

THE DOUBLE “COME” NO. 1608

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 10, 1881,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come.”
Revelation 22:17.*

WE have open before us the last page of the Word of God. The Spirit of God will not dictate a single fresh line of truth. We have come to the last chapter and very soon we shall reach the Amen! We are also, according to divine Revelation, approaching the last page of human history. So short a time will elapse before the present economy shall conclude that the angel says, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this Book: for the time is at hand.” How shall the Book finish? If we have come almost to its last verse, how shall it conclude? If we could have been asked by the Great Spirit of God, “How shall it close?” What would have been our reply? We must certainly have left it entirely to His infinite wisdom, but what suggestions might we have made? Shall it finish with a promise? It is well that it should, and there is the cheering word for the righteous, “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” But if we close with comfort for saints, what about the multitudes outside? What about the tens of thousands who are perishing? Does not our love to sinners suggest that there should be a word to them? Shall it, then, be a word of threat, stern and vigorous, to awaken their consciences and convince them of sin? Here it is—“Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and makes a lie.”

Yet one does not like to finish with a sentence of exclusion. The Old Testament closes with the word, “curse.” Let not the New Testament conclude in the same fashion. What, then, shall it be? Shall the last sentences be full of tender invitation and earnest entreaty to the sinner, bidding him come to Christ and live? Yes, let it be so! But shall we forget the Lord, Himself, while we are thinking of the *sinner*? He has told us that He will come—should not the very last word of Scripture have a reference to Him and to His glorious advent? Should not the Spirit, at the last, as well as at the first, bear witness to Jesus? Shall not the last word that shall linger in the reader’s ears speak of the approaching Glory of the Lord? Yes, let it be so! But it would be best of all if we could have a word that would combine the four—a promise to the righteous, a threat to the wicked, an invitation to the poor and needy and a welcome to the coming one! Who could devise such a verse? The Holy Spirit is equal to the emergency! He can dictate such a verse—He *has* dictated it! Here it is in the words of our text—“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come.” That, “Come,” is a *promise* to the righteous, for, “at the coming of the Lord they shall have their portion and their glory, for His reward is with Him.” That, “Come,” is a word of *thunder* to the wicked, for when He comes He shall break them as with a rod of iron! He shall dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel!

That, “Come,” is a word of *invitation* to the sinner—“Let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” And yet it is a welcome to our Well-Beloved, for when the Spirit and the bride say, “Come,” they invite the coming One, the Messiah whose Second Advent our heart desires, to whom we cry, “Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!” I rejoice to find my text, set in the closing chapter of Scripture, closing Scripture in such a way as wisdom, alone, could have dictated—comprehending all the things which are desirable in the finis of Holy Writ! Oh for grace to gather from this remarkable portion the instruction which it contains! “Come,” is the word of the Spirit and the bride—and our text urges us to let it be *our* word, too, if we have ever heard it. “Let him that hears say, Come.”

In trying to open up this passage we shall notice, first, that here is a two-fold ministry—we are bid to say, “Come,” but it is in a double sense—we say to Jesus, “Come,” and we say to the sinner, “Come.” Secondly, we shall notice how this two-fold ministry is secured—“The Spirit and the bride say, Come.”

This is actually and perpetually done according to the ordinance of God. Then, thirdly, we shall see how this two-fold ministry is to be increased—let him that hears add a new voice to that which is already speaking and let him say, “Come!” In conclusion, you who are hearing ones shall have this two-fold ministry urged upon you. May the Spirit of the Lord bless our discourse to him that hears!

I. First, then, let us consider THE TWO-FOLD MINISTRY. There is, in the text, a cry for the coming of the Lord. If you read the verse in connection with that which goes before it, you will be persuaded that the cry of the Spirit and the bride is addressed to the Lord Jesus concerning His Second Advent. As the echo of the Savior’s previous words, “Behold, I come quickly,” the Spirit and the bride say, Come. This cry is continually going up from the Spirit and from the Church of God and the more gracious the season, the more intense the prayer. Because we have the first fruits of the Spirit we groan within ourselves for the glorious manifestation of our Lord. Just as the 12 tribes, serving God day and night, looked for the *first* coming, so ought all the tribes of our Israel, day and night, without ceasing, to wait for the Lord from heaven. We are looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” is the desire of every instructed saint.

