cause, lest it should be some hidden or unrecognized sin.³ For 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;' ⁴ so *never* let us go on comfortably and easily when He is silent to us. And instead of envying others who get

¹ Ps. cvi. 15; Hos. xiii. 11, etc.

² 1 John iii. 22.

³ Job x. 2.

⁴ 1 Sam. xxviii. 6; Ps. xix. 12; ib. lxvi. 18.

‘such wonderful answers,’ ‘let us search and try our ways.’¹

Personal acceptance comes first. We must be ‘accepted in the Beloved’² before we can look to be answered through the Beloved. Is there a doubt about this, and a sigh over the words? There need not be; for now, at this moment, the old promise stands with its unchangeable welcome to the weary: ‘Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.’³ Then, if you come, now, at this moment, on the strength of His word, you *cannot* be rejected; and if not rejected, there is nothing but one blessed alternative—‘accepted!’

Then come the answers! As surely as the prayers go up from the accepted one, so surely will the blessings come down. When Esther had touched the golden sceptre, ‘*then* said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.’⁴ But there is no ‘half’ in our King’s promise. He says, ‘All things’ and ‘whatsoever.’⁵ And He *does* ‘do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,’ and more than fulfils our little scanty requests.⁶

And *then*, by every fresh fulfilment we should receive ever new assurance of our acceptance,—*then* (shall it not be ‘to-day’?), as we give thanks for each gracious answer, we may look up confidently and joyfully, and say, ‘Thy servant *knoweth* that I have found grace in thy sight.’ For He says,

¹ Lam. iii. 40.

³ John vi. 37; Heb. vii. 25.

⁶ Matt. xxi. 22; John xiv. 13.

² Eph. i. 6.

⁴ Esth. v. 3.

⁶ Eph. iii. 20; 1 Kings x. 13.

‘See, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.’¹

Accepted, Perfect, and Complete,²
 For God’s inheritance made meet!³
 How true, how glorious, and how sweet!⁴

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

The Omniscience of the King.

‘There is no matter hid from the king.’—2 SAM. xviii. 13.

THE very attributes which are full of terror to ‘the King’s enemies,’⁵ are full of comfort to the King’s friends. Thus His omniscience is like the pillar, which was ‘a cloud and darkness’ to the Egyptians, but ‘gave light by night’ to the Israelites.⁶

The king’s own General complained of a man who did not act precisely as he himself would have acted. In his reply he uses these words, ‘There is no matter hid from the king.’ The appeal was final, and Joab had no more to say. When others say, like Joab, ‘“*Why* didst thou not” do so and so?’ and we know or find that full reasons cannot be given or cannot be understood, what rest it is to fall back upon the certainty that our King knows

¹ 1 Sam. xxv. 35.

⁴ Col. ii. 10.

² Eph. i. 6.

⁵ Ps. xlv. 5.

³ Col. i. 28.

⁶ Ex. xiv. 20.

all about it! When we are wearied out with trying to make people understand, how restful it is that no explanations are wanted when we come to speak to Him!¹ 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do;'² and the more we have to do with Him, the more glad and thankful we shall be that there is 'not anything' hid from the King.³

In perplexities,—when we cannot understand what is going on around us—cannot tell whither events are tending—cannot tell what to do, because we cannot see into or through the matter before us,—let us be calmed and steadied and made patient by the thought that what is hidden from us is not hidden from Him. If He chooses to guide us blindfold, let Him do it!⁴ It will not make the least difference to the reality and rightness of the guidance.⁵

In mysteries,—when we see no clue—when we cannot at all understand God's partial revelation—when we cannot lift the veil that hangs before His secret counsel—when we cannot pierce the holy darkness that enshrouds His ways, or tread the great deep of His judgments where His footsteps are not known,⁶—is it not enough that even these matters are not hid from our King? 'My father will do nothing, either great or small, but he will show it me.'⁷ 'For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth.'⁸

Our King could so easily reveal everything to us,

¹ Job xxiii. 10.

² Heb. iv. 13.

³ 1 Kings x. 3.

⁴ Isa. xlii. 16.

⁵ Ps. cvii. 7.

⁶ Ps. xcvi. 2; ib. xxxvi. 6; ib. lxxvii. 19.

⁷ 1 Sam. xx. 2.

