

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

"LO, I COME": APPLICATION.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 3RD, 1891, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Then said I, Lo, I come."—Psalm xl. 7.

To my great sorrow, last Sunday night I was unable to preach. I had prepared a sermon upon this text, with much hope of its usefulness; for I intended it to be a supplement to the morning sermon, which was a doctrinal exposition. The evening sermon was intended to be practical, and to commend the whole subject to the attention of enquiring sinners. I came here feeling quite fit to preach, when an overpowering nervousness oppressed me, and I lost all self-control, and left the pulpit in anguish. I come hither this morning with the same subject. I have been turning it over, and wondering why it was so. Peradventure, this sermon was not to be preached on that occasion, because God would teach the preacher more of his own feebleness, and cast him more fully upon the divine strength. That has certainly been the effect upon my own heart. Perhaps, also, there are some here this morning who were not here last Lord's-day evening, whom God intends to bless by the sermon. The people were not here, peradventure, for whom the eternal decree of God had designed the message, and they may be here now. You that are fresh to this place, should consider the strange circumstance, which never happened to me before in the forty years of my ministry; and you may be led to enquire whether my bow was then unstrung that the arrow might find its ordained target in your heart. The two sermons will now go forth together from the press; and perhaps, going together, they may prove like two hands of love wherewith to embrace lost souls, and draw them to the Saviour, who herein saith, "Lo, I come." God grant it may be so!

The times when our Lord says, "Lo, I come," have all a family likeness. There are certain crystals which assume a regular shape, and if you break them, each fragment will show the same conformation; if you were to dash them to shivers, every particle of the crystal would be still of the same form. Now the goings forth of Christ which were of old, and his coming at Calvary, and that great advent when he

shall come a second time to judge the earth in righteousness, all these have a likeness the one to the other. But there is a coming of what I may call a lesser sort, when Jesus cries "Lo, I come" to each individual sinner, and brings a revelation of pardon and salvation; and this has about it much which is similar to the great ones. My one desire this morning is to set forth the Lord Jesus as saying to you, as once he did to me, "Lo, I come." Still he cries to the weak, destitute, forlorn, hopeless sinner, "Lo, I come." I shall talk about that coming, and hope that you will experience it now, and thus be able to follow me in what I say. I speak to the unconverted mainly; but while I do so I shall hope to be refreshing the grateful memories of those already saved; but this will all depend upon the working of the Spirit of God. To him, then, lift up your hearts in prayer.

I. I will commence with this observation: THE LORD CHRIST HAS TIMES OF HIS FIRST COMINGS TO MEN; "*Then said I, Lo, I come.*"

What are these times? Mayhap some here present have reached this season, and this very day is the time of blessing when the text shall be fulfilled: "Then said I, Lo, I come." Go with me to the first record in the volume of the Book, when it was said that he should come. You will find it in the early chapters of Genesis.

Jesus said, "Lo, I come" *when man's probation was a failure.* Man in the Garden of Eden had every advantage for obedience and life. He had a perfect nature, created without bias towards evil, and he was surrounded with every inducement to continue loyal to his Maker. He was placed under no burdensome law. The precept was simple and plain: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Only one tree was reserved: all the rest were given up to be freely enjoyed. In a very short time—some think it was on the first day, but that we do not know—our mother Eve ate of the fruit, and father Adam followed her, and thus human probation ended in total failure. They were weighed in the balances, and found wanting: "Adam being in honour continued not." At that point we read in the volume of the Book that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. *Then* our Redeemer said, "Lo, I come." Harken to me, my friend: you also have had your probation, as you have thought it to be. You quitted your father's roof with every hope, your mother judged you to be of a most amiable character, and your friends expected to see in you one whose life would honour the family. You thought so yourself. Your probation has reversed that hope: you have turned out far other than you should have been; and looking back upon the whole of your life to this moment, you ought to be ashamed. It has been a terrible breaking down for you, and for all who know you; and you are sitting in this place feeling, "Yes, it is so; the tests have proved me to be as a broken reed. I am under condemnation by reason of my transgressions against God." How rejoiced I am to tell you that, at such a time when you are conscious that you are a dead failure, Jesus says, "Lo, I come!" If you had not been a failure you would not have wanted him, and he never comes as a superfluity; but now in your complete break-down you must have him or perish, and in infinite pity

he cries, “Lo, I come.” Is not this good news for you? Believe it and live.

