



# TRAVELER'S JOURNEY

Advent Letters for Young Sojourners



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*Advent Letters for Young Sojourners*

*as given to and then compiled by a young family*

## SOJOURN

*noun* | *so·journ* | \ˈsō-,jərn, sō-ˈ\

1. (*v.*) *To dwell temporarily; to live in a place as a temporary resident or as a stranger, not considering the place as a permanent habitation; to delay; to tarry.*
2. (*n.*) *A temporary residence, as that of a traveler in a foreign land.*

## ADVENT

*noun* | *Ad·vent* | \ˈad-,vent, chiefly British -vənt\

1. *The coming or arrival of something or someone that is important or worthy of note*
2. *Advent*
  - a. *The liturgical period preceding Christmas, beginning in Western churches on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and in Eastern churches in mid-November, and observed by many Christians as a season of prayer, fasting, and penitence.*
  - b. *The coming of Jesus at the Incarnation.*
  - c. *See Second Coming.*

OH, SWEET HOME OF LOVE AND PEACE  
WHERE PILGRIMS TIRE IN TROUBLED REST  
INTO THE HOPE OF ZION LEAN  
WHERE IN JESUS' ARMS WE WILL FALL AT LAST  
"ABIDING CITY," SANDRA McCracken

# PREFACE

One dark, cold November evening there was a knock at our door. With the chaos of putting little ones in pajamas and brushing teeth answering the door was put off. When we finally were able to answer the door whoever called was gone, but they had left something.

On our front stoop was an old suitcase with a note attached. The note read,

*Friends,*

*I am sorry I could not stay to greet you. I must travel on before night falls. The letters in the box will explain everything. You will hear from me soon.*

*He is coming.*

*- Traveler*

We now know it was our friend Traveler. Along with the note he left Advent candles bundled together and wrapped with a tag that read “Carry the Light.” There were five candles in all—three purple, one pink (for the third week of Advent), and a white candle for the Christ candle to be lit on Christmas Day. There was also a book wrapped in the box, *Dangerous Journey*, a children's version of the story of Pilgrim's Progress. Finally, there were the letters. That first year Traveler sent four letters, one for each week of Advent. He has sent many more since then.

Our family has shared in the delight, wonder, hope, longing, and joy of the Advent season. It has become a treasured memory and tradition in our home. These Advent letters have been a poignant way for our children to begin to understand this world is not our home, that we belong to an eternal kingdom and its glorious King. It has shown our children that Jesus came to save sinners and that our hope is sure in him, because we know He is coming again to right all wrongs, wipe away every tear, and take His people home. But until then, we are to, as many have said before us, “watch the skies,” to look forward to the second coming of the Lord and to live as faithful and true ambassadors of a truer and better kingdom. These are big truths, but even the youngest hearts can begin to understand the ways of the family of God.

Traveler has written many letters. Some years we've read one a week and learned a new verse from our favorite Advent hymn, O Come, O Come Emmanuel. Other years we've read a few letters a week. We've compiled and grouped the letters by similar together for you. For a bit of organization, the letters are labeled by week, number, and then a brief title.

The first week focuses on the longing of a sojourner, that homesickness and restlessness we often feel in the world. The second week focuses on our need to humble ourselves, to repent and be forgiven, and that Christ has paved the way for us to do that. The third week looks at how we are to be ready, even as we wait for Jesus' return. And, week four reminds us of how we are to live in the world until Jesus returns.

In the evenings, we'll light the Advent candles and read a letter. The lighting of candles is a beautiful and simple illustration that reminds us Jesus is the light of the world. He came to break the power of sin and darkness, to bring light and life to all mankind. Our hopes and fears are met in him, our need for peace and love are found in him. Amen.

Whether you read Traveler's letters from this book or print them and have them appear on your doorstep, the choice is yours. Our prayer is that your family would be encouraged to continue in this journey of faith and to know with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength Christ's promises are true. He is the fulfillment of all things and he is coming again.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

# INTRODUCTION

## SOJOURNING & ADVENT

Oh, sojourner, you who have died and been raised with Christ, who know the tension of a two realm life. Your heart beats for a world where all is right and the light of the Word shines full. Our Redeemer has saved us, Emmanuel--God with us. You've tasted and seen, if only in fallible part, the goodness of our Savior God. For now, we toil and we traverse in a land, a city, and a country that's not our home. We follow in the footsteps of our father, Abraham, obeying our calling to go out in pursuit of our promised inheritance. We go, like our forefathers and the saints before us, not knowing where, trusting in the promise God made to Abraham in the stars. We stand in a hope that is sure, in a colossal, unfading, and unbreakable love (Ro 8).

