

REST FOR THE LABORING NO. 1322

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*[The Tabernacle was on this night thrown open to strangers,
the entire regular congregation kindly vacating their seats.]*

*“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you
shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”
Matthew 11:28-30.*

Our Lord had just been declaring the doctrine of election, thanking the heavenly Father that He had chosen babes, though He had passed by the wise and prudent. It is very instructive that, close upon the heels of that mysterious doctrine, should come the gracious invitation of my text—as much as if the Lord Jesus would say to His disciples, “Let no views of predestination ever keep you back from proclaiming fully My gospel to every creature.” And as if He would say to the unconverted, “Do not be discouraged by the doctrine of election. Never let it be a stumbling block in your way, for when My lips have said, ‘I thank You, O Father, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes,’ I also proceed to speak to you in the deepest sincerity of heart and say, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

I shall notice at the outset who it is that makes so large a promise and gives so free an invitation. There are many quack doctors in the world and each one of these cries up his own medicine. Who is this man who calls us so earnestly and promises rest so confidently? Is He an impostor, too? Will He play us false? Does He boast beyond His ability? Ah, it cannot be thought so, for this man, this marvelous man who promises rest to those who come to Him, is also God! He is the Son of the Highest as well as the son of Mary! He is Son of the Eternal as well as Son of man and He has power, because of His divine nature, to accomplish whatever He promises to perform! As a man, the Lord Jesus was noted for His truthfulness. From His lips there never fell an equivocation. He never boasted beyond His ability or led men to expect from Him what He could not render. Why should He deceive? He had no selfish end to serve or ambition to gratify. Did He not come to tell men the truths of God? It was His errand and He did it thoroughly. Believe Him, then! As you are persuaded of the truthfulness of His character, accept His teaching. And as you believe in His Deity—if you do believe, and I trust you do—believe in His ability to save and at once trust your soul in His hands! If He is a mere pretender, do not come to Him. But if, indeed, you believe my Lord and Master to be faithful and true, I beseech you attend, at once, to His call!

Where is He now? He is not here, for He is risen. But since He spoke these words, He has lost no power to save, but in a certain sense has gained in ability—for since He uttered those words He has died the death of the cross by which He obtained power to put away the sins of men! He has also risen from the grave, no more to die, and He has gone up into glory with all power given unto Him in heaven and in earth. He is King of kings and Lord of lords! And it is in His name and by His authority that we proclaim to you the gospel of Christ, according to His words, recorded by the evangelist Mark—“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth: go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

It is an enthroned Redeemer who tonight invites you! See that you refuse not Him that speaks. He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. Therefore doubt not His power to save you, but come to Him at once and find rest unto your souls. Jesus being the speaker, and His authority and ability being both clear, we shall now come to dis-

sect the words and may God grant that as we do so, the Spirit of God may use every syllable and press His truth home upon our hearts!

And, first, I notice here a character which, dear friends, I think *describes you as the laboring and the heavy laden*. Secondly, I notice *a blessing which invites you*—"I will give you rest." Thirdly, I notice *a direction which will guide you*—"Come unto Me: take My yoke upon you: learn of Me." And, fourthly, I notice *an argument which I trust may persuade you*—"I am meek and lowly in heart. My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

I. First, then, here is a character which, no doubt, describes a considerable number of those here assembled—"ALL YOU THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN."

The words look as if there were a great many such persons—"all you," and, indeed, so there are, for laboring and burden-bearing are the common lot of the sons of Adam. Laborers and loaded ones constitute the great mass of mankind—and the Lord Jesus invites them all without exception—high or low, learned or illiterate, moral or depraved, old or young—"all that labor and are heavy laden" are comprehended in His call. Some have ventured to say that this describes a certain *spiritual* character, but I fail to see any words to mark the spirituality of the persons. Certainly I see not a syllable to limit the text to that sense. Brothers and sisters, it is not our right either to add to or to take from the word of God knowingly, and as there is no indication, here, that these words are to be limited in their meaning, we shall not dare to invent a limit! Where God puts no bolt or bar, woe unto those who shall set up barriers of their own. We shall read our text in the broadest conceivable sense, for it is most like the spirit of the gospel to do so. It says—"all you that labor," and if you labor, it includes you! It says—"all you that are heavy laden," and if you are heavy laden it includes you, and God forbid that we should shut you out! No, God be thanked that no man can shut you out if you are willing and obedient, and come to Christ accepting His invitation and obeying His command.

