

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

COMING—ALWAYS COMING.

A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“To whom coming.”—1 Peter ii. 4.

THE apostle is speaking of the Lord Jesus, of whom he had previously said, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,” and he follows that sentence up with this, “To whom coming as unto a living stone.” Now, I want to call your special attention to this present participle—this act of coming—for there is much to counsel and to comfort us in the fact and the reflections it suggests.

The Christian life is begun, continued, and perfected altogether in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very great blessing for us. Sometimes when you go a journey, you travel so far under the protection of a certain Company, but then you have to change, and the rest of your journey may be performed under very different circumstances, upon quite another kind of line. Now we have not so far to go to heaven in the guardian care of Jesus Christ, and then at a certain point to change, so as to have somebody else to be our leader, or some other method of salvation. No, he is the author and he is the finisher of our faith. If we begin aright we begin with “Christ is all”; if we go on aright we go on with “Christ is all”; and if we finish aright we finish with “Christ is all.” It was a great delusion of some in Paul’s day that after they had begun in the spirit, they hoped to be made perfect in the flesh; and there are some nowadays who begin as sinners resting upon Christ, but they want to go on as independent saints, resting on themselves. That will never do, brethren. It is not “Christ and Company” anyhow. The sinner knows that it must be Christ only, because he has nothing of his own; and the saint ought to know that it must be Christ only, because he has less than nothing apart from Christ. I believe that if we grow out of Christ we grow in an unhealthy mushroom fashion: what we need is to grow up into Christ in all things, knowing him more and more, and being more and more satisfied that he is what we need. This is really a healthy growth, and may God send more and

more of it to us as long as ever we live. Blessed be his holy name, with us it is Christ in the morning, when we are young and full of strength; it is Christ at noon, when we are bearing the burden and heat of the day; and it is Christ at eventide, when we lean on the staff for very age, and the shadows lengthen, and the light is dim. Yea, and it shall be Christ only when the night settles down and death-shade curtains our last bed. In all circumstances and conditions we look to Jesus only. Are we in wealth? Christ crowns it. Are we in poverty? Christ cheers it. Are we in honour? Christ calms us. Are we in shame? Christ consoles us. Are we in health? He sanctifies it. Are we in sickness? He relieves it. As he is at all times the same in himself so he is the same to us. To the same Christ we must come and cling under every new circumstance. Our heart must abide faithful to her one only Lord and lovingly sing,—

‘T’ll turn to thee in days of light
As well as nights of care,
Thou brightest amid all that’s bright,
Thou fairest of the fair!’

We have not to seek a fresh physician, to find a new friend, or to discover a novel hope, but we are to look for everything to Jesus Christ, “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” “Ye are complete in him.” Stand to this, my brethren. Never think that you need aught beyond the provision which is stored up in him, for sanctification, for satisfaction, or for safety. Cast not your eyes around you to find a supplement to the Lord Jesus, or you will deceive yourselves and dishonour him. It is not with our Lord as it was with Moses. Moses led the people through the wilderness, but he could not bring them into the promised land: that was reserved for Joshua. Brother, the Lord Jesus has led you so far through the wilderness, and he will lead you over the Jordan, and secure your heritage to you, and see you safely landed in it: look not, therefore, for any other leader or lawgiver. It is not with Christ as it was with David: David collected the materials for the temple, but though he could gather together vast stores of great value, he could not build them up, for the Lord said that this honour should be reserved for his son that should be after him; and therefore the construction of the temple was left for Solomon. But our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed be his name, has not only gathered together his people and the precious treasures with which he is to build a living temple unto God; but he will also build it stone upon stone, and bring forth the top stone with shouting. He shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory. Christ in the Christian’s alphabet is A, B, C right down to Z, and all the words of the pure language of Canaan are only compounds of himself. Has he not said it, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”?

