



*The Saviour of the World*

Volume 3

# THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

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Charlotte Mason

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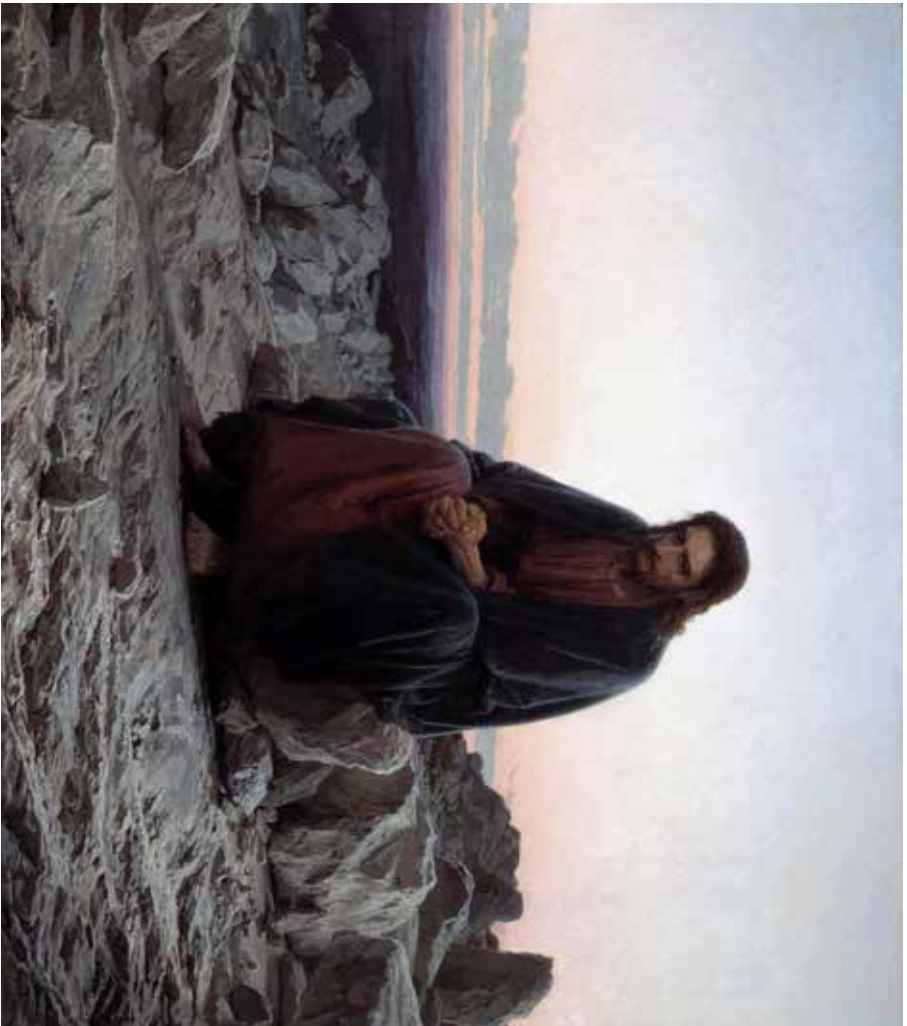
Book 3

## *The Kingdom of Heaven*

*by*

CHARLOTTE M. MASON





*Christ in the Wilderness*

IVAN KRAMSKOI

# *Contents*

BOOK I	
Of Taking the Kingdom	17
BOOK II	
Parables of the Kingdom	59
BOOK III	
Administration of the Kingdom	119
BOOK IV	
The Beginning of the Holy War	145



## PREFACE

*(Critic and Author: a Dialogue)*

*Cr.* Forgive my dulness that I fail to see  
The work's intention;—if a single plot  
On the vast sphere of thought and fact it stakes,  
Hedges about, bring under ordered tilth.  
Is it a Life of Christ? A hundred men  
Have writ in whole or part the Life of lives:  
All are rejected, falling short as they must  
Of that surpassing fitness mark the Four.

*Au.* E'en so falls to the lot of every man  
To restate for himself, on his own plan,  
That which we name the Gospel: not his Creed—  
Restatement there shall curious vapours breed!—  
Far other work is his, as line by line,  
His mind absorbs the history divine,  
Figures each scene, weighs well each pregnant word  
Let fall in sequence due by the Good Lord  
Who came, our WISDOM, down to teach mankind  
The WAY, the END, the way marks each shall find  
For every step of the road. Wise men of Greece,

Those Easter sages, too, taught,—Man's increase  
In wisdom for the ordering of his days—  
His righteous first pursuit and all his praise:  
He came not to destroy what these had taught;  
But rather to enforce that Wisdom, wrought  
But ways and words of God in mind of men:  
No easy lesson this; once and again,  
“Now; have ye understood?” the TEACHER Cries:—  
And we, so slow of heart to realise  
That there is aught a child may not perceive,  
Or more than fool is able to believe!  
High sounding teaching our vain minds demand,  
Nor know at all—we do not understand!