That also was a *time when man's clever dealings with the devil had turned out a great failure*. The serpent came and said, “God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” How craftily he put it! How cunningly he insinuated that God was jealous of what man might become, and was keeping him back from a nobler destiny! He even dared to say, “Ye shall not surely die,” thus giving the Lord the lie direct. He seemed to say—His threat is a mere bugbear, a thing to scare you from a great advance in knowledge and position. “Ye shall not surely die.” Eve, in her supposed wisdom, was not able to cope with the serpent's subtlety. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” The devil had played his cards so well that man was left bankrupt of virtue, bankrupt of happiness, bankrupt of hope. *Then*, in the volume of the Book, it was written, “I said, Lo, I come.” Yes, in the hour when hellish falsehood had robbed man of everything. No man hath yet dealt with the devil without being a loser. The arch-deceiver promises very fairly; but he lies from beginning to end. I know he promised you pleasure unbounded, and liberty unrestrained. Now, the pleasure is burnt out, and the ashes of that which once blazed and crackled, are terrible to look upon. As for liberty, where is it? You have become the bond-slave of sin. You were to enjoy life, and lo, you are plunged in death! It may be, there are in this house persons who bear in their bodies the marks, not of the Lord Jesus, but of the devil's temptations. He has made you so to sin that your bones are filled with the sins of your youth; and you know it. He needs a long spoon who eats out of the same dish as the devil, and your spoon has not been long enough. Sin has overreached and betrayed you; and you stand trembling before God as the result of having listened to the falsehoods of hell, and having rejected the commands of heaven. Supposing such a person to be present—and I feel sure he is—I pray that he may hear my text as from the Lord Jesus himself. “Then said I, Lo, I come.” The devil has trodden you down, but Jesus comes to raise you up. Your paradise is lost, and by him it is to be restored. Jesus has come to give repentance and remission of sins. That crafty head which deceived you, the Lord Jesus has broken; he came for this purpose. If you had not been betrayed, you would not have needed a deliverer; but your misery has made room for his mercy. Not while Adam is perfect in paradise is there any news of the Seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head; but after the serpent has done his deceitful work, and has ruined the race, then we hear that ancient gospel of God, and see the sole hope of fallen man. Here is good cheer for you who look with shame upon your foolish yielding to Satan's deceits. You are caught as silly birds in a snare; you have been as foolish as the fish of the sea which are taken in a net; but when you are captives, Christ comes to be your Liberator, and God commends his love towards you in that while you are yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.

Further than this, when we find the first promise of our Lord's coming, "in the volume of the Book," we find that *man's covering was a failure*. The guilty pair had gathered the leaves of the fig-tree, and had made themselves aprons, for they knew that they were naked. This was the first fruit of that boasted tree of knowledge, and it is the principal one to this day. Their scant coverlet contented them for a little while; but when the voice of the Lord God was heard in the garden they confessed that their aprons were good for nothing; for Adam owned that he was afraid because he was naked, and that therefore he had hidden himself in the thick groves of the garden. It is easy to make a covering which pleases us for a season; but self-righteousness, presumption, pretended infidelity, and fancied natural excellence—all these things are like green fig-leaves, which shrivel up before long, lose their freshness, and are rather an exposure than a covering. It may be that my hearer has found his imaginary virtues failing him. It was when our first parents knew that they were naked that the Saviour said, "Lo, I come." My downcast hearer, if you are no longer in your own esteem as good as you used to be; if you can no longer hide the fact that you have broken God's law, and deserve his wrath; if you no longer believe the devil's lie that you shall suffer no penalty, but may even be the better for sin, then the Lord the Saviour says to you, "Lo, I come." To you, O naked sinner, shivering in your own shame, blushing scarlet with conviction—to you he comes. When you have nothing left of your own, he comes to be your robe of righteousness, wherein you may stand accepted with God.