I shall not go into any details about when He will come. I will not espouse the cause of the pre-millennial or the post-millennial advent—it will suffice me, just now, to observe that the Redeemer’s coming is the desire of the entire church and, “unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” The ministry of prayer for the coming of the Lord ought to grow more and more fervent as the years roll on—even as the watchers look for the morning the more eagerly as the night wears away. Certainly the time draws nearer and the event can hardly be far removed. Therefore let the prayer be general and eager till our Lord hears it—

*“Hark how Your saints unite their cries,
And pray and wait the general doom!
Come, You, the soul of all our joys!
You, the desire of nations, come!”*

Let everyone that hears the prophecy of our Lord’s assured coming join in the prayer, “Your kingdom come.” But there is a second ministry of the church which is the cry for the coming of *sinners* to Christ. In this respect, “the Spirit and the bride say Come.” It is a very sad calamity when any church ceases from its mission work. It is clearly out of fellowship with the Spirit of God and has ceased to work with Him. The cry of, “Come,” should never cease at any time or in any place. It should be addressed to all men as we have opportunity. The world should ring with, “Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus! Come and welcome, sinner, come!” For this purpose the Spirit of God dwells among men and for this purpose there is a church left on earth! If it were not for this, the Holy Spirit might depart and Jesus Christ might bear His saints away to dwell with Him above.

The Spirit abides here and the church abides here that together they may continually cry, “Let him that is thirsty come; and whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” This, then, is the double ministry and I want you to notice that the first call is not opposed to the second. The fact that Christ is coming ought never to make us any the less diligent in pressing sinners to come to Christ! I deeply regret when I see persons so taken up with prophecy that they forget evangelism. Trumpets and vials must not displace the gospel and its invitations. By all means, pray fervently for the Advent and search the roll and see what the Spirit says concerning it—but still, look on the world that lies in the Wicked One and let its sorrows command your tears—let its sins excite your zeal. Go out into the world and cry, “Come,” and the Spirit of God will cry with you and by your cry many shall be brought to Christ that they may live! A desire for the personal coming of the Lord is by no means antagonistic to the resolve to labor on in His absence in the hope of subduing the world to His gracious reign.

Again, take heed that the second call never obscures the first. Albeit we are to seek sinners with all our might and to compel them to come in to the marriage supper, yet we must not forget whose marriage it is, nor cease to pray for the majestic appearing of our Lord, the Prince of Life. Despise not prophesying. Be taken up with evangelical work—let it fill your heart, your hands and all your mouth—but, at the same time, watch for that sudden appearing which, to many, will be as unwelcome as a thief in the night! Let the two comes leap at the same moment from your heart, for they are linked together. Christ will *not* come until He has gathered unto Himself an elect company! Therefore when you and I go forth and say to sinners, “Come,” and God blesses us to the bringing in of them, we are doing the best we can to hasten the advent of the Son of Man. Jesus will not descend till He has borne long with the ungodly.

Until, indeed, His word shall have been preached throughout all nations for a testimony against them and then shall the end be. Brethren, the two truths of God work together as a matter of fact and we are not to dissociate them. Look for the Lord's coming and then work towards that coming by bidding sinners come to Christ and live! To my mind the doctrine of the coming of Christ ought to inflame the zeal of every believer who seeks the conversion of his fellow men. How can he be a believer if he does not seek this end? The Lord comes quickly—O sinner, come quickly to the Lord, or it may be too late for you to come! We who call you may soon be silenced by His advent and mercy may have no more to say to you.

"The oxen and the fatlings are killed, all things are ready; come to the supper before the wrath of the King shall be awakened by your delays." We beseech you come at once, for the Day of Judgment will soon be ushered in. I am sure that everybody who is eager to save souls will soon be driven to desire the advent. If we vehemently cry, "Come," to the ungodly and see their rejection of the gospel, we shall, at times, become so cast down that we shall cry, "Come, Lord, and end this dreary age. Men reject and despise You and Your servants are distressed; it is time for You to interpose, for they make void Your laws." Go into a heathen land and see their images and preach to them concerning the *true* God! And when they reject your testimony you will be driven to cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!" Stand in a Popish country and see them altogether given to their idols and worshipping crosses and relics—and you will soon cry, "Come, Lord Jesus. Let Antichrist be hurled like a millstone into the flood, never to rise again!" The vehemence of your desire for the destruction of evil and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ will drive you to that grand hope of the church and make you cry out for its fulfillment! There is no need to say more about this two-fold ministry. Only let its two parts be evenly balanced. Let there be prayer *to* our Lord—"Come quickly!" and an equal measure of *entreaty to sinners*—"Come to Christ!" Blend the two in wise proportion and set both on fire. Tell of Christ's coming for judgment and then invite men to come to Christ for mercy. Warn them that He is on the way, but tell them that He waits to be gracious and that while He lingers they have space for repentance!

