

## The Two "Comes"

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"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." [Revelation 22:17](#).

OUR text stands at the end of the Bible even as this day stands at the end of the year—and it is full of Gospel even as we would make our closing Sabbath discourse. It would seem as if the Holy Spirit were loath to put down the pen while so many remained unbelieving, notwithstanding the testimony of the Inspired Word and, therefore, before He closes the canon of Holy Scripture and guards it against all addition or mutilation, with most solemn words He gives one more full, free, earnest, gracious invitation to thirsty souls to come to Christ and drink! So on this last page of the year I would gladly write another Gospel invitation that those who have not, up to now, believed our report, may, even on this last day of the feast, incline their ears and accept the message of salvation!

Before yet the midnight bell proclaims the birth of a new year, may you be born to God! At any rate, once more shall the Truth of God, by which men are regenerated, be lovingly brought under your attention. I ask those of you who have the Master's ear to put up this request to Him just now, that if the arrows have missed the mark on the previous 52 Sabbaths, they may strike the target this time, being directed by the Divine Spirit. Pray, also, that if some have kept the door of their hearts fast closed against the Lord Jesus till now, He may, Himself, come in the preaching of the Word, this morning, and put in His hand by the hole of the door, that their hearts may be moved for Him.

In answer to that prayer we shall be sure to get a blessing! Let us expect it and act upon the expectation and we shall see men flying to Jesus as a cloud, and as doves to their windows! Are not the Words of our text the Words of the Lord Jesus? Can they be regarded as the words of John? I think not, for they follow so closely upon the undoubted language of Jesus in the former verse. Thus runs the passage—"I, Jesus, have sent My 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. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come!"

We can hardly, I think, divide the paragraph, and we must, it seems to me, regard our text as the Words of the risen Jesus, that Morning Star whose cheering beams foretell the glorious day! The lover of men's souls was not quite done speaking to sinners—there was a little more to say and here He says it. The Divine Redeemer, leaning from His Throne where

He sits as the reward of His accomplished work, and bending over sinners with the same love which led Him to die for them, says, "Let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Looking at the words, therefore, in that golden light as coming from the dear lips of the Well-Beloved, let us notice first, the heavenward cry of prayer—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come!" These voices go upward to Christ. Then, secondly, let us hear the earthward cry of invitation—"Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That cry goes outward and downward towards needy and sorrowing spirits. Then, thirdly, we shall pause awhile to notice the relation between these two cries, for the coming of Christ is connected with the coming of sinners. And then, as best we can, we shall observe and expect the response to the two cries—both from Him who sits in the heavens and from souls thirsting here below.

O Divine Spirit, bless the Word!

I. First, then, our text begins with THE HEAVENWARD CRY OF PRAYER, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him that hears say, Come!" I think it will be evident, if you read carefully, that this cannot be interpreted as being only the voice of the Spirit and the bride to the sinner. Surely the sense requires us to regard this cry of, "Come!" as addressed to our Lord Jesus, who in a previous verse had been saying, "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with

Me." We may see the second included in it, but it will never do to exclude the first. We shall not have dealt honestly with the words before us unless we regard them, first, as spoken upwards towards our Lord whose coming is our great hope.

The matter of this cry is first to be noticed—it is the coming of Christ. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" This is, and always has been, the universal cry of the Church of Jesus Christ! There is no one common theory about the exact meaning of that coming, but there is one common desire for it, in some form or other. Some of us are expecting the bodily coming because the angel said, when the cloud concealed the rising Christ, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven." We therefore look for His descent upon the earth in Person, to be here, literally, among us.

Some expect that when He comes it will be to reign upon the earth, making all things new and bringing to His people a glorious period of a thousand years in which there shall be perpetual Sabbath rest. Others think that when He comes He will come to judge the world and that the day of His appearing is rather to be regarded as the end of all things and the conclusion of this dispensation than as the commencement of the age of gold. There are some who think the millennium a dream and the coming of Christ in Person to be a mere fancy—they believe that He will come spiritually—and they are looking for a time when the Gospel shall spread very wonderfully and there will be an extraordinary power about

the ministrations of the Word. They believe that nations shall run to Him and be converted to His Truth.

