

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. Luke 24. vv. 28-29.

Our beloved friends will have already potently realised what has been our objective during this holy Day, as we have sought to celebrate Easter Day, and particularly to refer to the first Easter Day as it relates to two of the Lord's dear disciples in the afternoon of the day, in their sad, mournful, desolate state as they walked together and reasoned and communed as they journeyed to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. I mention the distance because it will give you to feel more, geographically, the sense of the walk,- as of walking to Eastbourne. An amazing character of the walk was, and this is always monumental in the Christian Church,- one of the most beautiful narrative in the New Testament concerning the Lord's dear people,- that as they journeyed in a sad condition yet in communion of spirit; they were reasoning. It is a pitfall for saints to deteriorate to human reason, because everything in the Christian walk, path, and experience will ultimately nonplus human wisdom. As we are so addicted to it, and take a broad and close survey in the inner circle of our lives, we are bound to come to a sad condition of desolation and at our wits' end;- the end of all wisdom.

An amazing and beautiful part of the story that has given hope to millions of people in two thousand years, (think of the tremendous benefit it has been to Christian folk.) is, "Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." I suppose not a single day passes in your life, especially when your cup is filled and your shoulders weighted, and your mind filled with anxiety and concern, but you plead before divine Majesty,- you who are younger; you in the heat and burden of the day; the old, afflicted, bereaved, distressed, that Jesus Himself will go with you. Many mornings you will know you may have momentous decisions to make; mountains of anxiety; a condition of flux in life; uncertainty as to the future; and your plea will be that Jesus Himself will draw near and go with you. Or a dear gracious lady in one room, and you are alone: your prayer will be the same. Will Jesus of His mercy draw near? You may be afflicted, and unable to care for yourself, and you have asked the Lord to draw near and go with you through the shadows to the bright sunshine of eternal Day.

So this is a universal and cosmopolitan prayer. All saints of God plead it before Him daily. It is eminently suitable for ministers of the gospel. To day would have been impossible for me apart from this. It is like diving in at the deep end. Shall we sink? It is wonderful to go on swimming and to reach the Happy Land. It is true for godly ladies, aged, lonely, who find in the anxiety of the last stages of life only one divine blessing and heavenly grant can satisfy them, and there is no substitute; that Jesus Himself will draw near and go with you.

Jesus Himself drawing near does not mean just His physical presence: it is the presence of His love, His Spirit; the presence of your Saviour Father, Friend, who loves you. So there are two things. Your understanding is opened: you are drawn out, rebuked, your heart burns. This is a most wondrous expression. Something supernatural seems to light up your countenance and cause latent powers in your spirit to rise: your heart burns. It is beautiful. Once you get it you always know it. When you get it you will bless God and say; "It is enough." You go to prayer and your heart burns in you. The Lord is with you: you are satisfied. You listen to the glorious gospel and your heart begins to burn; there is a fire; a flame of love and devotion. You get an intense burning of your spirit and the time comes when you must speak about it. You cannot contain your

joys....It is life, the grace of God; the principle of holiness and life in the soul.

So I will make reference to the way He draws them out. They did not know Him at first, and He drew them out, and immediately from their own Scriptures of the prophets He lovingly and powerfully reproved them. We in the gospel day and having the Scriptures of the New Testament are in a different position, but it seems incredible that they should be so conversant with the prophets and never see the truth of His resurrection. You remember that Christ reproved them from Moses: that is why I read in Moses, of the truly remarkable type of our blessed Lord. When Abraham was told to offer up his only son, the little lad said; "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." You come through to the wondrous word that must ring out in the hearts and lives of godly people; "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.—Jehovah-Jireh." So it seems incredible that they had no vision of the types of the Old Testament. Had they never read Isaiah? were they ignorant of his prophecy? and in ^{the} chapter we read this afternoon; "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

I cannot stay to cite so many cases in the prophets where the resurrection of Christ is so clearly foreshadowed. One of the first things in the Scriptures, if they had faith to see, foreshadowed the resurrection of Christ. You will know what is topical; namely, when the Lord looked on Adam and said; "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him...And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman." He awoke. It is clear if you go to the depths by the Spirit of interpretation, you will see the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. Here is His wife. And the birth of the promised son to Abraham and Sarah,— their bodies were dead as to procreation, yet out of their dead bodies in that function the Lord raised up a son. They would say; "What does it mean? Our bodies have to

die, and out of them rises the promised son." And there was Aaron's rod that budded. A bud is divine resurrection. Every bud in Creation is a shooting forth of life after a period of what would appear to be death. A bud; the shooting forth of life.