To you, then, do we speak, "all you that labor." You who work so hard to earn a crust that your limbs are weary with your daily toil—come to Jesus! And if He gives you no rest for your bodies, yet to your souls He will! Yes, even for your physical toil, He is your best hope, for His righteous and loving teaching will yet alter the constitution of the body politic, till the day shall come when no man shall need to toil excessively to earn his share of the common food which the great Father gives for all His creatures! If ever rest from oppression and from excessive labor shall become the joyful lot of mankind, it will be found when the Son of David shall reign from pole to pole and from the river even to the ends of the earth!

And come, you that labor with mental labor—you that are straining your minds and exhausting your spirits—you who pine and pant after repose for your souls, but find it not! Perhaps you are laboring to enter into rest by formal religion—trying to save yourselves by rites and ceremonies—by attendance on this service and on that, making your life a pious slavery that you may find salvation by the outward ordinances of worship. There is no salvation there! You weary yourselves with searching for a shadow! You seek for the living among the dead! Why do you spend your labor for that which satisfies not? Turn your thoughts another way! If you come to Christ you shall cease from the bondage of an external and formal religion! You shall find a finished righteousness and a complete salvation ready to your hand!

O you that are trying, by your good works, to save yourselves and doing no good works all the while—for how can that be good which you do with the sole view of benefiting *yourselves*? That *selfish* virtue which only seeks its own—is that virtue? Can that commend itself to God? I know how you wear your fingers to the bone to spin a garment of your own righteousness, which, if it were spun, would be no more substantial than a spider's web and no more lasting than the fading autumn leaves! Why do you not cease from this fruitless toil? O you that hope for salvation by the works of the law, it is to *you* that Jesus speaks! And He says, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest." And He can do it, too! He can, at once, give you a spotless righteousness! He can array you from head to foot with the garments of salvation! On the spot He can give you both of these, and so give you rest, you laboring ones!

Some of you are laboring after *happiness*. You think to find it in gain—hoarding up your pence and your pounds and seeking for rest in the abundance of your beloved wealth. Ah, you will never have enough till you get Christ! And when you have Him, you will be full to the brim! Contentment is the

peculiar jewel of the beloved of the Lord Jesus. All the Indies could not fill a human heart—the soul is insatiable till it finds the Savior—and then it leans on His bosom and enters into perfect peace.

Perhaps, young man, you are laboring after *fame*. You despise gold, but you pant to obtain a great name! Alas, ambition's ways are very weary and he who climbs the loftiest peak of honor finds that it is a slippery place where rest is quite unknown. Young brother, take a friend's advice and care no longer for man's praise, for it is mere wind. If you would rise to a great name, become a Christian, for the name of Christ is the name above every name and it is bliss to be hidden beneath it, and overshadowed by it! Christ will not make you great among men, but He will make you so little in your own esteem that the lowest place at His table will more than satisfy you! He will give you rest from that delirious dream of ambition and yet fire you with a higher ambition than ever!

What is it you are laboring for? Is it after *knowledge*? I commend you. It is a good possession and a choice treasure. Search for it as for silver. But all the knowledge that is to be had from the zenith to the center of the earth will never satisfy your understanding till you know Christ and are found in Him! He can give rest to your soul in that respect by giving you the knowledge of God and a sense of His love. Whatever it is you labor after, come to Jesus, and He will give you rest.

But the text speaks of some as, "*heavy laden*." They are not merely struggling and striving, but they are burdened. They have a load to carry and it is to these that Jesus says, "I will give you rest." Some carry a load of sin. I mean not all of you. Some of you think, perhaps, that you have *no* sin. But there are others who know that they have sinned. In the memory of the past they are full of fear and looking, in the present, to their own condition and position. They feel uneasy and unhappy. Their grief has nothing to do with the house or with the barn—it is with their own selves that their burden begins and ends. "I have sinned," they say, "and how can I be forgiven?" This is the load they carry. Some carry a load of *sorrow* on the back of this load of sin—a daily fretting, worrying sorrow from which they cannot escape—to such Jesus beckons and He says, "I will take your sins from you, forgive you, and make you whiter than snow. I will take your sorrows from you, too, or, if the sorrow abides with you, I will make you so content to bear it that you shall thank God for the cross that you carry and glory in your infirmity because the power of Christ does rest upon you." Loaded, then, with sin or sorrow, come to Jesus and He will give you rest!

