

# The Spirit's Voice

By the Autor of:

"ANGELS IN WHITE," "LIFE'S JOURNEY,"

"BREAK OF DAY," "MODERNISM,"

&c., &c.



To be obtained of:

RUSSELL ELLIOTT,

2 Bracken Gardens,

Barnes, LONDON, S.W.13.

---

Price, 3d each, or 12 for 2/6. post free.

# THE SPIRIT'S VOICE

---

**The Voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I Cry?**

Isa. XL. 6.

The Spirit's voice has been heard all down the ages. Chaos and darkness heard it at the beginning, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. It was heard by man before the flood, when corruption and violence prevailed, and God's Spirit strove with him. The Spirit of Christ was heard through Noah. That same voice spoke, when prophets were moved by the Holy Ghost, and testified of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. There is a remarkable record of the same activity in Isaiah XL., where two voices are heard. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness;" and, again, "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?" The one is human and the other Divine, and yet they are the same, one in their testimony, because the Divine is speaking through the human. The human voice proved, long afterwards, to be that of John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. We read: "John bare witness of Him and cried."

What a solemn and overwhelming fact confronts us here in the prophetic utterance of the prophet, and its fulfilment seven hundred years after in John the

Baptist! In both cases we hear the Spirit's voice. The testimony has a double application. It concerns God and it concerns man. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," is the first announcement. But there is another; and who can measure the importance of it as regards man himself? Does man want to know the truth about himself?—can he bear to know it? "The voice said, Cry"—and here, of course, it is the Spirit's voice. Then in answer to this is the human voice—"And he said, "What shall I cry?" And this is what is to be proclaimed: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." How stupendous is the message, and how little man's ideas of himself fit in with this description! How little he is willing to believe it! His main effort in every sphere of life, whether religious, social or political, is to demonstrate, if possible, that this estimate is not true. But it is impossible! And in order that there may be no mistake about it, the statement is repeated: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth." Yet there is something which neither withers nor fades nor fails: "The word of our God shall stand for ever." To the Spirit's voice we must listen, if we are to know the truth.

How tremendous then is the answer to the question, "What shall I cry?" The one message, so far as man himself is concerned, which is to be sounded in his ears does not flatter him. But, on the other hand, it inspires no false hopes. It tells him of his utter ruin and utter need. It agrees with these other words, "Verily man at his best state is

altogether vanity." But if man is but grass, the message also tells him of something that endures. A message of glad tidings from God even to such a hopeless and undone creature. "The word of our God shall stand for ever." And the Apostle Peter, quoting the passage from the Old Testament, declares: "And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." That word which endures is a word of glad tidings—a message of salvation in the fullest sense, if only man will listen.

The voice said "Cry": and he said "What shall I cry?" All true preaching is a "Cry." It is not what shall I mumble, or mutter, or even what shall I speak? A cry comes from the very depths of the soul. It can be heard by all. It tells of urgency, and demands a hearing. It means that the message must be uttered with all the vehemence, all the conviction and all the earnestness possible. Even of our Lord Himself it is recorded: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried." And it is not a little remarkable that His utterance had reference to the Spirit. A cry was heard ringing through the Temple. The feast of Tabernacles had failed, for it had become merely a feast of the Jews. But One was present Who could satisfy the thirsty soul. To such the invitation was: "Let him come unto Me and drink."

The apostle Peter not only quotes the passage from Isaiah but emphasises it; for it may be rendered: "The grass has withered and the flower has fallen." The coming of Christ and His rejection by man proved that all flesh, without exception, was unprofitable, and that as regards man himself all was hopeless. He was not only a sinner but an enemy. Even God manifest in flesh, and in grace, awakened no response in him but hatred. Those only "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God," recognised Christ and received Him.

John's testimony on the banks of the Jordan had this double aspect. The cry that was heard there not only bore witness to the coming of One who would bring salvation, but to man's utter incapacity and ruin: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees." The Spirit's testimony is to man's need of God, and to the way in which God has responded to that need. Let us not be either ashamed or afraid to acknowledge our need and emptiness when we can find all in God. "Of His fullness have all we received and grace upon grace."



