

CHRIST ... and His gracious invitation
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(MATTHEW II:28)

As the blackness of the night sky seems to be studded with fiery gems, so the Bible seems set in rubies and beryl and diamonds, which scintillate and relieve the somber setting of human failure. And as here and there in the constellations some stars outshine others in brilliance, so certain texts appear to possess added lustre and singular beauty. They are rare gems of incalculable worth, and could not be purchased with a king's ransom. Not the least among these great verses is Matthew 11: 28, " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There the entire purpose of Christ's coming is expressed in a few lines ; how the aches of a sick world may be removed, and the innate needs of all races fully met.

The Simplicity of the Invitation

The Lord Jesus said, " Come unto me. In contrast to many of the tiresome requirements of ancient orders and modern sects, the word of Jesus is both refreshing and illuminating. Come is the first word in every man's vocabulary. Expressed by the outstretched arms of a mother, it conveys meaning when sounds are confusing and irritating. Comparative religions declare that man must do or go ; that eternal rest depends upon the efficiency with which he performs the allotted task. Christ said, Come, and His invitation was constantly reiterated. To Peter He said, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become a fisher of men." When the disciples were weary with acts of service, He said, " Come ye apart, and rest awhile." None of these invitations ever led to disappointment. The disciples could draw near to their Lord without moving an inch. So can we-if we know how.

The Scope of the Invitation

The Lord Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," and in that one striking utterance His words circumnavigated a globe. Problems are never sent into exile ; their roots go deep in the soil of every country. The cares of this world are common both to palace and hovel ; to nobleman and peasant ; to university professor and untutored heathen ; to the African who sits alone in a hut in the forest, and to the skilled engine driver who sends his screaming train toward the distant horizon. Thus did John write, " For God so loved the world. . . ." All who labor and are heavy laden-with care, with fear, with toil-may respond to the invitation of Christ, and be certain to receive a welcome.

The Surety of the Invitation

The Lord Jesus said, " Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Life is filled with disappointments, and even the most reliable projects have a habit of failing. It is a most humiliating thing to place one's confidence in the promises of a person or movement only to discover at a most crucial moment that one's trust has been misplaced. A covenant is an undertaking in which two parties enter into sacred agreement to abide by the terms of the contract. The Lord Jesus said, " Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." That promise has been subject to the tests of time and circumstance, yet during the long interval which has elapsed since He first uttered the words, no voice has ever charged Him with inability to honor His promise. The promises of God are always true,

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always reliable, always a very sound investment.

The Sublimity of the Invitation

The Lord Jesus said, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." If this text be a rare jewel of the sky, this word is one of its most delightful facets. It reflects glowing fires of beauty. Turn the jewel in the hand, and the word rest will send forth beams of sheer loveliness to delight the heart and thrill the soul. Rest cannot be bought with earth's currency, for it is of God. It is not advice freely given; it is not sympathy sincerely expressed; it is not financial assistance benevolently offered. Rest is healing for a wounded heart, comfort for a troubled mind, fellowship for a lonely spirit, unspeakable relief for a haunted soul. Rest is dawn after midnight, calm after storm, laughter after tears, glad reunion after heart-breaking separation. Rest is heaven's gift to a weary world. No government can supply it; no engineer can manufacture it; no church can claim a monopoly on its distribution. It belongs exclusively to Christ, and He alone can give it to others. He said, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." No night sky is completely clouded if one star is visible, and likewise no life is completely dark if the unrivalled brilliance of this celestial jewel can be seen shining from God's book.

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