Our text speaks about coming to him, and I shall endeavour to expound it to you thus. *This is a full picture of Christian life.* I consider it to be a complete picture of a saint drawn with one stroke. It is not easy to make a portrait with one line, yet I remember seeing a somewhat famous portrait of our Lord in which the artist never lifted his pencil from the paper from beginning to end, but drew the whole of it with one continuous series of circles. So here I may say the whole Christian life is drawn in one line—coming unto Christ. “To whom coming.” When we have spoken upon that, I shall answer two questions; the one—*what is the best way of coming to him at first?* the other—*what is the best way of coming to him afterwards?* May the Holy Spirit bless the whole discourse to our souls.

I. First, then, HERE IS A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. It is a continuous “coming” to Jesus.

If you have your Bibles open at the text I want you to notice that the expression occurs in connection with two figures. There is one which precedes it in the second verse, namely, the figure of *a little child* fed upon milk. “As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming.” Children come to their parents, and they frequently come rather longer than their parents like; it is the general habit of children to come to their parents for what they need. They begin with coming to the mothers when they are new-born babes. Look at the little child; it cannot provide for itself. If it were left to shift for itself it must die; but having tasted the unadulterated milk, it thirsts for more of it. When the time comes round for it to be fed, and it comes very often, it gives unmistakeable signs even before it can speak that it wants its food; it knows where to come, and it will not rest till it reaches its place and nestles down. As the child grows up it knows the breakfast hour, and the dinner hour, and knows where to come for the grateful meal and the hearty welcome. You do not want in most of your houses, I suspect, to ring a bell to call your children together to the family table: they all carry little interior bells which let them know pretty accurately when meal-times will be, and they come freely, without persuading or forcing. Some of them are now getting to be fifteen! or sixteen years of age, and they keep on coming still. They come to your table just as they used to come. When first you had to lift them into their little chairs then they were coming; and now they take their big chairs as if they quite belonged to them; but they still keep on coming. Yes, and they come to you not only for bread and for meat, but they come for a great many things besides. In fact, the older they grow, the more they come for. They used to come for little shoes and little garments, and now they need them cut of a larger size, and of more expensive material, and they come accordingly. Though they cost you more they come with greater freedom, for habit has made them very bold in their coming. They do not require any

entreaty or encouragement to come for what they want: they look for many things as a matter of course, and for the rest they come with all the readiness imaginable. Perhaps they let you know their desires a little sooner than you want them to do, and when you think that they might manage a little longer with what they have, they press their claims with earnestness, and vote them urgent. They very soon find out their requirements, you never have to call them together and say, “Now girls, I want you earnestly to consider whether you do not want more dresses. Now boys, I want you to lay it to heart whether you do not require new clothes.” Oh, nothing of the sort. Your children do not need to be called in such a way; they come without calling. They are always coming for something, as you very well know. Sometimes they constrain you to put your hands into your pockets so frequently and for such a variety of expenses that you wonder how long the purse will hold out, and when your resources will be exhausted. Of one thing you feel quite sure that it will be easier to drain your purse than to stop your children from coming for one thing or another.

They come to you now for a great many things they did not come for at first. It seems that there is no end to the things they come for, and I believe there is no end at all. Some of them, I know, continue to come after they have got beyond their boyish years. Though you have a notion, I suppose, that they might shift for themselves, “they are still coming for sovereigns where shillings used to suffice. When you could put them to bed at night with the reflection that you had found them in food and raiment, and house and home, you knew your expenses; but now the big fellows come to you with such heavy demands that you can hardly see the end of it. So it is; they are always coming.

Now, in all this long talk I have been showing you how to understand the figure of coming to Christ. Just what your children began to do from the first moment you fixed your eyes on them, and what they have continued to do ever since, that is just what you are to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to be always coming to him—coming to him for spiritual food, coming to him for spiritual garments, coming to him for washing, guiding, help, and health: coming in fact for everything. You will be wise if, the older you grow, the more you come, and he will be all the better pleased with you. If you find out other wants and make clearer discoveries of your needs, come for more than you used to come for, and prove thereby that you better understand and appreciate what manner of love it is—that ye should be called the sons of God. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Has he not said to you, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it”? It is rather strange that you never have to tell your children to do that. They do it without any telling; but you have been told to do it, and yet you do not do it. He complains, “thou hast

not called upon me, O Jacob.” The infinite liberality of your heavenly Father has urged you to make great requests of him, and yet you have stuttered and stammered and been afraid to ask, until he now tells you that “you have not because you ask not.” Beloved, let us learn from our children, and let it be the habit of our lives to be incessantly coming to the heavenly Father—coming offener, coming for more reasons, coming for larger blessings, coming with greater expectations, coming in one life-long perpetual coming, and all because he bids us come.