Can the Spirit's voice be heard to-day? Strange were it not so, seeing that, in a peculiar way, this is the dispensation of the Spirit. One outstanding feature of John's testimony concerning Christ was this: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." This was fulfilled at Pentecost, when believers were "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." He dwells in the Church and that is where His voice is heard. (Acts XI. 28; XII. 2; I. Cor. XII. 3, 7, 8; I. Tim. IV. 1). The last passage quoted is most important as bearing upon this very point we are considering. It affirms "the Spirit speaketh expressly." Here we seem to have something beyond the fact that the Apostle was inspired to write these words. Remembering that the Apostle is writing of the House of God, the meaning seems to be that the general testimony of the Spirit was to this effect. His voice was heard by others beside the Apostle.

In this connection, let us remind ourselves that in the addresses to the Churches, as recorded in Rev. II. and III., each address commences with the words "These things saith," and closes with, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith." It is Christ from Whom the message comes, but the voice

that is heard is the Spirit's. The actual communication is by the Spirit through John.

As these addresses cover the entire Church period, two supremely important facts demand attention. First, the Holy Spirit remains to the end: Second, His voice is still to be heard. Thus, when, in the last address, our Lord says, "If any man hear My voice" that voice is the Spirit's voice. For the simple reason that at the close of the exhortation is repeated: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

As confirming all that has been said already we find at the close of Revelation—when the Lord presents Himself to the churches for the last time, and His voice is heard uttering the final message—we find the Spirit and the Bride are associated: The Spirit and the Bride say "Come." Now it is evident the Bride would not say this of herself, independently of the Spirit. At least, it is of the utmost importance to see it is not so; but that it is the Spirit and the Bride. But is it not equally important to see that neither is it the Spirit alone? They are in closest association. They are united in saying "Come." The Spirit's voice is again heard, and the Bride listens and responds.

Thus, very briefly, we have traced the Spirit's operations as revealed in Scripture, and we have seen that in our day, as in all other ages, the Spirit's voice is to be heard. Are we hearing it? Are we listening for it?

The Spirit has come to earth to form a Bride for Christ, and, at the close, our attention is directed to "the Spirit and the Bride." He has done His work. The Bride is there, and she is saying "Come" to her Lord in unison with the Spirit.

It is what is foreshadowed in Genesis XXIV. The servant is sent by the father to obtain a bride for Isaac. Almost every detail of the chapter fits in

with New Testament doctrine. The servant leads Rebecca across the desert to Isaac, and Isaac comes to meet her. How the servant must have engaged the thoughts of the bride with the one to whom he was leading her! "Send me away that I may go to my master," he had said, when they wanted him to linger. And we read: "The servant took Rebecca and went **his way.**" The servant and Rebecca were one. She had said "I will go." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say Come." Hear Whom or what? Surely, it is the Spirit's voice we are to hear. And what will He say? His testimony is to the return of Christ. What a wonderful truth, that, in the company of the Holy Spirit, we are being led home to Christ! May we listen to all the Spirit has to say to us on the way.

\* \* \* \*

That the Spirit's voice is to be heard to-day we have no doubt. A servant of the Lord was taken aside recently, so that in solitude and away from his usual surroundings and activities, he might discover (so he believes) what special message, if any, the Lord has for His people at the present time. The message borne in upon him—too often and too decidedly to be mistaken—was that the Lord is about to come. He is ready to admit that, from one point of view, this is nothing new. But it came to him in such a vivid and impressive way as to make our Lord's return the one thing uppermost in his mind. And he has the overwhelming conviction that, at last, the hope is about to be realised.