You will thus both drive and draw, both convince and comfort—and your testimony will have two hands with which to bear men to their Savior!

II. And now, secondly, let us note that THIS TWO-FOLD MINISTRY IS SECURED. According to our text, "The Spirit and the bride say Come." They *always* say it and always will say it till Jesus comes! The Spirit says it. What a cry must this be which comes up from the Spirit of God, Himself! Given at Pentecost, He has never returned nor left the church, but He dwells in chosen hearts, as in a temple, even to this day. With groans that cannot be uttered He makes intercession for us and this is one of His intercessions, "Come, Lord Jesus." We are sure that Christ will come, if for no other reason than from this fact—the Spirit cries, "Come"—for the Spirit cannot plead in vain. This ministry of the Spirit is, in part, carried on by the Word of God. This Book tells us that Christ will come and gives a thousand pleas for the Lord's coming and for the sinner's coming to Him. This is done by the Spirit, also, in His operations upon the human heart—He bears witness of judgment to come and He persuades men to come to Jesus. He is always moving men to pray that Christ may come and moving men to come to Christ! He dwells with us and shall be in us—and in both the senses of the word, the Spirit of God is evermore crying, "Come!" This also is certainly fulfilled by the church wherever she is a *true* church. Note that here she is called, "the bride." A bride is one that has been chosen from among others and set apart by love to be especially dear to him who chose her.

So is the church chosen by God's eternal election and by the love of Christ to be Christ's beloved forever. A bride is one that, being chosen, is espoused. The covenant is an espousal of the church to Christ and every conversion—every regeneration of each person making up the church—is, so to speak, a renewal of the espousal of the chosen to the Bridegroom. A bride, however, is more than espoused—she is expectant of the marriage. It is not long before the wedding day will come to one who is called, "the bride," and even so it is with the church. She is, today, beloved of Christ, chosen of Christ, espoused of Christ—and the time comes when the marriage shall be consummated—"blessed are they that shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb." Joy, joy, joy awaits the elect Church of Christ. Before long shall heaven and earth be filled with the splendor of the nuptials of the King of Kings when He shall take to Himself His great power and reign and take to Himself His bride who shall then be called the Lamb's wife! Even today the church is the bride of Christ, reserved unto Him, alone. She has no

head but Christ. She acknowledges no rule and sovereignty but that of Christ. This church, which deserves to be called, "the bride," is always fulfilling the double ministry which lies in the cry of, "Come." Her prayers rise to heaven incessantly for her Bridegroom's appearing—

*"Come, Lord, and tarry not!
Bring the long-looked-for day!
Oh, why these years of waiting here,
These ages of delay?"*

And then she turns round to an ungodly world and she cries, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money, let him come!" So, you see, the church speaks up to her Lord that she may bring Him down and she speaks down to the world that she may bring sinners up to Christ! Thus our God secures the ceaseless double ministry, for while the Spirit is upon the earth and the church is yet among men, the two, together, will continually say, "Come." Many things make it certain that the Spirit of God and the bride of Christ will always maintain their two-fold ministry. For, first, the sin of man grieves the Holy Spirit and moves Him to say, "Come, Lord," while He says to sinners, "Turn you, turn you and come to Jesus." The church, also, is vexed with abounding sin. She is sorrowful to be compelled to dwell in the tents of Kedar and the wickedness of men makes her cry aloud, "Come, Lord Jesus," while in pity to guilty man she cries, "Come and be cleansed from your iniquities."