Or, possibly, the load may be that of *daily care*. You are continually crying, "What shall I eat? What shall I drink? With what shall I be clothed?" Oh what heavy hearts tread our streets! How many are scantily fed and scarcely clothed! What myriads go down Cheapside unhappy because they can see no provision for their most common needs! Even to these, Jesus says, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest." He teaches the sweet art of casting our cares on Him who cares for us. He shows us that, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live." He has a way of making us content with little, till a dinner of herbs, with His grace to season them, becomes a greater dainty than the stalled ox of the rich man! Come to Him, you poverty-stricken, and He will teach you the science of joying and rejoicing under all circumstances! Even in a cottage with scanty comfort, He will give you rest and true riches.

Or, the burden may happen to be one of *doubt*. You, perhaps, feel as if you can believe nothing and are uncertain about everything. This, also, is a crushing load to a thoughtful spirit. I, too, know what that means, for I have seen the firm mountains of my youth moved from their foundations and cast into a sea of questioning. I, too, have been loaded down with difficulties and skepticisms. From that burden I am delivered, for in that day in which I believed on Jesus—the man, the God—and cast myself at His dear feet to be His servant and believe His words and trust in Him, then did the reeling earth stand still and heaven no longer fled away! I saw Jesus and in Him I found the pole of faith, the basis of belief! Believe in Jesus and you will meet with a blessed rest of mind and thought such as earth cannot afford elsewhere—a rest that shall be the prelude to the everlasting rest in heaven where they know even as they are known!

So Jesus cries aloud tonight, to you who labor and to you who are loaded down with mighty burdens! He cries, and I beseech you have regard to the cry! Are you weary of life, young man? Christ will give you a *new* life and teach you how to rejoice in Him always! Are you disappointed? Has the world given you a slap in the face where you looked for a kiss? Come to my Lord! He will give new hopes that

shall never be disappointed, for he that believes in Him shall not be ashamed, world without end! Are you vexed with everybody and most of all with yourself? Jesus can teach you love and put you at your ease again. Does someone fret and tease you from day to day? Come to my Master and the vexations of the world shall gall you no longer. You shall reckon that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in you! Do you despair? Are you ready to fling yourself away? Do you wish that there was no hereafter? And if you were sure there *is* none, would you speedily make your own quietus? Would you afford short shrift to your soul and end this mortal life at once? Ah, do not do it! There are brighter days before you, since Jesus has met you and new life will begin if you will come to my Master and sit at His feet! I will give you a hymn to sing, which shall grow sweeter every day you live—

*“Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day,
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!”*

I have spoken enough upon the character, which, I think, comprehends many here—“All you that labor and are heavy laden.” I know how well it suited me once upon a time and how glad I was to answer to the call of the text.

II. Now, secondly, the text speaks of A BLESSING WHICH INVITES YOU. “Come unto Me,” says Jesus, “and I will give you rest.” “Rest! Rest! Rest!” I could keep on ringing that silver bell all the evening—“Rest! Rest! REST!” “You gentlemen of England who live at home at ease,” you scarcely know the music of that word! The sons of toil, the mariners tossed upon the sea, the warriors in the battle, the men who labor deep in the mines—these know, as you do not, how sweet this music sounds! Rest! Rest! Rest! Rest for the weary body is the outward emblem of that inward blessing which Jesus Christ holds up, tonight, before the eyes of all laboring and heavy-laden souls. Rest—rest which He will give, which He will give at once—rest to the *conscience*. The conscience, tossed to and fro under a sense of sin, has no peace. But when Jesus is revealed as bleeding and suffering in the sinner’s place, and making full atonement for human guilt, then the conscience grows quiet. As Noah’s dove lighted upon the ark, so conscience lights on Christ and rests there forever! No sin of yours shall trouble you when you have seen how it troubled Christ—how He took it on His shoulders and bore it up to the cross—and then flung it into the depths of the sea, never to be mentioned against you anymore forever!

