

## Powerful Persuasives

A Sermon

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Delivered by

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"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—[Matthew 11:27-28](#).

I HAVE preached to you, dear friends, several times from the words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is such sweetness in the precept, such solace in the promise, that I could fain hope to preach from it many times more. But I have no intention just now to repeat what I have said in any former discourse, or to follow the same vein of thought that we have previously explored. This kindly and gracious invitation needs only to be held up in different lights to give us different subjects for admiration. That it flowed like an anthem from our Saviour's lips we perceive, in what connection it was spoken we may properly enquire. He had just made some important disclosures as to the covenant relations that existed between himself and God the Father. This interesting revelation of heavenly truth becomes the basis upon which he offers an invitation to the toiling and oppressed children of men, and assigns it as a reason why they should immediately avail themselves of his succour. Such is the line of discourse I propose now to follow. Kindly understand me that I want to deal with the hearts and consciences of the unconverted, and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to plead with them that they may at once go to Jesus and find rest unto their souls. I shall require no stories or anecdotes, no figures or metaphors, to illustrate the urgent necessity of the sinner and the generous bounty of the Saviour. We will make it as plain as a pikestaff, and as sharp as a sword, with the intention of driving straight at our point. Time is precious, your time especially, for you may not have many days in which to seek the Lord. The matter is urgent. Oh! that every labouring, weary sinner here might at once come to Jesus and find that rest which the Saviour expresses himself as so willing to give! With all simplicity, then, let me explain to you the way of salvation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden."

*The way to be saved is to come to Jesus.* To come, to Jesus means to pray to him, to trust in him, to rely upon him. Each man who trusts in another may be said to come to that other for help. Thus to trust in Jesus is to come to him. In order to do this I must give up all reliance upon myself, or anything I could do or have done, or anything I do feel or can feel. Nor

must I feel the slightest dependence upon anything that anyone else can do for me. I must cease from creature helps and carnal rites, to rest myself upon Jesus. That is what my Saviour means when he says, "Come unto me." The exhortation is very personal. "Come unto me," says he. He saith not, come to my ministers to consult them. nor come to my sacraments to observe them, nor come to my Bible to study its teaching—interesting and advantageous as under some circumstances any or all of these counsels might be; but he invites us in the sweetest tune of friendship, saying, "Come to me." For a poor sinner this is the truest means of succour. Let him resort to the blessed Lord himself. To trust in a crucified Saviour is the way of salvation. Let him leave everything else and fly away to Christ, and look at his dear wounds as he hangs upon the cross. I am afraid many people are detained from Christ by becoming entangled in the meshes of doctrine. Some with heterodox doctrine, others with orthodox doctrine, content themselves. They think that they have advanced far enough. They flatter their souls that they have ascertained the truth! But the fact is, it is not the truth as a letter which, saves anybody. It is the truth as a person—it is Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life, whom we need to apprehend.

Our confidences must rest entirely upon him. "Come unto me," saith Jesus; Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

*The exhortation is in the present tense.* "Come" now; do not wait; do not tarry; do not lie at the pool of ordinances but come unto me; come now at once, immediately, just where you are, just as you are. Wherever the summons finds you, rise without parley, without an instant's delay. "Come." I know that the human mind is very ingenious, and it is especially perverse when its own destruction is threatened. By some means or other it will evade this simple call. "Surely," says one, "there must be something to do besides that." Nay, nothing else is to be done. No preliminaries are requisite. The whole way of salvation is to trust in Jesus. Trust him now. That done, you are saved. Rely upon his finished work. know that he has meditated on your behalf. Commit thy sinful self to his saving grace. A change of heart shall be yours. All that you need he will supply.

"There is life in a look at the crucified One;

There is life at this moment for thee."

So sweet an invitation *demands a spontaneous acceptance.* Come just as you are. "Come unto me," saith Christ. He does not say, "Come when you have washed and cleansed yourself." Rather should you come *to be* cleansed. He does not say, "Come when you have clothed yourself and made yourself beautiful with good works." Come *to be made* beautiful in a better righteousness than you can wear. Come naked, and let him gird thee with fine linen, cover thee with silk, and deck thee with jewels. He does not say, "Come when your conscience is tender, come when your heart is penitent, when your soul is full of loathing for sin, and your mind is enlightened with knowledge and enlivened with joy. But ye that labour, ye that are heavy laden, he bids you to come as you are. Come oppressed with your burdens, be-

grimed with your labours, dispirited with your toils. If the load that bends you double to the earth be upon your shoulders? just come as you are. Take no plea in your mouth but this—he bids you come. That shall suffice as a warrant for your coming, and a security for your welcome. If Jesus Christ bids you, who shall say you nay?

