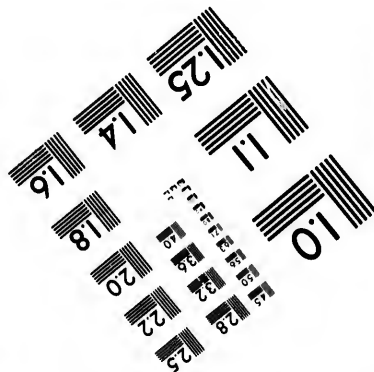
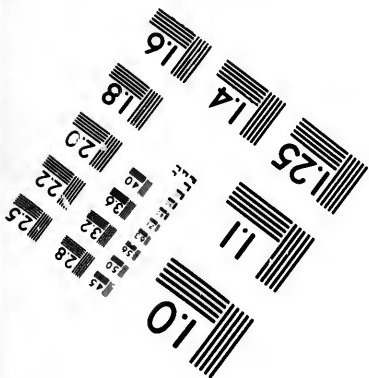
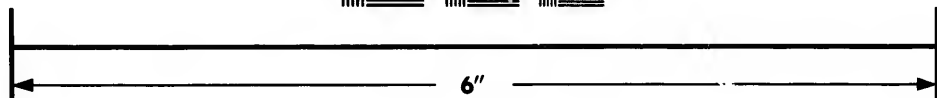
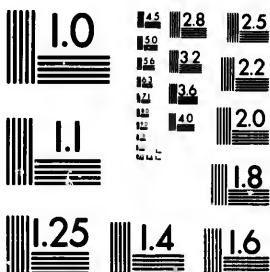


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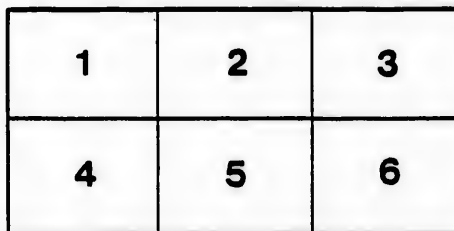
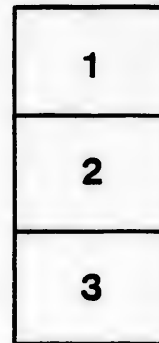
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**P**orch of the  
..... Temple



Plain Words on the  
Approach to our Father  
and to His House . . . . .



By J. C. Davidson, M. A.

RECTOR OF PETERBOROUGH.



Peterborough, Ontario.

THE PETERBOROUGH REVIEW PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED.

1896

Price Five Cents.

TO  
JAMES L. HOUGHTELING  
A LAYMAN LEADER IN THE CHURCH'S WARFARE ON THE  
FRONTIERS OF PRACTICAL RELIGION  
THIS SMALL EFFORT  
IN THE SAME QUARTER OF THE FIELD  
IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED.



W **D** ID you ever think of the many interesting and tender associations which cluster around the porch of an old family homestead? Its light has guided and cheered expected friends and home-coming wanderers. It has listened to welcomes which have gladdened responsive hearts. It has witnessed the preparations for, and the entrances into, the happiness of home-life. And from that Porch the children of the family have passed forth to their work in the world supported by helps and influences which no walls confine—family connexion, family interest, and family love.

Such a porch is as clear and distinct to our minds as the mansion to which it forms an entrance.

Let us now turn our attention to a higher "Home," even that of our Heavenly Father—not to His glorious abode above the skies, but to His Kingdom on earth, in which His happy people live and worship and work. We are told of our near relationship to the Prince of this Kingdom, and we desire to draw near to Him; but we hardly know the way. It is said that He dwells very near to us, but in the darkness we cannot discern the outlines of His dwelling and—what our eyes especially look for—the entrance into it.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to point out at least one entrance to the life of Communion with God

—the practical helps and duties with which the enquiring soul is called upon to deal.

In approaching God our first step is to *look away from ourselves*. We know that we are sinners, but probably we cannot at once realize the fact or feel any deep sorrow for past mistakes and misdoings. There is in this no reason for discouragement. Let our thoughts travel away in the direction (so far as we know it) of God. Look **The Father of the Family** towards Him, even from a far country. Behold His generous kindness. “He maketh His sun to arise on the evil as well as on the good: He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.”