*Cr.* I see: you would unfold what might be named  
Christian Philosophy if full-proclaimed;  
Your heifer, friend, has been in many a plough!

*Au.* You hit my purpose partly, I avow;  
but the *Method* of the Master seems to me  
Too subtle-wise for any man to see  
But who hath deeply pondered in his heart;  
For see, Christ's teaching is no separate part,  
A sermon here, there a miracle, event—  
Or Birth in Bethlehem, or how He went  
Afoot through all their hamlets doing good,  
Healing all sickness, giving men their food;  
And all in casual wise, occasion-moved:  
There is, I take it, tho' scarce fully proved  
The fact, yet evidence the Saviour meant,  
Say, single sheet by sheet, to unfold His intent  
As men should show capacity to meet

his thought with thought reciprocal; we know  
No words of teaching any further go  
Than the measure of his mind who hears that word:  
This limitation to His work, our Lord  
Accepts all graciously, and lays His plan  
To catch the ear, mind, heart of every man,  
Arrested to attention by some sign  
In this mechanic-world of life divine.  
So all His works, as pictures, illustrate  
Uttrances mystic, opening mysteries great;  
And every teaching fits with all the rest;  
And all's profound, progressive, asks our best—  
The eager student's utmost labouring zeal  
To comprehend, to know, to inly feel:—  
Thus, diligent, He teaches; now, by law,  
By fable now, or miracle, will draw  
Men to consider. Ever one theme  
His teaching labours; Word and Work 'twould seem  
Are used t'elaborate some truth divine  
Till, lo, at last, His hidden meanings shine  
Revealed to men, no more to be obscured,  
Although the disciples only are assured.  
That lesson taught, another cognate theme  
The Lord pursues with patient skill supreme.  
Till that be comprehended, if by few—  
The Twelve, perchance; through months doth He  
pursue  
With many variants-sayings, acts and ways,  
A single them, shall fructify our days:  
Thus, in the months this volume would include,

Teaching about the KINGDOM is pursued  
By our dear Lord, through miracle and tale,  
Example cited, what may best avail  
To win men's thoughts from emulous greed and strife  
To that must be sole business of their life!

*Cr.* I see your point of view; men would attend  
Schools of the sages, days, moths, years on end,—  
Their sole concern to master, thought by thought,  
Philosophy with aids to living fraught;  
this you demand for Christ?

*Au.* Aye, this and more;  
For who as He God's image can restore?

*Cr.* But you forget the temper of our days;  
Never had Christ more lavish generous praise;  
That He, the ideal Man, not one denies;  
Starlike, serene, doth still His image rise  
Above the troubled waters: but, see you,  
The line of argument you must pursue  
Demands a certitude we don't possess:  
The Son of Man we're ready to confess—  
Not we, Confessors in the ancient sense  
Imperill'd life and limb!—yet are we sure,  
his loveliness must long as time endure:  
but all His several words, those wonders, signs—  
The Critic, look you, is abroad; divines  
Here, textual error by a method sure;  
There, chronicle will not the tests endure  
Science applies to that she can receive:  
Now, face the matter squarely; how believe  
The "Gospel truth" our wisest hold in doubt?

Nay, that we clear the Christ from all the rout  
Of controversial issues is our praise!

*Au.* But what a Christ is He on whom your gaze  
With sentimental rapture fix ye! See,  
Those Pharisees, more logical than ye!  
“Blasphemest thou!” they cry when He employs  
Attributes of the Almighty: a man enjoys  
Twofold, deny, still voluble in praise!  
Trifling inaccuracies—these but prove  
Men wrote those things that they had learnt to love  
Hear four men tell what happened in the street  
This very day,—how do their tales compete  
For credence? Not because they are agreed,  
But, this man tells the tale with better heed  
To what is possible! Now, here we fail;  
Just here our usual methods won’t avail!  
Nothing is “probable” where He is concerned;  
Our art of reasoning must be all unlearned:  
Suppose, Dimension Fourth, that ancient quest,  
Sudden disclosed itself to seeker blest;—  
What errors would men make! How hard to wrest  
Their thought from the old measures, length and  
height  
And ponderosity,—confined them quite,  
Set bounds to speculation! It is plain,  
That new conditions, measures, must obtain;  
The new Dimension,—its own standard, test;  
All things thenceforth are meted at behest  
Of the new basic fundamental laws  
Inherent in that absolute new-found cause!