*He puts the matter very exclusively.* "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." Do nothing else but come to him. Do you want rest? Come to him for it. The old proverb hath it that betwixt two stools we come to the ground." Certainly, if we trust partly in Christ and partly in ourselves, we shall fall lower than the ground. We shall sink into hell. "Come unto me" is the whole gospel. "Come unto me." Mix nothing with it. Acknowledge no other obedience. Obey Christ, and him alone. Come unto me. You cannot go in two opposite directions. Let your tottering footsteps bend their way to him alone. Mix anything with him, and the possibility of your salvation is gone. Yours be the happy resolve:—

"Nothing in my hands I bring:

Simply to thy cross I cling."

This must be your cry if you are to be accepted at all. Come, then, ye that labour, ye horny-handed sons of toil. Come ye to Jesus. He invites you. Ye that stew and toil for wealth, ye merchants, with your many cares, labourers ye are. He bids you come. Ye students, anxious for knowledge, chary of sleep, burning out the midnight oil. Ye labour with exhausted brains; therefore, come. Come from struggling after fame. Ye pleasure—seekers, come; perhaps there is no harder toil than the toil of the man who courts recreation and thinks he is taking his ease. Come, ye that labour in any form or fashion; come to Jesus—to Jesus alone. And ye that are heavy laden; ye whose official duties are a burden; ye whose domestic cares are a burden; ye whose daily toils are a burden; ye whose shame and degradation are a burden, all ye that are heavy laden, come and welcome. If I attach no exclusive spiritual signification to these terms, it is because there is nothing in the chapter that would warrant such a restriction. Had Christ said, "*Some* of you that labour and are heavy laden may come," I would have said "*some*" too. Howbeit he has not said "some," but "all" "that labour and are heavy laden." It is wonderful how people twist this text about. They alter the sense by misquoting the words. They say, "Come ye that are weary and heavy laden." After this manner some have even intended to define a character rather than to describe condition, so they shut out some of those who labour from the kind invitation. But let the passage stand in its own simplicity. Let any sinner here, who can say, "I labour," though he cannot say spiritually labour, come on the bare warrant of the word as he finds it written here; he will not be disappointed of the mercy promised. Christ will not reject him. Himself hath said it, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And any man that is heavy laden, even though it may not be a spiritual burden that oppresses him, yet if he comes heavy laden to Christ, he certainly shall find relief. That were a wonder without precedent or parallel, such as was never witnessed on earth throughout all the generations of men, that a soul should come to

Jesus, be rebuffed, and told by him, "I never called you, I never meant you; you are not the character; you may not come." Hear, O heaven! witness, O earth! such thing was never heard of. No, nor ever shall it be heard of in time or in eternity. That any sinner should come to the Saviour by mistake is preposterous. That Jesus should say to him, "Go your way; I never called for you," is incredible. How can ye thus libel the sinner's friend? Come, ye needy—come, ye helpless—come, ye simple—come, ye penitent—come, ye impenitent—come, ye who are the very vilest of the vile. If you do but come, Jesus Christ will receive you, welcome you, rejoice over you, and verify to you his thrice blessed promise, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Now to the tug of war. It shall be my main endeavour to press the invitation upon you, my good friends, by the arguments which the Saviour used.

Kindly look at the text. Read the words for yourselves. Do you not see that the reason why you are solemnly bidden to come to Christ is because:—

I. HE IS THE APPOINTED MEDIATOR.

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father." God, even the Father, your Creator, against whom you have transgressed, has appointed our Lord Jesus Christ to be the way of access for a sinner to himself. He is no amateur Saviour. He has not thrust himself into the place officiously. He is officially delegated. In times of distress, every man is at liberty to do his best for the public welfare; but the officer commissioned by his Sovereign is armed with a supreme right to give counsel or to exercise command. Away there in Bengal, if there are any dying of famine, and I have rice, I may distribute it of my own will at my own charge. But the commissioner of the district has a special warranty which I do not possess; he has a function to discharge; it is his business, his vocation; he is authorised by the Government, and responsible to the Government to do it. So the Lord Jesus Christ has not only a deep compassion of heart for the necessities of men, but he has God's authority to support him. The Father delivered all things into his hands, and appointed him to be a Saviour. All that Christ teaches has this superlative sanction. He teaches you nothing of his own conjecture. "What I have heard of the Father," he saith, "that reveal I unto you." The gospel is not a scheme of his suggestion. He reveals it fresh from the heart of God. Remember that the promises Christ makes are not merely his surmises, but they are promises with the stamp of the court of heaven upon them. Their truth is guaranteed by God. It is not possible they should fail. Sooner might heaven and earth pass away than one word of his fall flat to the ground. Your Saviour, O sinner—your only Saviour—is one whose teachings, whose invitations, and whose promises have the seal royal of the King of kings upon them. What more do you want? Moreover, the Father has given all things into his hands in the sense of government. Christ is king everywhere. God has appointed Christ to be a mediatorial prince over all of us—I say over us all—not merely over those who accept his sovereignty, but even over the ungodly. He hath given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as