In conjunction with this, and as confirming it, he was led to study the history of David, and to notice one feature of that history which stands out in a most striking way: viz., the power David possessed, in a most unusual manner, of attaching people to his person. Nothing at all approaching it can be found

anywhere else in the Bible, except in the case of our Lord Himself. In this respect, as in others, David is a type of Christ, and the Holy Spirit has, designedly we think, given us many instances of such devotion. Further, it is to be noticed, that our Lord in his last addresses to the Churches speaks of Himself in connection with David. To Philadelphia He says "He that hath the key of David," and at the very close He presents Himself as "the Root and the Offspring of David." Does not all this mean that our Lord would attach all hearts to Himself in view of His coming? He is infinitely greater and more glorious than David. Yet our attachment to Him is sometimes less than that which David received.

The first instance of this attachment is the case of Jonathan, recorded in Chapter XVIII., of I. Samuel. First, we have the record of David's conflict with the giant. "Saul and all Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid," we read. No one had sufficient confidence, no one was competent, to meet the great enemy. David, a slender youth, undertakes the task; and, discarding all human weapons, selects five smooth stones from the brook for his purpose. All speaks of weakness, from the human point of view, and therefore David in his encounter with the Philistine becomes the apt type of Him Who was "crucified through weakness." But "the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The sling and the stone do their work, and the giant falls. Then great emphasis is laid upon the fact that "There was no sword in the hand of David." Here, again, all is typical. Christ did not meet our great foe and overcome him with offensive weapons. There was no sword in His hand.

"By weakness and defeat He won the mead and  
crown,

Trode all our foes beneath His feet by being  
trodden down."



He had no weapon; it was by what He suffered He vanquished our foe, for we read, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."

Of David we read: "David ran and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith." The giant's head cut off with his own sword! And did not Christ defeat our foe after the same fashion? He took part in flesh and blood "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Satan's weapon, death, became the means by which his power is annulled.

In submitting to death our Saviour accomplished two things. He bore the judgment due to our sins, and so put them away; for He thereby made propitiation for sins, and for ever silenced the accusing voice of Satan and of our own conscience; but that death also declared the full tale of God's love to the sinner. Death now—the death of Christ—instead of being God's judgment upon us, becomes the revelation of His love to us. In the death of my substitute I see that God is for me, instead of being against me; and all fear of death and all bondage are gone. Satan's power has been annulled. The giant's head has been cut off with his own sword.

Just as the head of the giant in David's hand (mentioned no less than three times) told of victory completed and victory declared, so Resurrection is the proof, in our case, that the sacrifice of Christ is accepted and the victory is complete. The accusing voice of the Adversary is forever silenced. Christ has been raised for our justification. It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?

But testimony must also be borne to the person of him who gained the victory. And so immediately

there follows a question which is asked no less than three times: "Whose son is this youth?" David himself answers this question, for no one else can. It is when this question is answered that we read, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

Is it not remarkable that our Lord asks a similar question about Himself? When all others have put their questions, as recorded in Matt. XXII., and He has answered them, He asks a question. And the one question He asks is: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" They answer, "the son of David." But He is more than David's Son—He is David's Lord. And Christ proceeds to quote that sublime utterance of David, in Ps. CX., which refers not to David but to Himself: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

The question about David was: "Whose son is this youth?" And the answer won the heart of Jonathan. The one question for us is: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" When we can give an answer to that our hearts will be won. He can answer all our questions, even the deepest—the question of our sins, and He can tell us that He has satisfied God about them. And now He asks us for an answer to His question. And the answer fills and satisfies us for ever. He is One worthy to sit at the right hand of God, yet He invites our love.

It is to be noticed that it was not the victory David achieved, great and important as it was, which won the heart of Jonathan, but the person of David. "And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul"—that is, confessing who he was—"that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David." Jonathan must indeed have been grateful for the victory, as were all Israel. The one who had defied their armies, and caused them to be dismayed

and greatly afraid, was no more. Yet, as a matter of fact, it is not said that this caused Jonathan to love David as his own soul. The person as well as the work was needed for this.

There is Another Who has done a work for us and won a victory far greater than anything achieved by David. A greater foe has been overcome. And who can measure the suffering and shame endured to accomplish it? These did not enter into David's conflict. He needed courage and faith, but there was no suffering and no shame. What, then, think ye of Christ?