Jesus gives rest to the *mind* as well as to the conscience. As I have said, the mind wanders to and fro, lost in endless mazes. It must believe *something*, but it knows not what. He who is the greatest unbeliever, generally believes the most—only he believes a lie. Incredulity and credulity are strangely near of kin, for he that believes not in God generally believes in himself, or believes in whatever his own dreams may shape. But he that takes Christ and rests upon Him, finds his mind no more disturbed—his thoughts rest, his judgment becomes satisfied, his brain is quiet.

Rest to the *heart*, too, is given by Jesus. Oh, there are choice and tender spirits in this world that need, above all things, something to love! These too often choose an earthly object and lean on that reed till it breaks or turns into a piercing spear. O hearts that pine for love, here is a Beloved for you whom you may love as much as you will or can—and yet never be guilty of idolatry, nor ever meet with treachery! O broken heart, He will heal you! O tender heart, He will delight you! The love of Jesus is the wine of heaven and he that drinks it is filled with bliss! Jesus can give rest to the palpitating heart. You sons of desolation, hasten here! Daughters of despondency, gather to this call!

He can give rest, too, to *your energies*. O you whose unabated strength seeks a worthy field of labor, do you enquire, “What shall we pursue?” You want to be up and *doing*, but you have not found an object worthy of you. Oh, but if you follow after Jesus and, in the love of God and in the love of man, cast aside selfishness, desiring only to be obedient to the great Father’s will and to bring your fellow men into a gracious state, then shall you find a noble and restful life! If you are willing to give up life, itself, for God’s glory as Jesus did—for you cannot well be His disciple if you do not—then shall you find perfect rest unto your souls.

As for your *fears and forecasts* which now are troubled—He will turn them into hopes of endless glory! Dark forebodings of a future, you know not what—the sound of an awful sea whose surf beats upon an invisible shore, and whose billows resound with sound of storm and everlasting tempest—from all this you shall be delivered! Jesus will give you rest from every fear. If you will come to Jesus you shall obtain rest in all ways—the rest of your entire manhood, rest such as shall unload you of your burdens and ease you of your labors—this is the rest which Jesus promises you!

“Alas,” cries one, “I wish I could attain rest. That is the one thing necessary to me. I should then become strong and happy. My mind would become clear and I should be able to fight the battle of life if I could but obtain rest.” Yes, but you cannot have it unless you come to Christ. Not heaven, itself, could give you peace apart from Christ, nor can the grave’s deep slumbers rest you unless you sleep in Him! Rest! Neither heaven nor earth, nor sea and hades—none of them can afford you any trace of it until you come to the incarnate God, Christ Jesus, and bow at His feet. Then you shall find rest to your souls, but not till then!

III. This brings me, next, to say that the text presents A DIRECTION TO GUIDE EVERY LABORING AND HEAVY-LADEN SOUL IN THE PURSUIT OF REST. I shall be sure to have your very deep attention to the directions which Jesus gives, for you all need to find rest. Oh, may the divine Spirit now lead you into the way of peace! If you follow our Lord’s directions and do not find rest, then His word is not true. But His word *is* true! I invite you to try it and urge you, at once, to accept His guidance and leadership.

The first direction is, “*Come unto Me.*” “Come unto Me,” He said, “and I will give you rest.” Mark, it is not coming to a *sacrament*. It is not coming to a church, or coming to a doctrine. It is coming to a *person* which is set before you—“*Come unto Me.*” You are to come to God in human flesh, the Deity, Himself, dwelling among us, and taking our nature upon Himself. You are to come to *Him*. He does not bid you *do* anything or *bring* anything! He does not command you to *prepare* yourself, or advise you to wait. He bids you come—come as you are—come now—come alone—come to Him and to Him, only! Nobody here needs me to say that we cannot go to Christ, as to *bodily* going, for in His own actual person He is in heaven and we are here below. The coming to Him is *mental* and *spiritual*. Just as we may come in spirit to some great poet whom we never saw, or approach some renowned teacher whose voice we have never heard, so may we come in thought, in meditation, to Jesus, whom our eyes have never beheld! We are to come to Him in some such fashion as the following words describe—I believe what God has revealed concerning You, O You wondrous person; I believe that You are God and man; I believe that You have died for human sin; I believe that You are able to save, and I think of You and meditate upon You daily. “I believe You to be the Savior, and I trust You to save me. I am troubled and You say, ‘I will give you rest.’ I trust You to give me peace and I mean to follow Your directions till I find it. I ask You to give me Your Spirit that I may enter into Your rest. As much as lies in me I come to You! Oh, draw me while I come! Lord, I believe! Help You my unbelief!”

