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Come!

A Christmas Invitation

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

Reader,

The name of the tract before you is short. But the subject which the name unfolds is deeply important. It is the first word of a text of Scripture which deserves to be written in letters of gold. I offer that text to you as a Christmas invitation. I entreat you to look at it, and ponder it well. That single text may be the salvation of your soul.

The end of another year is close at hand. Another Christmas is drawing near. Family parties are once more gathering. Friends are inviting friends to come and see them. Homes are being filled with happy faces. Surely, at a time like this, *an invitation* cannot be out of season! Listen, then,

to the invitation which I bring you this day. It may be unlike any that you have yet received. But it is of unspeakable importance. It concerns the eternal happiness of your soul.

Reader, do not shrink back when you read these words. I do not want to spoil your Christmas pleasures, provided always that your pleasures are not mixed with sin. I know that there is a time to laugh, as well as a time to weep. But I do want you to be thoughtful, as well as happy—to consider, as well as to make mirth. There are some missing at Christmas parties this winter, who a year ago were alive and well. There are some now gathering round Christmas firesides, who a year hence will be lying in their graves.

Reader, how long have you yourself to live? Will another Christmas find you alive? Once more I entreat you to listen to the invitation which I bring you this day. I have a message for you from my Master. He says, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'

There are four points in the text before you, to which I ask your attention. On each of these I have somewhat to say.

- I. First. *Who is the Speaker of this invitation?*
- II. Secondly. *To whom is this invitation addressed?*
- III. Thirdly. *What does the Speaker ask us to do?*
- IV. Lastly. *What does the Speaker offer to give?*

May the Holy Ghost bless the reading of this tract to your everlasting benefit! May this Christmas prove the happiest and best Christmas you have ever spent!

I. In the first place, *Who is the Speaker of the invitation which heads this tract?* Who is it that invites so freely, and offers so largely? Who is it that says to your conscience this day, 'Come—come unto me'?

Reader, you have a right to ask these questions. You live in a dying world. The earth is full of cheats, shams, deceptions, impositions and falsehoods. The value of a promissory note depends entirely on the name which is signed at the bottom. When you hear of a mighty Promiser you have a right to say, Who is this? and what is his name?

The speaker of the invitation before you is the greatest and best friend that man has ever had. It is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God.

He is one who is *almighty*. He is God the Father's fellow and equal. He is very God of very God. By him were all things made. In his hand are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He has

all power in heaven and earth. In him all fulness dwells. He has the keys of death and hell. He is now the appointed mediator between God and man. He will one day be the judge and king of all the earth. Reader, when such an one as this speaks, you may safely trust him. What he promises he is able to perform.

He is one who is *most loving*. He loved us so that he left heaven for our sakes, and laid aside for a season the glory that he had with the Father. He loved us so that he was born of a woman for our sakes, and lived thirty-three years in this sinful world. He loved us so that he undertook to pay our mighty debt to God, and died upon the cross to make atonement for our sins. Reader, when such an one as this speaks, he deserves a hearing. When he promises a thing, you need not be afraid to trust him.

He is one who *knows the heart of man* most thoroughly. He took on him a body like our own, and was made like man in all things, sin only excepted. He knows by experience what man has to go through. He has tasted poverty, and weariness, and hunger, and thirst, and pain, and temptation. He is acquainted with all our condition upon earth. He has 'suffered himself being tempted.'¹ Reader,

¹ Hebrews 2:18.

when such an one as this makes an offer, he makes it with perfect wisdom. He knows exactly what you and I need.

He is one who *never breaks his word*. He always fulfils his promises. He never fails to do what he undertakes. He never disappoints the soul that trusts him. Mighty as he is, there is one thing which he cannot do. It is impossible for him to lie. Reader, when such an one as this makes a promise, you need not doubt that he will stand to it. You may depend with confidence on his word.

Reader, you have now heard who sends you the invitation which is before you today. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Give him the credit due to his name. Grant him a full and impartial hearing. Believe that a promise from his mouth deserves your best attention. See that you refuse not him that speaketh. It is written, 'If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we refuse him that speaketh from heaven' (Hebrews 12:25).

II. I will now show you, in the second place, *to whom the invitation before you is addressed*.

The Lord Jesus Christ addresses 'all that labour and are heavy laden.' The expression is deeply comforting and instructive. It is wide, sweeping,

and comprehensive. It describes the case of millions in every part of the world.

Where are the labouring and heavy laden? They are everywhere. They are a multitude that man can scarcely number. They are to be found in every climate, and in every country under the sun. They live in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in America. They dwell by the banks of the Seine, as well as the banks of the Thames—by the banks of the Mississippi as well as the banks of the Niger. They abound under republics as well as under monarchies—under liberal governments as well as under despotism. Everywhere you will find trouble, care, sorrow, anxiety, murmuring, discontent, and unrest. What does it mean? What does it all come to? Men are 'labouring and heavy laden.'

To what class do the labouring and heavy laden belong? They belong to every class: there is no exception. They are to be found among masters as well as among servants—among rich as well as among poor—among kings as well as among subjects—among learned as among ignorant. In every class you will find trouble, care, sorrow, anxiety, murmuring, discontent, and unrest. What does it mean? What does it all come to? Men are 'labouring and heavy laden.'