That first news of the coming Champion came at a time *when all man's pleas were failures*. Adam had thrown the blame on Eve—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Eve had also thrown the blame on the serpent; but the Lord God had silenced all such excuses, and driven them from their refuges. He had made them feel their guilt, and had pronounced upon them the inevitable sentence; and then it was that he spake of the "Seed of the woman." Here was man's first, and last, and best hope. So too, my friend, when you dare no longer plead your innocence, nor mention extenuations and excuses, then Jesus comes in. If conscience oppresses you so sorely that you cannot escape from it; if it be so that all you can say is "Guilty, Wilfully Guilty," then Jesus comes. If you neither blame your surroundings, nor your companions, nor the providence of God, nor your physical weakness, nor anything else, but just take all the blame to yourself because you cannot help doing so, then Jesus comes in. Verily you have sinned against God, against your parents, against your fellow-men, against light, against knowledge, against conscience, and against the Holy Ghost; no wonder, therefore, that you stand speechless, unable to offer any plea by way of self-justification. It is in that moment of shame and confusion that the Saviour says, "Lo, I come." For such as you are he is an Advocate. When a sinner cannot plead for himself, Christ pleads for him; when his excuses have come to an end, then will the Lord put away his sin, through his own great sacrifice. Is not this a precious gospel word?

When our Lord did actually arrive, fulfilling the text by being born

of a woman, it was *when man's religion had proved a failure*. Sacrifices and offerings had ceased to be of any value: God had put them away as a weariness to him. The scribes and the Pharisees, with all their phylacteries and wide-bordered garments, were a mere sham. There seemed to be no true religion left upon the earth. Then said Christ, “Lo, I come.” There was never a darker thirty years than when Herod slew the innocents, and the chief priests and scribes pursued the Son of God, and at last nailed him to the tree. It was *then* that Jesus came to us to redeem us by his death. Do I speak to any man here whose religion has broken down? You have observed a host of rites and ceremonies: you were christened in your infancy, you were duly confirmed, you have taken what you call “the blessed sacrament”; or it may be you have sat always in the most plain of meeting-houses, and listened to the most orthodox of preachers, and you have been amongst the most religious of religious people; but now, at length, the Spirit of God has shown you that all these performances and attendances are worthless cobwebs which avail you nothing. You see now that—

“Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to heaven.”

You are just now driven to despair, because the palace of your imaginary excellence has vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision. If I had told you that your religiousness was of no value, you would have been very angry with me, and perhaps you would have said, “That is a bigoted remark, and you ought to be ashamed of making it.” But now the Spirit of God has told it you, and you feel its force: he is great at convincing of sin. When the Spirit of truth comes to deal with the religiousness of the flesh, he withers it in a moment. All religion which is not spiritual is worthless. All religion which is not the supernatural product of the Holy Ghost is a fiction. One breath from the Spirit of God withers all the beauty of our pride, and destroys the comeliness of our conceit; and *then*, when our own religion is dashed to shivers, the Lord Jesus comes in, saying, “Lo, I come.” He delights to come in his glorious personality, when the Pharisee can no longer say, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men”; and when the once bold fisherman is crying, “Lord, save, or I perish.” If you feel that you need something infinitely better than Churchianity, or Dissenterism, or Methodism—in fact, that you need Christ himself to be formed in you—*then* to you, even to you, Jesus says, “Lo, I come.” When man is at his worst, Christ is seen at his best. The Lord walks to us on the sea in the middle watch of the night. He draws nigh to those souls which draw nigh to death. When you part with self you meet with Christ. When no shred of hope remains, then Jesus says, “Lo, I come.”

Once more. The Lord Jesus is to come a second time; and when will he come? He will come *when man's hope is a failure*. He will come when iniquity abounds, and the love of many hath waxed cold. He will come when dreams of a golden age shall be turned into the dread reality of abounding evil. Do not dream that the world will go

on improving and improving, and that the improvement will naturally culminate in the millennium. No such thing. It may grow better for a while, better under certain aspects; but, afterwards the power of the better element will ebb out like the sea, even though each wave should look like an advance. That day shall not come except there be a falling away first. Even the wise virgins will sleep, and the men of the world will be, as in the days of Noah, eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage. On a sudden, the Lord will come as a thief in the night. The deluge of fire will find men as unprepared as did the deluge of water. He will come taking vengeance on his adversaries. When things wax worse and worse we see the tokens of his speedy coming. He will shortly appear, for the sky is darkening. When every hope will seem blotted out, and nothing but grim ages of anarchy and ungodliness are to be expected, then our Deliverer will come. When the tale of bricks was doubled in Egypt, Moses came; and when the world attains to its utmost unbelief and iniquity, Jesus will come. So at this moment my hearer may be saying, "I cannot be worse than I am; if I am not actually in hell already, yet I feel a fire within which tortures my soul. The sword of vengeance hangs over my head suspended by a single hair. I tremble to live, and I fear to die. Lost! Lost! Lost! I am past hope!" This is the time for my text: "*Then said I, Lo, I come.*" He who is able to save to the uttermost appears to the soul when every other hope disappears. In your deep distress I see a token for good. You are now reduced to spiritual death, and now I trust the eternal life will visit you.