Now, mark, it is not merely to His teaching, or to His commandments, or to His church that you are to approach—it is to HIM that you are to come! Not merely to reading the Scriptures or to offering prayer, for if you put your trust in reading the Bible, or in a prayer, you have stopped short of the true basis of salvation. It is to HIM—a real person—a man and yet God—One who died and yet ever lives that you must draw near. You are to trust Him! The more you know of Him by the reading of His word, the better you will be able to come. But, still, it is neither Bible reading, nor praying, nor chapel attendance, nor church attendance, nor anything else that you can do that will save you, unless you come to HIM! This you can do if you are on the sea where the Sabbath bell never sounds. This you can do in a desert where there are no meetings of God’s people. This you can do on the sick bed when you cannot stir a limb. You can go to Jesus by the help of His blessed Spirit and you can say, “Lord, I believe in You.”

That is the first thing, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

The next command is, “*Take My yoke upon you.*” “Come,” and then, “take.” That is to say, no man is saved by merely trusting himself with Christ, unless that trusting is of a living and practical kind. I sometimes explain this to my people as I will explain it to you. A celebrated doctor visits you, when you are very ill, and he says to you, “Do you trust me?” You reply, “Yes, sir, wholly.” “Well,” he says, “if

you trust me completely and give your case over into my hands, I believe that I shall see you through this sickness.” You assure him of your implicit faith in him and then he begins to question you. “What do you eat?” He lifts up his hands in horror and he exclaims, “Why, my good man, you eat the very thing which feeds your sickness—you must not touch that anymore, however much you like it—you must have simpler food and a more harmless diet.” “Then,” he says, “I will send you a little medicine which you will take every three hours, according to the prescription. You are sure you trust me?” “Yes.” “Then all will be well.” He comes back in a few days and he says. “You seem worse, my friend. I fear that your disease has taken a stronger hold upon you than before. I do not understand how matters have taken this turn. Are you trusting me?” “Yes, doctor, trusting you entirely.” “Well, what have you been eating?” And then you tell him that you have been eating just what you used to eat and you have broken all his rules as to food. “Now,” he says, “I see why you are worse. You are not trusting me. Have you regularly taken my medicine?” He looks at the bottle upon the table. “Why, you have not taken a single dose!” “No, sir, I tasted it and I did not like it, and so I left it alone.” “How is this?” says the doctor, very much grieved. “My friend, you said that you trusted me implicitly.” “Yes, sir, so I do.” “But I say you do not,” he says, “and I will leave you. I insist upon it that I will not be responsible for your health if you mock me with such a pretended faith! If you believed me, you would have done as I told you.” Now, Jesus Christ never sent me or any other minister to preach to you and say, “Only believe, and you may live as you like, and yet be saved.” Such preaching would be a lie! It is true that we say, “Only believe,” but that, “Only believe” must be such a believing that you do what Jesus bids you! Jesus has not promised to save you *in* your sins, but *from* your sins, just as a physician does not pretend to heal a man while he feeds his disease and refuses the remedy—he only promises that he will benefit him if the faith which he expects him to exercise shows itself to be a practical and real faith. Beware of a liar’s faith! And that is a liar’s faith which you pretend to get at revival meetings if you then go and live just as you did before—

***“Faith must obey her Maker’s will
As well as trust His grace.
A gracious God is jealous still,
For His own holiness.”***

So Christ says, “Take My yoke.” That is, “If you will be saved by Me I must be your Master and you must be My servant. You cannot have Me for a Savior if you do not accept Me for a lawgiver and commander. If you will not do as I bid you, neither shall you find rest for your souls.”