So He reproved them. His teaching goes on all through life for a child of God, and through eternity they will be led to living fountains of waters. It will take eternity to really know God; to adore, worship and explore the depths,- and eternity has no beginning or end. So they were reproved: I am. One thing I am reproved by is, I find myself hesitating, if the Lord puts into my spirit a Scripture and I feel to lack ability and grace to preach from it,- protesting and hesitating, and I am reproved. If I venture ~~on~~^{w^m} the Lord He is with me. I do not ^{w^m} to run in a rut: this is easy to the natural mind. I need divine revelation, holy inspiration and grace, and He has promised; "My grace is sufficient for thee," It is a great act of love when the Lord reproves us: it is a mercy to be reproved.

Let us go to the next step. "They drew nigh." It seemed to them a short journey, with their burning hearts and the presence ~~of~~^{the} the Lord, though they did not know Him. One of the mysterious things concerning post-resurrection was, He could draw near and be close to them and they did not know Him. Then He showed Himself and vanished. We never read this before the resurrection. I think really this is often the case with us. That is to say, we get a brief glimpse, and He vanishes. That is why you want to say; "Abide." Let us, dependant on our good God, come to the blessed point. "And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further." (I have given away some of my points, so I have lost ground there.) It is always interesting and wonderful, this point of the Lord drawing near and seeming as though He will leave you without the blessing. There is this in the same category. I do not know how far the adversary's intelligence ranges. He may know when the Lord will bless His people. I will tell you why. There are times when he really sets on you so violently, and he would discourage you altogether from attending divine service, or preaching a sermon, or from going to the Prayer Meeting and standing before God in prayer. It is as if the devil is almost let loose on you to stop you. On many occasions

I have proved; "If thou press on, the crowds will fly." and it needs some pressing. Some have known it when they have come to their baptism. They were blessed at the Church Meeting, and the devil set on them at the baptismal day and tried to prevent them passing through the water. I have walked this with candidates. Let us look at this point. It is for a child of God to venture wholly; it is for a minister; it is for you, though you are nothing only weakness and fear, to cast yourself on God and go forward. When you are helped to do this there is often a blessing waiting for you, but it was as if the devil did his utmost to prevent you passing through. If it is a dark trying day and the devil tries to prevent you following the Lord, He gives you grace to cast yourself on the sweet mercy of God and go forward, and it is wonderful. "If thou press on, the crowds will fly." I have often been able to say the end of a thing is better than the beginning. The end of a day may be, and the secret is implicit trust and reliance on the Lord.

So "he made as though he would have gone further." I suggest this certainly makes the heart grow fonder; as though the heart is burning and He is going on. Their hearts grew fonder, and He stimulated the grace of faith and every grace. It is wonderful to have right things stimulated to a gracious exertion, so undoubtedly this was the Lord's purpose. He did not intend to go on and not satisfy them, but He would stimulate them. It must have occurred to you as an enigma, the directive from Naomi to Ruth; "Go, return each to her mother's house," and so on. Strange, is it not? a gracious woman as Naomi was, and she well knew Ruth was a gracious character, yet she said. "Go back." She knew she could not. If Naomi knew what it was to be well rid of Moab she could not wish Ruth to go back. It brought out from Ruth the deepest exercise of her soul. (I have quoted it to day.) Also, she probably felt so desolate and in a dejected state that she was not a fit companion for any. She could never have wished Ruth to go back to an idolatrous land. Is it with you when the Lord makes as though He would go further? If so, let us use by grace, the power He has given the saints by the Spirit. We have a blessed capacity under the Spirit, by grace to constrain Him.