There is a dissonance, an uncomfortable realization that this place where we lay our heads will never be home. It pulls us and the temptation is strong to jump in, but we believe, we hope, we strive for a better promise. We know this broken world will never fully satisfy us. It'll never fill us with the joy and the love and the beauty we've tasted. We've glimpsed the homeland and now we know as long as our feet walk on earth's cursed ground, we are strangers and aliens. We await Zion, redemption's homeland.

There is a city yet to come. We've tasted and smelled its heavenly fragrance, the place where God is builder and architect. We long for that golden city, to set our feet on the promised land. There we will enter into a peace and pleasure our good souls have never known. Until then, we travel.

As we sojourn we long for the fulfillment of all things, eagerly awaiting the day when Jesus returns to call his people home and set all aright. We long and plead for injustice to end and the salvation of God's people. Our hearts break under the reckoning of sin.

We recognize the gift of a babe born in a stable---a Savior, our hope and light. We see Him who was and is and is to come, He who existed before the foundation of the world. Him who the prophets called Messiah. Throughout the years and all of our days, we long and cry and hope for Emmanuel to come and ransom captive Israel. We look eagerly to the clouds, praying for reconciliation and justice to pour down, for Him who is before all things and in whom all things hold together (Col. 1:17).

Like the saints before us, we travel as strangers and exiles on the earth. We are seeking our home, that heavenly place our God has prepared. Our citizenship here is but temporary, our hearts rest in a place we've yet to see.

O tired pilgrim, do not yet give up hope. He is coming, for now we toil, but one day the trumpet will sound and He will come riding on the clouds. He is coming.

I hope within these letters you will find a place of rest and solace. I pray your hopes and fears will settle into the capable hands of Jesus our Redeemer. I pray you'll feel the call to sojourn, to lift your feet and trod the path of the saints of old, for it is a beautiful way.

I pray that together we'll long for heaven and live for Christ's return in a new way, that our hearts would awaken to a greater affection for Christ and we would truly love and abide as Kingdom people.

Lastly, I hope this little book comforts your weary heart and kindles the hope that is yet to come. He is coming. As sure as the sun shines, He is coming.

THEN LET US LIVE AS PILGRIMS DO;  
LET NOT THE WORLD OUR REST APPEAR.  
FOR WE'VE NO ABIDING CITY HERE.  
Thomas Kelly

Hold the faith, beseech and pray.

Your friend,

Traveler



O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL,  
AND RANSOM CAPTIVE ISRAEL  
THAT MOURNS IN LONELY EXILE HERE  
UNTIL THE SON OF GOD APPEAR  
REJOICE! REJOICE! EMMANUEL  
SHALL COME TO YOU, O ISRAEL.

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

# FIRST COMING

Madeleine L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready,  
till men and nations were at peace.  
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.  
He came when the need was deep and great.  
He dined with sinners in all their grime,  
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.  
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.  
To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,  
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.  
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh  
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane  
to raise our songs with joyful voice,  
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,  
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

## Week 1 - LETTER 1, ADVENT BEGINS

To those who are counted among the family of God; dearest friends, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have traveled far and have much further to go, but this word must reach you. My body is weary from the journey, but my discomfort is for your comfort and salvation and so I bring you this.

You have heard how it was in the beginning, yes?

There was a curse. A creature so vile shook his fist at God and told the Father's precious children, Adam and Eve, our first parents, that God was not good. And in that moment, they believed this creature. They soon realized the lie, but it was too late. Sin had come. Trust was broken. The first man and woman were tainted by their unbelief--their sin.

They were sent from paradise, a place where they had walked with God. The curse came with pain and toil, but there was a ray of light. Our God-King would not let the serpent win. No, not ever.

Many generations passed before one was born who would lift the curse. A Savior. Do you know of whom I speak? Yes, Jesus. We are nearing the time of his birth. I see the lights and hear the sounds. Advent is upon us.