If you will look again at your Bibles, you will get a second illustration from the fourth verse, “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, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Here we have the figure of a building. A building comprises first a foundation, and then the stones which are brought to the foundation and are built upon it. This furnishes a very beautiful picture of Christian life. I have read that there has been discovered beneath Jerusalem an immense cavern **or** quarry near the Damascus gate. Travellers who have been into this quarry say that there are niches in the live rock out of which the magnificent stones were cut with which Solomon’s temple was built. The temple is up there on the top of the rock, and then far down in the quarry you can distinctly discover where the huge stones used to be. Now there was a process of *coming* by which each stone came to the foundation. Some stones that were expected to form part of the building never reached it: there is one huge stone of that sort in the Bezetha cavern now. It is still there, for this reason—that, though it is squared and chiselled on the front and two sides, and also on the top and the bottom, yet it has never been cut away at the back, and so it cleaves to the rock of which it is naturally a part, and remains in its original darkness. Now, the passage that I would like you to think of is that in the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah—“Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.” There are many here present who have been cut off from the rock, and lifted up out of the horrible pit; since which early operation of divine grace they have been coming and coming till they have reached the foundation, and are built up as lively stones in the temple which is established upon Christ. But there are others of you who need further excavating. God has begun his work upon you, he has used sharp tools, and begun to separate you from the world: it has taken a long time to get you cut away from the rock, even in part. You used to be altogether sinful and earth-bound, and you lived in worldliness, just as the stone formed a part of the rock; God has been using his great chisel upon you, and cut you away, and separated you to a great extent from your fellow men; but still at the back, in secret, your heart cleaves to sin. You have not given up the darling lust of your heart and therefore you are not quarried

yet, and you cannot come to Christ, for that is impossible till you are separated from the rock of which you naturally form a part. Oh, how I wish that almighty grace would take the saw of the word tonight, and make clear cuts right across your stony heart until you are sawn right adrift from the hard rock of sin, that you may afterwards be made to come to Christ to be built upon him as your foundation. That is how the work of grace begins,—by cutting loose the soul from the evil world of which it has been a component part. This is part of the process by which the living stones are brought to rest on the foundation, for it is clear that they cannot come to the foundation till first they are removed from their native bed in the pit of sin. Oh, may God's grace continue to take out many of this congregation like stones divided from the quarry, that so by grace they may come to Jesus.

Well, after they had cut out those stones in the quarry, which, with a little imagination, you can see lying there, detached and distinct, the next operation was to pull them up to the top of Mount Zion. It was a long drag up to the summit of the hill. How Solomon managed to remove such enormous masses we do not know. If he had no machinery or motive force that could supersede manual labour, and the force on which he relied was in the sinews of men, the matter is all the more wonderful. They must have pulled away perhaps many thousands of them at one single stone, hauling it out of the pit, dragging it up the zigzag roads till at last the gigantic mass reached its place. Now, there is a lifting, a drawing of the soul to Christ after this fashion, and I see among you some who have recently been drawn. You have not been dragged by men. All the men in the world could not draw a sinner to Christ. No machinery is known or will ever be invented that can ever draw a proud, stubborn will to Christ. We may tug and pull till we break the ropes, but we shall never make a soul stir one inch Christward. But there is another power which can accomplish the work impossible to us. "I, if I be lifted up," says Christ, "will draw all men unto me." He has such attractive power that he draws the stones out of the quarry of nature, right up to the foundation which his free grace has laid in Zion, and they are built upon him. This is the second part of the work of grace in the soul; first it separates us from the rock, and then it draws us up to the foundation, and in both it is working out our coming to Christ.