Then there is a third direction and I pray you notice each one of these words, for failure about any one of them may cause you to miss peace. I remember when I was seeking the Lord, that before I came to peace, *I was made willing to be or to do anything the Lord Jesus chose to bid me do or be.* Are you in such a state? Then listen, for Jesus says, “*Learn of Me.*” That is to say, at first you do not know all His will and, perhaps, you will do wrong—but then that will be in ignorance—and He will graciously wink at your fault. But He says, “Be My disciple; be My scholar; come and learn at My feet.” Christ will not be your Savior if He is not to be your teacher. He will teach you very much, at first, and a great deal more as you go on. And it is essential to your salvation that you have a teachable spirit even as a little child. You must be willing to drink in what Christ pours out for you. The promise is to those who are willing to become *learners*. This is the gospel, but it is not often preached as it should be—“Go you into all the world, and *disciple* all nations,” or, “make disciples of all nations.” Now, what are disciples but *learners*? You must be willing to be a learner and say, “As I learn I will do, and as I am taught I will practice, trusting You, O Jesus, to save me all the while. Not trusting to my doing or my learning, but trusting alone to You. Yes, both doing and learning because I trust You, because You are all my hope, therefore will I do as You bid me, if you, O Lord, will help me.” Come, young men, I am glad to see so many of you present here, this evening. It is a good thing that you bear Christ’s yoke in your youth. You must have some master, you know, and you will either be your own master—and you cannot have a worse—or you will get the devil for your master, or you will get the world for a master, and either of these will make dreadful drudges of you! But if you take Christ for your Master, oh, then it is that you will find Him to be your Savior, and you shall enter at once into rest! And that rest will grow, for, if you notice, my text first says, “I will give you rest,” and then it says, “You shall *find* rest.” That is to say,

you shall find for yourselves a deeper and more profound enjoyment of life as you understand more fully the divine will and obtain more grace to put it into practice.

This is the sum and substance of the gospel. Yield, sinner! Yield! Yield to Jesus! O you proud sinners, come and bow before my Lord! Down with your weapons of rebellion! Lower the crest of your pride! Unbuckle the harness of your self-glorying and say, “Jesus, Master, only save me from the guilt and power of sin and I will bless You forever and ever, and rejoice to obey You as long as I live.” Now, what I have said is no fiction of mine! I have not altered my Master’s conditions, or imported anything into the text that is not there. There it stands. “Come unto Me: take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.”

IV. Now the last thing—and I will not detain you much longer, is THE ARGUMENT TO PERSUADE YOU TO DO SO. And that argument is this: First, *the Master you are to serve is “meek and lowly in heart.”* I confess there are some men whom I could not serve. They are proud, austere, domineering. One might sooner eat his flesh from the bone than serve such tyrants. There have been despots in the world whom to serve was degradation. But when you look at Jesus Christ, whose whole Being is love, gentleness, meekness, lowliness—oh, there are some of us who feel that His shoe laces we are not worthy to unloose! We would count it heaven to be permitted to kiss His feet, or wash them with our tears, for He is such a glorious One that His beauty attracts us to Him. He holds us spellbound by His wondrous character and we count it not slavery, but perfect liberty, to wear His yoke and carry His cross! Have you never heard how He has been served by His disciples? Why, they have gladly given up their lives for Him! Let Bonner’s Coalhole, and the Lollards’ Tower, and the stakes that stood at Smithfield tell how men have loved Him! They so loved Him that they sang in the dark dungeon and made it light with their joys! They clapped their hands in the fires, glad to be consumed that they might bear testimony for Him! Have you never heard of old Polycarp, when they bid him deny his Master, saying, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me displeasure! How can I, now, blaspheme my King that saved me?” Oh, He has bred such enthusiasm in His followers that neither the gridiron of St. Lawrence nor the wild bulls of Blandina have been able to prevent the saints from glorying in His name! They would have gone through hell, itself, to serve Him, if it had been possible! His love has had such power over them—whatever we have to suffer for Him, He suffers with us! Alexander was a great master of men and one of the reasons why all his soldiers loved him so enthusiastically was that, if they were upon a long march, Alexander did not ride, but marched along in the heat and dust with the common soldiers. And when the day was hot and they brought his majesty water, he put it aside, and said, “The sick soldiers need it more than I. I will not drink till every soldier has a draught.” So is it with Christ! In all our afflictions, He is afflicted and He will not have joy until He gives joy to His people! Yes, He has done more than Alexander, for He emptied Himself of all His glories and gave Himself to die upon the cross and consummated the redemption of His people by His own agonies. Who would not follow one whose footprints show that He was crucified for His followers? Who would not rally to His banner, when you see that His hand which upholds it was pierced with nails that He might redeem us from hell? On which of His disciples has He ever looked unkindly? Which of His redeemed has He ever cast away? To which of those that love Him has He ever been unjust or ungenerous? Therefore I charge you all—and all His saints speak in me while I speak—take His yoke upon you and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart.