Advent, it means to come. In these days and weeks before Christmas, we long for and pray Jesus will return. Oh, yes, we'll celebrate his first coming with joy and praise God who made himself man to save us, but it is Jesus' second coming we look toward. Before we celebrate the blessed day God sent his only Son as a baby to be the sacrifice in our place, I must ask you something very important.

Will you journey with me? It won't be easy, there will be challenges along the way, but this I know, our Savior leads us.

He is coming, but we don't know when. We watch the skies--longing to go home to Zion, the kingdom of our God. We humble ourselves by preparing our hearts. We serve those around us--- both those in the light and in the dark. We wait, ready for Jesus to come again.

Take heart, my blessed friends, God is with us.  
He is coming. Amen. So be it.

Your friend and servant,  
Traveler

## Week 1 - LETTER 2, Homesick

Oh friends, how my eyes have seen the glories of the Promised Land. I see its heavenly light shining from the mountains before me. It is far off, but I have had the joys of hearing glimpses from other travelers along the way.

It is our home.

Oh, the many who have traveled before us--Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph, Joshua, and our father David. Rahab, Ruth, and Mary. Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah all who have led the way. Peter, Paul, and John. All have given us whispers of hope of the kingdom to come.

All strangers on this earth, like you and me, the faithful before us. By faith, we know the certainty we hope even if we cannot see. Like those before us, we must journey on as strangers and aliens on this earth. We must not think of the place we have come from--our past, full of darkness and sin, nor the comforts of this world. Though this journey is long and we do not always see the way--trust, my friend. Trust God has something better for us.

Our sin and sorrow will not last forever, evil will not always abound. We have hope. We have been born into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. We are a chosen race, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. We are God's mercy people.

Let us not think of the old land, our old ways--let us continue to desire a better country, our heavenly home. For God is not ashamed to be the God of the faithful. He has prepared for us an eternal home.

Journey on, good friends, journey on.

Grace and peace to you,  
Traveler

## Week 1 - Letter 3, Rest in Peace

Oh, friends, do you ever feel tired of all you must do? The daily tasks of life and even times when walking with our Savior feels a burden. I know this too. There have been many times on my journey to Zion where I have grown weary and, yes, even hopeless. I've felt the weight of my sin and tried to do better in my own strength.

Friend, hear this closely, I cannot do better. All my fears and failings have met their death on the cross of Christ. There is nothing left for me to do, nothing I can do to be better, more holy, more righteous--it's already been done in Christ.

The only thing left is to rest in his peace. Take the burden off your back and let it go. Is fear holding onto you? Give it to him. Straining toward perfection? Only he can make you holy. Are you starving, desiring to be made full, to silence the emptying? He will fill you. All you need is ask.

Rest from your work. Rest from your striving for perfection, to be good enough. Draw near to Jesus with confidence and he will take your worries, your sorrows and give you mercy and grace in your time of need. For his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Lay down your heavy load, friend. The journey is easier when your cares rest in the hands of God. Lay it down and rest.

Grace and peace to you, my friend,

Traveler

## Week 1 - Letter 4, Sorrows

The world is harsh. In my travels I have seen many terrible things. Hunger and corruption, jealousy and maddening anger. I have seen wounds from words and sword alike. To look at the world it would be easy to wonder, where is God's justice? His justice will come. There are hints of it even now. But when Christ's second advent comes all wrongs will be made right and evil will not go unpunished.

Vengeance belongs to God and he will repay. When you are hurt by another, taken advantage of, teased, leave God to do the repaying. Do not doubt it. Entrust yourself to the Lord and be faithful to his ways. Full justice will come at Jesus' return.

For now, while we wait, pray for the hurting, seek to end suffering, be the voice of the voiceless. Take heart and seek the Lord, pray for his kingdom to come and rule and reign.

For one day he will make all things new, he will wipe away every tear from every eye, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the old things will have passed away.

One day he will come and evil (the effects of the curse) will be no more. Until then, hold out the light of faith, be His hands and His feet.

Grace and peace to you in the name of our blessed Savior,

Traveler

COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS,  
BORN TO SET THY PEOPLE FREE;  
FROM OUR FEARS AND SINS RELEASE US,  
LET US FIND OUR REST IN THEE.  
ISRAEL'S STRENGTH AND CONSOLATION,  
HOPE OF ALL THE EARTH THOU ART;  
DEAR DESIRE OF EVERY NATION,  
JOY OF EVERY LONGING HEART.

*Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

# COME YE SINNERS

Joseph Hart

Come ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love, and pow'r.

*I will arise and go to Jesus,  
He will embrace me in His arms;  
In the arms of my dear Savior,  
O there are ten thousand charms.*

Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome,  
God's free bounty glorify;  
True belief and true repentance,  
Ev'ry grace that brings you nigh.

Come ye weary, heavy laden,  
Lost and ruined by the fall;  
If you tarry till you're better,  
You will never come at all.

Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him.



## Week 2 - Letter 1, Born to Set Us Free

Christmas. We celebrate a baby born in a manger. But what does the manger tell us, good friends? Why was the Son of God born as a baby where animals eat? Why was the Son of God made flesh, as the apostle John said, to dwell among us?

The Son of God was born to set us free. That, my friends, is why we celebrate Christmas and why at Advent our hearts turn to prepare him room, as the old hymn calls. So we call out, *Come, Lord Jesus come!* We have long expected our Messiah, our Savior. Christ was born to set us free--are you free, dear one?

Jesus has come to release from all our fears, all our sins that we may find rest in Him. Are you ever afraid? Trust in Jesus. Do you struggle with sin? Confess it to God. He is faithful and just to forgive us. Jesus is our strength and our comfort, our hope and our joy. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of our freedom.

Before we come to that joyous day, let us take time to examine our hearts, to recognize Jesus Christ is in us, to heed the prophet's warnings and forsake our sins that we might greet Christ's second coming with great joy! And if we do not see his reflection in us? Then to bid the call to come and die, then live anew!

Be found in Him, dear friends.

Grace and peace to you,

Traveler

## Week 2 - Letter 2, The Prophet's Warning

There are men who spend their years walking about the earth on their way to Zion proclaiming, as the prophets of old, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Imploring other traveler's with all their might to turn from their sinful ways and live anew.

The only way we may enter the kingdom is with humble hearts made clean by the blood of the Lamb. We must forsake the old ways, for they have no place in the kingdom of light.

Heed the warnings of the prophets, brethren. The cry still goes out from the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." Cleanse your heart from sin. The Lord is forgiving and just. He desires you to be freed from all wrongdoing--jealousy, anger, laziness--from whatever hinders His full reign over your heart.

Let Christ subdue all that is not holy, all that does not honor God the Father. Call upon him when you are tempted to sin, call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved. In him is fullness of joy and at his right hand is pleasures forevermore. He is a good King and a good Father who desires to give his children good things. We must not let our own sin, our unbelief in his goodness, hinder us from accepting the grace he freely extends.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Christ is coming.

I must be on my way, friends.

Grace and peace,

Traveler

## Week 2 - Letter 3, Our Sins Have Been Paid

Greetings, dear ones, I had a conversation last night with a fellow traveler who was weighed down by deeds they committed long ago. They share our faith and know of God's great grace which is greater than our sin, but still shame hung over this dear saint's head. They admitted that at times they struggle with receiving God's forgiveness because of the greatness of their sin. Oh, the ache!

When we repent sometimes we become too focused on our sins. We repent and turn from our sinful ways, but in seeing the holiness that is Christ we can only see how wrong our sin really was. And to a point that is good. We must look to Christ and see how he is the perfect example, but let us not look to our Deliverer and think we must measure up to him in our own strength, by the works of our own hand. For, as the Scriptures say, we have been saved by grace, not by works. Nor let us look to Christ's perfect holiness and continue to live in shame when we have abundant forgiveness and righteousness in him. Oh, no, dear friends.

BUT GOD--

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us,  
in that while we were sinners Christ died for us.*

*Romans 5:8*

Love. God demonstrated his own love toward us that while we were sinners Jesus died for us. It wasn't duty or drudgery or disdain that sent Jesus to take the punishment for your and my sins. Dear ones, the Lord is not waiting to catch you in the act of sin and condemn you. No! It is his love that motivated the sacrifice of Christ and now...our sins are paid and remembered no more! Jesus has gone before us and paid the price we could never pay. And now, with the debt settled he invites us in to a full, unhindered relationship with God. To know him, to abide in him.

