

## THE LABOURER'S REST

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"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

There are two features especially worthy of notice in the invitations which are scattered up and down the Scriptures of truth: one is, their **limitation**; the other, their largeness. By their **limitation**, I mean, that they are confined to God's quickened family; that they do not extend themselves into, what I might almost call, infinite space; but are circumscribed within a circle, and that descriptive of the characters of those in whose hearts the Spirit of God is at work. The other feature worthy of notice is, the **largeness** of these invitations as far as is compatible with their limitation.

I will endeavour to explain my meaning more fully. In the invitations the Spirit of God traces a circle; and that circle does not extend its boundaries beyond the quickened family of the living Jehovah. But within that circle there is a largeness, so as to comprehend every one of God's own people that are embraced within it. These two apparently contradictory features are reconcileable thus. God knew what was in the hearts of His people; He knew that they would require every possible encouragement that He could give them; and yet He would not stretch the encouragement beyond those for whom it was intended. He would not lavish his gracious invitations upon an ungodly and rebellious world; and yet in these very invitations, He would use language which, though within the bounds of due circumscription, should fully reach unto and embrace every quickened soul. Let us look, for instance, at the invitation

contained in **Isa 55:1**, and see if we cannot trace out these two features—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

**"That thirsteth"**—there is the limitation; the utmost bound of the circle is not extended beyond those who are spiritually athirst for the living God. And yet, within that circle, how large, how wide, how comprehensive is the invitation! "Ho, **every one** that thirsteth." How widely do the arms of the invitation extend themselves, to draw into and fold within their embrace all, without exception, in whose bosom the Blessed Spirit has raised up those spiritual desires after the waters of life which are expressed by the figure of "thirst!"

Again; look at the invitation which dropped from the Lord's own lips, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" **Joh 7:37**. The Lord Himself limited His own gracious invitation to those who thirsted after Him; but within that limit, how He enlarged it to suit the case of every one who spiritually thirsted to be wholly His! "If any man"—not some, not few, not many; but "if any man"—whether many or few, whatever be their state or condition if this spiritual feature be but found in them, "let them come unto Me and drink."

So again, in the invitation, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" **Isa 45:22**, we still see these two prominent features. **"The ends of the earth,"** spiritually understood, refer to God's poor, tried family, who often feel themselves to be at the remotest distance from the Lord. But all these are freely invited. "All the ends of the earth;" all that feel themselves in that remote spot, all who know themselves to be spiritually far from a holy God, and mourn over their distance and separation, are freely and fully invited to look unto the Lord for salvation.

The same two features we also find in the text. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The invitation does not spread itself beyond the circle of those "who labour and are heavy laden." It does not extend itself so wide as to take in those who have no burden nor sorrow in their hearts. It is not lavished upon the ungodly and rebellious; and yet within that circle, how freely and graciously does the Lord invite all in whose hearts this fruit of divine teaching is. "Come unto me," He says, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden." So that while the limitation excludes the dead in sin and unregeneracy, the enlargement takes in all the quickened and the exercised; and thus while the circumscription of the circle prevents its being abused to foster self-righteousness and presumption, the wideness of the circle, by embracing all that are spiritually, burdened and sorrowful, shuts out hopelessness and despair.

Having observed these two noticeable features in this and every scripture invitation, we may go on, with God's blessing, to enlarge upon the text. We may remark four things connected with and flowing out of it:

I.—The character of the Speaker.

II.—The character of the persons spoken to.

III.—The invitation itself.

IV.—The promise connected with the invitation.

These several features may the Lord enable me so to open up, and may He so accompany the word with power, that it may be made a blessing to some of the poor and needy of His living family.

I.—We will look, first, **then**, with God's blessing, at **the character of the Speaker**. All the force, all the value of the invitation depends upon that. We cannot raise up our expectations too high, we cannot fix our eyes too intently upon the Person of Him who uttered this gracious invitation. For is it not the Lord of life and glory? Is it not the Mediator between God and man? Is it not "Immanuel, God with us," from whose lips, those lips into which grace was poured, that these words dropped? To neglect this—to overlook the character of the Speaker—is to take away the force of the whole.