Now it would be very interesting to take up these various statements and speculations, but we do not want to do so, because, after all, in whatever way men look at it, all the true people of God still desire the coming of Christ, and so long as He draws near they are content! They may have, more or less light about the manner of it, but still the coming of Christ has been always, since the time when He departed, the great wish and desire, yes, and the agonizing prayer of the Church of God. "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus," is the cry of the whole host of the Lord's elect!

It is true that some have not always desired this coming from motives of the most commendable kind. Many become more than ever earnest in this prayer when they have been in a state of disappointment and sorrow, but still, that which they desire is a right thing and a promised blessing to be given in its time. I suppose the trial of sorrow will always give a keener edge to the desire of Christ's coming. Luther, on one occasion, when much discouraged, said, "May the Lord come at once! Let Him cut the whole matter short with the Day of Judgment, for there is no amendment to be expected." When we get into this state of mind, the desire, though right in appearance, may not be quite as pure as we think.

Desires and prayers which grow out of unbelief and insolence can hardly be of the very best order! Perhaps when we more patiently wait and quietly hope, we may not be quite so feverishly anxious for the speedy coming. And yet our state of mind may be more sober and more truly watchful and acceptable than when we showed more apparent eagerness. Waiting must sit side by side with desiring—patience must blend with hope. The Lord's, "quickly," may not be my, "quickly," and if so, let Him do what seems good to Him!

It may be a better thing, after all, for our Lord to tarry a little longer, so that by a more lengthened conflict He may the better manifest the patience of the saints and the power of the eternal Spirit! It may be the Lord may linger yet a while, and if so, while the Church desires His speedy advent, she will not quarrel with her Master, nor dictate to Him, nor even wish to know the times and the seasons. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," is her heart's inmost wish, but as for the details of His coming, she leaves them in His hands.

Having noted the matter of the cry, let us next observe the persons crying. The Spirit is first mentioned—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come!" And why does the Holy Spirit desire the coming of the Lord Jesus? At present the Spirit is, so to speak, the vicegerent of this dispensation upon earth. Our Lord Jesus is gone into the heavens, for it was expedient for Him to go, but the Comforter, whom the Father has sent in His name, has taken His place as our Teacher and abides on earth continually as the Witness to the Truth of God and the Worker for it in the minds of men. But the Spirit of God is daily grieved during this season of long-suffering and conflict. How much He is provoked all the world over is not possible for us to know.

The 40 years in the wilderness must have become as nothing compared with 19 centuries of rebellious generations! The ungodly vex Him, they reject His Testimony and resist His operations. And, alas, the saints grieve Him, too. You and I have, I fear, grieved Him often during the past year and so He desires the end of this evil estate and says to our Lord Jesus, "Come!" Beside, the Spirit's great objective and desire is to glorify Christ, even as our Lord says, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and show them unto you."

Now, as the coming of Christ will be the full manifestation of the Redeemer's Glory, the Spirit, therefore, desires that He may come and take to Himself His great power and reign. The Holy Spirit seals us "unto the day of redemption," having ever an eye to that great event. His work tends towards its completion in the day of the appearing of the sons of God. He "is the Earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession." Therefore does the Spirit have sympathy in the groans of His saints for the glorious appearing—and it is especially in this connection that He is described as helping our infirmities and making intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. In this sense the Spirit says, "Come!" Indeed, all such cries of, "Come!" in this world are of His prompting!

Our text, next, tells us that "the bride says, Come!" We all know that the bride is the Church, but perhaps we have not noticed the peculiarity of her name. It is not, "the Spirit and the Church say, Come!" But, "the Spirit and the bride," for she says, "Come!" always more fervently when she realizes her near and dear relationship to her Lord and all that it involves. Now, a bride is one whose marriage is near, either as having just happened or as close at hand. She is far more than merely engaged—either she is married or about to be—although the actual marriage feast may not have been celebrated yet. So is the Church very nearly arrived at the grand hour when it shall be said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come and His bride has made herself ready." And because of that, she is full of joy at the prospect of hearing the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes!"