As I prayed with this struggling traveler by the fire light, we talked of how easy it is to focus on all we've done wrong and be ashamed. We can't see why Christ would choose to forgive us. But we must look up, we must raise our faces to the Redeemer and know we are forgiven and free. When our heads hang low and Perhaps we refuse to accept his full forgiveness living as if we need to pay him back with our good works. We feel that he is too good and we deserve to be miserable for the wrong we've done.

Rest in His love, rest in His grace,

Traveler

## Week 2 - Letter 4, The Light of Life

Friends, may your journey be full of joy and peace. I write to you from the road. It's cold here. I stopped for the night at an inn. Looking out my tiny window, I can see the street being covered in a blanket of pure snow. It is beautiful, but will make it hard to travel on in the morn.

Do you know how snow is so white, so beautiful and pure when it first falls. I love the look of it as the sun shimmers across it's icy layer. It's so bright that at times I have to shut my eyes at its brilliance.

Do you remember how Jesus is the light of the world? And our advent candles remind us of this, but do you know what light does? It makes the darkness scatter.

When we are in sin, we are living in darkness. Can you see when it's dark? Could you live your everyday life in the dark? Eat breakfast without seeing your hands? Play without seeing your toys? Get dressed without seeing your clothes? What would happen if you lived in the dark?

We might get hurt, make the wrong choice (What if you got shorts when you needed pants?! Or ketchup when you needed honey?!), or make a mess. If we lived in the dark, we'd always be fumbling around, messing things up, hurting ourselves and others. When we sin the same thing happens. Sin is the darkness in our lives. When we choose to sin, when we choose to make unkind or unwise choices, when we choose to trust ourselves more than Jesus, we are walking in the dark.

Oh, my friends! How it hurts us to fumble around in the dark when the Light of the World is eager to take us in and cleanse us! If we humble ourselves by admitting our mistakes and that we don't know the way, then Jesus can come in and make our hearts and our lives as pure and beautiful as the dazzling snow.

It is not easy to admit our sin, but to walk in the light of Jesus and his love is better than our own way. Trust in Christ, dear ones, for that is where the real living is!

Grace and peace. Your friend,

Traveler

FOR THE HERALD'S VOICE IS CRYING  
IN THE DESERT FAR AND NEAR,  
CALLING ALL TO TRUE REPENTANCE,  
SINCE THE KINGDOM NOW IS HERE.  
OH, THAT WARNING CRY OBEY!  
NOW PREPARE FOR GOD A WAY!  
LET THE VALLEYS RISE TO MEET HIM  
AND THE HILLS BOW DOWN TO GREET HIM.

*Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

Before us place in dread array,  
Lord Jesus, that tremendous day,  
When thou in clouds shalt come,  
To judge the nations at thy bar;  
And tell us, Lord, that we shall there  
Receive from thee a blissful doom.

Lord, for thy coming us prepare,  
May we to meet thee without fear  
At all times ready be:  
In faith and love preserve us sound,  
O let us day and night be found  
Waiting with joy to welcome thee.

*from A Collection of Hymns*

## Week 3 - Letter 1, The Waiting Way

Friends, the road is long and the world groans in sin and despair, and yet we wait for the Son of Man. We wait and we wait and we wait. Jesus our Lord said he was coming soon. We will not know the day or night, the year or month, but He has said he is coming. We are to wait and watch the skies, listening for the heralds trumpet call, “The King of Kings! He comes riding on a cloud!”

His own words have told us he has gone to prepare a place for us and he himself will come again to take us there that we may be where he also is. Do you remember what Doubting Thomas asked, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” And our Lord responded to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Jesus is the way. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus is in our Father God and the Father in Jesus. He calls us to believe in God and believe in him.

We know that. And still, the waiting is hard. In our troubles, struggles with sin, fear, and sorrow it can feel that God is far off. The enemy whispers lies that God has forgotten us, that He isn't coming, that His story is simply another fairy tale.

Dear, dear friends, do not give the devil this foothold. Do not believe his lies. God is not dead, nor does he sleep. He is not delayed. It is good for us to remember with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. As the Apostle Peter reminds us, “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count as slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but all should reach repentance.”