Well, we have watched the stone as it has been carried up. What is the next process? Why, the next work is to let it down, so that it lies in due order upon the foundation. The foundation of the temple very likely was far below the adjacent soil; and so this mass of stone had to be let down to the foundation steadily and wisely that it might rest in its proper bed. What a task it is sometimes—to let a huge stone down upon the foundation, and to get it to lie square and true, so that every bit of it is in proper position with the rest of the structure. Picture the process to your mind's eye. We have got the stone

upon the base, but half of it projects beyond the foundation, and so far it has nothing to lean upon. That will never do. It must be moved till it lies plumb with the foundation, exactly square with the other stones, and till every portion of it rests firmly on its proper bed. Oh, dear hearts, this is one work which the grace of God has to do with you—to bring you to lie upon Christ, to recline upon Christ, and that wholly, rightly, and squarely. It takes a long time to bring some sinners to this; they want to be propped up with a little bit of self-righteousness, they cannot be induced to lie right square upon Christ; they want to tilt a little, have a little shoring up with their own doings, and a little dependence on themselves: but this will never do. “To whom coming,” says the text, “coming as to a living stone.” Oh, that almighty grace would constrain you all to be coming till you lie flat and square on Christ, till you have Christ at one corner, and Christ at the other corner, and Christ at all the four corners whereon your soul lies; till you are resting on the Lord Jesus Christ at all times, in all respects, under all circumstances, for everything. Other foundation can no man lay; be ye sure that ye rest wholly upon it.

“Bless the Lord,” says one, “I know I have come as far as that. Can I get any farther?” Well, look brother, as long as ever that huge stone lies on the foundation it is always coming to the foundation. Its own weight is always pressing it down upon the foundation, and the heavier it is the more closely and compactly it lies. I do feel myself, now, to be more close to Christ than ever I was. My weight of sin helps to press me down on him. My weight of trouble, my weight of care, my weight of anxiety about the souls of my hearers, and even my weight of joy, all help me to press more on my Lord. The way to be coming to Christ, brethren, as long as ever you live, is to lean more on Christ, press more heavily on Christ, and depend more upon Christ than ever you did. In this way, you know, some stones seem, by long abiding and pressing, to cleave to one another, and unite together till they appear to be no longer distinct, but one mass. Have you not often noticed in an old Roman wall that you cannot distinguish the mortar from the stone? You cannot tell where the stones were joined; they have grown to be one piece. And blessed is that Christian who, like a living stone, has continued so to come to the foundation till Christ and he have become one, as it were: yea, one in conscious fact, so that nothing can divide them. Thus we continue still to come to Jesus, and draw nearer to him; nearer and yet nearer still, built up into him, perfectly joined in one spirit. Then, only then, shall Christian life be perfected.

These two figures of the babe and the stone have shown you, I trust, what the text means. I have not gone far afield to find them—they lie, as you have seen, in the immediate context. “To whom coming” is an apt description of the whole of Christian life: mind that you make it the rule of yours.