⁸ John v. 20.

and make everything so clear! It would be nothing to Him to tell us all our questions. When he does not, cannot we trust Him, and just be satisfied that He knows, and would tell us if it were best? He has 'many things to say' unto us, but He waits till we can bear them.¹

May we be glad that even our sins are 'not hid' from Him? Yes, surely, for He who knows all can and will cleanse all. He has searched us and known us,² as we should shrink from knowing ourselves, and *yet* He has pardoned, and *yet* He loves!³

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

The Power of the King's Word.

'Where the word of a king is, there is power.'—ECCL. viii. 4.

THEN the question is, *Where* is it? 'Let the word of Christ dwell *in you* richly,'⁴ and 'there,' even 'in you,' will be power.

The Crowned One, who is now 'upholding all things by the word of His power,'⁵ hath said, 'I have given them Thy word.'⁶ And those who have received this great gift, 'not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God,' know that

¹ John xvi. 12.

⁴ Col. iii. 16.

² Ps. cxxxix. 1.

⁵ Heb. ii. 9; ib. i. 3.

³ Isa. xlvi. 8.

⁶ John xvii. 14.

‘there is power’ with it, because it ‘effectually worketh also’ in them.¹

They know its life-giving power, for they can say, ‘Thy word hath quickened me;’² and its life-sustaining power, for they live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’³ They can say, ‘Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee;’⁴ for in proportion as the word of the King is present in the heart, ‘there is power’⁵ against sin. Then let us use this means of absolute power more, and more life and more holiness will be ours.

‘His word was with power’⁶ in Capernaum of old, and it will be with the same power in any place now-a-days. His word cannot fail; it ‘shall not return void;’ it ‘*shall prosper.*’⁷ Therefore, when our ‘words fall to the ground,’⁸ it only proves that they were not His words. So what we want is not merely that His power may accompany our word, but that we may not speak our own at all, but simply and only the very ‘word of the King.’ Then there will be power in and with it. Bows drawn at a venture⁹ hit in a way that astonishes ourselves, when God puts His own arrows on the string.¹⁰

There is great comfort and help in taking this literally. Why ask a little when we may ask much? The very next time we want to speak or write ‘a word for Jesus’ (and of course that ought to be today),¹¹ let us ask Him to give us not merely a general

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 13.

⁴ Ps. cxix. 11.

⁷ Isa. lv. 11.

¹⁰ Ps. xlv. 5.

² Ps. cxix. 50.

⁵ John vi. 63.

⁸ 1 Sam. iii. 19.

¹¹ Heb. iii. 13.

³ Matt. iv. 4.

⁶ Luke iv. 32.

⁹ 1 Kings xxii. 34.

idea what to say, but to give us literally every single word, and 'they shall be withal fitted in thy lips.'¹

For He will not say, 'Thou hast asked a hard thing,'² though it is far more than asking for the mantle of any prophet. He says, 'Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth.'³ This was not for Jeremiah alone, for soon after we read, 'He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully'⁴ (for we must not overlook our responsibility in the matter); and then follows the grand declaration of its power, even when spoken by feeble human lips: 'Is not My word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'⁵ 'Behold, I will make My words in thy mouth fire.'⁶

If we are not even 'sufficient of ourselves to *think* anything as of ourselves,'⁷ how much less to *speak* anything! 'Have I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.'⁸ We would rather have it so, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'⁹ Our ascended King has said, 'All power is given unto Me. Go ye *therefore*.'¹⁰ That is enough for me; and 'I trust in Thy word.'¹¹

Resting on the faithfulness of Christ our Lord,
Resting on the fulness of His own sure word,
Resting on His power, on His love untold,
Resting on His covenant secured of old.

¹ Prov. xxii. 18.

⁴ Jer. xxiii. 28.

⁷ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

¹⁰ Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

² 2 Kings ii. 10.

⁵ Jer. xxiii. 29.

⁸ Num. xxii. 38.

¹¹ Ps. cxix. 42.

³ Jer. i. 9.

⁶ Jer. v. 14.

⁹ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

The Name of the King.

‘A King shall reign. And this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’
—JER. xxiii. 5, 6.