many as he has given him. It is of no use your rebelling against Christ, and saying, "We will not have him"—the old cry, "We will not have this man to reign over us." How read ye in the second Psalm "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. "Christ is supreme. You will have either to submit to his sceptre willingly, or else to be broken by his iron rod like a potter's vessel. Which shall it be? Thou must either bow or be broken; make your choice. You must bend or break. God help you wisely to resolve and gratefully relent. Has the Father appointed Christ to stand between him and his sinful creatures? Has he put the government upon his shoulders, and given him a name called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty, the everlasting King? Is he Emmanuel, God with us, in God's stead? With what reverence are we bound to receive him!

Moreover, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of mercy and goodness, are laid up in Christ. You recollect when Pharaoh had corn to sell in Egypt, what reply he made to all who applied to him, "Go to Joseph." It would have been no use saying, "Go to Joseph," if Joseph had not the keys of the garner; but he had, and there was no garner that could be opened in Egypt unless Joseph lent the key. In like manner, all the garners of mercy are under the lock and key of Jesus Christ, "who openeth, and no man shutteth; who shutteth, and no man openeth." When you require any bounty or benefit of God, you must repair to Jesus for it. The Father has put all power into his hands. He has committed the entire work of mercy to his Son, that through him as the appointed mediator, all blessings should be dispensed to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. "Now, sirs, do you want to be saved? I charge you to say whether you do or not; for if you care not for salvation, why should I labour among you? If you choose your own ruin, you need no counsel; you will make sure of it by your own neglect. But if you want salvation, Christ is the only authorized person in heaven and earth who can save you. "There is no other name, given among men whereby we must be saved." The Father hath delivered all things into his keeping. He is the authorised Saviour. "Come unto me, then, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden." This argument is further developed by another consideration: Christ is:—

## II. A WELL-FURNISHED MEDIATOR,

"*All things* are delivered unto me," he said, "of my Father. "Sum up all that the sinner wants, and you will find him able to supply you with all. You want pardon; it is delivered unto Christ of the Father. You want change of heart; it is delivered unto Christ of the Father. You want righteousness in which you may be accepted; Christ has it. You want to be purged from the love of sin; Christ can do it. You want wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It is all in Christ. You are afraid that if you start on the road to heaven, you cannot hold on. Persevering grace is in Christ. You think you will never be perfect; but

perfection is in Christ, for all believers, being saints of God and servants of Christ, are complete in him. Between hell-gate and heaven-gate there is nothing a sinner can need that is not treasured up in his blessed person. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." He is "*full* of grace and truth." Oh! sinner, I wish I could constrain you to feel as I do now, that had I never come to Christ before, I must come to him now, just now. Directly I understand that:—

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

Why, then, should I not come? Is it because I want something before I come? Make the question your own. Where are you going to seek it? All things are delivered unto Christ. To whom should you go for ought you crave? Is there another who can aid you when Christ is in possession of all? Do you want a tender conscience? Come to Christ for it. Do you want to feel the guilt of your sin? Come to Christ to be made sensitive to its shame. Are you just what you ought not to be? Come to Christ to be made what you ought to be, for everything is in Christ. Is there any, thing that can be obtained elsewhere and brought to him? The invitation to you is founded upon the explanation that accompanies it. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father"; therefore, Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The argument is so exclusive, that it only wants a willing mind to make it welcome. Only let God the Holy Spirit bless the word, and sinners will come to Christ, for unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Now note the next argument. Come to Christ, ye labouring ones, because:—