But the work and the victory are not sufficient to win our love, any more than they were sufficient to win Jonathan's. They may, and do, win our gratitude. But we do not usually love people because of what they have done, but because of what they are. And here is just the point where many stop short. They know the work, but they do not know enough of the Person.

“Hast thou seen Him, heard Him, known Him,  
Is not thine a captured heart?”

How have we answered the question, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?

When our Lord found the man whose eyes He had opened, and who was cast out of the synagogue, He does not say, “I have opened your eyes, what am I to you?” Nor does He say “I have given you sight, you ought to be grateful.” The question He puts is—  
“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

\* \* \* \*

Jonathan is won. He loved David as his own soul. How does he show it? We read:—

“Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow, and to his girdle.”

He did not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. He proves his love by a most striking manifestation of it.

He “stripped himself.” David was greater in the eyes of Jonathan than Jonathan. A whole world of significance lies within those two words—“**Stripped himself.**” Perhaps no other words could convey so much. David, as we have said, was more to Jonathan than Jonathan. Is this so as between Christ and us? Stripping ourselves means more than forsaking sin. When we are converted we renounce our sins. We are only too glad to be rid of them. For one thing, we are ashamed of them. We change our behaviour. But to “strip ourselves” means to renounce self. We see a man stripping himself, out of love to Christ, in the third chapter of Philippians. Paul there speaks of all that gave him a position before men: things that were to his credit and made something of him, as the the world—and what is more, as the religious world—views things: “But what things were gain to me,” he says, “those I counted loss for Christ.” He “stripped himself.”

Has anything like that happened in our case? Is Christ so much to us that we have sacrificed things that would have brought us distinction and worldly advantage, in order to make more of Him, and that He may be honoured? Things which would have been positive gain to us, as before men, we let go.

Jonathan was the king's son, and the robe he wore must have given him distinction and been a mark of his exalted rank, but he gives it to David. And having done that, the rest is easy. For a man who has learned to strip himself is prepared to make any sacrifice. And so his garments, and his sword

and his bow and his girdle are all surrendered. His is indeed a captured heart—captured and conquered. For a warrior who surrenders his sword and bow surely makes full submission. While the gift of the girdle meant that henceforth he would serve David with all his strength.

What shall we say? what can we say? in answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" In the presence of One greater than David—not only "Great David's greater Son" but so great that He is David's Lord—One Jehovah can address as distinguished above all others, and to Whom He says, what, indeed, has been said to no one else: "Sit Thou on My right hand"—can we withhold what He so richly deserves? And is He not worthy of the best we can offer? One sitting at the right hand of God—One seated upon the Father's throne—One to Whom heaven and earth will one day bow—invites our attachment and affection.

He has done what no one else has done—what no one else could do, even had there been willingness to do it—He has died for us, and His death alone could save us from perdition. But there is more than that. "He died for us that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him."

We read of David, on one occasion, that "He bowed the heart of all the men of Judah even as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants." (II. Sam. XIX. 14). Is Christ to have less than David? Shall not the heart be bowed in His Presence? He Who has "given us all that love could give." If so, shall we not send this word to Him, "Return Thou?" Have you sent this word to Him? Does He hear you saying "Come," and saying it in such a way that He will not refuse? "Why speak ye not a word of bringing the King back?" Oh, fellow believer, we must bring the King back. It is possible, for whatever God does, He does in answer to His people's prayers. Christ

came at first in answer to prayer. For what is the opening scene in Luke's gospel but a prayer meeting? (Luke I. 10), which is referred to in connection with the birth of John the Baptist, His forerunner. The Holy Spirit came in answer to prayer. (Acts I. 14). Jerusalem will be restored and God's earthly people blessed in answer to prayer. (Isa. LXII. 6-7) and Christ will come the **Second** time in response to the cry of His people. For what is the last prayer the Holy Spirit inspires?—"The Spirit and the Bride say Come." Perhaps that prayer has already met with a partial response in the words which occur a little lower down:—"Surely I come quickly." To which we add our double "Amen." "Amen, Amen, Come, Lord Jesus."