II. But now, secondly, I have to ANSWER THE QUESTION, *What is the best way of coming to Christ at first?*

There are some poor hearts among you longing to be saved. “Ah,” you say, “I hear that if I come to Christ I shall be saved; but how can I come to him? What do you mean by coming to Jesus?” Well, our reply is plain and clear,—it is to trust Christ, to depend upon him, to believe him, to rely upon him. Then they enquire, “But how can I come to Christ? In what way would you recommend me to come?” The answer is, the very best way to come to Christ is to *come with all your needs about you*. If you could get rid of half your needs apart from Christ, you would not come to Jesus half so well as you can with the whole of them pressing upon you, for your need furnishes you with motives for coming, and gives you pleas to urge. Suppose a *physician* should come into a town with motives of pure benevolence to exercise the healing art. What he wants is not to make money, but to bless the townsmen: he does not intend to make any charge or take any fees, but he lets it be known that he has come into the town to display his skill. He has a love to his fellow men, and he wants to cure them, and therefore he gives notice that as he only wishes for opportunities of displaying his kindness and skill, the poorest will be welcome, and the most diseased will be best received. Now, then, who is the man that can come to the doctor’s door with confidence, and give a good rat-tat-tat, and feel that he will be welcome? Well, there is a person who has cut his finger: will the doctor rush into the surgery to attend to him? No doubt he will look at the cut, but he will not grow very enthusiastic over it, for doctors do not get much credit out of curing cut fingers. Here is another gratis patient who has a wart on his hand. Well, there is nothing very famous about curing warts, and the physician is by no means excited over his work. But here is a poor forlorn body who has been given up by all the other doctors, a patient who is so bad that he lies at death’s door: he has such a complication of diseases, that he could hardly tell what diseases he has *not* suffered from, but certainly his condition is terrible enough to make it appear hopeless. He seems to be a living wonder of disease. That is the man who may come boldly to the physician, and expect his immediate attention, and his best consideration. Now, doctor, if you can cure this man he will be a credit to you. This man exactly answers to your advertisement. You say that you only wish for patients who will give you an opportunity of displaying your skill. Here is a fine object for your pity, he is bad at the lungs, bad at the heart, bad in the feet, bad in the eyes, bad in the ears, bad in the head, bad all over. If you want an opportunity of showing your skill, here is the man. Jesus, my Lord and Master, is the Great Physician of souls, and he heals them on just such terms as I have mentioned. Is there a far gone sinner here tonight? Is there a deeply sin-sick soul anywhere within the range of my voice? Is there man or woman who is bad altogether? Come along, my friend,

you are just in a right condition to come to Jesus Christ. *Come just as you are*, that is the best style of “coming.”

Another illustration may be furnished by the common scriptural figure of *a feast*. A king determines to act with generosity; and, to show how liberal his disposition is, he desires to make a banquet for those who need it most. He says, “If I make a great feast to my lords and dukes, they will think little of my hospitality, for they fare sumptuously every day; therefore I will seek out guests who will be more likely to be grateful. Where shall I find guests who will most enjoy my dainties, men who will eat with the greatest gusto, and drink with the greatest delight?” Having considered the matter, he cries to his heralds, “Go ye into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.” From among the tramps by the roadside the heralds soon gather starving wretches who exactly meet the king’s wishes. Here is a poor man who has had nothing to eat for the last forty-eight hours. Look at his eager delight at the sight of the food! If you want somebody to eat largely and joyfully, is not he the man? See how he takes it in! It is wonderful how the provisions disappear before him! Here again is a poor woman who has been picked up by the wayside, faint for want of bread. She has scarcely any life in her, but see how she begins to open her eyes at the first morsel that is placed before her, and what delight there is in her every expression as she finds herself placed at a table so richly loaded. Yes, the poorer, the more hungry, the more destitute the guests, the more honour is accorded to the king who feeds such mendicants, and receives such vagrants to his table. Hear how they shout the king’s praises when they are filled with his meat! They will never have done thanking him. Now, if I address a soul tonight that is very needy, very faint, very desponding, you are a fit guest for my Master, because you have such a fine appetite for his generous repast of love. The greatness of your need is your fitness for coming to Christ, and if you want to know how to come, come just as you are. Tarry not to improve yourself one single atom; come as you are, with all your sin and filthiness and need about you, for that is the best way to come.

If you want to know how to come aright the first time, I should answer, *come to find everything you want in Christ*. Do not come with a load of your own wealth. Remember what Pharaoh said to Joseph; “Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.” Do not bring your old rubbish with you. “I thought I was to bring repentance.” Do not attempt to do so, but look to Jesus for it, Jesus Christ is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. Come and receive a heart of flesh, for you cannot make one for yourself. “Oh, but I thought I was to bring faith.” Faith also is the gift of Christ. It cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; draw near then to that word to find faith. Come for everything. “Oh, but I want to feel.” And then, I suppose, after you have found a nice lot of feelings

you will come to Christ, and say, “Lord, thou art now able to save me, for my feelings are right.” What self-conceit! Come to Christ for feelings; come to Christ for everything.