But there is more than a general kindness to be seen. Look again. An all-seeing eye lovingly seeks *me* out; a powerful hand lovingly beckons *me*. It is the eye, the hand of my own Father. That Father's relationship and love has remained the same through all my wanderings and forgetfulness; and the place once given me in His family remains unoccupied, ready for my home-coming.

Surely as all this dawns upon me I *can* cry out (if nothing more) the one word “Father!”

But with this glimpse of a Father's love I catch sight also of His exceeding holiness, and before it my heart quails. “Behold the **Lamb of God**” Sin-defiled and sin-bound, how can I approach the pure and holy God?

But He who has invited me knows all my unworthiness, and has provided a Fountain for sin and for uncleanness wherein I may wash and be clean.



A loving Father points me to a loving Saviour.

In love the Lord Jesus, at his Father's bidding, came down from Heaven and was made man.

In love He lived among men a beautiful life of humility, of kindness, of holiness.

In love He died in pain upon the cross.

In love He rose from the dead and (with hands outstretched in blessing) ascended into Heaven, there to plead for us and to prepare for us a place in the mansions of our Father's House.

“ He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good,  
That we might go at last to Heaven  
Saved by His precious Blood.”

Come then in faith to your Saviour that through Him you may be ‘forgiven’ for the past and be ‘good’ in the future.

These two words are closely connected. Jesus Christ brings forgiveness only to those who repent deeply enough to turn from their sins to His life of goodness.

This may seem hard, but any easier way would of necessity prove a delusion. Sin with its low delights, a Saviour with the lofty happiness of our true Home—these lie in directly opposite directions. If we choose the Saviour we must step forth toward Him and His pure Home life, turning our backs on all the sin and worldliness outside.

In answer to prayer God's Holy Spirit will inspire and enable us to do this.

Having been granted this glimpse of the Father and the Saviour—a glimpse of your true Home and a foothold in it—don't stop to admire, but stride on with definite determined footsteps.

There is danger here. It is narrated that a Grecian Deity checked the advance of victorious foes by scattering over the battlefield a cloud of golden mist which dazzled and diverted the attention of the invaders.

Whatever may be the glory above or the peaceful appearances around, you are not now in a resting place but on a battlefield fighting the Family foes. Do not, **The Call to Action** then, idly musing, let your powers and privileges evaporate in sentiment, but direct them to solid manly action.

No irresolution. Do something, and do it quickly.

*What are you to do?* Nothing very wonderful. Think what would be the natural, reasonable course to follow towards the end you have in view.

A business man once made this offer to a popular Evangelist. "If you will in one sentence, free from cant, tell me how to 'get religion' I will agree to make an honest effort to 'get' it." After a pause the Evangelist answered, "act as if you were religious." The man accordingly began to follow the simple customs of religious people. He set himself to attend church on week-days as well as on Sundays, to have private and family prayer, and to be just and kind to his neighbours. Thus acting with all his heart the part of a religious man, associating with religious people, and breath-

ing in on all sides a religious atmosphere he caught, after a time, the spirit of religion, came to find a solid satisfaction in this new kind of life, and became imperceptibly a truly religious man.

Now there was just one mistake about this course—God Who is the Truth can ask no man to advance to what is true through what is false, or even slightly unreal.

ACT not *as if* you were religious but *because you are* (in a measure) religious, though you may not have realized it. ACT because God has already been working upon you and has long been waiting for you to co-operate! ACT because you were given in your baptism a birthright—a place in the Divine family—and it is high time for you to claim it, and begin to live up to it! ACT because after all your nature is not wholly bad, but (like other people's) is a mixture of good and bad, of which the good may be gradually developed and the bad cast out!

Take heart then! Don't let yourself go—and to this end, act instead of thinking or wishing. ACT NOW instead of to-morrow.

“ Act, act in the living present  
Heart within, and God o'erhead.”

*What are you to do?* Perhaps the best immediate act is to promptly commit one's self. Say at once to a near relative or friend (if you cannot bring yourself to speak more directly) “ I am resolved to do better : I intend to begin this or that habit.” This will help you in the weaker moments to come. Your course

“ With thy  
mouth con-  
fess the Lord  
Jesus ”

of action is decided, and someone else knows it. You have run up your flag; it has been seen, and your feelings of honour will help you stand by it.