Who marvels that it is so? It would be unnatural if there were no desire on the part of the Church to see her Beloved Lord and Head. Is it not as it should be, when the bride says, "Come!"? I wish to call your attention to the fact that while I have made two of the persons mentioned in the text for the purpose of discoursing upon them in due order, yet they are not divided in the passage before us. It does not say the Spirit says, "Come!" and the bride says, "Come!" but, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come!" That is to say, the Spirit of God speaks by the Church when He cries, "Come!" And the Church cries unto Christ for His coming because she is moved of the Holy Spirit!

True prayer is always a joint work—the Holy Spirit within us writes acceptable desires upon our hearts and then we present them! The Holy Spirit does not plead apart from our desiring and believing—we must, ourselves, desire and will and plead and agonize because the Spirit of God works in us so to will and to do. We plead with God because we are prompted and guided by His Holy Spirit! Our pleadings, which go up to Heaven for the

advent of Jesus, are the Holy Spirit crying in the hearts of the blood-bought! The Church, herself, prays in the Holy Spirit, instantly crying day and night for the fulfillment of the greatest of all the Covenant promises—

Come, Lord, and tarry not! Bring the long looked-for day! Oh, why these years of waiting here, These ages of delay? Come, for Your saints still wait! Daily ascends their sigh. The Spirit and the bride say, Come! Do You not hear the cry?"

The next clause of the text indicates that each separate Believer should breathe the same desire, "Let Him that hears say, Come!" Brethren, this will be the index of your belonging to the bride! This is the token of your sharing in the one Spirit and being joined unto the one body—if you unite with the Spirit and the bride in saying, "Come!" No ungodly man truly desires Christ's coming. On the contrary, he desires to get away from Him and forget His very existence! To delight in drawing near unto the Lord Jesus Christ is an evidence of our election and calling. To wish more and more fully to know Him and to dwell more near to Him is the token of our having been reconciled unto God by His death and of our having a new nature implanted in us!

To long to see Jesus Christ manifested in fullness of His Glory is the ensign of a true soldier of the Cross. Do you feel this? Do you desire to be better acquainted with the Lord Jesus? You have heard the Gospel—do you say, as the Church does, "Come, Lord Jesus"? Alas, to many, the Day of the Lord will be darkness and not light! They cannot desire it, for it will be a day of terror and confusion to them! But unto such as have heard and believed in the precious name of the Son of God, it will be joy and peace and, therefore,, the cry of their heart is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" This utterance of "Come!" by him that hears it, is the mark of his joyful consent to the fact that Christ shall come!

It is well, my Friend, if when you hear that Christ will come, you say, "Let Him come." If He comes to reign, let Him, for, blessed be His name, who should reign but He? If He descends to judge the earth, let Him come, for we shall be justified at His bar! His ends and objectives in coming cannot but be loaded with infinite benefit to us and Glory to our God and, therefore,, we would not delay His chariot wheels by so much as an hour—

"Hasten Lord, the promised hour! Come in Glory and in power! Still Your foes are not subdued— Nature sighs to be renewed. Time has nearly reached its sum, All things with Your bride, say, 'Come!' Jesus, whom all worlds adore, Come and reign forevermore!"

The saying of, "Come!" by each true hearer is the sign that his heart responds to the doctrine which he has been taught. We have received it by Revelation that Christ is to come and our souls say, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus! It is our happiness that it should be so."

Thus have we mentioned the persons by whom this cry is uttered and now let us add a word upon the tense in which the cry is put. It is in the present tense. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come!" The Spirit and the bride are anxious that Christ should come at once. And he that knows Christ and loves Him desires, also, that

He should not tarry. Look, my Brothers and Sisters, is it not time, as far as our poor judgments go, that Jesus should come? See how iniquity abounds! Behold our very streets, how foul they are with sin! See how errors are multiplied—do they not swarm in the Church of God, itself? Have not heresies come down like birds of prey upon the sacrifice, to pollute even the altars of the Most High?

See at this present time how skeptics defy the living God! They hiss out from between their teeth the question, "Where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were?" Behold how Antichrist stalks boldly through the land! Superstitions which your fathers could not bear are, again, set up among you! The graven images, crosses, crucifixes and sacraments—many gods and many lords of old Rome have come back to England—and they are worshipped in her national Church! In England, stained with the blood of martyrs, once again the mark of the Beast is to be seen on the foreheads of those whom she feeds to teach her people! Is it not time that the Lord should come?