### MEPHIBOSHETH.

Do we miss Him? Do we miss Him as Mephibosheth missed David? Perhaps there is hardly a more touching incident in the whole of Scripture than the story of his devotion to David. It is another example of the peculiar feature of which we have spoken. That story is well known. When all David's enemies had been overthrown and his kingdom established, and David is securely seated upon his throne, he remembers his "covenant with Jonathan" (I. Sam. XX. 14-15). The kindness of the Lord was to be shown to Jonathan's house for ever. And so David enquires: "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (II. Sam. IX. 1). The only one to be found was one "lame on his feet." A pitiable object, one who could not do David much harm, nor could he render him any service. But the king sends for him, to show him the kindness of God. He restores him all the lands belonging to the house of Saul, and tells him he shall eat bread at his table continually, which was a greater honour. And the last reference to him is, "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did

eat continually at the King's table, and was lame on both his feet."

"Lame on both his feet!" He could neither fight for the King nor run on his errands. But he did more—he gave him his heart's devotion. And there came a time, when this was more precious to David than any service. David had passed through that terrible experience due to the insurrection under Absalom. The rebellion had been quelled and David is on his way back to be reinstated on the throne. But Mephibosheth is missing. A lie had been circulated that he was seizing the opportunity to regain the kingdom, which once had belonged to his ancestor Saul.

This was far indeed from the truth, and we read, "Mephibosheth, the son of Saul, came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." And when David says to him: "I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land," Mephibosheth's reply is: "Yea, let him take all, for as much as my Lord the King is come again in peace unto his own house." (II. Sam. XIX. 24, 29/30). Here is a striking instance of attachment to David's person. Why does the Holy Spirit record these particulars for us? except to emphasise the special feature of which we have spoken, and in order to teach us the lesson that if hearts were thus drawn to David and became attached to him, how much more should we be attached to Him of Whom David was only a type.

Is not this the plain teaching of the New Testament? Let us recall one passage in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter I. (vv. 18-22).

"But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was

yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God: Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

The words "stablisheth us with you," might be rendered, "Attaches firmly to." We are to be firmly attached to Him so as not to be moved away.

Christ is presented here as Son of God. How this reminds us of the three-fold question in respect of David, which we have been considering—"Whose son is this youth?" And of our Lord's own question: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" All the promises of God to David will be made good in David's Son, Who is also Son of God. This is why the final presentation of Him in Scripture is as "the Root and the offspring of David."

We read of this One:—

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

This represents far more than David ever did for Mephibosheth. Generous as were his dealings with Jonathan's son, and with a magnanimity which did him infinite credit, yet David probably was not one whit poorer in consequence, nor did he relinquish his high station. But here is One infinitely greater than David—the Heir of all things as well as of the promises—the Son, superior to all—and of Him we read, "For your sakes He became poor." "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Only by relinquishing everything could He make us rich. For He must take our sins upon Himself—"bare them in His own body on the tree"—and this meant the laying aside of rank and station and riches, going outside the gate, forsaken of all. If David "bowed the



heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man," is there not a thousand times more here to bow our hearts and win them for ever?

### ABIGAIL.

To take one more instance, we may see in Abigail something of what should characterise ourselves. For she has very special characteristics. A Spirit-taught woman she was indeed. In Jonathan we see one surrendering all to another—everything a man prizes most—in order to place another man in front of him; in Mephibosheth we see one who possessed no titles and no honours, needy and unknown, won by kindness and drawn by the favour shown to him, so that David was more to him than lands or even personal comforts. And now in Abigail we have another instance of the same kind, though displaying itself in a different way.

