

The approachableness of Jesus

'Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.'

Luke 15:1

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Matthew 11:25-30

What is the way for a sinner to come to Christ? It is simply this; the sinner, feeling his need of a Saviour, trusts himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the perplexity of my boyhood, but it is so simple now. When I was told to go to Christ, I thought, 'Yes, if I knew where he was, I would go to him; no matter how I wearied myself, I would trudge on till I found him.' I never could understand how I could get to Christ till I understood that it is a mental coming, a spiritual coming, a coming with the mind. The coming to Jesus which saves the soul is a simple reliance upon him, and if, today, being aware of your guilt, you will rely upon the atoning blood of Jesus, you have come to him, and you are saved. Is he not, then, approachable indeed, if there is so simple a way of coming? No good works, ceremonies or experiences are demanded; a childlike faith is the royal road to Jesus. This truth is further illustrated by the help which he gives to coming sinners in order to bring them near to himself. He it is who first makes them coming sinners. It is his eternal Spirit who draws them unto himself. They would not come to him of themselves; they are without desires towards him, but it is his work to cast secret silken cords around their hearts, which he draws with his strong hand and brings them near to himself. Depend upon it, he will never refuse those whom he himself draws by his Spirit. Rest assured he will never shut the door in the face of any soul that comes to feed at the gospel banquet, moved to approach by the power of his love. He once said, 'compel them to come in,' but he never said, 'shut the door in their faces and bolt them out.'

FOR MEDITATION: Christ's invitation to come to him could not be wider (Matthew 11:28; John 7:37). His reception of all who come to him could not be kinder (John 6:37). But the refusal of so many to come to him could not be more obstinate, foolish and insulting to him (John 5:40).

Miracles of love

'Thou hast loved my soul out of the pit of corruption.' Isaiah 38:17
(marginal reading)

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: John 14:18–24

Lose your sense of Jesus' love and the power of your religion is gone. You have stolen the life if you have taken away the love. Believe it, know it, pray for it. Spirit of God, make them feel it, and anything shall be possible, whether of sin slain or duty wrought. I have often felt myself to be a mere expanse of foulness, like the mudflats by the seashore when the tide is out. As far as the eye can carry, you see a continent of mud with black rocks, rotting seaweed, pieces of wreck, creeping things innumerable and such foul matters as the eye might never wish to see again. What is to be done with this dismal region? Here lie the fisher boats embedded in the mud; what shall float them? It would be impossible to drag them down to the sea; must they lie there and decay? What is to be done with this mud and weed? Wait; and lo, at the appointed time the sea advances from its bed; ripple by ripple and wave by wave it rises, spreading out itself like a molten looking-glass, where just now all was foul; and lo, the boats are lifted; they walk the waters like things of life, while all that rotted in the noon-day sun is forgotten, and the waves follow each other with continuous flashes of silver sheen. O Lord, thou art that sea of love; thy mercies are thy waves of lovingkindness; let them come up and flood my soul; with infinite power of love, rise and cover all my nature. I hope the Lord will deal so with all of you. Never rest until you enjoy this love and, when you do enjoy it, keep it. If you find my Beloved, hold him and do not let him go.

FOR MEDITATION: God loves his people with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). Have you lost your sense of it? Better to cry 'Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?' (Psalm 89:49) than to complain 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' (Malachi 1:2).