The Lord has not forgotten his precious children—those bought, sealed, and redeemed by the blood of Christ. No, never! These centuries of waiting are full of His mercy, his longing heart for more to know his love and call to repentance and fullness of life.

The day of the Lord is coming. His promise *will* be fulfilled.

We are people of the waiting way. We walk this road as travelers and sojourners, but we don't walk idly, twiddling our thumbs and wasting our time. We hope and we trust in the Lord. We pursue lives of holiness and godliness, diligent to be found, when Christ comes again, with our hands at the trowel of kingdom work. We love, we work, we live at peace, we walk in joy. We share this hope we've found.

Yes, the wait feels long. Oh, how I desire the day He comes again and all will be made whole. But know, He is coming. Even so, come Lord Jesus, come!

To him be the glory,

Traveler

## Week 3 - Letter 2, Keep Your Lamps Lit

Dear ones, don't let the waiting on this journey make you forgetful. Remember the Lord's own parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13). They were a wedding party and in those days the women waited with the bride in a house separate from the groom as he made ready the home for his bride. (Does this sound familiar, friends? The Groom has gone to prepare a place and will come again. Yes, Jesus told his stories so that we may better understand him and his kingdom.) And once the home was ready the bridegroom would come for his bride and her attendants to bring them to the wedding celebration.

But in this parable five of the young women were wise and five were foolish. The wise women brought enough oil for their lamps to last the long night, while the foolish women brought only a little oil. The bridegroom took a long time coming, but when his arrival was seen at a distance the foolish young women were not ready. Their lamps were low and the flame flickering, they begged the wise young women to borrow oil so they could go out with the wedding party. The wise young women told them there would not be enough for both of them and to go buy more oil for themselves. And when the bridegroom came they went with him to the wedding feast. Oh, and those unprepared young women? Once they found oil for their lamps they came to the feast to find the door shut and begging to enter the lord answered, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you."

Friends, the Lord spoke this parable to remind us that, yes, we are waiting for his return, but to be wise as we wait. We are to be ready in our waiting. To prepare our hearts, to be faithful, to trust in his holy work Christ completed for us on the cross. For when he comes it will be too late to right ourselves with the King of Kings.

He himself told us not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven even if their deeds seemed righteous, but only those who have called upon the Lord to be saved.

I beg you, friends. Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. Test yourself. Do you recognize Jesus Christ in you? Are you trusting the work Christ as your salvation? It is the only way.

Take heed, the warning of the parable of the ten virgins. Do not be found waiting and unready. The time for repentance is now. The Lord is waiting for you, he is calling you to repent and be saved!

Oh, precious ones! How I long to see you in the New Jerusalem. I pray you will answer the call to walk in the way. Oh, you saints that already know the Lord, don't grow weary. It's hard, but continue trusting in His goodness. He is coming. Amen.

Grace and peace to you all,

Traveler



## Week 3 - Letter 3, The Way We Should Go

I must be quick tonight, good friends, the caravan is moving on soon and I must post this letter before we depart. So a quick word on this waiting way. I've had much time to ponder on this journey,

as we live in this waiting, as we work and pray, play and learn, adventure and create, let us remember we citizens of a heavenly kingdom and as such we are called to live lives that are worthy of the Lord. We are to be humble, gentle, patient, we are to bear one another in love. We are to forgive as the good Lord has forgiven us. We are to be at peace with all men as far as it depends on us. We are to be one with the Church, the body of Christ, because of our glorious shared hope—"one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph 4:5). Amen.

Be people of the Light. Speak the truth in love. Be filled with the Spirit. Giving thanks to God the Father in heaven, in the good and in the bad and in the mundane—give thanks! This is God's will for us. We are the waiting people, heralds of the light, but we are also to be the thankful people, gracious with our words so that more may come to know our Risen Lord.

We are ambassadors, dear ones, God's one representatives walking this earth. We have the privilege to show the world the goodness and greatness, the mercy and lovingkindness of our great and glorious God by how we treat each other. By how we respond to our troubles, to anger, to disappointment, to being wronged, to sorrow, to joy, to love—all of these will tell the world what we believe about God and who He is. Let them see the light of life and men in you!

May the world look at you and see Jesus!

They are ringing the bells. Travelers are packing up all around me. I must finish quickly.

Remain in the Lord, abide in him and follow his ways. It is for your joy and your strength. He cares for you, as do I.

