

them to ever new fountains of waters of life.—*Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.*

THE INVITATIONS OF THE BIBLE.

I have long thought that the real beauty and sweetness of the Bible lies in its invitations. Every page is loaded with them in some form or other. There is an invitation for every class and condition of humanity, and for every scene and circumstance in life, and to every invitation is appended a precious promise. The whole Bible may be summed up in one word, "Come!" The entire book is only a letter of invitation addressed to wayward children, urging them to come home to a Father's house and to a Father's heart. The precepts of the Bible are intended to call attention to the invitations, and its warnings are only invitations in disguise, designed to force the mind to dwell upon the sweet words of welcome which everywhere gleam in such pleasant contrast with the stern rebukes and severe threatenings. Upon one page we read the solemn warning, "Flee from the wrath to come," but right opposite, on the next page, we find such words as "Come, for all things are now ready."

Thus it is throughout the entire book for every warning and every threatening we find a kind invitation and a word of welcome. Away back in the Bible we read, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth;" and again, Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" while further on we

read, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and then in almost the very last verse, just as the Divine Author was closing the book, resting under its very seal as God's farewell message to a ruined world, we find that broad, all-comprehensive invitation, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," as though God was loth to quit the pleasant task of revealing himself to men, and had paused to remind them of all the kind invitations he had previously given, endeavoring to compress them into one.

Thus the invitation, "Come," is echoed through the entire Bible. One page borrows it from another, and one verse from another, until at last it rests under the very seal of the book. It begins with the first of Genesis and extends to the very last of Revelation, shedding its cheerful light upon every page, and imparting its heavenly influence to every verse. Moses utters it in the Decalogue, David sings it in the Psalms, Solomon repeats it in the Proverbs, Isaiah uses it in the prophecies, Paul echoes it in the epistles. It was typified in the blood and blaze of the sacrifice. It was the burden of Christ's earthly ministry. It forms an essential part of the Bible history. It was interwoven with the ceremonial law. It was borne across the chasm of centuries with the voice of prophecy. It is a prominent factor of the gospels, and stands conspicuous in all the epistles. It is the one word common to all the inspired writers. It is the grand