Now, when such an invitation as this drops from the lips of Him, "who spake as never man spake," the words go forth full of sweetness and grace—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We want two features in the character of the Speaker made manifest to our conscience, to encourage us to receive the invitation: **first**, we must know whether He that speaks it has power to perform what He says; and **secondly**, whether He who has the power has also the **will**. It is necessary that both these things should meet in the Speaker of such an invitation as this. If He lacked **power**, He would speak in vain; for He would promise what He could not perform; if He lacked **will**, He might speak, but we should not be able to rest upon the invitation, as doubting whether His heart moved in concert with His lips. But do we not see the highest power and deepest will uniting together in the Person of the Speaker here? Look at Him in his complex Person. Is He not "God over all blessed for ever?" Is He not "the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?" Is He not equal to the Father as the Second Person in the glorious Godhead? Can He then want **power**? He, "**for** whom all things were made"—He, "**by** whom all things were created"—He, "**by** whom all things consist" He, for whose glory all things were

made that are made—He cannot want **power**. But does He want **will**? Do we not read of "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush?" And how did He shew forth that will? Can we ever think too much of—can we ever look too much at His coming out of the bosom of the Father? O look at the everlasting love of God in giving up His only-begotten Son! Look at the everlasting love of the Son in condescending to stoop so low! What infinite love! What boundless compassion! What depths of mercy and grace must have dwelt in His eternal bosom to bring Him down into this lower world, there to become "a worm, and no man"—to "take upon him the form of a servant"—to be "made in the likeness of men"—to "take the flesh and blood of the children"—and to debase Himself so low that He might raise us up so high! Can He then want **will**?

But when we look at His complex Person, His Godhead and manhood in one glorious Immanuel, do we not see all power and will there shining forth? The power of Godhead, and the will of Godhead; and that power, and that will, manifested in the assumption of manhood. So that when we look upon the Lord of life and glory, "Immanuel, God with us," the infinite manifestation of eternal power, and the infinite manifestation of eternal love, can we want a stronger demonstration than this, that He has all power and all will, not only to promise, but also to perform? What more then can we want in the character of the Speaker to enforce this invitation upon the conscience?

II—But we pass on to consider the character also of **the persons spoken to**. Who and what are they? They are described in two words—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are **heavy laden**." The Lord here has selected, so to speak, two features which are to be found in the heart and conscience of all His ransomed and quickened family

1. that they labour—and

2. that they are **heavy laden**. And all that are so heavy laden, the Lord freely invites: yea, more, He Himself draws them near to His own blessed bosom.

Let us look at these two features separately:

1. What is it to **labour**? To labour is to have a load to carry, to have a task, a work to perform. Now, the Lord's people, when the spirituality of the law is made known in their conscience—when the purity and holiness of God's character are manifested in their souls, and their heart is made tender in His fear, are immediately set to work. They are compelled by their inward feelings, and by the weight of eternal realities upon their conscience, to labour to work out their own salvation, and establish such a righteousness, as they think will be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. But they always, sooner or later, find **and it is God's purpose to make them find** that this labour is labour in vain; that it is the toil of the Ethiopian to change his skin, and the leopard his spots; that the iniquity of our nature, the depravity of our heart is so desperate and so incurable, that there is no such thing as working out a righteousness which God can accept.

The Lord sees that many of His dear children are toiling and struggling to do something pleasing in His sight. And, whatever disappointments they continually meet—whatever rents are made in the web which they are weaving to clothe themselves with; however short they find the bed, and however narrow the garment—yet many go on foolishly endeavouring to please God by the works of the law, instead of trampling under foot their own righteousness, and looking wholly and solely to the obedience and sufferings of Jesus. To

such He says, "Come unto me." Your labour is in vain; you can never work out a righteousness pleasing to God; for to be a righteousness acceptable to Him, it must be perfect: there must be no flaw in it; it must be completely without a spot, a speck, or a stain. Can you produce **this?** Have you ever produced one thought perfectly pure?—one action thoroughly holy?—one desire with which sin and self have not in some way intermingled? Were you ever fully conformed to God's holy will and word for one minute in your life? Then how can you produce a righteousness which God can be pleased with?