“What,” saith one, “can you mean it, that I, an unfeeling, impenitent wretch, am bidden to come at once and believe in Jesus Christ for everlasting life?” I mean just that. I do not mean to send you round to that shop for repentance, and to the other shop for feeling, and to a third store for a tender heart, and then direct you to call on Christ at last for a few odds and ends. No, no, but come to Christ for everything.

“Come, ye needy, come and welcome,
God’s free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh,
Without money
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”

I heard of a shop some time ago in a country town where they sold everything, and the man said that he did not believe that there was anything a human being wanted but what he could rig him out from top to toe. Well, I do not know whether that promise would have been carried out to the letter if it had been tried, but I know it is so with Jesus Christ; he can supply you with all you need, for “Christ is all.” There is not a need your soul can possibly have but the Lord Jesus Christ can supply it, and the very best way to come is to come to him for everything.

The best way to come to Christ is to *come meaning to get everything*, and to obtain all the plenitude of grace, which he has laid up in store, and promised freely to give. Some poor souls who come to Jesus Christ seem as if they wanted a little relief from fear, a hope that they may just get saved, and a fair chance of going to heaven when they die. Pray do not come in that way, my dear friend. Come intending to obtain the fulness of love, the uttermost of grace. Some time ago, when there was a dinner given to poor people, they were told to come and they should have all they could eat. Do you know what they did, some of them? There was not to be any dinner till six o’clock. Well, that they might have a noble appetite, they did not eat any breakfast—not they. They meant to get all they could now they had an opportunity, and so they came as hungry as possible. Many years ago, I am told, it used to be the custom of the lord of the manor, in certain villages, on Christmas-day to give the poor people a basin of food, and the rule was that whatever basin was brought his lordship always filled it. It was perfectly marvellous how the basins grew, till at last, when some of the women came with their basins the lord of the manor looked at the huge bowls and wondered how they could dare to bring such capacious vessels. But if he was a man of a generous heart,

all he would say to his steward would be, “These people believe in my generosity. Go and fill their bowls. Fill, and fill on till you have filled them all. As long as they bring their bowls none shall say that I denied them.” And now, when you go to Christ, take a capacious vessel of large prayer and great expectation. Enlarge your desire, and make up your mind to this—“I am not going in to be a miserable Christian, with barely enough grace to keep me from open profanity, to whitewash me with a respectable profession, and ensure me against the peril of everlasting perdition: I mean to take a higher aim, and to seek a better portion. Fain would I vie with saints and angels and be the most happy, the most useful, the most joyous, the most holy believer that ever lived, if God will help me so to be.” I wish we had some of the old Methodist fire back amongst us again. Some of those dear old people, if they did not know much, used to enjoy much, and when they went to hear a sermon they listened with a zest, for they received the word of God as a fresh inspiration; it was a lively oracle to them. The gospel as it was preached to them awoke an echo in their hearts, they were all alive to its good cheer, and they shouted, “Amen, hallelujah, bless the Lord,” as they heard it, for it went home to their souls. Nowadays we are very proper and decorous in our behaviour all of us, and we are not a little critical in our taste. As we pick up a crumb of the gospel we like to know whether it is the real aerated bread baked in a tin, or whether it is the common household bread of the shops. The preacher is a “little odd,” and he does not cut the bread exactly into dice pieces, and so we do not like the manner of service, for we are rather fastidious, and we air our own conceits by fault-finding. Because the Lord’s servant does not very daintily bring us our portion on a silver salver, and hold it out to us, we curl our lip and say, “No, thank you.” Oh, may God deliver us from the fashionable stiffness and artificial nonsense. May he revive in us the reality both of nature and grace, so that we may come to his table of love with a good appetite. Modern Christians remind me of our boyish days, when we went to bathe in the sea, and used to dip our toes in the waves, instead of taking a plunge head first. I am sure that to plunge right in is the best way with religion. Throw your whole soul into it, and allow the glorious waves of everlasting love to go right over your head, and then dive and swim in that sea which is bottomless, and rejoice in the Lord with all your heart. But this mere dabbling about with *goody-goody goodliness*, instead of the grand old godliness, makes professors all of a shiver, and they stand in doubt, as though they hardly liked it, and would rather get back to the world and put on their old clothes again, only they are half afraid to do so. Oh, may the Lord give us to come with all our needs to him—to come to him for everything, and to come determined to have everything that is to be had, and to go in for it thoroughly by God’s grace. That is the way to come to Christ.

