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The Evangelical Churchman

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THE COMING KING.

Hills of the North, rejoice,
 River and mountain spring,
 Hark to the advent voice,
 Valley and lowland, sing :
 Though absent long, your Lord is nigh ;
 He judgment brings and victory.

Isles of the Southern seas,
 Deep in your coral caves,
 Pent be each warring breeze,
 Lull'd be your restless waves :
 He comes to reign with boundless sway,
 And makes your wastes his great highway.

Lands of the East, awake,
 Soon shall your sons be free ;
 The sleep of ages break,
 And rise to liberty.
 On your far hills, so cold and grey,
 Has dawn'd the everlasting day.

Shores of the utmost West,
 Ye that have waited long,
 Unvisited, unblest,
 Break forth to swelling song :
 High raise the note, that Jesus died,
 Yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.

Shout while ye journey home,
 Songs be in every mouth ;
 Lo, from the North we come,
 From East, and West, and South.
 City of God, the bond are free :
 We come to live and reign in thee.

A PRAYER FOR CHRIST.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

With the single exception of our Lord's intercession for his disciples on the night of his betrayal,

the principal prayers recorded in the New Testament are very short as well as very simple. The shortest, the sweetest, and the most comprehensive is that one which closes the sacred canon ; for the Bible begins with a narrative and ends with a prayer. It begins with the sublime story of the Creation ; it concludes with a petition that the ascended Christ would come and take possession of the world which he had redeemed with his blood. "Even so—come, Lord Jesus!" If the beloved disciple had cast about him to find the words which should express the deepest loyalty to his Master and the deepest love to his fellow-men, he could find none so comprehensive as these : "Come, Lord Jesus!" They epitomize all the richest blessings that can fill a human heart, or save and purify a wicked world.

Into the controverted questions about our Lord's "second coming" we do not enter. It is enough for us that Jesus comes afresh in every utterance of Gospel truth, every manifestation of Gospel grace and every forth-putting of Gospel effort to regenerate humanity. All the preaching of the Cross, from apostolic days to the present hour, all the enterprises of Christian benovolence, all grand movements like the Reformation, the revivals under Wesley and Whitefield, the establishment of foreign missions, the emancipation of the slave, the temperance reform, the whole circle of Christian charities are only the continued advents of Christ Jesus into the world he loves. Only when Christ is in them do such enterprises possess power and permanence.

There is a great deal of rambling and of repetition in the average utterances of the family altar and the prayer meeting. Many more things are said than are actually sought. But suppose God gave to each of us the same privilege that he once gave to Solomon : "Ask what I shall give unto thee." What would it be? One might urge the case of a sick child, or an unconverted husband, or a wandering son ; and another might covet a blessing on his pulpit, or his Sabbath-school work ; and another might ask for a revival, and many others for victories over special personal temptation or the influx of some especial grace. But, while various requests of various persons were presented, suppose that some one should rise up and say : "My petition includes and covers about all of yours. Let us pray for Christ!" Would not his prayer cover the whole circle of cases and meet about every want? For, if we get Jesus, we shall get every spiritual gift. Health, light, pardon, strength, comfort for aching hearts, converting power, sanctifying grace, victories over the devil—all these and more will come, if Jesus only comes himself. In him dwells all fulness. What are all the miracles in the Bible compared with him who is the mightiest miracle the world ever saw?

Now, let us suppose once more, that any of our church prayer gatherings should agree to merge their various requests into this single one : "Come, Lord Jesus!" It might prove like the concentration of many sun-rays into the focus of a burning-lens. "If two of you shall agree as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be for them of my Father which is in Heaven." Most assuredly a company of Christians could not go astray if, with all sincerity, they agreed in offering a prayer which is recorded in their Bible and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Assuredly no prayer could be more directly

in the line of the divine promises; none more likely to be answered. It would be as nearly sifted of all selfish and [sinful] desires as anything human could be. It would not involve any straining after immediate miracles, such as many believers in "faith-cures" require. There is nothing impossible, or even improbable in the fulfillment of this prayer of prayers.

For our Saviour has distinctly promised his presence with his flock. When his bodily form floated upward from Olivet in the vernal air, and a cloud received him out of human sight, the promise remained : "Lo, I am with you." Not somebody else, but "I," your risen Lord. Jesus was as truly in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost as he was on the day of his crucifixion. His presence filled that upper chamber, when the sound was like the sound of a mighty wind, and the light was like the light of a tongue of flame. He spake through Peter's lips, when the wonderful discourse made three thousand converts ; and he wrought through Peter's hands, when the cripple leaped up and walked through the beautiful gate. He had a personal encounter with that bitter bigot on the highway to Damascus. To the bigot's question, "Who art thou, Lord?" the reply was, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." I love to think of Jesus as hovering around the flaming stakes of the martyrs, and illuminating the dungeons of the confessors, and walking beside every missionary of the Cross. Christ was as veritably with Luther in the Erfurth convent, and with Bunyan in his Bedford cell, and with David Brainerd in the Indian camp, as he was with the disciples on the shore of Gennesareth. He still does mighty works through his living witnesses. Every genuine conversion wrought by a Spurgeon or a Moody in London testifies to a present Christ. He still casts out evil spirits from the drunkard, still welcomes the penitent harlot, still whispers in the ear of the contrite sinner, who begs for mercy : "Go in peace ; thy faith hath saved thee." When our Master said, "I am with you always," he meant that we had but to open the door and he will enter.

A strange mist of uncertainty seems to hang over the minds of many Christians when they are urged to realize and actualize their Saviour as a living presence. Because their eyes see no form of flesh and blood, they think of Jesus in a vague, shadowy fashion, and imagine a radiant personage away off on a celestial throne. That Jesus should come into their houses and hearts as really as he came into the house of Jairus and the heart of Lydia, seems to them a devout dream. But why limit his omnipotence and his omnipresence? Why insult him by giving the lie to his exceeding great and precious promise? The most thorough cure for unbelief is a close grip on Christ. The prayer which he loves most to hear, and delights most to answer, is the prayer : "Come, Lord Jesus." This will overthrow the adversary who torments us ; this will lift off the burden, or else give us strength to carry it ; this will sweeten the lot and keep the conscience clear and the temper tranquil ; this will clothe us with power from on high. If prayer is anything more than a pious delusion, it warrants the expectation that the Son of God will actually enter into our souls, and will purify and guide and rule our lives. Let us believe this, or else cease praying.

To-day, the want of this dying world is CHRIST. The one gift that includes all spiritual gifts, the