### III. HE IS AN INCONCEIVABLY GREAT MEDIATOR.

Where do I get that? Why, from this—that no man knows him but the Father. So great is he, so good, so full of all manner of precious store for needy sinners. No man knows him but the Father. He is too excellent for our puny understanding to estimate his worth. None but the infinite God can comprehend his value as a Saviour. Has anyone here been saying, "Christ cannot save me; I am such a big sinner"? You don't know him, my friend you don't know him. You are measuring him according to your little insignificant notions. High as the heavens are above the earth so high are his ways above your ways, and his thoughts than your thoughts. You don't know him, sinner, and no one does know him but his Father. Why, some of us who have been saved by him, thought when we saw the blessed mystery of his substitutionary sacrifice, that we knew all about him; but we have found that he grows upon our view the nearer we approach, and the more we contemplate him. Some of you have now been Christians for thirty or forty years, and you know much more of him than you used to do; but you do not know him yet; your eyes are dazzled by his brightness; you do not know him. And the happy spirits before the throne who have been there, some of them, three or four thousand years, have hardly begun to spell the first letter of his name. He is too grand and too good for them to comprehend. I believe that it will be, the growing

wonder in eternity to find out how precious a Christ, how powerful, how immutable—in a word, how divine a Christ he is. in whom we have trusted. Only the infinite can understand the infinite. "God only knows the love of God," and only the Father understands the Son. Oh! I wish I had a week in which to talk on this, instead of a few minutes! You want a great Saviour? Well, here he is. Nobody can depict him, or describe him, or even imagine him, except the infinite God himself. Come, then, poor sinner, sunken up to your neck in crime, black as hell—come unto him. Come, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and prove him to be your Saviour. The fact that no one knows how great a Saviour he is except his Father may encourage you. Now for another argument. Come to him because:—

#### IV. HE IS AN INFINITELY WISE MEDIATOR.

He is a mediator who understands both persons on whose behalf he mediates. He understands you. He has summed and reckoned you up, and he has made you out to be a heap sin and misery, and nothing else. The glory of it is that he understands God, whom you have offended, for it is written, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son," and he knows the Father. Oh! what a mercy that is to have one to go before God for me who knows him intimately. He knows his Father's will; he knows his Father's wrath. No man knows it but himself. He has suffered it. He knows his Father's love. He alone can feel it—such love as God felt for sinners. He knows how his Father's wrath has been turned away by his precious blood; he knows the Father as a Judge whose anger no longer burns against those for whom the Atonement has been made. He knows the Father's heart. He knows the Father's secret purposes. He knows the Father's will is that whosoever seeth the Son and believeth on him shall have everlasting life. He knows the decrees of God, and yet he says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give, you rest." There is nothing in that contrary to the decrees of God; for Jesus knows what the decrees are, and he would not speak in contradiction to them. He knows God's requirements. Sinner, whatever it is God requires of you, Christ knows what they are, and he is ready to meet them. "The law is holy, and just, and good," and Jesus knows it, for the, law is in his heart. Justice is very stern, and Jesus knows it, for Jesus has felt the edge of the sword of justice, and knows all about it. He is fully equipped for the discharge of his mediatorial office, and those that put their trust in him shall find that he will bear them through. Often, when a prisoner at the bar has a barrister who understands his work, and is perfectly competent for the defense, his friends say to him, "Your case is safe, for if there is a man in England who can get you through, it is that man." But my Master is an advocate who never lost a case. He has a plea at the throne of God that never failed yet. Give him—oh! give him your cause to plead, nor doubt the Father's grace. Poor sinner, he is so wise an advocate that you may well come to him, and he will give you rest. But I must not weary you, although there is a fulness of matter on which I might enlarge. With one other argument I conclude:—

#### V. HE IS AN INDISPENSABLE MEDIATOR.

The only mediator, so the text says. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son." Christ knows the Father; no one else knows him, save the Son. There is none other that can approach unto God. It is Christ for your Saviour, or no Saviour at all. Salvation is in no other; and if you will not have Christ, neither can you have salvation. Observe how that is. It is certain that no man knows God except Christ. It is equally certain that no man can come, to God except by Christ. He says it peremptorily; "No man cometh to the Father but by me." Not less certain is it that no man can please the Father except through Christ, for "without faith it is impossible to please him." No faith is worth having except the grace that is founded and based upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and him only. Oh! then, souls, since you are shut up to it by a blessed necessity, say at once, "I will to the gracious Prince approach, and take Jesus to be my all in all. "If I might hope you would do this early, I could go back to my home and retire to my bed, praising God for the work that was done, and the result that was achieved. Let us reiterate again and again the gospel we have to declare, the very essence of the gospel it is which we proclaim. Trust your souls with Jesus, and your souls are saved. He suffered in the room, and place, and stead of all that trust him. If you rely upon him by an act of simple faith, the simplest act in all the world, immediately you so rely you are forgiven, your transgressions are blotted out for his name's sake. He stands in spirit among us at this good hour, and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden"; and he gives you these arguments, which ought to convince you. I pray they may. He is an authorized Saviour, and a well-furnished Saviour. He is the friend of God, and the friend of man. God grant you may accept him, and find the boon which he alone can bestow. Amen.