Thus *sin* provokes the double cry which will yet secure its overthrow. The character of the two pleaders guarantees this perpetual ministry, for the Spirit of God is such a lover of holiness that He cannot but cry, "Come, Lord, and end the reign of sin!" He cannot but cry to men, "Flee away from your sins and come to Jesus!" The true bride of Christ has, also, such a delight in purity that from force of holiness she must always cry, "Come, Savior, and end the reign of evil," and she must cry to men, "Come to Jesus, that you may live by His salvation!" brethren, the love which the Spirit bears both to Christ and to men and the love which the church bears both to Christ and men are combined in one force and lead to the one cry! Because of this common love, the Spirit and the bride must unitedly say, "Come," in the two-fold sense. There is also the desire for Christ's glory which is in the heart of the Spirit of God. He delights to glorify Christ! It is His *office* to do so and, therefore, He never will stay from the double work of crying, "Come, Lord," and, "Come, sinner!" The true church also desires Christ's glory. What a throne she would make for Him! What a crown would she put upon His head! Therefore does she cry, "Come, Lord, and reign!" And then she exhorts sinners to come and submit at His feet. There is also the longing for Christ's presence which the Spirit of God has and which the bride has. Should not the bride long for the coming of the bridegroom? There are secret bonds of unity that bind both the Spirit and the bride to the great Bridegroom and while there are these bonds, we cannot wonder that they unitedly cry, "Come! Come!"

There is, moreover, before the Spirit's eyes and before the eyes of the church, the future victory—the day when all things shall be under the feet of Christ and He shall reign forever and ever! The Spirit works to this same end. All His operations of conviction, of regeneration, of comforting, tend towards the glorious triumph of the right and the true in the person of Jesus! The church laughs for joy of heart as she thinks of the splendor of the latter days and, like the spirits before the throne of God, in the prospect of the conquest of the world by her glorious Husband! This prospect leads both the Spirit and the bride to say to Christ with groans, "Come"—and to say to sinners with accents of entreaty, "Come unto Him, that He may give you rest."

I think I have sufficiently shown the character of this two-fold ministry and how our God has provided for its continuance.

III. I need your practical attention and your prayers while we speak upon the way in which THIS TWO-FOLD MINISTRY IS INCREASED. "Let him that hears say, Come." The hearing man is to say, "Come," but the *unconverted* man is not bid to do so. I want you to notice the gradations. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"—that is *actually* done. The man that "hears" is bid to say, "Come"—this *should* be done. But the man who is thirsting is not told to say, "Come." No, he cannot say, "Come," till he has first come for himself! The exhortation, then, to say, "Come," is only addressed to those who drink of the water of life.

You that are not saved cannot invite others. How can you? You do not know the way! You do not know the blessing to be found in that way! A more pitiable being than a man who tries to preach before he is converted, I can hardly imagine, and it is lamentable that there are in England hundreds of men or-

dained to the Christian ministry who, themselves, do not know what it is to be born-again! They are preaching mysteries in which they have no fellowship! This is unhappy work and *unlawful* work. "Unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes?" Yet all of you who have really heard the gospel with open ears and received the truth of God, by faith, into your souls are called upon to cry, "Come!" Every man that has really heard and learned the Word of God is to go forth and bid others come to Christ!

See, brothers and sisters, how this perpetuates the cry. I have cried, "Come," but my voice will be hushed in the grave before long. Younger men who have heard through my voice, will cry, "Come," when I am silent, and those that hear them shall cry, "Come," when that generation shall have passed away. As in the old Greek games the athletes ran with torches and one handed the light to another and thus it passed along the line, so is it with us. Each man runs his race, but he passes the torch on to another, that the light of God may never go out from generation to generation. "Let him that hears say, Come." Let the fathers teach the children and the children their children. And while the sun and the moon endure, let the voice that cries, "Come," to Christ, go up to heaven and let the voice that cries, "Come" to sinners, be heard in the chief places of concourse! This precept secures the swelling of the volume of the cry, for if every man that hears the gospel is to cry, "Come," then there will be more voices and yet more! What a feeble few they were who stood up at Pentecost, and by the mouth of Peter began to say, "Come!" When each man went out to preach, though they spoke in all kinds of voices, they were but a few that said, "Come," but before the sun went down there were 3,000 baptized into Christ—every one ready to say, "Come." Before centuries had passed, all Europe had heard the voice of those who said, "Come."