Now, we must learn for ourselves, by painful experience, that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and thus cast them away with self-loathing and abhorrence from us; yea, feel as Job did, "Though I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" **Job 9:30,31**. Yes, we must know and feel the word of God, manifesting His holiness and our unholiness, till we are glad to cast off our own righteousness just as we should be glad to cast off our besmeared clothes if we fell into a dirty ditch.

2. But there is another branch of spiritual labour—a **labouring under temptation**. The Lord's people are a tempted people. They do not indeed all sink into the same depths of temptation; they are not all equally plagued and harassed with the workings of an evil nature, an ungodly world, and an ever-watchful and implacable enemy. But the quickened family, I am well convinced, sooner or later, must be exercised with sharp and powerful temptations. A desperately wicked heart will not lie idle or asleep in their bosom; sin will work with greater or less power; the world will allure or alarm; Satan will entice or harass. And when these temptations come, **labour** must attend them.

Now the ungodly have temptations; but they never resist them. There is no fear of God in their heart, whereby the keenness of temptation is felt; no holy principle in their bosom to struggle against it. They comply with temptation; and complying with it, the temptation is not felt to be temptation. The current glides along so quietly and unresistedly that its depth, force, and rapidity are wholly unnoticed. But the Lord's quickened family have a spiritual nature communicated, what the apostle Peter calls "a divine nature" **2Pe 1:4** lodged in their bosom: a holy principle, which feels and hates sin, and desires and loves holiness.

It is, then, the internal opposition of this new, divine, and spiritual nature to all sin, that makes the quickened family of God feel the keen edge of temptation. The deeper, therefore, that the fear of God is in the heart, the more sensibly alive we are to His perfect holiness, and the more powerfully that the Spirit of God acts upon that new nature, the more keenly and acutely do we feel temptation.

But let us look at some of these temptations more in detail:

1. Some of the Lord's people labour under temptations **to suicide**. This temptation may indeed, in many cases, be connected with a diseased body; but it more usually springs from the suggestions of Satan, who will often ply the mind with such fiery darts as these—'You had better know the worst of it at once; there is no hope for you; you will be a vagabond upon earth; the very brand of Cain is set upon you; you are a reprobate, and God will hurl you down some day to the depths of woe; the longer therefore you live, the greater will be the number of your sins, and the hotter your damnation.' Many of God's family have had to labour, at one



time or other of their spiritual life, under this most distressing temptation.

2. Others of the Lord's family labour under temptations to **infidelity**. They can scarcely believe at times that the Scriptures are the word of God. Doubts, questionings, suspicions, objections keep working and fermenting in their minds as they read or hear the word, or seek to meditate and pray. There is often, what I may call, 'a bass accompaniment' of these infidel thoughts sounding in their hearts—a jarring string of the vilest suggestions, which mingles its harsh and discordant notes with every spiritual movement of the soul. The Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the efficacy of His finished work, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, Christ's second coming; in a word, the most sacred truths of Scripture, and Scripture itself, are all alternately questioned and assailed by the infidelity of our fallen nature. These harassing temptations are perpetually troubling some of the Lord's exercised family.

3. Others of the living in Jerusalem are perpetually tempted **to commit some sin**. A lustful eye is perpetually entangling some; and they tremble lest they should fall headlong into adultery, or say or do something which shall distress their own souls, and bring reproach on the cause of God. A covetous spirit besets others, perpetually seeking to get possession of their heart, and bury them in carnality and wordliness. The pride of their hearts is often assaulting others, hurrying them into words and actions utterly unbecoming the gospel. An impetuous hasty temper is the besetment of a fourth, and a tongue that cannot be tamed or ruled.