One simple thing that you will begin at once to do is to *go regularly to Church*. The devil will perhaps try to throw "Thou shalt worship" you off the track here, suggesting that 'the men in the Church are no better than those outside'—which is mere bravado. Or he will suggest that "Church-going does not save a man." No one said it did, but it is your duty to worship God, and moreover, within the Church is the atmosphere in which people are being saved and moulded.

If iron is to be cast it must go without doubt to the foundry, in spite of the fact that some of the metal is not successfully moulded there.

Take your place, then, in the Church, the Divine workshop and keep it.

\* \* \* \* \*

You say perhaps, you *do* go to Church. Well, in that case, it may be, you have a line of action to take up in that pew of yours almost as new and striking as if **Conversion for the Pew-holder** you were to enter the Church for the first time.

That line of action is this—by prayer and a strong exercise of will-power throw off that carelessness, that hardness, that stiffness which effectually hinders God's work in His own workshop. Expose yourself to the fire of His love. *Yield yourself*, like fluid metal, to the Divine influences—to the shape of the mould which is now placed around you, but

which can effect nothing as long as you are hard and cold. On entering pray to God to help you get into this plastic, receptive condition, and then give yourself up to the operations of His hands. "Yield yourself to the Lord."

At this stage there are two definite calls for definite action.

(1.)—Consider whom you are approaching. If it be man, **The call to Reverence** your attitude will merely be one of courtesy, you can still hold up your head. But if it be GOD whom you expect to meet it is a different matter—not courtesy but Reverence is due to Him before whom the Heavenly Host fall low in adoration—"The Lord is in His holy Temple let all the earth keep silence before Him." Enter, then, in silent reverence. Bow inwardly the knees of the heart, as well as outwardly those of the body.

If you cannot offer anything else—If you have no voice, no money—at least offer this—the *sacrifice of Reverence*.

(2.)—At the entrance of every house there lies a door-mat, that he who has come through the mire may cleanse his shoes before entering. At the entrance to **The call to Confession** God's Temple there lies another kind of door-mat, or (as is required by sandalled feet in the East) a laver. Our Lord's directions are clear—"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." After being fully cleansed in the waters of Baptism, and coming home to God, if necessary, from a far country, it only remains that the miry sins should be removed which from week to week cleave to the pilgrim's feet. Otherwise he cannot go acceptably into the presence

of God or do Him service. "There shall in no wise enter anything that defileth."

These sins must then be removed. So, in the silence before service, we thoughtfully repent of our sins, then lay them sorrowfully before God in the General Confession. After which there falls on our ears the loving authoritative proclamation, "He" i.e. God (not the priest) "pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel."

In child-like faith we simply believe this, and look up with gratitude into the face of our Heavenly Father. And lo! the temporary barriers between us and God are broken away; the sunlight of His countenance streams down; and as His pardoned and accepted children we joyfully address Him in the words of His Son's own prayer—"Our Father which art in Heaven."

Thus have we already been enabled to offer two sacrifices. Those of lowly Reverence and of sorrowful Confession—"the sacrifices, that is, of a broken spirit and of a contrite heart, which God will not despise."

We are now free to engage in the main part of the worship of God, i.e. the Sacrifice of Praise. With loving hearts,  
**The Call to Praise**      loud voices and one united intention of mind, we join in rendering up a glorious service after the pattern of that offered in Heaven "with a sound as of many waters." This lofty occupation it is not for us to dwell upon in these pages, but we merely pause to note one of its most evident features. It is at once seen that our Church

regards both this Service of Praise and other parts of worship as Sacrifices—gifts offered up—involving willing effort of body, soul and spirit.

Indeed this fact determines, to some extent, the architecture of our Churches.

It is as participants that we are to come under Divine influences, and so the Porch of the Temple has no attractive entrance opening into a "Spectator's Gallery." There is only one door and that opens into the arena of *action*.

We take our places not in circular seats arranged chiefly for hearing God's word read and preached, but in pews constructed for worship. These may appear stiff and straight; but here our old watch-word rings forth with bracing effect "My duty towards God is to worship Him;" and "straight" we are told, "is the line of Duty." Yes, the point is manifest. These pews are arranged on the principle that the congregation is not a religious audience, but a detachment of Christ's Army assembled, rank behind rank, for orderly and united service.