WE cannot do without this most wonderful name. It can never be an old story to us. It is always a ‘new name’¹ in freshness and beauty and power. It is our daily need and our daily joy. For strength it is indeed ‘a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.’² For sweetness it is ‘as ointment poured forth.’³ In it we see at once the highest height and the deepest depth; Jehovah, God of God, Light of Light, and our need of a righteousness which is not our own at all, because we have none. We stand as upon an Alpine slope, face to face with the highest, grandest, purest summit above, and the darkest, deepest valley below, seeing more of the height because of the depth, and more of the depth because of the height.

Jesus our King ‘hath by inheritance obtained a

¹ Rev. iii. 12.

² Prov. xviii. 10.

³ Cant. i. 3.

more excellent name ¹ than angels, for His Father has given Him his own name,—‘He shall be called Jehovah.’² But this alone would be too great, too far off for us; it might find echoes among the harpings of sinless angels, but not among the sighings of sinful souls. And so the name was completed for us, by the very word that expresses our truest, deepest, widest, most perpetual need, and the Holy Ghost revealed the Son of God to us as ‘Jehovah our Righteousness.’

Do not let us be content with theoretically understanding and correctly holding the doctrine of justification by faith. Turn from the words to the reality, from the theory to the Person, and as a little, glad, wondering child, look at the simple, wonderful truth. That ‘the Righteousness of God’ (how magnificent!) is ‘unto all and upon all them that believe;’³ therefore, at this very moment, unto and upon you and me, instead of our own filthy rags,⁴ so that we stand clothed and beautiful⁵ in the very sight of God, *now*; and Jesus can say, ‘Thou art all fair, my love,’⁶ *now*! That it is not any finite righteousness, which might not quite cover the whole,—might not be quite enough to satisfy God’s all-searching eye; not *a* righteousness, but *The* Righteousness of God;⁷ and this no abstract attribute, but a Person, real, living, loving,—covering us with His own glorious apparel,⁸ representing us before His Father, Christ Jesus Himself ‘made

¹ Heb. i. 4.

⁴ Isa. lxiv. 6.

⁷ Phil. iii. 9.

² Jer. xxiii. 6, marg.

⁵ Zech. iii. 4, 5.

⁸ Isa. lxiii. 1.

³ Rom. iii. 22.

⁶ Cant. iv. 7.

unto us Righteousness !¹ This to-day and this for ever, for 'His name shall endure for ever.'²

It is in His kingly capacity that this glorious name is given to Him. For only by 'submitting ourselves to the Righteousness of God,'³ can we have 'the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.'⁴ There can be no compromise,—it must be His only or ours only. He must be our King, or He will not be our Righteousness.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Working with the King.

'There they dwelt with the king for his work.'—I CHRON. iv. 23.

'THERE!'—Not in any likely place at all, not in the palace, not in 'the city of the great king,'⁵ but in about the last place one would have expected, 'among plants and hedges.'⁶ It does not even seem clear why they were 'there' at all, for they were potters, not gardeners,—thus giving us the combination of simple labour of the hands, carried on in out-of-the-way places; and yet they were dwellers with the king, and workers with the king.

¹ I Cor. i. 30.

⁴ Rom. iv. 6.

² Ps. lxxii. 17.

⁵ Ps. xlvi. 2.

³ Rom. x. 3.

⁶ I Chron. iv. 23.

The lesson seems twofold,—First, that anywhere and everywhere we too may dwell ‘with the King for His work.’ We may be in a very unlikely or unfavourable place for this,—it may be in a literal country life, with little enough to be seen of the ‘goings’¹ of the King around us; it may be among hedges of all sorts, hindrances in all directions; it may be, furthermore, with our hands full of all manner of pottery for our daily task. No matter! The King who placed us ‘there’ will come and dwell there with us; the hedges are all right, or He would soon do away with them,² and it does not follow that what seems to hinder our way³ may not be for its very protection; and as for the pottery, why, that is just exactly what He has seen fit to put into our hands, and therefore it is, for the present, ‘His work.’⁴

Secondly, that the dwelling and the working must go together. If we are indeed dwelling with the King, we shall be working for Him, too, ‘as we have opportunity.’⁵ The working will be as the dwelling,—a settled, regular thing, whatever form it may take at His appointment. Nor will His work ever be done when we are not dwelling with Him. It will be our own work then, not His, and it will not ‘abide.’⁶ We shall come under the condemnation of the vine which was pronounced ‘empty,’ because ‘he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.’⁷

We are to dwell with the King ‘for His work;’ but He will see to it that it shall be for a great deal

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 24.