O hoary systems of superstition, what else can shake you from your thrones! O gods that have long ruled over superstitious minds, who else can hurl you to the moles and to the bats? You know Him who made you quiver on your thrones on that night when He was born in Bethlehem's manger and you may well tremble, for when He comes it will be with an iron rod to dash you into shivers! "Even so," we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Amen."

II. Now, secondly, let us listen to THE EARTHWARD CRY OF INVITATION TO MEN. I must confess I cannot

quite tell you how it is that the sense in my text glides away from the coming of Christ to the earth into the coming of sinners to Christ, but it does! Like colors which blend, or strains of music which melt into each other, so the first sense slides into the second. This almost insensible transition seems, to me, to have been occasioned by the memory of the fact that the coming of Christ is not desirable to all mankind.

There are the unbelievers who have not obeyed Him and when they hear the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" straightway they begin to tremble and they say within themselves, "What if He should come! Alas, we rejected Him and His coming will be our destruction." I think I hear some such sinners weeping and wailing at the very thought of the Lord's coming, for they know that they, also, who have pierced Him must behold Him and weep because of Him! It seems almost cruel on the part of the bride and the Spirit to be saying, "Come!" when that coming must be for the overthrow of all the adversaries of the Lord!

And so Jesus, Himself, seems gently to turn aside the prayer of His people while He pleads with the needy ones. He lets the prayer flow towards Himself, but yet directs its flow towards you sinners, also. He, Himself, seems to say, "You bid Me come, but I, as the Savior of men, look at your brothers and your sisters who are yet in the far country, the other sheep

which are not yet of the fold, whom I, also, must bring in. And in answer to your cry to Me to come I speak to those

wandering ones, and say, 'Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'" Is not that the way in which the sense glides from its first direction?

Now, from whom does this cry arise? It first comes from Jesus. It is He who says, "Let him who thirsts come." The passage so stands, as I have already said, that we cannot but believe this verse to have been the utterance of Him who is the Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. He, out of Heaven, cries to the unconverted, "Let him who thirsts come." Will they refuse Him that speaks? Shall Jesus, Himself, invite them and will they turn a deaf ear? But next, it is the call of the Spirit of God. The Spirit says, "Come!" This Book which He has written, on every page says to men, "Come! Come to Jesus!" This is the cry of the Spirit in the preaching of the Word.

What do sermons and discourses mean but, "Come Sinner, come!?" And those secret motions of power upon the conscience. Those times when the heart grows calm, even amid dissipation, and thought is forced upon the mind—those are the movements of the Spirit of God by which He is showing man his danger and revealing to him his Refuge—and so is saying, "Come!" All over the world, wherever there is a Bible and a preacher, the Spirit is saying, "Come!" And this is the speech of the Church, too, in conjunction with the Spirit, for the Spirit speaks with the bride and the bride speaks by the Spirit.

The Church is always saying, "Come!" This is, indeed, the meaning of her Sabbath gatherings, of her testimony in the pulpit, of her teaching in the schools, of her prayers and her exhortations. Everywhere, poor wandering Hearts, the Church of God is saying to you, "Come!" Or if she does not do so, she is not acting in her true character as the bride of Christ. For this purpose is there a Church in the world! If it were not for this, our Lord might take His people Home as soon as they have believed, but they are kept here to be a seed to keep the Truth of God alive in the world. And their daily earnest cry to you is, "Come, come to Jesus!" "The Spirit and the bride say, Come!"

The next giver of the invitation is spoken of as, "Him that hears." If you have had an ear to hear and have heard the Gospel to your own salvation, the very next thing you have to do is to say to those around you, "Come!" Go and speak to anybody that you meet! Speak to everybody that you meet according as opportunity and occasion shall be given you! And say what all the Church says and what the Spirit is saying—namely, "Come!" Give your Master's invitation! Distribute the testimony of His loving will and bid poor sinners come to Jesus! Your children and your servants—bid them come! Your neighbors and your Friends—bid them come! The strangers and the far-off ones—bid them come! The harlot and the thief—bid such come! Those that are in the highways and the hedges! Those who are far off from God by abominable works—say unto all these—"Come!"