On this principle, for instance, the service may be shared in, and effectively helped forward, by a *deaf man*, who may at least enjoy the solid satisfaction which comes from filling one's appointed post and doing one's appointed duty.

Frequent objections are made to this great feature of action in worship. People say "there is so much standing up and kneeling down in the church—I want something easier." And yet these same people would be ashamed to

ask for ease and softness and idle pleasure in the service of the world.

In the world we all aspire to be, not mere spectators or loafers, but men of action. In the world our bodies willingly bend over the desk, the counter or the spade. Yes, for the world's wages, men are willing to adopt any posture however lowly which their work may demand.

It is good: our work may be made a Divine offering as well as our worship. But shall we not also gladly and lovingly bend these same bodies in lowly reverence before God in His House of prayer? Must He not value a tribute from the body which He has created and redeemed, and now sanctifies? "Wherefore glorify God in your body."

Bend the knee in prayer, the head in adoration. Yield up, for the time, your body, soul and above all your spirit for gladsome participation in this glorious and uplifting occupation.

Yes, let us ask God to make our inward hearts pure and loving and our outward actions becoming in His sight, so that "we may worthily magnify His holy Name." Thus learning to worship God with all our faculties on earth we shall prepare ourselves for His presence and service in Heaven.

In order that we may be thus prepared the character of this heavenly service has been revealed to us. Read the glowing descriptions given in the 4th, 5th, 7th, 14th and 19th chapters of Revelation. There the worship of Heaven is described as responsive, musical,



congregational, and strikingly reverent—all man's faculties contributing to its beauty and glory.

After this revelation, shall we, in deciding the form of our worship, be guided merely by our own likings, opinions and prejudices? Or shall we say "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven?"

But we cannot, in these pages, further enter into the service of the sanctuary. Our mission was to find our way **A Retrospect** to our Father's presence. Our souls were first led to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ as the 'Door.' Divinely inspired to action we came to the House of Prayer. Tarrying in the Porch, we received directions as to the posture and actions required in the King's Courts then we ventured within the portals and approached God in worship, as we shall one day approach and serve Him in the Heavenly Temple. \* \* \* \* \*

The Service thus begun is ended, and we must withdraw. **Into the Porch again** And so moving on with the quiet throng of worshippers, we pass out, and find ourselves once more in the Porch.

Let us not relax our attention but be on our guard. For again the Porch is to us an entrance—this time into the world with its business, its temptations, and its sorrows.

It is the same world upon which we turned our backs an hour ago, but cannot we see more in it than before? Can **Viewed in the light of Heaven** we not see, at least, our path of purity, of honour, of kindness, marked out more clearly? Do we not feel a stronger determination to walk in this way?

And as we behold not only the noble loftiness of this path of duty, but also its many difficulties, discouragements, and dangers, cannot we further see the impossibility of a loving Father leaving His children at this critical time, when they step forth into that hard way which He Himself has appointed?

“He will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

In God’s strength, then, and under His protection we face the world again, to do our work with more energy, to fight our battle with more courage, to live our lives with more hope!

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

But, perhaps, you feel that you cannot look so far upwards towards God or so far outwards into life.

Well, these or other thoughts are not necessary. They may even be harmful, if they take the place of actions.

And actions there are, most useful and most timely now. “My duty towards my neighbour is to love him.”

We are leaving our Father’s House. We have been allowed to approach Him not alone, but in union with other members of the Family—“*Our* Father,” **A service of the Porch** “Through Jesus Christ *our* Lord.” And now these other members—our brothers and sisters—are pressing closely around us. Have we done anything towards acknowledging our relationship to them?

In the reverential awe within the Temple little could be done in this direction, except, perhaps the glad offering of a seat, the polite handing of a book, the helping on with a garment.

Such acts of simple kindness are too often excluded by an affected stiffness or coldness which sometimes passes current for Reverence.

When we come to think of it, a marble statue is very 'proper,' dignified and silent, and its head is often meekly bowed. Yet we can hardly call the statue reverent. Reverence is a thing of the heart as well as of the posture. True Reverence is a true expression of our love towards God. It combines a becoming fear with a chastened affection. Cultivate then, in God's house not the cold attitude of the statue, but the loving Reverence of the Angels whose lowly worship of God does not exclude loving ministrations to men.