⁴ Mark xiii. 34.

⁷ Hos. x. 1.

² Job iii. 23.

⁵ Gal. vi. 10.

³ Matt. xxi. 33.

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 14.

besides,—for a great continual reward according to His own heart and out of His royal bounty,—for peace, for power, for love, for gladness, for likeness to Himself.

‘Labourers together with God!’¹ ‘workers together with him!’² ‘the Lord working with’ us!³ admitted into divine fellowship of work!—will not this thought ennoble everything He gives us to do to-day, even if it is ‘among plants and hedges’! Even the pottery will be grand!

‘Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, FOR I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.’⁴

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

The Recompense of the King.

‘Why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?’—2 SAM. xix. 36.

BARZILLAI ‘had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim,’⁵ exiled from his royal city. When the day of triumphant return came, David said to him, ‘Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.’⁶ This was the ‘reward.’

But what a privilege and delight it must have

¹ Cor. iii. 9.

⁴ Hag. ii. 4.

² 2 Cor. vi. 1.

⁵ 2 Sam. xix, 32.

³ Mark xvi. 20.

⁶ 2 Sam. xix. 33.

been to the loyal old man ! And to come nearer, what a continual joy it must have been to the women who 'ministered'¹ to the exiled King of heaven 'of their substance.' How *very* much one would have liked a share in that ministry !

Is there *any* loving wish which our King does not meet ? Was it not most thoughtful of Him to appoint His continual representatives, so that we might always and every one of us have the opportunity of ministering *to Him* ! These opportunities are wider than we sometimes think ; some limit His 'gracious Inasmuch'² to services for His sake to the poor only. Yet the 'strangers'³ whom He bids us love, may be rich in all but the friendliness and kindness which we may show them ; and the 'sick' may be those among our own dear ones who need our ministry. Why should we fancy it is only those who are *not* near and dear to us, to whom we may minister 'as unto Him' ?⁴

But oh, what little services are our cups of cold water !⁵ and how utterly ashamed we feel of ever having thought any of them wearying or irksome, when we look at 'the recompense of the reward,'⁶— '*such* a reward !' Is there one of us whose heart has not thrilled at the mere imagining of what it will be to hear 'the King say, Come, ye blessed !'⁷ Then what will it be to enter into the fulness of the reward, to 'come over with'⁸ Him, and dwell with Him always in 'the holy Jerusalem,' and 'go no more out.'⁹

¹ Luke viii. 3.

⁴ Eph. vi. 7.

⁷ Matt. xxv. 34.

² Matt. xxv. 40.

⁵ Mark ix. 41.

⁸ 2 Sam. xix. 33.

³ Deut. x. 19.

⁶ Heb. xi. 26.

⁹ Rev. xxi. 10 ; ib. iii. 12.

‘ *Why* should the king recompense it me with such a reward ? ’ ‘ *Why* should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee ? ’¹ For there is such a tremendous disproportion between the work and the reward, though such a glorious proportion between His love and His reward.

And yet there is a beautiful fitness in it. The banquet of everlasting joy for those who gave Him meat ;² the river of His pleasures for those who gave Him drink ;³ the mansions in the Father’s home for those who took the stranger in ;⁴ the white robes for those who clothed the naked ;⁵ the tree of life and ‘ no more pain ’ for those who visited the sick ;⁶ the ‘ glorious liberty ’⁷ for those who came unto the prisoner ; the crown of all, the repeatedly promised ‘ with Me ’⁸ for those who were content to be with His sorrowful or suffering ones for His sake. *Why* all this ? I suppose we shall keep on asking that for ever !

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

The Salvation of the King.

‘ The Lord is our King ; He will save us. ’—ISA. xxxiii. 22.

THE thought of salvation is constantly connected with that of kingship. Type, illustration,

¹ 1 Sam. xxvii. 5.

⁴ John xiv. 2.

⁷ Rom. viii. 21.

² Matt. xxv. 35, etc.

⁵ Rev. vii. 13.

⁸ John xvii. 24.

³ Ps. xxxvi. 8.