For it is not mere nature, though in its most attractive form, that we see in Abigail. She regards David not from any mere personal standpoint, such as might have been naturally attractive to a woman, but from the point of view of God's purpose. She had heard the Spirit's voice. Though how and when she had been thus taught of God we do not know. But is there anything more beautiful than to see God's work in a soul? And if it ever was seen, it is witnessed in Abigail. Her humility is most manifest. "Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be," are her first words on reaching David; while her last, at the end of the story, when David sends to fetch her after the death of Nabal, are these: "Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."

Yet, at the same time, she is capable of speaking words of weight and wisdom to David. She brings a divine message to him, warning him against seeking revenge. She can discern, too, the true character of

Nabal, for folly was as manifest in him, as wisdom was conspicuous in herself. And she can also discern between Saul and David. But, above all, she is fully enlightened as to God's purpose with regard to the latter, and that he was the appointed ruler over Israel. The words she utters are indeed wonderful: "For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house:" and again: "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God." "And it shall come to pass when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel . . . then remember thine handmaid."

These are amongst the remarkable utterances which fell from her lips. We say again, we do not know how and when she had been enlightened, but we do discern in her one taught of God, and her language is the language of the Spirit. It is the Spirit's testimony to Christ, viewing David as a type. This alone accounts for the place he has in Scripture.

And just as Abigail saw David in relation to God's purpose at that time, so every Spirit-taught child to-day becomes supremely occupied with God's eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. For we are "strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith." (Eph. III. 16, 17). Divine affections implanted in us by the Holy Ghost are set upon Christ, and He Who is the centre of all the Divine counsels, filling a place occupied by no one else, becomes of supreme interest to us. What engages our hearts is that in the age to come God will "gather together in one all things in Christ." Would there were more Abigails in the Church to-day, willing to fill the lowest place, yet, at the same time, with hearts engaged with the highest truth, and thus preparing the way for the coming of the Lord. If Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, the Spirit and the Bride will be saying "Come."

Let us seek to be Abigails. She had no higher aim than to serve David by washing the feet of His servants. Because of what David was in her eyes, she sought no higher glory than that. Her high thoughts of David and of God's purpose concerning him, made the lowest service a delight.

\* \* \* \*

### **DAVID'S LAST WORDS. (II. Sam. XXIII.).**

We have been occupied with David as a type of Christ, and must surely have been impressed by that peculiar feature of his history upon which we have been dwelling—the way in which people were attached to his person. As we have said, there is nothing to resemble it anywhere else in Scripture. And we cannot doubt that the Holy Spirit had a special design in bringing this feature into such striking relief. Other examples could have been given—to wit, the mention of David's mighty men. Their exploits were not the result merely of courage and prowess, but sprang from devotedness to their king.

Let us now consider David's last words, and compare them with the last words of Him Who is both the Root and Offspring of David, as recorded in Rev. XXII. This will bring us face to face with the Spirit's special testimony in our own day.

“Now these be the last words of David.” In every way they prove he was indeed a man after God's own heart. For are they not a testimony to his character? What we are at the **last** will generally indicate what we have been all along. It is very blessed to see to what his mind reverts as he faces the end.

David can think and speak of himself as “the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of

Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel." Reminding us of what is recorded in Pss. 78 and 89, "He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheep-folds: from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance." "Then Thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him."

But beside placing him in such an exalted position, God's Spirit had made him the author of those Psalms which, all down the ages, have spoken to the hearts of men. David refers to himself as the sweet psalmist of Israel, but recognises these psalms were not his own production. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," he says, "and His word was in my tongue." And then he declares that God not only spake by him, but spake *to* him. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass, springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

Truly great words to utter, and in them we see a foreshadowing of one greater than David. "The man raised up on high, the anointed," refers to Christ. Even the Psalms of David were the product of the Spirit of Christ. And to Christ—the once humbled but now exalted One—God will say as to no other "Be thou ruler over men" (margin). He will be "just ruling in the fear of God. As the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds."