"They constrained ~~what would~~ him." I have mentioned what would: it is love and faith. "The king is held in the galleries." If you are under

grace and the sweet exercise of the graces of the Spirit, you will hold the King in the galleries. "I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go." - remarkable language. "I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and unto the chamber of her that conceived me." "and would not let Him go." What a degree of faith! So 'constraining Him.' What constrains Him? A realisation that His Father gave you to Him as His own special gift, so He prizes you. And if He prizes you, His delight is with you: you will constrain Him. And to know His everlasting love is fixed on you will constrain Him. Really I cannot see a limit to the constraining influence of love. I cannot see that anything can stand in the way or be an obstacle. Think of this.- I speak with great propriety and prudence. What will affect a mother or father, especially a mother, more than the child she bore and the travail she went through to bring forth? "They are the travail of His soul," (67) and they will constrain Him. He knows and has known the agony of His holy soul to bring you forth.

So see the basic foundation for it. "They constrained him." And there is something else. He knows you are His child, His bride. If we take the language of Queen Esther, Christ will say to you; "What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee." He cannot deny Himself.

"They constrained him." By the help of God I will speak on the significant language. "Abide with us." This is a very specific request. Abide, stay with us. How shall I interpret it? First, if I am able to present it to you in this way. All through the long journey of life to the people of God, those who love and fear God know what it is to enjoy at times the sweet presence of Christ.- I do not know how many times you have enjoyed the sweet presence of the Lord this year? If you have had special seasons you will know. So there are occasions when the family of God enjoy His sweet presence, and it is a foretaste of heaven; there is no substitute. Usually these occasions are rather spread out, and they may be of short duration,- just a few moments. Or, the dew rests on your branch on the Lord's Day, and you get to Monday and still feel the influence. Not long after, and you have lost the sweet enjoyment of it,- not the blessing. Something within or without robs you. You surely can follow this. The language of request is different;

"Lord, enter in my breast,
And with me sup and stay;
Nor prove a hasty guest,
Who tarries but a day;" (673)

'Stay' is the word. "Lord, come and stay. Bring me to a season of divine blessing when Thou wilt come and stay with me, and not go away after a few hours. Abide with me." This is Scriptural.

If I am able I will cite two or three cases. The blessed request is also largely connected with the time that is stated, - "for it is toward evening, - close to the evening." It means the close of day, and it is a symbol for the decline of life. "It is toward evening, and the day is far spent." 'Day' means the day of your life, especially your spiritual life. "The day is far spent."

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

This must be in your spirit because it is in my spirit. "Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day." You will want the Lord to abide with you because you have not long here.

How would you know it is toward evening and the day is far spent? There are several ways of knowing. If we go to the last chapter of Ecclesiastes the expressions there relate to the decay and failure of the functions of the human body; all the organs and functions in a state of rapid decay. This in itself will point to it. "It is toward evening, and the day is far spent." That is why I read the Lesson. Dear old Israel was sick: it was his last illness, and he knew it. There was no question of uncertainty. How do I know? "Behold, I die: but God shall be with you." He knew. He knew he was dying, and there is one blessed thing concerning 'abide'. He had never thought to see Joseph, and he sees his seed. The Lord had cleared everything up, - turned his darkness into light. At one hundred and thirty he had the last seventeen years in the land of Goshen with Joseph, and no doubt they were days of the Lord's abiding with him. The

whole language suggests this was probably one of the happiest times of his life in the land of Goshen, the best of the land, with Joseph,- seventeen years of peace; his troubles over. He could look back to the remote past; it was all over, and the Lord was abiding with him. A number of souls have their best days at the end; (not all) when God has cleared everything up; He has answered prayer and blessed them. Israel had seventeen years in the land of Goshen. "Abide with us," and the Lord did when Joseph came in, how full the dear old patriarch was! "God Almighty appeared unto me," He went back to his Bethel when he set out on his journey. And now "Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day." "Behold I die." He blessed his sons, and in the midst of blessing them he said; "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." He was ready to go Home. "He gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." I will name to you the case of Moses. He said to the people; "I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the Lord hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan." He knew his days were far spent. Now you will say; "What is the abiding?" The Lord did it for him. He "went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And all Naphtali, and all the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea." "Abide with us." And the Lord buried him too

"Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,- this is it,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore." (1022)

Blessed be God. Amen.