⁶ Rev. xxii. 2 ; ib. xxi. 4.

and prophecy combine them. 'Thou shalt anoint him . . . that he may save my people.'¹ 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people.'² 'The king saved us.' 'A King shall reign; in His days Judah shall be saved.'³ 'Thy King cometh, . . . having salvation.'⁴

Because Jesus is our Saviour, He has the right to be our King; but again, because He is King, He is qualified to be our Saviour; and we never know Him fully as Saviour till we have fully received Him as King. His kingship gives the strength to His priesthood. It is as the Royal Priest of the order of Melchisedec that He is 'able to save.'⁵ Thus He is 'a Saviour, and a Great One,' 'mighty to save.'⁶

Our King has not only 'wrought,' and 'brought,' and 'made known His salvation,'⁷ but He Himself *is* our salvation.⁸ The very names seem used interchangeably. Isaiah says, 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy *Salvation* cometh;'⁹ Zechariah bids her rejoice, for 'Behold, thy *King* cometh.'¹⁰ Again, Isaiah says, 'Mine eyes have seen the *King*;'¹¹ and Simeon echoes, 'Mine eyes have seen thy *Salvation*,'¹² as he looks upon the infant Jesus, the Light to lighten the Gentiles; reminding us again of David's words, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation.'¹³

It is because we need salvation, because we are

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 16.

³ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

⁵ Heb. vii. 1, 17; ib. vii. 25.

⁷ Isa. lxiii. 5.

¹⁰ Zech. ix. 9.

¹³ Ps. xxvii. 1.

⁸ Ps. xcvi. 2.

¹¹ Isa. vi. 5.

² 2 Sam. iii. 18; ib. xix. 9.

⁴ Zech. ix. 9.

⁶ Isa. xix. 20; ib. lxiii. 1.

⁹ Isa. lxii. 11.

¹² Luke ii. 30.

surrounded by enemies and dangers, and have no power to help ourselves, and have no other help or hope, that He says, 'I will be thy King; where is any other that may save thee?'¹ There is no other. 'He saw that there was no man,'² and He says, 'There is no Saviour beside me.'³

What is our response? David begins a Psalm by saying, 'Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation;'⁴ but he quickly raises the key, and sings, 'He *only* is my salvation.'⁵ Perhaps we have long been quite clear that He *only* is our salvation from 'everlasting destruction';⁶ but are we equally clear that He *only* is (not will be, but *is*) our present salvation from everything from which we want to be saved?—from every danger, from every snare,⁷ from every temptation,⁸ from 'the hand of *all* our enemies,'⁹ from our sins?¹⁰ In death we would cling to the words, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'¹¹ Why not in life equally cling to, and equally make real use of, the promise, 'He shall save His people from their sins,'¹²—not merely from sin in general, but definitely 'from *their* sins,' personal and plural sins? 'Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?'¹³

His salvation is indeed finished, His work is perfect;¹⁴ and yet our King is still 'working salvation in the midst of the earth,'¹⁵ applying the reality of His salvation (if we will only believe His power) to

¹ Hos. xiii. 10.

⁴ Ps. lxii. 1.

⁷ Ps. xci. 3.

¹⁰ Tit. ii. 14.

¹³ Isa. l. 2.

² Isa. lix. 16.

⁵ Ps. lxii. 2.

⁸ 2 Pet. ii. 9.

¹¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.

¹⁴ Deut. xxxii. 4.

³ Hos. xiii. 4.

⁶ 2 Thess. i. 9.

⁹ 2 Sam. iii. 18.

¹² Matt. i. 21.

¹⁵ Ps. lxxiv. 12.

the daily details of our pilgrimage and our warfare. We need it not only at last, but now—every hour, every minute. And the King ‘shall deliver the needy when he crieth,’¹ ‘and shall save the souls of the needy.’²

May He say to your soul this day, ‘I am *thy* salvation.’³

Look away to Jesus,
 Look away from all!
 Then we need not stumble,
 Then we shall not fall.
 From each snare that lureth,
 Foe or phantom grim,
 Safety this ensureth,
 Look away to Him!



THIRTIETH DAY.



Good Tidings to the King's Household.

‘We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us; now, therefore, come, that we may go and tell the king's household.’—2 KINGS vii. 9.