The Lord gave the word—great was the company of them that published it. If at this time we could only awaken all that hear the gospel to say, "Come," what a chorus it would be! The entire world would hear it! If all who go down to the sea in ships knew the Lord and would say, "Come"—yes, if every Christian traveler would take care to proclaim the gospel wherever he went—what holy voices would be heard in nations that as yet are ignorant of Christ! The volume swells; the sound rolls like thunder along the heavens when all that hear it say, "Come." And how the force of it is strengthened! When one man says, "Come," and tells out the gospel tale, men may doubt it. Another steps in and says, "Come," and in the mouth of two witnesses the whole shall be established. If another and another shall say, "Come." If each one shall bear witness to the sweetness and the love of Christ, many will be driven to Christ by the power of such repeated testimonies! There is a young man whose sister has been saved. He laughs at her. His mother is converted. He smiles at her. His father is converted. He begins to think. His brother is converted—one after another all in the house are renewed. They all beseech him; they pray for him; they tell him the way of salvation and at last he must yield. When so many surround him, the testimony is so strengthened that the Spirit of God blesses it to his conversion! Consider, moreover, that not only does the testimony gain in strength, but the adaptation of it is remarkable! I may preach as long as I live, and I shall never do good to certain of you. It may be that I am not the man that God is likely to bless to certain peculiar persons. But if all that hear me would say, Come, some man among you would fit *them*, or some woman, at least, would reach their case. If all would say Come, though the sinner is like leviathan, some weak place in his scales would be found out and the sword of the gospel would come at him!

The adaptation of the testimony is half the battle. Thus, dear friends, you see that there are great reasons why everyone that hears should say, "Come." Then would the Word of God travel into strange places. The waiter at the inn and the sergeant at the barracks would become a blessing. The warden of the jail would bear the gospel to his prisoners. The nurse in the hospital would speak of Jesus to the sick. Places that never will be reached by the most earnest city missionaries or ministers will be open to the church if everyone that hears will say, "Come!" Down in the heart of the earth the miners sing and praise God when their fellow miner tells of Christ! In the palace, Christ is made known when the humble porter at the gate talks of Jesus! Every place would be accessible to the gospel if all who heard it would say "Come." We should then be as irresistible as the locusts when they go forth in swarms. I have seen those creatures invade a land! They climb up the walls and down them! They march across the roads and pass over the rivers and none can stand against them! If once the Church of Christ were full of the Spirit of God and all that heard the gospel would say, "Come," we should be perfectly irresistible! The Spirit of God being with us, nation after nation would yield! Popery would be swept away and er-

rors would vanish! But because we forget this command, therefore the church languishes, the darkness thickens and the gloom threatens to deepen into everlasting night. In all this I fall back upon the divine guarantee in the first part of the text, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come"—but, oh, that God would move His entire church to fulfill her mission and cause every one of her members to say, "Come!"

IV. I may not linger longer over this, for I must advance to the fourth part which is the most practical. This is my point—THIS TWO-FOLD MINISTRY IS URGED UPON ALL WHO HAVE HEARD THE WORD OF GOD. I will leave the point of saying, "Come, Lord Jesus," till the close of the sermon and, as it is not easy to ride upon two horses at once, I will keep to that part of our ministry which consists in bidding the thirsting ones come to Jesus. First, dear brother, dear sister, you who have with the ear of your inner nature heard the Word of God, *you* are called to cry to others, "Come to Christ." You are called to this work by an *obligation*—the fact that you have received a very gracious privilege. Somebody else brought the gospel to *you*, for faith comes by hearing and you heard the report and, therefore, you live. Are you not under a moral obligation to carry the gospel to others that they, also, may hear it and be saved? Remember how many lived and died to bring you the gospel! Had it not been for men who burned at the stake, there might have been no gospel preaching in England! Had it not been for those near and dear to you who loved you, prayed for you and wrestled for your salvation, you might have been in the midst of gospel light and yet never have seen a ray of it! Are you not a debtor, from now on, to all around you? Ought you not to repay your debt by laboring for others as others labored for you?

Remember, dear hearers, though it is no privilege to listen to *my voice*, yet it *is* a great privilege to hear the *gospel!* Prophets and kings desired it, but they heard it not. The clear manifestation of the glory of God in the person of Christ was known to none in olden time as it is to you. The very least in the kingdom of heaven enjoys privileges greater than any of those who lived under the legal dispensation. Are you not grateful for this? Will you deny to the next generation the light of God which your fathers preserved for you? Above all, remember that your ears have been opened by an act of sovereign grace. You might have been left as thousands are, to hear and not to hear—to listen to a voice, but not to perceive its meaning. But the eternal Spirit, in the sovereignty of His grace, has visited you and given you a new life; and with it, all the privileges of the children of God! Can you be indifferent to this? Will you not feel that now the precious seed of God must be scattered by your hands in the broad furrows of the world, out of gratitude to another hand that first gave the Seed to you and made it take root in the garden of your heart? Here, then, is your obligation. Now, listen to your commission—"Let him that hears say, Come." A believer preaching in the street was accosted by a gentleman who had been ordained to the ministry. Hands which belonged to arms decorated with lawn sleeves had been laid upon this gentleman's consecrated head and he was, thereby, made into an authorized minister. A wonderful thing this!