Now these temptations are not occasional visitants; they are not chance callers, who knock at our doors once a month, or

once a year. In many of the Lord's family they are perpetual: by perpetual, I mean, more or less frequently recurring temptations. It is this which harasses them, wears out their strength, makes this world a vale of tears to them—that temptation is so perpetually at work, and that they find they have a nature so headlong prone to comply and fall in with the temptation: that they find little but weakness where they hoped to find strength: and that, instead of resisting and fighting against these temptations, and in the fear and strength of the Lord overcoming them, they feel little else but a feeble wavering heart which is perpetually giving way: and that thus they are only kept from time to time by the skin of their teeth.

4. Others, again, of the Lord's people labour under **doubts and fears, questionings and suspicions**, whether the work of grace was ever really begun upon their heart: whether what they have felt **for they cannot deny that they have felt something** was not a spirit of delusion—whether their convictions were not merely convictions of natural conscience, and whether their joys were anything else but the joys of the hypocrite—whether, in a word, delusion and hypocrisy have not been the root and core of their religion; and whether they shall not perish in hypocrisy, or die in despair. Many of the Lord's family labour for years under these doubts and fears as to the reality of the work of grace upon their hearts. For they cannot trifle with these things; they cannot trifle with eternity; nor trifle with a heart-searching God: nor trifle with their immortal souls: nor trifle with death, hell, and judgment. They feel these realities too solemn and important to be trifled with; standing as they do upon the brink of eternity, and only a hand-breadth betwixt them and death. For want of bright and clear manifestations, many, if not the majority of the quickened family of God, are exercised whether what they have known

and felt was the work of the Spirit upon their souls, or whether it was merely the offspring of nature, hypocrisy, and presumption.

5. Others of the Lord's people labour **under almost perpetual assaults** of Satan. This enemy of the Lord and of His people, casts his blasphemous insinuations into their souls, directing his suggestions against the holiest and most sacred things, and filling their carnal minds with the filthiest and most abominable imaginations.

Now these various temptations **and all the family of God more or less experience them, though all do not sink to the same depth** constitute **labour**. But the word is rendered in some of the old translations, and I believe it is nearer to the original, "weary." "Come unto me, all ye that are **weary**." We shall not wander, therefore, far from the meaning of the Spirit in the text, if we look at that word also. For the effect of labour is to weary. We cannot labour under the law without weariness; we cannot labour under temptation without being wearied of the conflict; we cannot labour under distressing doubts and fears without being weary of them; nor can we labour under Satan's assaults without being faint and weary in our minds. In fact, the end of all spiritual labour is to weary. The Lord's purpose in laying burdens upon us is to weary us out. We cannot learn our religion in any other way. We cannot learn it from the Bible, nor from the experience of others. It must be a personal work, wrought in the heart of each; and we must be brought, all of us, if ever we are to find rest in Christ, to be absolutely wearied out of sin and self, and to have no righteousness, goodness, or holiness of our own.

The effect, then, of all spiritual labour is to bring us to this point—to be weary of the world, for we feel it, for the most

part, to be a vale of tears: to be weary of self, for it is our greatest plague; weary of professors, for we cannot see in them the grace of God, which alone we prize and value; weary of the profane, for their ungodly conversation only hurts our minds; weary of the saints, for they are sometimes too carnal for us, and sometimes too spiritual; weary of our bodies, for they are often full of sickness and pain, and always clogs to our soul; and weary of life, though often afraid to die, for we see the emptiness of those things which to most people make life so agreeable.

By this painful experience we come to this point—to be worn out and wearied; and there we must come, before we can rest entirely on Christ. As long as we can rest in the world, we shall rest in it; as long as the things of time and sense can gratify us, we shall be gratified in them; as long as we can find anything pleasing in self, we shall be pleased with it; as long as anything visible and tangible can satisfy us, we shall be satisfied with them. But when we get weary of all things visible, tangible, and sensible—wearied of ourselves, and of all things here below—then we want to rest upon Christ, and Christ alone.