Changes so vast in measures, values, all  
 That constitutes the worth of life, befall  
 The man who sees THE LORD; know Him, indeed,  
 The single MEASURE which shall not mislead  
 That man would try the truth, for TRUTH is He,  
 sole standard of the truth needs must He be;  
 To try His words and acts by any rule  
 Obtains without Himself, is as if fool  
 Should measure miles in quart-pots, yards in scales!  
 "Behold, I make a new thing!" What avails  
 Each petty test, pedantic, when the vast  
 Of Personality Divine goes past  
 Our dazzled eyes? No other help is brought;—  
 We must *see Christ* ere poor scale of our thought  
 Apply to his dimensions, infinite,  
 The VERY GOD amongst us! We may write  
 The breadth and length of miracle and word,  
 Then only, when we measure by the Lord  
     *Cr.* I see; you reverse the usual way;  
 First, know the Unknown; that learned, why, thought  
     may play  
 About the records, measuring them by trained  
 Conception of their Subject;-how obtained?  
     *Au.* Straight plunge we in dimension all unknown!  
 "New Birth," the Master calls it, who alone  
 Could speak of that He knew.  
     *Cr.* And by what sign  
 Shall one discern in himself this life divine?  
     *Au.* To answer were to say in single word  
 All, in three crowded years the disciples heard

From the lips of the Master.

*Cr.* This, disclose;

How may a man be certain that he knows?

*Au.* Perhaps, by this; a new dimension straight  
Reveals itself in him; he walks elate,  
Enlarged, unlimited; with passions, powers,  
For which no scope he found in th' slow dull hours  
Of all his former life! Constraining love,  
A pent-up passion, shall his doings move:  
A tremulous lover goes he, quick to grieve  
O'er wrong he does to love; apt to believe  
And linger tenderly o'er every word,  
Precious as pearl, hath fallen from his Lord:  
Ambition, power and place? All these the man  
Finds in his master's service; petty span  
Of personal issues, projects, holds him not;—  
In joy of THE KINGDOM all himself's forgot!  
And see what scope is his—the round world, all,  
Shall at his Master's footstool one day fall;  
And his to advance that End, by tool or pen,—  
Or aught brings solacement or strength to men!

*Cr.* The allurements of such prospect, I confess;  
Of life for his living, every man goes less;  
He prods him with the spur of this and that  
Desire, ambition,—soon, he ambles flat;  
Like stranded fish, he gasps for fuller life  
Than comes with children, power, or wealth, or wife:  
I own our need; but doubt is in the air:  
Has so-called Higher Criticism no share  
In furthering the issue all desire?

*Au.* Is it not, too, of God? The purging fire  
Shall fine the Word itself; but surer, He,  
Than record of the word; by Him, we see  
if any saying be indeed divine,—  
So shall His glory through the letter shine!

*Cr.* Allowing for th argument's sake your view,  
Still your first allegation must be true,  
Each man must ponder for himself to know:  
Then what is gained, when into verse you throw  
The tale we own inimitable; word,  
The like of which by men hath not been heard?

*Au.* Never rude Crucifix by roadside set  
But doth, in some poor heart, new thoughts beget  
Of Jesus, Lover of mankind and Lord!  
May it not be that every sincere word,  
Rough-carven, poor unworthy thought it be,  
is not without appeal to them who see  
That here is one in simpleness would show  
That fragment of the truth 'tis his to know?  
And look you, thought breeds thought; whoever  
thinks  
And drops his thought in word, where that word  
sinks,  
New thought springs up, created by impact  
Of thought on mind laid open; to react  
In ampler juster thought; increase we thus  
To measure that Stature set for us!

“He that unto God’s kingdom comes  
Must enter by His door.”

RICHARD BAXTER.



CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

*The Holy Infancy*

*ANGELS and prophets long had searched in vain  
Those mysteries, now, for wayfarers writ plain:*

*How Christ was born in Bethlehem of pure Maid,  
How to three kings His Rising was displayed:*

*How holy Simeon blessed Him and foretold  
His Mother's grief, He, sacrificed and sold.*

*How out of Egypt did God call His Son  
That all the prophets figured might be done.*

*How, simple Child, He dwelt in Galilee  
That simple folk His light might daily see.*

*How to Jerusalem in His twelfth year  
He went, before Jehovah to appear:*

*How there He shed His light, a duteous Boy,  
To keep the law His errand, not destroy.*

*How eighteen years of meek submission then  
Prepared Him for His labours amongst men.*