Because you have heard the message and proved its truth, go and call in others to the feast of love! Oh, if there were more of these individual proclaimers, what blessings would descend upon London! I do not know how many Believers in Christ there are present here, but I do know that there are 5,000 of us associated in Church fellowship at this Tabernacle. And if the whole of these 5,000 would but begin to bear witness for Christ with all their might, there would be salt enough even within this one Tabernacle to season all London, with God's blessing upon our efforts! My Brothers and Sisters, let us not be slow to address ourselves to those to whom the Spirit of God within us, the voice of Jesus from above and the cry of the whole Church is addressed! Let each individual member take up the note of invitation till all around, the trembling Sinner hears the encouraging cry of, "Come!"

Now, notice the remarkably encouraging character of this, "Come!" which is given by the Spirit of the bride. One part of it is directed to the thirsty—"Let him who thirsts come." By thirst is meant necessity and an appetite for its supply. Do you feel yourself guilty, and do you desire pardon?—you are a thirsty one! Are you disquieted and filled with unrest, and do you long to be pacified in heart?—you are a thirsty one! Is there a something, you know not, perhaps, what it is, for which you are sighing, and crying and pining? You are a thirsty one and to you is the invitation most positively and distinctly given, "Let him who thirsts come."

But how much I rejoice that the second half of the invitation does not contain even an apparent limit, as this first sentence has been thought to do! I regard the thirst here mentioned as by no means requiring of any man that he should have gone through a process of horror on account of guilt, or should have been overwhelmed with conviction and driven to despair of salvation. I believe that any desire and any longing will come under the description of, "thirst." But since some have stumbled at it and have said again and again, "I feel I do not thirst enough," see how sweetly the second clause of our text puts it—"Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Whether you are thirsty or not, yet have you a will to drink? Have you a will to be saved? Have you a will to be cleansed from sin? A will to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus? Do you will to have eternal life? Then thus says the Spirit to you, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now, notice three vast doors through which the biggest and most elephantine sinner that ever made the earth shake beneath the weight of his guilt may go. Here are the

three doors. "Whoever"—"Will"—"Freely."

"Whoever" is the first door. "Whoever"—then what man dares have the impudence to say that he is shut out? If you say that you cannot come in under, "whoever," I ask you how you dare narrow a word which is, in itself, so broad, so infinite? "Whoever"—that must mean every man that ever lived or ever shall live while yet he is here and wills to come! Well, then, the word, "will." There is nothing about past character, nor present character. There

is nothing about knowledge, or feeling, nor anything else but the will—"Whoever will." Speak of the gate standing ajar! This looks to me like taking the door right off the hinges and carrying it away!

"Whoever will." There is no hindrance whatever in your way. And then, "freely." God's gifts are given without any expectation or recompense, or any requirements and conditions—"Let him take the water of life freely." You have not to bring your good feelings, or good desires, or good works—just come and take freely what God gives you for nothing! You are not even to bring repentance and faith in order to obtain Divine Grace—you are to come and accept repentance and faith as the gifts of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. What broad gates of mercy these are! How wide the entrance which Love has prepared for coming souls! "Whoever!" "Will!" "Freely!"

Observe how the invitation sums up the work the sinner is called upon to do. First, he is bid to come. "Whoever will, let him come." Now, to come to Christ means simply for the soul to draw near to Him by trusting Him. You are not asked to bring a load with you, nor to work for Christ in order to earn salvation, but just to come to Him. Nothing is said about the style of coming—come running or creeping, come boldly or timidly—for if you do but come to Jesus, He will in no wise cast you out. A simple reliance upon the Lord Jesus is the one essential for eternal life!

Then the next direction is, "take." "Whoever will, let him take." That is all. That word, "take," is a grand word to express the Gospel. The world's gospel is, "bring." Christ's Gospel is, "take." Nature's gospel is, "make." Just change the letter and you have the Gospel of Divine Grace which is, "take." There is the water, dear Friends! You have not to dig a well to find it—you have only to take it. There is the bread of Heaven, you have not to grind the flour or bake the loaf, you have only to take it. There is a garment woven from the top throughout and without a seam—you have not to add a fringe to it—you have only to take it!