Now all this I put before you in simple language, believing what I say, and trusting that if I describe your case, you will know that I mean it for you. I have heard of a preacher who was so fearful lest he should be thought personal, that he said to his congregation, "Lest any of you should think that what I have said was meant for you, I would observe that the sermon I am preaching was prepared for a congregation in Massachusetts." I can plead nothing of the sort. I refer to you, my hearer, in the most pointed manner. I will attend to Massachusetts, if ever the Lord sends me there; but just now *I mean you*. Oh, that you may have grace to take home these thoughts to yourselves; for if you do so, they will by the Spirit's power bring the light of hope into your souls!

II. Secondly, I would remark that CHRIST COMES TO SINNERS IN THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON: "*Then said I, Lo, I come.*" Note that glorious *I!* Have you not seen people engaged in urgent work who did not understand their business? Apprentices, and other unskilful people, are muddling time away. They are making bad worse, and running great risk. Perhaps a great calamity will occur if the work is not done well and quickly. A first-rate worker is sent for. See, the man has come who understands the business. He cries, "Let me come! Stand out of my way! You are on the wrong tack: let me do it myself!" You have not blamed him for egotism, for the thing needed to be done, and *he* could do it, and the others could not. Everybody recognized the master workman, and gave place to him. The announcement of his coming was the end of the muddle, and the signal of hope.

Even so Jesus comes to you sinners, and his presence is your salvation. He says, “Lo, I come.” What does he mean?

He means, *the setting of all else on one side*. There is the priest—he has not helped you much; he may go, for Jesus says, “Lo, I come.” There are your own efforts and doings; there are your feelings and thinkings; there are your ceremonies and austerities; there are your prayers and tears; there are your hearings and readings—all these must be laid aside as grounds of confidence, and Jesus alone must be your trust. He can do for you what none of these can. You are trying to work yourself up to repentance and faith, and you cannot succeed. Let him come, and he will bring every good thing with him. It is glorious to see our Lord throwing down all our bowing walls and tottering fences, and to hear him cry, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation.” Everything else vanishes before his perfect salvation.

Before him there is *a setting of self aside*. You have been your own confidence. What you could feel, or do, or think, or resolve, had become the ground of your confidence; but now Jesus puts self down, and he is himself exalted. By working yourself to death, you cannot effect your own salvation. Lo, Jesus comes to save you. You cannot weave yourself a garment. Lo, he comes to clothe you from head to foot with his own seamless robe of righteousness. He annihilates self that he may fill all things.

Here is a glorious *setting of himself at our side and in our place*. Mr. Moody tells a story, which I would fain hope may be true; for one would like to hear something good about a Czar of Russia, and especially about our once enemy, the Emperor Nicholas. The story concerns a soldier in the barracks who was much distressed by his heavy debts. He was in despair, for he owed a great deal of money, and could not tell where to get it. He took a piece of paper, and made a list of his debts, and underneath the list he wrote, “Who will pay these debts?” He then lay down on the barrack bed, and fell asleep, with the paper before him. The Emperor of Russia passed by, and, taking up the paper, read it, and being in a gracious mood signed at the bottom, “NICHOLAS.” Was not that a splendid answer to the question? When the soldier woke up and read it, he could scarcely believe his own eyes. “Who will pay these debts?” was the despairing question. “Nicholas” was the all-sufficient answer. So are we answered, Who will bear our sins? The grand reply is “JESUS.” He puts his own name to our liabilities, and in effect, that he may meet them, he says, “Lo, I come.” Your debt of sin is discharged when you believe in Christ Jesus. “Without shedding of blood is no remission;” but the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin. You are not now to bear your own sins. Behold the scape-goat, who carries them away into the wilderness! Yea, Jesus says, “Lo, I come!” He takes our sins upon himself, he bears their penalty, and we go free. Blessed word—“Lo, I come”: I come to take your weight of sin, your burden of punishment. I come to be made a curse for you, that you may be made the righteousness of God in me. Sinner, stand out of the way, and let Jesus appear for you, and fill your place! He sets you on one side, and then he sets himself where you have been. Jesus is now the one pillar on which to lean,

the one foundation on which to build, the one and only rest of our weary souls.