*How He went out the John to be baptised,  
And John in Him a greater recognised.*

*How in the wilderness for Forty Days  
He bare assaults of Satan. Give we praise!*

*How in Caná He made the water wine,  
That men should see of life in Him a sign.*

*How in Jerusalem quick drave He forth  
The traders and their wares—of how small worth!*

*How journeying north to Galilee once more,  
He sate and taught that Woman heavenly lore.*

*How all the men came out who heard His fame,  
And, SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, did Him proclaim.*

*These things have we considered as we might,  
And hence would meekly follow in His light.*

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II

*His Dominion*

*CHRIST healed the rich man's son: the man believed;  
"God is a spirit," the lesson he received.*

*He preaches to His own; mad hate they bring,—  
Would from sleep brow of hill the Saviour fling!*

*People who sat in darkness saw great light  
Whose brightness baffled unaccustomed sight:*

*Those fishers four on Sea of Galilee  
The fishers of the Lord were called to be:*

*At Capernaum Christ preached: the people heard,  
And knew Authority was in His word.*

*Vile spirit bade He forth in that same hour,  
And all men recognised an unknown Power.*

*Peter's wife's mother, raised from fevered bed—  
By hand that raised her would thenceforth be led.*

*“At even ere the sun was set,” they came  
To Him for healing, sick and blind and lame.*

*Then wearied, He, a great while before day,  
Went out to desert place that He might pray.*

*The folk of Galilee would make Him King;  
He knows how little worth the praise they bring.*

*Weary with preaching, Christ bade put to sea;—  
Behold, a wondrous draught, the fishers’ fee!*

*A leper cried, Thou canst,—wilt make me clean?  
I will, saith Christ; healed, who had leprous been!*

*Levi took customs’ dues by the seaside,  
And when the Master called, he straight replied.*

*His Jews rejected for hypocrisy;  
Too skilled in subterfuge, what hope have we?*

*Man at Bethesda’s pool so long had lain—  
The Lord who healed him to betray was fain!*

*Christ taught,—the Father and the Son were One  
In words They spake, in all works They had done.*

*On the Son the royal crown of judgement set;—  
He learned the ways of men, nor would forget:*

*In Him was Life; and all the souls that live  
Draw breath from Him, to Him their praises give.*

*The Law, the prophets, witness; to each heart,  
The Father testifies, and shows his part.*

*Thy Jews condemned, grant us, good Lord, to heed—  
Unstable in our faith, slack in our deed!*

*Christ walked in cornfield on the Sabbath day,  
And set men free from bondage whilst they pray.*

*He instantly the withered hand restores,  
And, grieved, the Rulers' faithlessness deplores.*

*Once more to fair Genesareth He came,  
And multitudes drew nigh, with love aflame.*

*Our Founder chose the Twelve, and laid them, sure  
Stones to sustain that Church which shall endure.*

*He charged them; told them, how the poor are blest;  
How persecutions should their lives molest;*

*Taught them the brother-secret; how to give;  
How with all men as brothers they should live.*

*Of blind man led by blind man, cupboard's store,  
Of building House of Faith, He told them more:*

*And then He climbed the Mount that all might hear,—  
That multitude had come from far and near:*

*“Blessed are they that mourn,” He told the sad;—  
With promise of the Father’s care made glad.*

*Chaste must they be and kind and guard their speech;—  
For God’s own holiness is in man’s reach.*

*He taught men how to give their alms, to pray;  
And all their anxious fears to put away.*

*Behold, the Church He founded on that day  
Received those Institutes should guide her Way.*

*The people heard, and hardly understood,  
But knew the Word He spake was very good;*

*Perceived Authority in every word  
And fain would bear due fruit of that they’d heard.*

BOOK I

*Of Taking the Kingdom*



## I

### *The centurion's servant healed*

Six days the Father worked—and, lo, the world!  
The Almighty rested on the Seventh day.  
Work comparable for processes begun,  
For magnitude of issues, deep design,  
Had Christ the Son wrought on that blessed day  
When He called forth His Church, and—it was good,  
That new creation, now to have a name  
And blessed uses for the sons of men!

A man outworn with giving all he has,  
Or wealth, or thought, or love, or what he has,  
Falls emptied, as sky-vessel drained of air;  
And, quick, new ministrants are set to work  
To lift him, prostrate; with new hopes, inflate:  
The Father of us all graced His own Son,  
Begotten of Him ere the worlds were made,  
E'en as He graces any o'er-spent soul;  
But, for the Son had wrought a vaster thought  
Into expression than a man might work,  
There was conferred on Him more perfect gift,  
And adequate, than comes to any man.