How is it that those of us who were never the subjects of this solemn imposition manage to win souls for Christ? However, this man preaching the gospel in the street was stopped and asked by this successor of the Apostles what right he had to preach. And he was not slow to give an answer. The preacher quoted this text—"Let him that hears say, Come." "I have heard the gospel in my own soul," he said, "and that is my permission to go and preach it. And I shall not be stopped by you." You who preach the gospel in the streets are often called lay preachers, but, indeed, you are as much God's clergy as any others! The Apostle Peter distinctly calls the whole church, or, if you please, the mere laity, God's heritage or, in the Greek, God's *clerks* in that memorable verse addressed to ministers which warns them against being "lords over God's clergy." All of you who believe in Jesus are God's clergy and are authorized to speak the Word of God in some form or other. Yes, the women have their places. Even though they are forbidden to preach in the public assembly, there are times when they may address their own sex and others, much to the glory of God. Let them speak without fear, as often as God gives them opportunity, in their own modest, affectionate way. Let them tell of Jesus and His love. Somehow or other you are all to say, "Come," whether you are men or women, ignorant or learned! And here is your permit for doing it—"Let him that hears say, Come."

But this verse is more than permission; it is a *commission!* It means that the hearing man *ought* to speak and this he should do personally. The text does not say, "Let them that hear say, Come," for what is everybody's business is nobody's business. No, it says, "Let *him* that hears say, Come"—that is to say—each man who knows the gospel in his heart is bound to say, "Come." When is he bound to say it?

Why, now, at once! Let him that hears say, "Come," upon the first opportunity that presents itself! And when is he to stop saying it? Never at all! Let him that hears still say, "Come." Let him begin to say it as soon as he has heard it! Let him keep on saying it as long as He lives!—

*"His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim.
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'
Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name.
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"*

This is your commission. Mind that you attend to it. O you commissioned officers of Christ, see that you sound aloud your Master's word!

Next, dear brethren, attend to this ministry, not only because you are under obligation to do it and commissioned to do it, but because you are *qualified* to do it. "How?" you ask. Why, your qualification is this—that you have heard! A man can tell what he has heard. It has been thought by some that the qualification for preaching the gospel is great power of thought. Press your fingers upon your brow and fetch the doctrine out! Think on as hard as you can till you have brewed a new gospel! Produce a new gospel every six weeks! Yes, but that is not so, otherwise preachers would be few, indeed! If you need a servant to answer the door for you who is never to come in and tell you who calls, but who is to answer the door according to her own sense and wit, you will have to pick a long while before you find such a person! But if all you need is one who will tell you what is said and then go and say to the person at the door what you tell her, you can find such a maid pretty soon. This last is the true idea of a preacher—he is to say what God says to him and he must not go any further. If it is so said in the Word of God let him repeat it. This makes preaching a humbler work than some think it is and a more divine power by far! We do not believe in the cry, "Every man his own savior." No, we speak of the good old way which is the *only* way! Yes, brothers and sisters, you are qualified to say, "Come," to others because you have heard a voice saying, "Come," in your own soul!

The text says not, "Let him that has *heard*," but, "him that *hears*"—that is to say, let the man who is still hearing the voice of God speak. Hear and then tell what you hear! I have seen pictures of a pope which represent him with a dove sitting upon his shoulder—insinuating that he receives divine intimations. I am afraid that the bird is a raven in the case of these so-called heads of the church—but in the case of humble believers, the Spirit is present revealing Christ to the heart and that which is revealed is to be spoken by us. There is your qualification! You have proven the truth of God in your own soul and so can speak *experimentally*! You have found Christ! You have drunk the living water and you can say, "Come." I needed a drink of water, one day, in a thirsty place in Italy. And by the coachman's help I asked at a house for water. The owner of the house was busy and did not come to show me where the water could be found, but he sent a girl with me. She was very little, but she was quite big enough, for she led the way to a well and I was soon refreshed. She had not to *make* a well, but only to *point it out* and, therefore, her youth was no disadvantage. We have not to *invent* salvation, but to *tell* of it, and therefore you who are but babes in grace can perform the work! You have heard the voice of Jesus say, "Stoop down and drink, and live"—go forth and echo that voice till thousands quench their thirst! Your message is a very simple one—"Let him that hears say" _____ —a long and difficult sentence in Latin?