He sets himself where we can see him; for he cries, "Lo, I come"; that is to say, "See me come." He comes openly, that we may see him clearly. How I wish the Lord would reveal himself at this moment to each one of those who are weary of earth, of self, of sin, and possibly even weary of life itself! Oh, if you could but see Jesus standing in your room and stead, you would have faith to stand in his place, and so become "accepted in the Beloved"! O Lord, hear my prayer, and cause poor hearts to see thee descending from the skies, to uplift sinners from the dark abyss! Holy Spirit, touch that young man's eyes with heavenly salve, that he may see where salvation lies. Deal with that poor woman's dim eyes also, that she may perceive the Lord Christ, and find peace in him. Jesus cries, "Lo, I come! Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee.
Then look, sinner—look unto him, and be saved—
Unto him who was nail'd to the tree."

Should you even lie in all the despair and desolation which I described, I would persuade you to believe in Jesus. Trust him, and you shall find him all that you want.

Our Lord sets himself to be permanently our all in all. When he came on earth, he did not leave his work till he had finished it. Even when he rose to glory, he continued his service for his chosen, living to intercede for them. Jesus was a Saviour nineteen hundred years ago, and he is a Saviour still; and he will be a Saviour until all the chosen race shall have been gathered home. He tells us, "I said, Lo, I come"; but he does not say, "I said, I will go away, and quit the work." Our Lord's ear is bored, and he goes out no more from the service of salvation. It is not written of any penitent souls, "Ye shall seek me, but shall not find me"; but it is written, "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee." O my hearer, you are now in the place where the gospel is preached to you—yes, to you, for we are sent to preach the gospel to every creature; and though you should be the worst, and most benighted, and most guilty of all the creatures out of hell, yet you are a creature, and we preach Christ to you. O poor heart, may the Lord Jesus say to you "Lo, I come!" for he comes to stay,—to stay until he has worked salvation *in* you as he has worked out salvation *for* you. He will not leave a believer till he has presented him spotless before the throne of God with exceeding joy. I wish I could make all this most clear and plain. You are altogether ruined by your own fault, and you cannot undo the evil. You have done all you can, and it has come to nothing. You are steeped in sin up to your throat; yea the filth has gone over your head: you are as one drowned in black waters. Despairing one, cast not your eyes around to seek for a friend, for you will look in vain to men. No arm can rescue you, save one; and that is the arm of Jesus, who now cries "Lo, I come." Set everything else on one side, and trust yourself with the Saviour, Christ the Lord.

III. Oh, that many may be comforted while I dwell on a third head!
CHRIST IN HIS COMING IS HIS OWN INTRODUCTION.

Here our Lord is his own herald, "Lo, I come." He does not wait for an eloquent preacher to act as master of the ceremonies to him: he introduces himself. Therefore even I, the simplest talker on earth, may prove quite sufficient for my Lord's purpose if he will graciously condescend to bless these plain words of mine. It is not I that say that Jesus comes, but in the text our Lord himself declares, "Then said I, Lo, I come." You need not do anything to draw Christ's attention to you; it is Christ who draws your attention to himself. Do you see this? You are the blind bat; and he is all eye towards you, and bids you look on him. I hear you cry, "Lord, remember me," and I hear him answer, "Soul, remember me." He bids you look on him when you beseech him to look on you.

He comes when quite unsought, or sought for in a wrong way. To many men and women Christ has come though they had not even desired him. Yea, he has come even to those who hated him. Saul of Tarsus was on his way to worry the saints at Damascus, but Jesus said, "Lo, I come"; and when he looked out of heaven he turned Saul, the persecutor, into Paul, the apostle. The promise is fulfilled, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." Herein is the glorious sovereignty of his love fully exercised, and grace reigns supreme. "Lo, I come," is the announcement of majestic grace which waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men.

Our Lord Jesus is the way to himself. Did you ever notice that? He comes himself to us, and so he is the way by which we meet him. He is our rest, and the way to our rest; he says, "I am the way." You want to know how to get to Christ? You have not to get to Christ, for he has come to you. It is well for you to come to Christ; but that is only possible because Christ has come to you. Jesus is near you: near you *now*. Backslider, he comes to you! Wandering soul, roving to the very brink of perdition, the good Shepherd cries, "Lo, I come." He is the way to himself.