But the Lord has added another word, "**heavy laden.**" Mark you, He does not merely say, "laden." A man may carry an ounce upon his back, and that may be called a load; and he may be said to be laden. But such a load spiritually would no more be a burden for the Lord to remove, than a cross worked into a Popish vestment is the cross which the Lord bids His disciples take up and carry after him. In order therefore to bar out all such pretensions, the word is "**heavy laden.**" As though the Lord would not have to do with light professors; as though He would not hold out His hand to save any but the drowning; as though He would not cast a single look of condescension upon any who had not a heavy

load upon their back; as though He would neglect all who could carry their own burdens; and confine Himself wholly and solely to those who needed His out-stretched help. And why should He do otherwise? Did He come to save those who can save themselves?—to cleanse those who can cleanse themselves?—to deliver those who can free themselves? Did the Lord of life and glory come forth from the bosom of the Father—did the Eternal Son of God assume flesh, to save self-saviours, to help self-helpers, and cleanse self-cleansers? Surely, surely, we cannot think that the Son of God came down upon such a mission as that. No; it was "to seek and to save that which was lost." The text, therefore, expressly guards against any hypocritical pretensions; for in it the Lord says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and **heavy laden.**"

But how heavy laden?

1. Some are heavy laden with the **burden of guilt**. Indeed, whenever sin is charged upon the conscience, it must produce guilt. I have no opinion of any professor, however high, however low, whatever be his standing in the church, who has never felt guilt upon his conscience. I am sure he never can have known pardon—he never can have felt Jesus precious—he never can have believed in His name, nor cleaved to His blood and righteousness as all his salvation.

But what produces guilt upon the conscience? The work of the Spirit in the soul, revealing the spirituality of the law, and the holiness of God's character; and thus causing the guilt of sin to cut and penetrate into the conscience through the folds and veils of an unbelieving heart. But when I say, that every quickened vessel of mercy must feel guilt—guilt before God—guilt enough to bow his head down with shame, and to make him put his mouth in the dust—guilt to cut to pieces all his

own righteousness—guilt to force him out of every refuge of lies, and to beat out of his grasp every false hope—when I say that every child of God must feel guilt sufficient to produce this, I am not going to lay down **God has not, and why should I attempt it?** how deep that guilt must be, or how long that guilt must last. If it has not driven the soul out of every refuge of lies, if it has not beaten false hopes completely out of its hands, if it has not forced it to flee to Jesus as its only refuge, it has not been yet deep enough, it has not yet lasted sufficiently long; it must strike a deeper root downward to make the naked embrace the rock for want of a shelter. When it has done that, it has done its work. There is no salvation in guilt; it prepares the soul for salvation, but there is no salvation in it.

2. Again. There is also a being heavily laden with a **daily conflict**. Guilt is not perpetually felt; there is a relief for it; for when the blood of sprinkling is applied, guilt is removed. But conflict between a body of sin and death and the holy, pure, and divine nature of which God's people are made partakers, lasts during the whole of our mortal span upon earth: lasts did I say? it increases in continuance. Our early battles were but skirmishes: it was but the fight infantry meeting the first attacks of the cavalry. But when we have been long in the field then the battle becomes indeed in right good earnest: for "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood." This internal warfare is more or less experienced by all God's family. But what a burden it is to have such a daily conflict with a body of sin and death! It is the greatest burden that I have on earth. We all have our trials, heavy trials: but of all the burdens that I am acquainted with, the daily conflict with the body of sin and death, the workings of my corrupt heart, my fallen and depraved nature perpetually lusting to evil, entangling my eye, catching my affections, ensnaring my

soul, dragging me, or drawing me into everything that is foul and filthy, base and vile, **not externally, through mercy, but internally,** forms the heaviest burden I have to carry. I do not know that I have for months felt this burden, this heavy conflict, more severely than since I have been in this metropolis. I do not know that I have spoken a hundred sentences beyond actual necessity to an ungodly person: and the Lord has kept my feet from all outward sin and open evil: yet the conflict I daily and sometimes hourly feel with my wretched heart has been my trouble and grief continually. Now when we are so laden with a body of sin and death, when we feel such vile sins perpetually struggling for the mastery, and such a depraved heart pouring forth its polluted streams, **and I am sure the Fleet ditch emptying itself into the Thames at Blackfriars never poured forth such a polluted stream as the fountain of iniquity in your depraved heart and mine,**—I say, when we feel this common sewer of our depraved nature pouring forth this polluted stream, must it not make us grieve and groan if we have known anything of the life and fear of God in our souls? Yes, daily make a living soul grieve and groan, draw at times scalding tears from his eye, and force convulsive sobs from his burdened bosom to feel that he is such a monster of depravity and iniquity: that though God keeps his feet so that he does not fall outwardly and manifestly, yet there is such a tide of iniquity flowing in his heart, polluting his conscience continually.