JUST the last persons who would seem to need ‘good tidings,’⁴ and the last, too, who would seem likely to have them to convey! But oh, how

¹ Ps. lxxii. 12.

³ Ps. xxxv. 3.

² Ps. lxxii. 13.

⁴ 2 Kings vii. 3.

true the figure is ! how many among the King's own household need the good tidings which these lepers brought ! For they are starving so near to plenty,¹ and poor within reach of treasure,² and thinking themselves besieged when the Lord has dispersed the foe for them. Is it not often the spiritual leper, the conscious outcast, the famine-stricken, possessionless soul, who takes the boldest step into the fullest salvation, and finds deliverance and abundance and riches beyond what the more favoured and older inmate of the King's household knows anything about ?

It may be one of the enemy's devices,³ that we sometimes hold back good tidings, just because we shrink from telling them to the King's household. How many who do not hesitate to speak of Jesus to little children or poor people, or even to persons who openly say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us,'⁴ never say one word to their fellow-subjects about the blessed discoveries that the Holy Spirit has made to them of the fulness of His salvation,⁵ and the reality of His power, and the treasures of His word, and the satisfaction of His love, and the far-reaching fulfilments of His promises, and the real, actual deliverance, and freedom, and victory, which He gives,⁶ and the strength and the healing that flow through faith in His name !⁷

Satan even perverts humility into a hinderance in this, and persuades us that of course our friend knows as much or more of this than we do, and

¹ Ps. lxxxii. 10-16.

⁴ Luke xix. 14.

⁷ Acts iii. 16.

² 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

⁵ John xvi. 14, 15.

³ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

⁶ Rom. viii. 37.

that telling of what we have found in Jesus, may seem like or lead to talking about ourselves. Yet perhaps all the while that friend is hungering and feeling besieged, while we are withholding good tidings of plenty and deliverance.¹ Verily, 'we do not well.'² Have there not been days when the brightest of us would have been most thankful for the simplest word about Jesus, from the humblest Christian?—days when even 'the mention of His name' might have been food and freedom!

It does not in the least follow that members of Christian families need no such 'good tidings' because of their favoured position. They may need it all the more, because no one thinks it necessary to try and help *them*. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto *all* men, specially unto them who are of the household of faith.'³

And when? The constantly recurring word meets us here again, '*Now!*'

¹ Prov. xi. 24-26.

² James iv. 17.

³ Gal. vi. 10.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

The Prosperity of the King.

‘A King shall reign and prosper.’—JER. xxiii. 5.

IF we are really interested, heart and soul, in a person, how delighted we are to have positive assurance of his prosperity, and how extremely interested and pleased we feel at hearing anything about it! Is not this a test of our love to our King? Are we both interested and happy in the short, grand, positive words which are given us about His certain prosperity? If so, the pulse of our gladness is beating through to the very heart of God, for ‘Jehovah hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.’¹

His prosperity is both absolute and increasing. Even now, ‘Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame that I heard.’² If we could get one glimpse of our King in his present glory and joy, how we who love Him would rejoice for Him and with Him!³ And if we could get one great view of the wide but hidden prosperity of His kingdom *at this moment*, where would be our discouragement and faint-

¹ Ps. xxxv. 27.

² 1 Kings x. 7.

³ 1 Pet. iii. 22.

heartedness! Suppose we could see how His work is going on in every soul that he has redeemed out of every kindred and tongue all over the world,¹ with the same distinctness with which we see it in the last trophy of His grace for which we have been praising Him, would it not be a revelation of entirely overwhelming joy? Many Christians now-a-days are foregoing an immense amount of cheer, because they do not take the trouble to inquire, or read, or go where they can hear about the present prosperity of His kingdom. Those who do not care much, can hardly be loving much or helping much.