Remember, also, that *he is the blessing which he brings.* Jesus not only gives life and resurrection, but he says, "I am the resurrection and the life." Christ is salvation, and everything needful to salvation is in him. If he comes, all good comes *with* him, or rather *in* him. An enquirer once said to a minister, "The next step for me is to get a deeper conviction of sin." The minister said, "No such thing, my friend: the next step is to trust in Jesus, for he says, Come unto me." To come to Jesus, or rather to receive Jesus who has come to us, is the one essential step into eternal salvation. Though our Lord does say, "Come unto me," he has preceded it with this other word, "Lo, I come." Poor cripple, if you cannot come to Jesus, ask him to come to you; and he will. Here you lie, and you have been for years in this case; you have no man to put you into the pool, and it would do you no good if he did; but Jesus can make you whole, and he is here. You cannot stir hand or foot because of spiritual paralysis; but your case is not hopeless. Listen to my Lord in the text, "Then said I, Lo, I come." He has no paralysis. He can come, leaping over

the mountains of division. I know my Lord came to me, or I should never have come to him: why should he not come to you? I came to him because he came to me.

“He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.”

Why should he not draw us also? Is he not doing so? Yield to the pressure of his love.

“Then said I, Lo, I come.” You see *our Lord is his own spokesman*. He says to me, “Go and tell those people about my coming”; and I gladly do so; but you will forget *my* words, and refuse to accept the Coming One. Your consciences will be unawakened, your hearts unmoved: I fear it will be so. But if this text be fulfilled concerning our Lord this day—“Then said I, Lo, I come”—you will hear HIM. If he speaks he is himself the Almighty Word, and his voice will reach your hearts, and accomplish his purpose. Dear Christian people, join with me in this prayer: Lord, speak to thy chosen ones that lie here in their death-like despair, far off from thee, and say to each one of them, “Lo, I come.” O downcast soul, this is your morning: this is the set time to favour you: this day is salvation come to your house and to your heart. Make haste and come down from the tree of your frivolity or your self-righteousness. Receive the Lord Jesus, for to-day he must abide in your house and in your heart: the hour for the imperial “*must*” of the eternal purpose has arrived. God grant it may be so! May this be an hour of which Jesus shall declare,—“Then said I, Lo, I come!”

IV. Our next point is this—CHRIST, TO CHEER US, REVEALS HIS REASONS FOR COMING. Only a few words on this. Note the rest of the verse: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.” When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, because it was the due time *according to covenant purposes*. Christ comes to a guilty sinner, just as he once came to a manger and a stable, because so it was appointed. There is nothing for him to get, but everything for him to give; but he comes because so it is written in the volume of the divine decrees—

“Thus the eternal counsel ran,—
Almighty grace, arrest that man!”

Therefore in love the Saviour appears to the sinner, and by grace arrests him in his mad career.

It is his Father's will. Christ's coming to save a soul is with his Father's full consent and aid. The Father wills that you who believe in him, lost though you be, should now be saved, and Jesus comes to do the will of the Father.

He comes because his heart is set on you. He loves you, and so he hastens to your rescue. Your salvation is his delight. Though your soul is sunk in a sea of need, and you are in despair because of that need, Jesus loves you, and comes to meet your case. The best of all is that Jesus loves you. One asked an old man of ninety, “Do you love Jesus?” and the old man answered with a smile, “I do, indeed; but I can tell you something better than that.” His friend said, “Something better than loving Jesus! What is that?” The old

disciple replied, "*He loves me.*" O soul, I wish you could see this fact, which is indeed better than your love to Jesus, namely, his love to you! Because he loved his redeemed from before the foundation of the world, therefore in due time he says, "Lo, I come."

The fact is, *you have need, and he has love, and so he comes.* There is no hope for you unless he does come, and that is why he comes. If you had a penny of your own, he would not give you his purse; if you had a rag of your own, he would not give you his robe; if you had a breath of your own, he would not give you his life. But now you are naked, and poor, and miserable, and lost, and dead, Jesus reveals himself, and you read concerning him, "Then said I, Lo, I come." He gives you his reasons—reasons not in yourself, but all in *his* grace. There is no good in you; there is no reason in you why the Lord should save you; but because of his free, spontaneous, rich, sovereign, almighty grace, he leaps out of heaven, he descends to earth, he plunges into the grave to pluck his beloved from destruction.