In the last place, *that which Jesus Christ asks you to do is no hard thing.* As He is not severe, Himself, so His commands are not hard, for He says, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” True, there are some things which you now delight in of which Christ will say, “Have no more to do with them,” but He will only forbid you those things which injure you, and He will put something better in their place. He may call you to duties which will try you, but, then, He will give you such consolations that they will cease to be trials. In fact, the difficulties of following Christ are delightful to His hearty followers! They love difficulties that they may show the sincerity of their confidence in their leader. Oh, my beloved friends, the service of the Lord Jesus Christ is no bondage! There are no chains to wear! There are no prisons to lie in, or, if there are any, they are not of His making but are the devices of His enemies. Christ’s ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace. He calls you to that which is right, true, honest, loving, tender, heavenly. Who would not be willing to be called to this? He asks you only

to give up that which is evil and displeasing in His sight, degrading to your own mind, and which stops the channels of peace and happiness to your soul.

Above all, it is no hard thing, surely, to believe in Him. “Oh,” says one, “that is just the point. Sometimes I cannot feel that Christ could forgive me.” No, and do you know why? It is because you do not think enough of *HIM* and think too much of *yourself*. If you sit down and think of your sin, you will soon feel as if pardon were impossible but, when you turn and think of *Him*, you will see, at once, how readily He is able to forgive! There is a homely illustration which I often use, and I cannot think of a better, I must use it now. If you were to go, tomorrow, up and down London, right along from end to end, there would be quite a journey for you. Twelve, 14, 15, perhaps 20 miles you could go, and scarcely see a break in the houses. I would have you traverse the main roads and then go down the cross streets, lanes, alleys, and courts. After you had had a day of it you would say, “Dear, dear me, what a mass of people! How do they live?” And if you were nervous, you might very soon come to feel, “I am afraid, one of these days, London will be starved. Here are nearly four millions of people! Lebanon would not be sufficient to find them cattle, nor Carmel and Sharon to supply them with sheep for a single week! They will certainly be starved.” I can imagine your becoming seriously apprehensive of a famine. Well, then, next Monday morning we will have a fast horse and we will go up to Copenhagen Fields and see the live cattle. And then we will drive to Smithfield, and see the carcasses. And next we will go round to the markets and see where the fish and the vegetables are sold. And when we have finished our tour of observation—which will take us at least two or three hours early in the morning—as you get out of the Hansom Cab, I know what you will say to me. You will change your tone and say, “I am no longer afraid of the people’s starving, but I am more afraid of the meat being wasted! I cannot think where all the people come from to eat all this! I am astonished to see such a mass of food! I should not wonder if tons of it should be spoiled. There cannot be people enough to eat it all.” Your mind has suffered that sudden change because you have changed your point of consideration!

So now, if you think of sin, sin will seem a monstrous thing that never can be put away. And when you have reached that point, it is time to think of the blood which cleanses us from it. Think of sin till it bows you down, but do not think of it so as to despair! Turn your eyes to Calvary’s bloody tree and see, there, the Son of God in agonies of body and soul, pouring out His life for sinners! May the Holy Spirit give you a quick eye for the sufferings of Jesus. Oh, I have sometimes looked at Christ in that way till I have said, “The sin of a *world* might readily be put away! Yes, Master, and if every star that decks the heavens were a world, and every world were as full of sinners as this earth is, yet, surely, no grander redemption for them all would be needed than your august Sacrifice, O mighty Son of God!” John Hyatt, when he lay dying, was asked by one of his friends, “Mr. Hyatt, can you trust Jesus with your soul now?” And the good man answered, “Trust Him with *one* soul? I could trust Him with a million souls, if I had them!” That is how I feel when I think of the death of my Lord Jesus, and it is what I want *you* who are troubled in spirit to feel. As you see Him wounded, bleeding, dying on the cursed tree, sinners, may you find your hearts believing that He suffered thus for *you*. And, as you do believe it, you will find rest unto your souls. May God give that rest to every one of you tonight, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MATTHEW 11:15-30.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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