Is there not a certain appropriateness in Christian courtesy being quietly shewn in a Christian Temple?

In the Porch, or outside, better opportunities may be given for small but dignified courtesies. That stranger who has knelt near you now for several Sundays, or who has passed out beside you for months, that new-comer or lonely soul who goes somewhere in your direction—cannot you do some act, or say some word, or make some gesture to show that you recognize your connexion with them as fellow-members of the same Family?

These social overtures are not called for under all circumstances. Common sense and tact will of course, be exercised. But, where possible, it must be conceded that such acts are practical and reasonable outcomes of the facts and principles of the Christian religion.

Our Lord has Himself made the application to salutations **In the Name of a Disciple** (S. Matt. v : 47), to hospitality (S. Luke xiv : 13), and to small acts of kindness (S. Matt. x : 42).

It is clear from these and His other words that any and every prudent effort towards this end, done as to a fellow-disciple, will (even when it seems a failure) be noticed, accepted, and used by the great Head of the Church.

Again it is a distinctive mark and glory of the Church of God that rich and poor, educated and uneducated, master and servant—all are here “knit together in one communion and fellowship.” One family we dwell in HIM who “died that He might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad.” In the spirit of our Lord’s thoughtful, tender, unobtrusive love let us carry the reality of our Brotherhood out of the Temple into the porch, and on into the world.

Small gestures, words and acts too often lead to great chasms dividing men. They can also be used as successfully to unite them.

It is sorrowful to consider that the serene atmosphere of the Porch has been too often disturbed by heartburnings arising from the lack of these social courtesies.

**This Service to be freely offered, not selfishly demanded.**

On this account some have even gone forth with the determination not to again enter their Father’s House.

We can well understand the disappointment of such people in not receiving outward evidences of

Christian fellowship and sympathy. But there are certain points which we ask them in all fairness to consider before coming to a hasty conclusion : (1) REMEMBER WHERE YOU ARE. This Porch is not the entrance to a social club or to worldly society. It is the Porch of our Father's House through which pass sinful souls, not to meet other sinners, but to meet their God. His presence, His favour and His love may well engross the attention and compensate for anything that is denied to us in other directions.

And oftentimes it is in isolation and loneliness, and amidst the unsatisfied cravings of earth, that the Pilgrim's restless affections are compelled to mount upward.

(2) MAKE FAIR ALLOWANCES. These expressions of fellowship for which you long are found difficult, and sometimes impossible, by many truly Christian people. Have *you* tried to practise them? Probably others are expecting in vain from you what you expect from them.

And we may be thankful that true Christian Brotherhood is too deep and precious a thing to be made dependent on such expressions, however appropriate they may be.

**Words and  
Gestures  
are not  
Everything.**

The fellowship of the Church is, after all, not that of the ball-room with its superficial, and often unmeaning courtesies.

Rather is it the more undemonstrative but deeper fellowship of the Naval and Military Service, wherein men are united as wearers of one uniform, as subject to one discipline, as comrades in one army !

As a soldier in the Divine Army you must expect fellowship of a somewhat military type. If that fellowship is not often talked about, it is none the less real on that account; and practical evidence will be given when called for. Of course if you are merely a straggler or camp-follower it may be different; but, depend upon it, men notice and (with an unseen thrill of admiration) recognize fellow-soldiers who do their duty bravely and maintain the honour of the Cross-emblazoned Flag. Fix your attention, then, on the great Captain and the post of duty which He has assigned you. Stand firmly at that post subject to His orders. Don't weakly lean upon others or depend on their attitude.

What would be thought of a soldier who pettishly or sullenly should retire from the ranks because of certain feelings towards his comrades? Away with such unworthy ideas! Eyes front! Brace yourselves to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

(3) *See to your foundation.* This point of dependence brings us to the root of the matter. Look at in another light. For your attitude on this social question is important because it influences, and is influenced by, the very basis of your spiritual life. What is that basis? Does your religion depend upon God or man? In answering be not self-deluded by party cries. "What is your religion," I ask a man. "I am Protestant" he replies, and valiantly adds "I allow no man to stand between my soul and God." "You go to Church?" "No, I don't happen to care for our Min-

ister, and the congregation are't any too sociable." Yet this consistent individual *thinks* he is allowing no man to stand between his soul and God !