Be safe, dear friends, and walk humbly along this way.

Grace and peace to you and yours,

Traveler

## Week 3 - Letter 4, Remain Steadfast

I am almost there. Maybe a week or so of travel left. It is tiring. My body aches from sleeping on the road. I long for the comforts of home. There have been times on this journey when I've looked over my shoulder, saw the lights of home and wondered if I should go back. As I've traveled farther on, too far to make sense to turn back now, I've met some turning from the way. They say the road ahead is too treacherous, too hard to be passed. I've often wondered what it was they saw. What struggle did they meet?

I won't deny the way is hard and there are times I've wanted dearly to give up and turn back. This life, this journey to the city of God. It is no easy path. But, friends, what keeps me going, what keeps me strapping my pack to my back and putting one foot in front of the other is knowing I'm surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, all those saints of old who by faith received the promise of the Christ to come without the blessing of knowing the fullness of Him. I read of the stories of their lives,

“who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life” (Hebrews 11:33-40).

Their faithfulness and endurance is a humble reminder that I too can endure this journey in the strength of Christ. I look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith, who endured the cross because of the joy set before him. I implore you to remain steadfast, to persevere in the faith counting it all joy when you face trials, because we know that the testing of our faith produces steadfastness, that firm resolution we will persevere in the faith. And we will, because He is good.

Endure. Hope. Pray. Fight the good fight.

Work and do good in the waiting. Seek to bless others. We have been graciously given all things in Christ, may we seek to graciously show His goodness to others in our lives.

May we seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God along the way.

Be faithful and be ready for His return, good friends.

Until I write again,

Traveler

REJOICE, REJOICE, BELIEVERS,  
AND LET YOUR LIGHTS APPEAR;  
THE EVENING IS ADVANCING,  
AND DARKER NIGHT IS NEAR.  
THE BRIDEGROOM IS ARISING  
AND SOON IS DRAWING NIGH.  
UP, PRAY AND WATCH AND WRESTLE;  
AT MIDNIGHT COMES THE CRY.

*Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers*

## Week 4 - Letter 1, Sojourn On

Dear friends,

The time for celebration is nearing, but as it comes closer I beg you to remember, this world is not your home.

Yes, we live here. We lay our heads down in our earthly home each night and awake each morning, but this is not our home. We are not meant to be comfortable here.

There are lights and presents and food and all manner of things that may try to capture our hearts. These are good things that can remind us of the good gifts the Father gives us, but remember who you belong to and where you come from. These earthly things can easily capture our hearts and minds if we forget our true home. Set your heart and mind on the things of heaven, not of earth. What tempts us here will not satisfy, but rather leave us empty. No gift, no food, no praise of men will fill us. Long for Christ, be found in him, dear ones.

Loosen your affections for this world. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Oh, the treasures this world offers to you is nothing compared to knowing Christ! Everything is rubbish, trash next to Jesus. Store up for yourself treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, nor thieves break in and steal. For wherever you find your joy, your treasure-- there you will find your heart.

Let your heart be found in the steadfast hand of Christ. Sojourn on, good friends, leave this world behind and sojourn on.

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Traveler

## Week 4 - Letter 2, Serve Like the Son

We have his example before us, the holy Son of God made man. The humility and love of God made flesh to dwell among us. And why? He who came to seek and save the lost.

To seek out, aimless wanderers, like you and me, hungry and thirsty for a life that satisfies. “Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God,” as the old hymn tells, and he rescued us from the dangers of hell and the miseries of life apart from the graciousness of God by Christ's shed blood.

Let us honor him with our lives, let us live worthy lives to give glory to the Father and the Son.

It is unnatural in our world to be humble, but if we follow the Resurrected Christ then humility is in our bloodline. Consider others better than yourself by doing nothing out of jealousy or pride. Seek to help others and not merely yourself. It is hard, yes, when others are unkind or our own selfishness rises up, but we have not been left without a witness. We are called to be like Christ, who made himself nothing. The Prince of Peace and King of Kings took the form of a servant and humbled himself to the point of death--death on a cross. He is our example.

If we live in the humility and service of Christ, we will be like no other this world has seen. We will shine the light of Christ and the glory of God in the face of Christ.

We are to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, with humility, gentleness, patience, showing love to each other (even those you disagree with), be eager to maintain the unity in the body of Christ.