The way of salvation may be summed up in the four letters of the word, "take." Do you desire Christ? Take Him. Do you need pardon? Take it. Do you need a new heart? Take it. Do you want peace on earth? Take it. Do you want Heaven hereafter? Take it—that is all. "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And there is one other word which I love to dwell on, and it comes twice over, "Let him who thirsts come, and whoever will let him take." It is graciously said, let him. It seems to me as if the Lord Jesus Christ saw a poor soul standing thirsty at the flowing crystal fountain of His Love and the devil, standing there, whispered to him, "You see the sacred stream, but it flows for others. It is what you need, but you must not have it, it is not for you."

Listen! There is a voice from beyond the clouds which cries aloud, "Let him take it!" Stand back, Satan, let the willing one come! He is putting down his lips to drink—he understands, now—but there comes rushing upon him hosts of his old sins, like so many winged bats, and they scream out to him, "Go back! You must not draw near! This fountain is not

for you—this pure crystal stream must not be defiled by such leprous lips as yours!" Again there comes from the Throne of Love this blessed password, "Let him come and let him take."

It is as when a man is in court and is called to go into the witness box. He is standing in the crowd and his name is called. What happens? As soon as he hears his name he begins to push through the throng to reach his place. "What are you doing?" asks one. "I am called," he says. "Stand back! Why do you push so?" asks another. "I am called by the Judge," he says. A big policeman demands, "Why are you making such confusion in court?" "But," says the man, "I am called. My name was called out and I must come."

If he cannot come. If it is not possible for him to get through the throng, one of the authorities calls out, "Make way for that man—he is summoned by the court. Officers, clear a passage and let him come." Now the Lord Jesus calls the thirsty one and He says, "Whoever will, let him come!" Make way, doubts! Make way, sins! Make way, fears! Make way, devils! Make way, all of you, for Jesus Christ, the great King and Judge of all has said, "Let him come!" Who shall hinder when Jesus permits? He who is divinely called shall surely come to Jesus! Come he shall, regardless of whomever may stand in his way!

This morning I feel as if I could come to Jesus all over again and I will do so! Do you not feel the same, my Beloved Brothers and Sisters? Well then, dear Brothers and Sisters, after you have done so, turn round and proclaim this precious Gospel invitation to all around you! Say to them, "Come and take the water of life freely!"

III. The third point is THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE TWO COMINGS. Is there any relation between the coming of Christ from Heaven to earth, and the coming of poor sinful creatures to Christ and trusting Him? There is this relation, first, that they are both suggested in this passage by the closing of the Scriptural Canon. John is about to write, by the voice of the Lord, that none are to add to or take from the completed Book of God. The Church says, "If there are no more Prophets to proclaim the mind of God, no more Apostles to write with infallible authority and no more instructors to give forth new revelations, or bring new promises, then it only remains that the Lord should come.

"Then," she says, "Come, Lord Jesus!" And here are the sinners standing round and they hear that no other Gospel is to be expected, no more revelations are to be added to those which are in this Bible. They hear there will be no other Atonement, no other way of salvation. Therefore it is their wisdom to come at once to Jesus! It is because the Book was about to receive its finis that the Spirit and the bride unitedly cried to the sinners to come at once! No fresh Gospel is to be expected, therefore let them come at once! Why should they tarry any longer? The oxen and fatlings are killed, come to the supper! All things are ready, there is nothing more to be done or to be revealed! Upon us the ends of the earth have come. "It is finished" has rung through earth and Heaven, therefore—

"Come and welcome, Sinner, come!"

I think I perceive another connection, namely, that those people who, in very truth love Christ enough to cry to Him continually to come, are sure to love sinners, also, and to say to them, "Come!" Not that there are not some who talk a great deal about Christ's coming and yet manifest but small care for other men's souls. Well, it is talk—the profession of looking for the Second Advent is nothing but talk when it does not lead people to cry to perishing men, "Come to Christ!" He who loves Christ so very much that he is quite wrapped up in himself and forgets the dying millions around him. He who stands star-gazing into Heaven, expecting to see a sudden Glory to take himself away does not understand what he says! For if he really loved his Lord, he would set to work for Him and would show that he expected the King to come by endeavoring to extend His kingdom!