V. Here is my last word: CHRIST'S COMING IS THE BEST PLEA FOR OUR RECEIVING HIM, and receiving him now. O sirs, remember you have not to raise the question whether he will come or not. He is come. You have not to say, How can I come to him? He comes to you. You do want a Mediator between your soul and God; but you do *not* want any mediator between yourself and Jesus; for he says, "Lo, I come." To you in all your filthiness, in all your condemnation, in all your hopelessness, he comes. Wait not for anybody to introduce you to him, or him to you; he has introduced himself, and here is his card—"Then said I, Lo, I come." No pleas are needed to persuade him to come to you, for he says, "Lo, I come." Though you cannot think of a single argument why he should appear to you in mercy, he does so appear. It is written, "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." O words of wondrous grace! Our gracious Lord does not wait for our entreaties; but of his own accord he says, "Lo, I come." Without asking you, and without your asking him, he puts in an appearance in the sovereignty of his grace.

No search is needed to find the Lord, for he comes in manifested grace, and calls upon us to see him. "I have long been searching for Christ" murmurs one. What! seeking for the sun at noonday? Jesus is not lost. It is you that are lost, and he is searching for you. He says, "Lo, I come": it is *you* that will not come. Still one declares that he has been seeking the Lord Jesus for many a day. This is sadly strange, for Jesus is near. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." If thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt be saved. Searching after Christ? Nay, verily he saith, "Lo, I come."

Moreover, no waiting is needed, and no preparation is to be made by you. Why do you wait? HE does not wait, but cries, "Lo, I come!" "I will get ready for Christ", say you; but it is too late to talk so,

when he cries, "Lo, I am come." Receive him! If you are in yourself sadly unready, yet he himself will make everything ready for himself. Only open wide the door, and let him in. Do you say, "But I am ashamed"? Be ashamed. He bids you be ashamed, and be confounded, while he declares, "I do not this for your sakes." Yet be not so ashamed as to commit another shameful deed by shutting the door in your Redeemer's face. Shut not out your own mercy. A pastor in Edinburgh, in going round his district, knocked at the door of a poor woman, for whom he had brought some needed help; but he received no answer. When next he met her, he said to her, "I called on Tuesday at your house." She asked, "At what time?" "About eleven o'clock; I knocked, and you did not answer. I was disappointed, for I called to give you help." "Ah, sir!" said she, "I am very sorry. I thought it was the man coming for the rent, and I could not pay it, and therefore I did not dare to go to the door." Many a troubled soul thinks that Jesus is one who comes to ask of us what we cannot give; but indeed he comes to give us all things. His errand is not to condemn, but to forgive. Miss not the charity of God through unbelief. Run to the door, and say to your loving Redeemer, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but as thou hast come to me, I welcome thee with all my heart."

No assistance is wanted by Christ on your part. He does not come with half a salvation, and look to you to complete it. He does not come to bring you a robe half woven, which you are to finish. How could you finish it? Could the best saint in the world add anything to Christ's righteousness? No good man would even dream of adding his home-spun to that raiment which is of wrought gold. What! are *you* to make up the deficient ransom price? Is it deficient? Would you bring your clods of mud into the royal treasury, and lay them down side by side with sapphires? Would you help Christ? Go, yoke a mouse with an elephant! Go harness a fly side by side with an archangel. But dream not of yoking yourself with Christ.

He says, "Lo, I come", and I trust you will reply, "My Lord, if thou art come, all is come, and I am complete in thee."

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in thee I find."

Receive him: receive him at once. Dear children of God, and sinners that have begun to feel after him, say with one accord, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." If he says, "Lo, I come," and the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and he that heareth says, Come, and he that is athirst comes, and whosoever will is bidden to come and take the water of life freely; then let us join the chorus of comes, and come to Christ ourselves. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" Ye who most of all need him, be among the first and gladdest, as you hear him say, "Lo, I come."

All that I have said will be good for nothing as to saving results unless the Holy Ghost shall apply it with power to your hearts. Join with me in prayer that many may see Jesus just now, and may at once behold and accept the present salvation which is in him.