What a morning that will be of which Christ is the light and the sun, and from which His Presence has banished all clouds. Earth will respond to heaven then. The tender grass will spring up and the rain will be over. Then it will be said, "The

winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Earth will be renewed under the smile of its true Owner and Lord, and in Him heaven and earth will be one. Jacob's vision of long ago will find its adequate fulfilment, and Christ's own words will be realised, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

David is under no delusion as to the final import of what God had said to him. And we may well rejoice that David's last words carry us beyond David to One greater and better—One Who has engaged our hearts with Himself in a way we could not feel towards any other.

Yet David is sure of God and sure of the fulfilment of all His promises, in spite of the admission: "Although my house be not so with God." "Yet He hath made with me," he says, "an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow." It all looks on to Christ. As we read in Ps. lxxxix.—

"Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore and my covenant shall stand fast with Him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven." (vv. 27-9).

God spake in vision to David (v. 19) but the words, taken in all their significance, go beyond anything that was true of David, and can only be fully realised in Christ.

### REV. XXII. 16-20.

Let us now turn from the last words of David to the last words of One Who is David's son and yet

David's Lord. (Rev. XXII. 16). We do not mean that the last chapter of Revelation is necessarily the last inspired writing chronologically. There is a good deal of difference of opinion existing upon this question. Relatively, the matter is of small importance. The words we are about to quote are the last words of Christ as being found at the very close of the Bible, and also the last on account of the message they contain. They constitute a formal and final utterance of Christ to His Church.

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the Root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star."

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

There are great contrasts, as well as a certain similarity, between the words of David and those of Christ. It is interesting to notice how the connection with David is maintained.

The One now before us speaks of Himself as the Root of David. He is God as well as Man. David received all from Christ. The Spirit of Christ spake by him and made him what he was. The Deity and humanity of our Lord are found linked together in two prophecies in Isaiah, Chapters IX. and XI. In the first, we have "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," but He is also "the Mighty God" (v. 6). In the latter chapter we read: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." This is in verse 1. Whereas in verse 10 the same one is spoken of as "a root of Jesse." This is quoted by Paul in Romans XV. 12. "There shall be a Root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles."

Yet Christ also speaks of himself as the "offspring of David," and this connects Rev. XXII. with II. Sam. XXIII. David has the Kingdom in view, for he refers to a Ruler over men and to what should be his character, as he does also to the "sun" and to the "everlasting covenant." Here in Rev. XXII. we behold the One of Whom all this will be true and Who will answer to every requirement, for He will be "just ruling in the fear of God." But something new is added. He is "the Bright Morning Star." Both the Kingdom and the Church are in view.

And linked with all this greatness, yea, introducing it and identified with it and making possible our part in it, is that human Name, which awakens a response in every heart under the influence of the Spirit. "I Jesus . . . the root and the offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star."

To this One there is an immediate response, just as there is a response in the first chapter of this same book. The moment Jesus Christ in a three-fold character is presented, the Church responds, "Unto Him that loves us." So here, the moment attention is drawn to Jesus, in connection with His coming and reign, the response is, "Come."

How much is lost if we make this merely an appeal to the sinner. The fact is, in one and the same verse, there is both. But first of all, the invitation is to Christ, and there are at least four reasons for thinking that this is so. In the first place, Christ is addressing the Churches. In the next, it is the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Now the Bride, as such, does not exactly address the World. But how appropriate for the Bride to be in sympathy with her Lord and longing for His return. And this constitutes the third reason—its appropriateness. The fourth and last reason is that the words in verse 20 "Surely I come quickly" seem in answer to the invitation "Come," from the Spirit and the Bride in verse 17.

This affords a very striking contrast with II. Sam. XXIII. In David's case there is no response. Most impressive and beautiful and full of suggestion are his last words, but there is no response. There is a response, further on in the chapter, when David longed and said, "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate." Then three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines and drew water. "Nevertheless he would not drink thereof but poured it out unto the Lord." And here again there is contrast in Rev. XXII. All who are "athirst" are invited to "take the water of life freely." That is possible because of One Who went outside the gate and laid down His life for sinners—"I Jesus." David refused to drink because the men went in jeopardy of their lives; the reason for men to drink now is because One has laid down His life.