There is this connection, also, that before Christ comes a certain number of His elect must be gathered in. He shall not come until an appointed company shall have been brought to eternal life by the preaching of the Word. Oh then, Brothers and Sisters, it is ours to labor that the wanderers may come home, for so we are, as far as lies in us, hastening the time when our Beloved, Himself, shall come! Once more, there is a sort of coming of Christ which, though it is not the first meaning here, may be included in it, for it touches the center of the sinner's coming to Christ. Because, Brethren, when we cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" if He shall answer us by giving us of His Spirit more fully, so that He comes to us spiritually, then penitent souls will assuredly be brought to His feet.

We know this, that wherever the Lord, Himself, is in a meeting, hearts are sure to be broken and repentance is certain to be manifested! Wherever Jesus Christ is in power, there must be a revival, for dead souls must come to life in Him. The great thing we need above all others is a grip of that glorious promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," and as we, in this sense, obtain the coming of the Lord, we shall see sinners come and take of the water of life freely!

IV. Well then, lastly, WHAT ARE THE RESPONSES? We sent up a cry to Heaven and said, "Come!" The response is, "Behold, I come quickly." That is eminently satisfactory. You may have to wait awhile, but the cry is heard and if the Lord should not come in your lifetime, the same preparation of heart which made you look for His coming will be blessedly useful to you if He sends His messenger to take you Home by death. The same waiting and watching will answer in either case, so you need not be under any distress about which of the two shall happen!

Christ will descend to earth as surely as He ascended to Heaven! And when He comes there will be victory to the right and to the true—and His saints shall reign with Him! And now concerning this other cry of, "Come!"—we ask sinners to come. We have asked them in a fourfold voice—Jesus, the Spirit, the bride, and him that hears—they have all said,

"Come!" Will they come? Brothers and Sisters, it is a question which I cannot answer. You must not ask me, for I do not know! You had better ask the persons, themselves! They

are of age, ask them. Take care that you ask them before they get out of the Tabernacle this morning! They know and, therefore,, they can tell you whether they mean to come or not.

This I will say to them—my dear Friends, I trust that this last day of the year may be, to you, a day of mercy! The Jews had a Feast of Ingatherings at the end of the year and I earnestly pray that we may have a gathering in of precious souls to Christ before the year quite runs out—that would be a grand finish to this year of Grace and a sweet encouragement for the future! But suppose you do not come. Well, you have been invited. If a Christmas feast is provided for the poor and a number of beggars are standing shivering outside in the sleet and snow, but will not come in, though earnestly bid, we say, "Well, you have been invited. What more do you need?"

Remember, also, that you have been invited very earnestly. The Spirit, the bride and him that hears—and Jesus, Himself—they have all said to you, "Come!" I am as the man that hears and I have said, "Come!" I do not know how to say it more earnestly than I have said it. Oh, how would my soul delight if everyone here came to Christ at this moment! I would ask no greater joy out of Heaven to crown this year with! You are invited and you are earnestly invited—what more do you need? If you never come, you will have this thought to haunt you forever—"I was invited and pressed again and again, but I would not come."

I want you to remember, too, that you are called to come now, at once! You may not be bid to come tomorrow for several reasons. You may not be alive, or there may be no earnest person near to invite you. Can there be a better day than today? You have always said, "Tomorrow," yet where are you now? Not a bit closer, some of you, than you were 10 years ago! Do you remember that sermon when you were made to tremble so and you said, "Please God, if I get out of this, I will seek Your face"? But you postponed it and are you any closer now?

You remember the story of the country man who would not cross the river just yet, but sat down and said he would wait until all the water had gone by? He waited a long time in vain and he might have waited forever, for rivers are always flowing. You, too, are waiting till a more convenient season shall come and all the difficulties shall have gone by. Forget about such supreme folly! There will always be difficulty! The river will always flow! O man, be wise! Plunge into it and swim across! Now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation!

Oh that you would believe in Jesus Christ! May His Spirit lead you to do so now!—

Only trust Him! Only trust Him! Only trust Him now! He will save you! He will save you! He will save you now!" Cast yourselves upon the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus and the great work is done! The Lord help you to do so. Amen.

Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Revelation 22 HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—917, 345, 509.