But we *do* care about it; and so how jubilantly the promises of His *increasing* prosperity ring out to us! 'He *must* increase.'² 'He *must* reign, till He hath put all enemies under his feet.'³ 'Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be *no* end.'⁴

All our natural delight in progress finds satisfaction here,—no stagnation, no reaching a dead level; we are on an ever-winning side, bound up with an ever-progressing cause. A typical light on this point flashes from the story of David. He 'went on and grew great,'⁵ or, as the margin has it, 'going and growing;' which we cannot forbear connecting with the promise to ourselves, 'Ye shall *go* forth and *grow* up.'⁶ And then we are told that He 'waxed greater and greater' (marg.), 'went on going and *increasing*.'⁷

But we must not be merely on-lookers. Let us

¹ Rev. v. 9. ² John iii. 30. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 25. ⁴ Isa. lix. 7.
⁵ 2 Sam. v. 10. ⁶ Mal. iv. 2. ⁷ 1 Chron. xi. 9.

see to it, first, that there be increasing prosperity in His kingdom in our hearts. Pray that He may not only reign but prosper in that domain. And next, let us see to it that we are doing all we can to further His prosperity all around us. Translate our daily prayer, 'Thy kingdom come,'¹ into daily, burning, glowing action for its prosperity.

¹ Matt. vi. 10. ² Ps. xxiii. 5. ³ 2 Sam. xix. 33. ⁴ Gal. iv. 5.
⁵ Cant. ii. 4. ⁶ Cant. v. 1. ⁷ Cant. i. 12.

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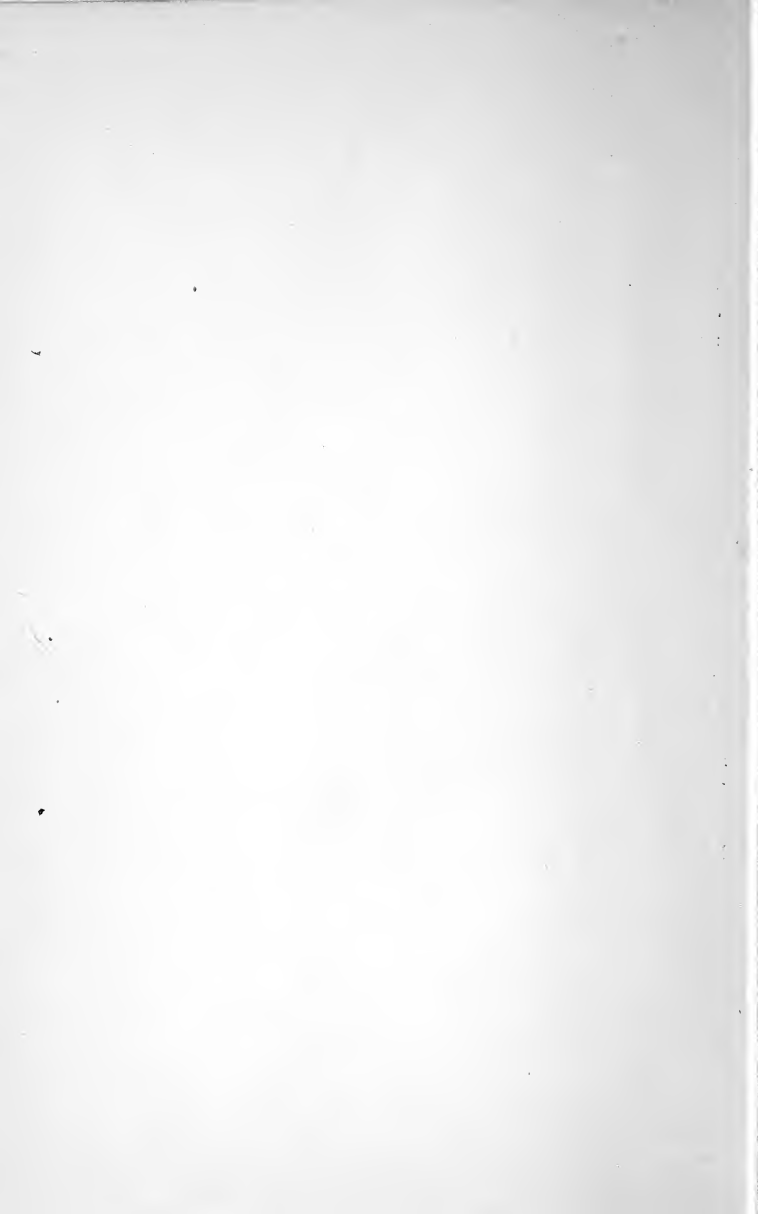
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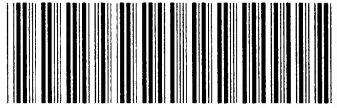
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