

JOHN ... who remembered how Jesus said, Come
JOHN ... who remembered how Jesus said, "Come"
(JOHN 1:39; 7:37; 21:12)

I like to think of John as he paused, pen in hand, during the writing of his Gospel. Scenes of bygone days were as clear as if they had happened on the previous day. The Master had been a perfect host, Who loved to share His company. Christ's invitations as recorded in John's Gospel suggest a highway to spiritual blessing.

Come and See . . . a great pleasure-John I : 39

The Jordan valley was a scene of activity, for many people had arrived to hear the wilderness preacher. " And John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned . . .and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him . . .Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him. . . ." How we would love to talk to those disciples. What did Jesus say during their stay in His home? Did he make any prediction or expound any Scripture? Did He prepare a meal, and if so, what did they eat? There are so many things we would like to know. " One of the two was Andrew. . . . He findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah." Three things are apparent. (i) He heard Christ's invitation, and accepted it. (ii) His coming to Christ brought assurance to his own soul. (iii) His increasing enthusiasm begat an intense desire to bring others to the Lord. This sequence of events is always reproduced with every true conversion.

Come and Drink . . . a great promise-John 7:37

The supply of water in the city of Jerusalem was always a major problem, and at feast-time it became a menace. When thousands of visitors invaded the capital, it was impossible to meet the demands made upon the meagre supplies. The last day of the feast always brought restrictions, and requests for water were made everywhere. Thus, it was truly astounding when Jesus stood and cried, " If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." The Master obviously chose the time for His most challenging utterance; but as the people surged in His direction, they became disappointed to discover that this was not exactly what they desired. Undoubtedly some complained about His remarks, but with calm deliberation he added: " He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his inner man shall flow rivers of living water." Long afterward John remembered this speech and explained, " But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." This second invitation of Christ seems to link with the desire of Andrew to win his brother. When thirsty souls discover the wells of God's salvation, they have an increasing desire to share their satisfaction with others. The soul is more than a receptacle-it becomes a channel! The living water first flows into the human heart, and then through it to a waiting world. John declared the water was a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures suggest three things: (i) salvation-He meets my need; (ii) sanctification-He fills me; (iii) service-He uses me.

Come and Dine ... a great provision-John 21:12

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The beach was still; the silence was unbroken except for the sound of the waves and the sudden squawk of a bird. The Saviour was about to serve breakfast to His tired guests. They looked at His kind and dignified face, and remembered the invitation with which He had welcomed them: "Come and dine." A night's fruitless toil had left them weary and discouraged, but when their task seemed to be completely hopeless, His appearance on the beach had turned defeat into triumph. He had kindled a fire and invited them to breakfast. At that fireside they were to discover new strength which would enable them to meet the demands of the future. Long afterward, Peter remembered that morning; and when John was old, he could still recall all that happened. They sat on the beach while the Master healed the wounds in their spirit. Probably they remembered, too, that other occasion when after a period of itinerant preaching they had returned to hear the Lord say, "Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest a while . . ." (Mark 6:31). Service is a great privilege, but to commune with Christ is far better. To be alone with the Master means a new appreciation of: (i) His power-He, too, can catch fish-many of them. (ii) His purpose-it is then that He issues His commands, "Feed my sheep," etc. (iii) His person-surpassing the joy of service is the glory of His presence. It is heaven to be at His feet. "Come and see" is enrollment in God's school. "Come and drink" is proficiency in study. "Come and dine" is to graduate; and only then is the Master truly satisfied with His student.

The Indian's Parable

During my itinerary of Western Canada I conducted evangelistic meetings in the Baptist church at Penticton, and it was there that, for the second time, I met the Rev. Gordon Vincent. Exactly twelve months earlier I had missioned in his former church at Woodstock, New Brunswick; and as a result of campaigning twice with the same minister, I came to know him very well. Mr. Vincent had one of the largest libraries I had ever seen, and suspecting that he possessed hidden stores of excellent illustrations, I asked if he could give me a good story. His kindly eyes sparkled as he scanned his many books. Possibly he suspected that I had great interest in native peoples; my travel films of New Guinea, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand had all supplied evidence of that fact. It was not surprising, therefore, when he informed me about the Indian's parable.

During a Gospel meeting, an Indian and a white man had been convicted of sin. The Word of God had disturbed them to such an extent that both were exceedingly miserable. The Indian surrendered himself to Christ, and became supremely happy; his white brother went away distressed. Several weeks passed, and finally the second man became a Christian, and rejoiced in the forgiveness of sin. Then he remembered the weeks of weariness during which he had almost despaired of finding peace. All this puzzled him, and when he met the Indian Christian, he shared his thoughts. "My brother, I wonder why it was that you found happiness in one night, while I had to wait many weeks to get it?" The Indian smiled and replied, "Me tell you. There was a great prince, who was very wealthy. When he met us, he was sorry for us, and, offered us his wonderful coat. Now you had a very nice suit, which had cost much money. You looked at your suit and thought, 'I do not need his coat. I am well dressed.' Now me, I no well dressed. I look at my poor blanket, which is no good anyhow, and I say, His coat is

JOHN ... who remembered how Jesus said, Come good; he give it to me as a present. Me take it. I make up mind soon, for I am poor. You think and think and think, for you believe you not poor. That's why you miserable."

A Penny for Bobbie

Charles Haddon Spurgeon bequeathed to mankind some of the best stories ever told, and among the number was that of an orphan called Bobbie. Mr. Spurgeon describing the incident says, "Sitting down in the orphanage grounds upon one of the seats, I was talking with one of our brother trustees, when a little fellow about eight years of age left the other boys who were playing around us, and came deliberately up to us. He opened fire upon us thus, 'Please, Mr. Spurgeon, I want to come and sit down upon that seat between you two gentlemen.'

'Come along, Bob, and tell us what you want.'

'Please, Mr. Spurgeon, suppose there was a little boy who had no father, who lived in an orphanage with a lot of other little boys who had no fathers, and suppose those little boys had mothers and aunts who comed once a month, and brought them apples and oranges, and gave them pennies, and suppose this little boy had no mother and no aunts, and so nobody never came to give him nice things; don't you think somebody ought to give him a penny? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, that's me! '"

The Shepherd's Call

The Rev. Griffith Thomas has described a scene well known to people who have travelled in the Middle East. He had been watching a number of shepherds watering their flocks, and marvelling at the way in which thousands of animals from various directions all mingled until a surging mass of sheep jostled and struggled around the watering place. He saw the shepherds unconcernedly talking to each other, and not in the least worried about the task of separating their animals from the struggling throng. Mr. Thomas wondered how the seeming miracle would be performed; but when the time of departure arrived, each shepherd went his way calling to his sheep. Instantly the animals responded to the call, and without any confusion followed their master. Intrigued by the situation, Mr. Thomas overtook one of the shepherds and asked a question. "Do your sheep always follow you like that?" "Yes, sir, they know my voice, and when I call to them, they always follow me." Mr. Thomas thought for a while and then asked, "Have you ever known a time when they did not respond to your voice?" "The shepherd answered, "Yes, there is a time when the sheep will not respond. When a sheep is sick, it will follow anybody. But as long as the animal is healthy, it will always respond to the call of its own shepherd." Surely, many people must be sick!

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