III. There remains one other question—WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COME AFTERWARDS? The answer is,—Come just as you used to come. Brethren and sisters, the text does not say that you *have come* to Christ, though that is true, but that you *are coming*; and you are to be always coming. The way to continue coming is to come just in the same way as you came at first. I have many things to say about this, but my time has gone, and therefore I will not enlarge, but I will only put them thus in brief. I am persuaded that the only happy, the only safe way for a Christian to live is to live in daily dependence upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, just as he did when he was a babe in grace and a stone newly drawn from the quarry of nature. I know what it is to build up a nice structure of my own experience on the foundation of Christ, and to climb upon it, instead of standing on the foundation. If you were ever on the top of Snowdon, or some other high mountain, you will have noticed that to make the standing a little higher they put up some wooden scaffold or other, some ten or twelve feet of platform, to increase the elevation, and then everybody wants to get up on that platform. Well, now, I have built my little platform on Christ. My own experience has made a very handsome erection, I can tell you. I have felt, “Well, I know this and that and the other by experience,” and I have been quite exalted. Sometimes, too, I have built a platform of good works—“I have done something for Christ after all.” The proud flesh says, “Oh yes, you really have performed something you might talk about if you liked.” Self-confidence has piled my platform up and it has been a very respectable looking concern, and I have asked a few friends up. But, do you know what has occurred? Why, I have felt my platform shake. It began to tremble. Stress of weather had rotted the beams, and the supports have begun to give way, and I have seen all my building tumble down, and I have gone down with it; and as I have gone down with it I have thought, “It is all over with me now. I am going crash down, I do not know how far, but perhaps I shall fall to the bottom of the mountain” Instead of that I alighted on the top of the mountain. I did not fall very far, but came right down where it had been most sensible of me if I had always kept, namely, on *terra firma*, down on the solid earth. I have noticed that a great many of my brethren have been lately building some very pretty little wooden structures on the top of Jesus Christ. I think they call them “the higher life,” if I rightly recollect the name. I do not know of any life that is higher than that of simple faith in Jesus Christ. As far as I am concerned, the highest life for me out of heaven is the life of a poor publican saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” My very good friends are not content with this position, though he who keeps it goes to his house justified more than boasters. Some friends built very high a little while ago, I thought they would soon reach the moon, but certain of them went down in a very ugly way, I have heard, and I am afraid some more will go down if they do not mind what they are at. Give up building these

artificial elevations: give up resting on them; and just stand on the level of Christ's finished work, the blood of Christ for sinners shed; the righteousness of Christ to sinners imputed. Be yours the humble plea—

“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”

He that is down there will never fall, and he who keeps there is really as high up as the man who thinks he is all aloft; for all above living by faith in Christ is mere dream and moonshine. There is nothing higher, after all, than just being nobody, and Christ being everybody, and singing with poor Jack, the huckster,

“I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all,”

If you grow till you are less than nothing, you are full grown, but few have reached that stage; and if you grow till Christ is everything to you, you are in your prime; but, alas, how far short of this do most men fall! The Lord bring you to that highest of all growths—to be daily coming to Christ; always empty in yourself, but full in him; always weak in yourself, but strong in him; always nothing in self, but Christ your perpetual all in all! The Lord keep you there, brothers and sisters, and he will have praise and glory of you, both now and for ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Peter ii. 1–16.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—795, 606; and “O Christ what burdens bowed thy head”—44 Sankey.