The Lord speaks to such, "**Come unto me.**" What a sweet invitation! What gracious words! "I, that am mighty to save:" I, Jehovah Jesus, the Lord of life and glory: the once crucified, but now risen Immanuel, invite all such, "Come unto me."

But whom does He thus address? The virtuous, the moral, the upright? those who have cleansed their own hearts and hands, and in their own strength and righteousness live good lives? He does not deign these a look. These are whited sepulchres, fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and uncleanness. These are "scribes and pharisees, hypocrites," who lay heavy burdens upon others, and never touch one of them with their little finger. The Lord does not speak to such. He will not spare them one look of compassion. But He fixes His penetrating gaze, His sympathising eye upon, and opens the tenderness and compassion of His loving bosom unto those who labour and are heavy laden; to His poor, suffering, sorrowing, groaning, and mourning family; to those who have no one else to look to; those who are burdened in their consciences, troubled in their minds, and distressed in their souls. He says to such, "Come unto me." This leads me to the third branch of my discourse.

III.—"**The invitation.**" How authoritatively, and yet how graciously, does the Lord speak! Have you never observed this in the word? How differently the Lord speaks from the prophets of old! When the prophets spake, it was with a "Thus saith the Lord." But when the Lord of life and glory spake, it was, "I." He stood on earth not as a prophet, to interpret the word of God, as the spiritual instrument, or as the vessel of clay through which God addresses men. No; he spake not so: but He spake, clothed in all the majesty of Godhead. Jehovah spake when He spake; for He is God over all; God and man in one glorious Person. And what does He say? What is the gracious invitation that dropped from His lips? O that we might hear them spoken with power to our hearts: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."



And what is **coming**? How frequently the Lord speaks thus in the word! He says, "All that the Father giveth me **shall come** unto me; and him that **cometh** unto me I will in no wise cast out." "If any man thirst, let him **come unto me**, and drink." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, **come ye** to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price." How frequently does the word occur! But what is its meaning? Is there not in coming some **movement**? When I come to a place, is it not perfectly distinct from standing where I am? In coming, there is a movement of my body—is there not? So spiritually **for we are to interpret these spiritual figures by their natural meaning** there is, in coming to Jesus, a movement of the soul; so that if there be no movement toward **Him**, there is no coming. But as "labour" is spiritual, and "heavy laden" is spiritual, so the "coming" is spiritual. It is not then a coming of the body. The body may come, and the heart be left behind. It is not the humble tone, the prostration of the body, the bending of the knee, or the upturned eye;—all these forms may and do exist, where the soul is dead in sin.

But coming is a movement Godward of that divine nature which God himself has implanted in the soul. It therefore implies **faith**. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." We cannot come to Jesus except we believe in His name, and we cannot believe in His name except special and spiritual faith is in our hearts; for "faith is the gift of God," a grace and fruit of the Spirit. Before, then, we can come, there must be faith communicated through the special operation of the Spirit upon our conscience.

Now, wherever there is this special faith given whereby we see Jesus, **what a precious sight!** believe in Jesus, **what precious faith!** and move toward Jesus, **what a blessed movement!** then there will be a coming to **Him**. But we

come in two different forms. I will not say there are two ways of coming; there is only one way; yet in our feelings they are often distinct. I will explain my meaning.