Beware lest, in unduly emphasizing the need and extent of Christian fellowship, you *move the whole structure* of **Rock vs. Sand** personal religion off from its firm foundations **Foundation** of GOD and duty on to the shifting sands of man and sentiment.

You have come to Church to assist in offering up an acceptable sacrifice of Worship to God. By joint efforts (in which you had an active share) this service has ascended to Heaven, as was symbolized by the smoke of the ancient sacrifices.

Your duty is done ; and you can return home with a feeling of calm, thankful satisfaction which does not depend either on the quality of the sermon or on the greetings of friends.

Thus sustained by solid abutments of Duty—not left to lean on props of sentiment, built on Divine not human foundations—will your Religion gradually become a substantial structure able to weather the storm, instead of an artificial erection kept up by external supports—flimsy and fated to fall ! \* \* \* \* \*

In conclusion we would concentrate your attention on the two kindred subjects here brought before you—the approach to God, and the approach to His House.

(1) First and foremost, get clearly in your mind the way in which you are privileged to draw near to *God*. If in



these pages it has been re-iterated that this is a way of Action, the re-iteration has been made because of a popular tendency to overlook this important essential.

We do not however forget the supernatural Door of Baptism. "Except a man be born of water and of the **Through the Waters of Baptism** Spirit he cannot enter." This door is opened by our Father Who loves us before we can love Him. In the time of our helplessness He thus ushered us into the Christian Family. And, accordingly, at the entrance of most churches is placed the Font with its message of hope even to those who have become careless and bad. It is a reminder that we have a Father Who still loves us. It is a reminder that we have a place and a welcome awaiting us in the Family of God. See to it, then, that the Font is not rejected—that no human will is interposed to prevent the Divine love embracing in one Family "the children of God who are scattered abroad."

Lastly let us dwell on the Love which should animate all who are drawing nearer to God. It may be that you have **The Path of Love** been able to see and follow the path of Duty before recognizing the impulse of Love. Do your duty more and more lovingly, and be not content until the path of duty has revealed itself to you as the Path of Love. We cannot argue with those who calmly choose to remain hard and flinty, mean or superficial. But it is pathetic to see men, who are otherwise faithful and good, walking on from day to day in dreary and unsatisfied ignorance of the full, deep, glowing Love of God within their reach !



'To such we speak. Why not enjoy this greatest of blessings? Open your hearts to the love of God in nature. Walk in the sunshine. Read thoughtfully the story of God's tender love in Jesus Christ. Contemplate your Saviour's character—His life and words and works, His death. Pray earnestly and often that you may be like Him. Say over and over again "O God pour into our hearts more love," and then begin to exercise yourself in loving thoughts and words and acts. Thus, exposing yourself to Divine influences in the worlds of nature and of grace, will you become more loving as you approach nearer to God Who is Love.

(2) Finally, in view of the Majesty as well as the Love of God, let us recall the needs and requirements of those **Power in the Porch** who approach Him in His Temple, and the Divine power available on their behalf.

In the porch of the Temple of Jerusalem sat a lame man who was healed by St. Peter. Notice the means used—Christ's Apostle in His Master's name calls him to *definite action*—"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" . . . . . And he, leaping up stood and walked, and entered with them into the Temple . . . praising God" (Acts iii).

Among those who throng the Porches of God's Temples now are many men and women lame in spirit, irresolute in will, weak in character. This can be seen by a glance at their faltering, uncertain gait, their purposeless attitude.

Like the lame Jew, some have been brought by their friends; others have drifted in; and there are others still

too crippled in will and enterprise to come to the Temple in any way.

To all these persons who will hear and receive them come to-day the same words from the same Saviour. If followed, this direction will be found to be full of life and power. "Rise up and walk!"

Look up then in hope to the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen in faith to the authoritative message delivered by His ambassadors. Rise up with fixed determination. Walk joyfully into the Temple to do your duty there. And this duty done, walk thoughtfully out again through the Porch with more of the Spirit and power of God—inspired to carry that humble, loving, lofty spirit out into the great world!



*This Little Book  
To the Kind Reader*

*GREETING:—*

*I would go as a Missionary to carry my  
message to SOME ONE ELSE.*

*Will you not send me?*

