

no time for a visit to Him. Is it so far then to the nearest church? So far that He may will accept the distance as sufficient reason for our absence, except at times when attendance is of obligation? Can I urge home duties and necessary occupations, when I see who those are that can and do find time to visit Him?

O my Lord, why these wretched subterfuges with You, "the God of Truth"? Why not fall at Your feet and own that it is not distance, nor lack of leisure, nor any reasonable plea that keeps me from You, but simply and solely the want of love? It is a reason I could not give to any other friend. I should have to find some other pretext with which to colour my neglect. But with You there need be no dissembling. Your friendship stands alone in the perfect frankness and confidence permissible on both sides. We may own to being cold and halfunwilling visitors, yet we are not for that unwelcome. The petulance, the selfishness, the waywardness of our moods that in the very interest of their friendships call for self-restraint, may show themselves in all their ugliness before the all-pitying, the Friend "more friendly than a brother", whom nothing can shock, disgust, estrange.

He wants our intercourse with Him to be perfectly free; nothing studied, nothing strained. He desires to have us as we are, no less than as we would be. He wants to be taken into our confidence, to be let into the secret chambers of our souls, into which we only peep ourselves at stated times and with half-averted glance. He would share in the interests and troubles of the moment, be called upon for sympathy in every event great or small that interrupts the even flow of our home life or of our inner life; take part in every experience whither of sorrow or of joy. The soldier off to the front, the baby with its broken toy, the girl with her first secret, no less than the wife, the mother, the priest with their burdened hearts—He wants them all. He sees us going off here and there for help, and comfort, and counsel. He hears our feet as they hurry past His door to wear the doorsteps of other friends, and He calls to us in those tones divine in their tenderness of reproach: "You will not come to Me. My people have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living water,