It is that One Who awakens a response which no one else can awaken. There is no response when David speaks. But in Rev. XXII. we find ourselves in the presence of One Who will rule over men according to all the requirements of God and the needs of this poor world. To Him there is a response. It is that One Whose way to the Crown was by the Cross. One Who died for men, according to God's will, may safely be left to rule them. He will indeed be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." That One is Jesus—"I Jesus."

Can we withhold our response when He is presented? We know ourselves to be in relationship with that very One. The Spirit taught us our need and led us to the Cross, and has brought the love revealed there into our hearts. And now the Spirit attaches our hearts to Him. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." A Bride is to share His Kingdom and reign and be His companion for eternity.



One more contrast presents itself. David has to use these words with regard to God's covenant with him and his house: "Although He make it not to grow." David realised the time had not come for God to make good His promises, though he firmly believed in them. Yet their **immediate** accomplishment was not to be. But what we have in Rev. XXII. is the exact contrast of this. There, in response to the invitation from the Spirit and the Bride, we have the answer, "Surely I come quickly." The Church's Amen follows: "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." There is to be no delay.

Nor need there be any difficulty in our minds as to this. The present dispensation is a parenthesis in the ways of God and there was no reason at any time why it should continue. It forms no part of the prophetic plan as such. The moment our Lord left this scene, His return became the next event to be looked for, as is proved by Acts I. 11. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

There is one respect in which all believers to-day should be like David. As he looked forward to Christ's day and thought of Him as the Ruler and of the "morning without clouds," he exclaimed: "This is all my salvation and all my desire." These words express an intense longing on David's part that God would make good His promise. Ought not the same longing to animate us? We are in closer relationship with Christ than was David. And do not our Lord's words in Rev. XXII. both create that longing and in a measure satisfy it? "I Jesus," reminds us of one truly Man, and of all connected with His life on earth, the love and grace displayed from the manger to the Cross. He is the vessel of Divine testimony through Whom God's mind is communicated to the Church. But He is also the One sufficient for all

needs, whether on the part of God or man: whether in connection with earth or heaven. One Who is "The Root and the offspring of David, the bright, Morning Star" is capable of fulfilling all hopes.

Is it any wonder the Spirit creates a response in the Bride to such a presentation? Jesus, and the Spirit and the Bride are seen in perfect harmony. The Bride is more to Him than the Kingdom even. And what is He to her? The Spirit has done His work. He has presented Christ in such a way that her heart has been won. The glory of His Person, the fullness of His love, have gained her affections; and His death, resurrection and ascension have met all her needs. His coming is the one longing desire of her heart. In the words already quoted, the language of our hearts should be, this is "all my salvation and all my desire."

We trust many who read these lines realise experimentally that what we have said is true. Have you not heard the Spirit's voice? We have been seeing how many were attached to David. So the Spirit would attach us to Christ. And another experience accompanies this. Closer and more intimate fellowship with the Father becomes the enjoyed portion of the heart when there is a real waiting for His Son from heaven, and an intense desire for His return. Joy unspeakable and full of glory takes possession of us as we pray for this, and realise we can obtain the answer. Believing Christ's words: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you."

We have no doubt that the Spirit is inspiring such prayers and awakening such expectations at the present time. Happy are they who find themselves in the current of these desires and who realise within themselves that the Spirit and the Bride are indeed saying "Come." "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The salvation here spoken

## *THE SPIRIT'S VOICE*

of is to be saved out of this present evil world and be brought into the day—the day which Christ alone can introduce; and of which He will be the light and the sun; a day characterised by the righteousness, power and love of God.

“ All taint of sin shall be removed,  
All evil done away;  
And we shall dwell with God's Beloved,  
Through God's eternal day.”

Thus, the Spirit's voice is heard at the close as in every dispensation has been the case. And He is saying: “ Let him that heareth say, Come.” As we hear, may we take up the cry, “ Even so, come Lord Jesus, Amen.”