No! Is he to repeat a very complicated piece of Miltonic blank verse? No! "Let him that hears say, *Come*." "I can say that," says somebody. Mind you do, brother. Just go and tell people that Jesus died. Tell them that, "whoever believes in Him is not condemned." Do not be too long over it, it is only one word, you know—"Let him that hears say, *Come*." Be very earnest about it. There are many ways of saying it—mind you say it in the best possible manner. And then, as the message is very short, repeat it often—

*"Tell me the story often,
For I forget it soon."*

Tell it over and over again, since it is all in one word, "Come." Mind you do not add anything else to it. Do not tell them to bring a price! Do not tell them to prepare themselves, and to *do* this or that—just say, "Come, come, come away from yourselves! Come away from your sins! Come away from your right-

eousness! Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus, sinner, come!" It is a very short message. And so I conclude by saying, take care to remember that yours is a two-fold ministry and so when you have said, "Come," to the sinner, mind you back it all up with prayer! Go home and say, "Lord, come to these poor sinners by Your grace. Lord, come, I pray You; come that this poor work of mine may be ended, because a greater work shall be accomplished by Your coming." Let your heart cry to your Lord, "Come!" for then you will not be engrossed with the world. No man will be anxious for Christ to come while he has everything he wants here below and is quite satisfied with it. The miser and the sensualist do not want the Lord to come—they are so glued to this world that they dread *anything* that might change their relation to it. You must let loose of the world or you cannot sincerely say to Jesus, "Come," and that is the very spirit of an earnest worker. You must say, "Come," because you are ready to welcome Christ!

That is the way in which to preach the gospel. I have no right to preach a sermon which I should be ashamed for Christ to hear. You and I ought to live so that if our Lord were to come we should not be afraid, but should just go on doing what we have in hand. We ought to live so that if it were a part of the program that Christ would come at 12 o'clock, we should finish life beautifully at that very hour and look at the great Judge and rejoice to appear before Him! This is the spirit in which to go on saying, "Come," to sinners! Hear the wheels of your Master's chariot behind you? Then you will not be dull in preaching the gospel! Feel that men will soon have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ—then you will not be cold in your delivery! Expect that very soon you, too, must give your account before the Great White Throne and even think you see it—and see yourself and your hearers standing before it—*then* will you preach as though you never might preach again! You will preach as a dying man to dying men and so the, "Come," of prayer will help you when you deliver the, "Come," of invitation and you will be enabled to make full proof of your ministry!

I must add how pleased I was when I was seeing applicants who wished to join the church, to see that God is blessing many of you in the conversion of souls. One or two of the number were converted under my ministry out of some 15 or 16, but the most of them were under your ministries—one and another of my beloved members had brought others to Jesus! I noticed four little rooms in and about Bermondsey to each of which God had been pleased to give conversions through prayer meetings, or the preaching of certain younger brothers. I am right glad of that, and I wish we had hundreds of such room and cottage meetings. This big city of London will never be evangelized by our great assemblies. If all the chapels were filled, which they are not, and if all the churches were filled, which they certainly are not, then a large proportion of the people could not get in. But, alas, they do not come to worship—they will not come!

I do not think they understand some of my fellow ministers, for they talk too grandly—some ministers have not learned to talk English—they speak a kind of French-Latin English. It is not the Saxon English which the people know and as they do not understand what is preached, they do not care to come. The way to get at the masses is to reach them by twos and threes—I am sure of it! Get them into your houses, talk about Jesus Christ in your parlors, in your kitchens, in your bed-chambers, in the corners of the streets, anywhere! I am so glad that very many of you do so—go on and prosper! It will not matter whether I live or die if you all become ministers. Would God that all of the Lord's servants were prophets! May all of you live to win souls!

"Let him that hears say, Come." God help you to do it, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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