Sometimes we come as driven: sometimes we come as **drawn**. Sometimes the north wind blows us from behind; sometimes the south wind allures us from before. Guilt, fear, wrath, death, hell, eternity—this storm upon our back will often drive us; for we have no refuge but Jesus where we can hide our guilty heads. For where else can I hide? In the law? That curses. In self? That is treacherous. In the world? That is under the curse of God. My own righteousness? That is filthy rags. My own strength? All is weakness. My own resolutions of amendment? They will all issue in my falling more foully than before. Then, when the north wind of guilt, wrath, and terror beat upon the soul; and at the same time, the Holy Spirit, by His internal operations, holds up to the eyes of the understanding, and illuminates the mind to see who this precious refuge, this shelter, this harbour is, then the soul flies unto Jesus; as one said of old

Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee.

We find this traced out in **Isa 28:16,17**, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." Now, when the hail sweeps away the refuge of lies; and the waters of guilt and fear overflow the hiding-place; and the soul sees the stone that God has laid in Zion for a foundation, a tried stone, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, it flees to this Rock for shelter, hides

in this Rock of Ages, and takes shelter in his Person, blood, and righteousness. This is **coming**.

But there is another coming, and that not of a different nature; for the Spirit works in one and the same way; yet His operations are different; and that is **drawing**. Have you never felt drawn? What said one? "**Draw me**" not drive me, "and I will run after thee!" "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" **Jer 31:3** There is the putting in of the hand by the hole of the door, and a moving of the bowels towards the Lord of life and glory. There is a sweet attractive power put forth in the heart. We see His beauty; "we behold His glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." We see in Jesus all the Majesty of the Godhead, and all the tenderness of manhood, and see them both combined in one glorious Person. We see the hands that made heaven and earth nailed to the bloody tree. We see the divine nature united to the human; and the infinite nature shining forth in the finite. And we see beauty, glory, and blessedness in this divine Immanuel. We hear Him speak; we catch the sound of His invitation falling on our heart; some dew and savour drop into the soul, and this melts, stirs, and breaks—this softens, moves, and draws—and this blessedly leads the soul to look to, and take refuge in a glorious Immanuel. This is **coming**. There is a sweetness in this. This is not being driven by necessity, but drawn by love. This is not being compelled through the hardness of the case, and through wrath, guilt, and fear beating upon our unsheltered head. But it is the sweet putting forth of the power of the Lord, drawing up our heart's affections unto Himself. The children of God feel both at different times and at different seasons. They need both. They are sometimes in situations where **drawing** would not do: and they are sometimes in situations where **driving** will not do. When they are carnal, worldly-minded, wrapped up in

self, and going after idols, they want a driving north wind. But a driving north wind continued too long would make them rebellious, stir up the enmity of their hearts, and almost plunge them into despair. Therefore they want the drawings of divine love, the sweet attractive power of the beauty of the Lord to overcome rebellion, put down unbelief, smite the demon of infidelity in them, and lead them to the footstool of the Lord of life and glory to lay hold of His strength, and embrace Him in the arms of faith and affection. When this is done, that is fulfilled—"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." There is a willingness then to be saved by Jesus. There is no self-righteousness then clamouring for its share of work and wages; no rebellion boiling within; no infidelity nor unbelief striving for the mastery; but the world drops its charms, self-righteousness is turned into self-loathing, and the soul is willing to be saved in the Lord's own way by superabounding grace, and the love and blood of the Lamb.

Is not this a sweet coming? But how many times do we thus come in our lives? Some persons would make us believe that we come to Christ once as poor guilty sinners, and when we have come once, and got a blessing, there is no more such coming again. Delusion is stamped upon all such doctrine. I venture to say this, that if a man say he has only come to Christ as a poor needy sinner once in his life, and has lived many years to make a profession after, and never came again, he never came spiritually at all; he has never known the attractive power of the Holy Ghost in his conscience; his hope is delusive, and he has nothing but a lie in his right hand. Is guilt felt but once?—pardon received but once?—then may coming be but once, and receiving but once.

