

His mouth in affectionate words, "What seek ye?"—not "Whom seek ye? Wherefore come ye thus after me?" There was nothing forbidding in the inquiry. He put it to them that He might search their hearts, awaken their consciousness, and invite their confidence. The Divine and the human beautifully mingle here. In the consciousness of His Godhead He knew that the hour for beginning His work was come, and that these two men were following Him in the naturalness of a human action. He turned and asked them why they followed Him. His question and influence were alike full of approval and encouragement. So still, and so always to those that follow Him. Mark the influence as suggested by the fact here recorded.

He awakens consciousness. This is the first thing that the Saviour does to those that truly follow Him. Men never really know themselves till they know Him. Like a true master in this case, He did not speak words of instruction to these disciples, but sought to excite their reflection and awaken their consciousness. What a wondrous hour is that in a man's life when first he yields to the influence of the Son of God! When first he feels that Christ in the Gospel speaks to him. A new consciousness dawns upon his soul; he finds a reality in his being that he never felt before: new ties encompass him, new hopes dawn upon him: he is another man. He is conscious of a majesty in his manhood that he never thought of before; and all that Christ has done and can do for the soul rises up in wonderful fullness to its view. "What seek ye?" There is a latent fullness of meaning in the inquiry, conveying essential truth which is applicable to all who ever come to Him. The whole consciousness of our being is excited by contact with Christ, and goes forth in desire, gratitude, and hope. Nothing so lifts up the soul, nothing so lights up the countenance, which is the index of the soul, with intelligence and joy.

He invites confidence. "What seek ye?" He asked the question that the disciples might have an opportunity of unobscuring themselves to Him, of telling Him all their feelings, and desires, and hopes. As if He had said, "What can I do for you? What interest in me, what hope, what desire leads you to follow me?" So the Saviour will have no coldness, no reserve, no distance between Himself and his followers. He invites their fullest confidence that they may tell Him all. This, my brethren, is for you and me. We may pour out our hearts to Him: we may tell Him all our anxiety and all our desire; and if we may do so at the very outset of our discipleship, so assuredly we may do so afterwards. This will be for our relief, always for our help and our encouragement. And then the quickening inquiry, "What seek ye?" glides into the invitation "come."

He offers a welcome. When Jesus thus tenderly drew them on to open their hearts to Him, they replied with the question as to where He dwelt, or as to His abode for that night. "Where dwellest thou? Where loigest thou?" "They would not trouble Him on the way; they wished to speak with Him alone." But in their words they breathed the desire to be near Him, to be with Him, to learn of Him; and instantly He gave them welcome—"come"; "come and see." He invited them to accompany Him. There was more than mere persuasion, more even than invitation, there was gracious command in this word "come." They were welcome to Him, and in the word *come* we have the key note of His whole ministry and mission. So it has come down to us, this gracious, ever-present and pressing welcome.

Thus, my brethren, He encourages His disciples and followers still, quickening their consciousness, inviting their confidence, and offering them a welcome to go with Him. He never sends any away empty. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—the resting place of human desire and hope.

IV.—*In following Christ the believer finds more than he expected or imagined.*

The disciples readily obeyed the Lord, and cheerfully followed Him. They went and saw where He dwelt, and they did more—they remained with Him for the remainder of that day. This was a privilege they did not look for. They tasted and saw something of the grace and glory of the Saviour. They had fellowship with Him. The two first disciples with Jesus for the first time! What a day must that have been for them! What they saw or heard on the occasion is not recorded: we know only that they made the grandest of all discoveries, and reached the conviction that they had found the true refuge and resting-place of the human soul.

So, my brethren, Jesus gives to all who seek Him more than they can ask or think—a Divine peace—a purer joy, and a brighter hope than they could have conceived. Is it not so? Is it not true that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived what God hath prepared for them that love Him?" What has Jesus been to you, to many of you in your pilgrimage hitherto? You have followed Him sometimes with weak faith and cold affection, so that your following has been afar off. Yet His language has ever been gracious to you. "Come"; "come and see," and in your coming what have you found? More than you could have anticipated, more than you can tell—a peace which passeth understanding—a joy that is unspeakable—a hope that maketh not ashamed. What would life be to you now without fellowship with Christ? There is no strength for the soul, no blessedness, no consolation, no prospect like that which fellowship with Jesus Christ supplies. "I will come to Him and sup with Him, and He with me."

The pursuits of the world often disappoint. You have gone to some scene of pleasure with high expectations, and you have come away mortified that your expectations were foolishly so high. You have looked for large things in the interest and influence of some friend in your behalf, and you find that he has forgotten his promise, or that his word can do you little good. But if you follow Christ there will be no disappointment. If you go with Him, you will find in fellowship with Him, an enjoyment which nothing earthly can yield, a repose which nothing earthly can disturb, a possession which no material calamity can injure, and a prospect which no worldly discomfiture or discouragement can darken. I asked a poor man the other day, a man who has known the pinchings of poverty and the cravings of hunger, and the penalty of sin, but who is now clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus, "Could £10,000 have done for you what you feel Christ has done?" I shall not soon forget the eagerness and earnestness beaming in his countenance, as he replied with instant and remarkable decision, "No, sir, no, the world could not have done for me what Jesus Christ has done." This is gloriously true. Oh! come and try. Follow Christ, that you may know Him, and in knowing Him you will find that He can do exceedingly abundantly more than you have asked or thought. To know Him is life and blessedness for evermore.

FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

LITTLE READERS: There are many things which we would like to learn, but one of the first things we should learn about is ourselves.

If we were going to be travellers, we should first travel in our own country, and afterwards in foreign lands; so before we talk about the flowers, the shining stones, the rolling ocean, or the winds and rain, we will learn something of ourselves.

I asked a little girl what her eyes and ears were made for, and she said, "I see with my eyes, and hear with my ears." And what are your hands and feet good for?" I asked. "I work and play with my hands, and run with my feet," she replied.

"The other day I saw a little baby. It was very white and cold. It had eyes, but it could not see; it had ears, but it could not hear; indeed, it could not stir a finger. Can you tell me why?" I asked.

"Was it dead?" asked Lillie.

"Yes, it was dead. Its soul had left its little body."

"Little Jennie had a canary which sung and flew around its cage in great glee whenever she came home from school as much as to say, 'Oh, I am so glad to see you! It has been very still without you,' and then it would 'tune up' and sing its loudest and sweetest song."

One day, when Jennie came home from school, Dick—the cat—was the bird's name—did not come to the door of its cage and chirp. "What is the matter with Dickie?" said Jennie, as she climbed into a chair and looked into the cage. "Poor birdie!" she said, and cried most violently, for its little, happy, cheery bird was lying cold and lifeless on the bottom of the cage. It had eaten something which made so sick that its life could not stay in its body. It could not move. It did not hear or see because its life, like the baby's soul, had gone out of its body.

You learn by this that the soul cannot stay in the body when it is dead, and that our bodies are for the soul to be with, to hear with, and to work and play with.