Remember, Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and we, as his representations on this earth, are to continue his service.

The world is great and full of need, serve like the Son has served you, dear ones.

Grace and peace,

Traveler

## Week 4 - Letter 3, Grace & Mercy

Oh, dear ones, how I have seen those who claim the name of Christ live! It saddens me to report to you of the ones who call Jesus Lord, but live not according to his ways. They neglect grace and mercy and heap rules and regulations onto the people. They call out the sins of others without so much as offering a hand of grace, a whisper of mercy. There is no kindness in their dealings, and where there is no kindness there is no Christ.

Brethren, remember how Christ called you. He called you in love and mercy. It was his kindness that led you to repentance. Not his disdain, not a list of everything you've done wrong. He led you with kindness. Gentleness. Grace.

The love of Christ is what compels us to share his free gift of grace. If there is no kindness, no grace, no mercy in our dealings with others, no evidence of the fruit of the Spirit, then we must ask ourselves this hard question, Do you recognize Christ in you? Examine yourself.

By Christ we have been declared ministers of reconciliation. We have been entrusted with this message, that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. He did not count our trespasses against us. Remember that, dear friends.

Pray for the restoration of hearts, that the desolate would be made whole. Live a life that shines grace and mercy, and spread it like warm butter on dry toast.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Your friend,  
Traveler

## Week 4 - Letter 4, Beseech

The way is long. I'd grow weary and despairing if I knew not Christ is my prize. The waiting is hard. We know not when he comes, but until he does we will travel on this road of faith.

Endure, my good friends. Long for the end to come. There is hope in the darkest night, because God is good and his presence is never far off.

Though there be mourning, there will be dancing. Though there be evil, there will be justice. Though there be hunger and thirst, there will be satisfaction overflowing. Though there be pain and suffering, there will be wholeness and healing. Though there be toil, there will be rest. Though there be darkness, there will be light.

Watch for the light. We know not the hour or the day he is coming. But we know, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt, because His promises are sure and good, that he is coming.

Praise God in the sun and in the rain, giving thanks in all circumstances. Hold fast to the faith.

We go, like our forefathers and the saints before us, not knowing where, trusting in the promise made in the stars. We stand in a hope that is sure, in a colossal, unfading, unbreakable love.

From where I sit, I see the light of Kingdom come. The light is beginning to break along the horizon. I see it! Zion within my grasp! O tired pilgrim, do not yet give up hope. He is coming, for now we toil, but one day the trumpet will sound and He will come riding on the clouds.

Home is on the horizon. He is coming, for now we wait.

Beseech and pray, for he *is* coming.

Your faithful friend and fellow sojourner,  
Traveler

COME,  
LORD JESUS,  
COME.



## A LETTER FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”*

*Colossians 1: 15-20*

It is here, good friends. The day we remember Christ's first advent. May your hearts be full of joy and peace that can only come from trust in an everlasting and gracious Savior.

When we see his face night will be no more. And in Zion, our heavenly home, we will have no need of lamp or candle or sin, for the Lord God will be our light and he will reign forever and ever world without end. Amen.

Jesus is the light of the world. Follow Him, dear children, for whoever follows him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. My fellow travelers and children of God, you are the light of the world. Yes, you! A city on a hill cannot be hidden...let your light shine before others so they may see your good works and praise God in heaven!

As you light this final candle, the Christ candle, take the light with you and let this blazing fire shine in your heart until it fills your whole life. Let all see the light of Christ, the hope of salvation, living and active in you--for this is what the world needs!

*Long lay the world in sin and error pining until he appeared and the soul felt its worth! A thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!*

Today is that new and glorious morn--every day with Christ is new and glorious for he is making all things new! Even you! Christ in you, the hope of glory!

Merry Christmas, my blessed friends. Take joy! Salvation is here and Jesus will soon come again!

Grace and peace to you. Until we meet in the holy city,

Traveler

# LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

Christina Rossetti

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine,  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine,  
Worship we our Jesus,  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

GLORY BE TO GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON,  
AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT. AS IT WAS IN THE  
BEGINNING, SO IT IS NOW AND SO IT SHALL EVER  
BE, WORLD WITHOUT END. ALLELUIA. AMEN.

*The Gloria*