Is not religion that is worth the name, a daily work? Is it not begun, carried on, and crowned by the Lord of life and glory

Himself? Is it by coming once that we are made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light?" What! Is all the beauty of Jesus exhausted at one view? Are there not in Him treasures of mercy? Are there not in us treasures of wickedness? Are there not in Him boundless depths of compassion? Are there not in us unfathomable depths of iniquity? Do we not daily sin, hourly provoke God? Do we not daily need mercy and compassion? Are we not daily transgressors against infinite patience? And do we not daily want that patience to be manifested? As long as we live in the body, there will be at times **would to God there were more times of it!** a coming unto this blessed Jesus. There will be a prostration of the spirit before Him; there will be a yielding up of a broken heart to His service; there will be a clasping of Him in the arms of love and affection; there will be a pouring out of the soul at His footstool. And every temptation that does not produce this, and every burden that does not effect this, and every conviction and sorrow that does not thus bring to His feet, is of as little value as the howling wind over a heath. There is no spiritual effect produced by our experience of trial, temptation, and sorrow, if it do not bring us to the only spot where rest and peace are to be found.

But this leads me, as time is waning, to the last branch of the subject.

IV.—**The promise—"I will give you rest."** What does rest imply? To my mind it implies several things.

1. **To rest is to lean upon something.** Is it not? So spiritually. We want to lean upon something. The Lord Himself has given us this figure. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, **leaning** upon her Beloved?" The figure of "a rock" on which the church is built—"the foundation" which God has laid in Zion—points to the same idea, that of

leaning or dependence. Now when the soul comes to lean upon Jesus, and depend wholly and solely on Him, it enters into the sweetness of the invitation. Have we not leant upon a thousand things? And what have they proved? Broken reeds that have run into our hands, and pierced us. Our own strength and resolutions, the world and the church, sinners and saints, friends and enemies, have they not all proved, more or less, broken reeds? The more we have leant upon them, like a man leaning upon a sword, the more have they pierced our souls. The Lord Himself has to wean us from the world, from friends, from enemies, from self, in order to bring us to lean upon Himself; and every prop He will remove, sooner or later, that we may lean wholly and solely upon His Person, love, blood, and righteousness.

2. But there is another idea in the word "rest,"—**termination.** When we are walking, running, or in any way moving, we are still going onwards; we have not got to the termination of our journey. But when we come to the **termination** of that we have been doing, we rest. So spiritually. As long as we are engaged in setting up our own righteousness, in labouring under the law, there is no termination of our labours. But when we come to the glorious Person of the Son of God—when we hang upon His atoning blood, dying love, and glorious righteousness, and feel them sweet, precious, and suitable, then there is rest. "We which have believed, do enter into rest," says the apostle. His legal labours are all terminated. His hopes and expectations flow unto, and centre in Jesus—there they end, there they terminate; such a termination as a river finds in the boundless ocean.

3. But there is another idea still connected with "rest," **relief.** When we rest, we find relief to our weary limbs. So spiritually. When the soul comes to Jesus, He gives it rest

and relief from its burdens; as well as deliverance from anxiety, and cessation from the labour that distresses and distracts it. He promises to give this—"Come unto me, and I"—Who else can do it? None, either in heaven or earth—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and **I** will give you rest." How? By communicating to the soul out of His infinite fulness, by sprinkling upon the conscience His atoning blood, by shedding abroad in the heart His dying love, and enabling the soul to believe on His name, and cling to His Person.

In this there is rest—nothing else will do it—nothing else will give it. Other remedies will leave us at last under the wrath of God. But he that comes to and leans upon Jesus, His finished work, His dying love, will have rest here and heaven hereafter. Are not our poor minds often restless, often anxious, and pensive, because of a thousand doubts, perplexities, painful trials, and grievous afflictions—do they not all make your spirit weary and restless within you? There never can be anything but restlessness while we move round this circle of sin and self. But when by precious faith we come out of our own righteousness, our own strength, our own wisdom, our own worthiness; come to, believe in, hang upon, and cleave unto the Person, blood, and work of the only-begotten Son of God, so as to feel a measure of His preciousness in our hearts—then there is rest. This is solid, this is abiding, this is not delusive; this will never leave the soul deceived with false hopes. No, it will end in eternal bliss and glory—in the open vision of eternal love—in seeing Him face to face whom the soul has known, looked to, believed in, and loved upon earth.