

A PROMISE OF REST

RELIEF FOR HUMANITY FROM OPPRESSIVE BURDENS OF LIFE.

THE SIMPLE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

These Who Labor and Are Heavy Laden Will Find a Rest for Their Everyday Trials in the Spiritual Food Provided So Freely by the Saviour of Mankind—A God Given Blessing.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1905, by William Bailey, of Toronto, at the Dept. of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Chicago, Nov. 8.—In this sermon the preacher urges a return to the "old paths"—the simple Christian faith in the Saviour and his promises—as the only means of securing the greatest of blessings, relief from the oppressive burdens of life, which bear heavily on humanity. The text is Matthew xi, 28. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Like a sensitive opal, this text shines best when it has been heated by the fire of tribulation. Like the diamond, it glitters and sparkles brightest when it has been cut by the lapidary of trouble. Like some of the autumnal fruits, it is sweetest to the parched lips when it has been frost-bitten. Like the morning sunrise, it is the most gladly welcomed by the poor, tired invalid, who, unable to sleep during the long, weary hours of the night, has tossed upon the hot, fevered pillow and wished for the day. Like the sight of the old homestead, it is most desired by the ragged outcast of a repentant prodigal, wearied with his journey from the far country, who sees again his father's home, where he shall find forgiveness and love.

These old promises of the Bible, offering rest and peace to those who are troubled and in pain and sin, have a far different meaning to us after we have been compelled to lift the cup of sorrow to our lips and drink its contents to the bitter dregs. When young men and young women first open the Bible the gospel promises in reference to sorrows and heavy burdens do not appear very strongly to them. Their horizons are always rainbowed. Their hillside are always hanging gardens and terraced vineyards. Their bodies always seem to have the warm, rich blood of perpetual youth coursing through their veins. A physician's prescription is not sought after by the well nor an oculist by those having good eyes. But when, after we have been compelled to take a long course in the "school of adversity" and then post-graduate course after post-graduate course, oh, then how different God's sweet promises appear to us!

To-day I would talk to those who have floundered knee deep and chin deep in the quicksands of trouble. I would try to interpret for you what the gospel rest of my text means. I would interpret it not only for those who have found this rest, but also for those who may be persuaded to seek it as a God given blessing at the foot of the cross. What is your burden, my brother? Perhaps it is some sorrow common to the whole human race. It is very heavy and no lighter from the fact that others are bearing the same load. Perhaps it is some trouble peculiar to yourself that you cannot bear to describe even to a friend. "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness," but, whatever it may be, the invitation Christ gives is for you.

The past and the present, like the Siamese twins, are inseparably joined. From a human standpoint we cannot live in the "to-day" without feeling the blistered lips of the "yes-

terday" breathing upon our cheeks. In Dante's "Inferno" there was one region in which suffering spirits had their necks twisted by the king of terrors. While they might be walking in one direction their eyes were always turned to the rear. In life's journey the remorseful eyes of the unforgiven sinner are always turned to the rear. They are always looking at the threatening results of evil deeds which may have been committed years ago. The evil results of those sins, like a hound upon the track of a hare, never lose their scent.

An unforgiven man can never get any rest from the heavy, remorseful burden of sins, no matter when they were committed. These unpardoned sins will curse his life as they have cursed the beautiful hands of Lady Macbeth with the blood of the murdered Duncan. They will hiss at him as the haunting spectres terrified the sleeping King Richard after the murder of his two nephews or as the cries of the dying during the St. Bartholomew's massacre never ceased to echo in King Charles' ears.

You tell me that a sin committed can never be undone. You say that the guilty can never become innocent; that the soul stained and polluted with transgression can never be made clean. From a human standpoint that is true, but there is a divine remedy that effects even that miracle. Christ has borne the penalty for the sins of the world, and through his blood shed for you your soul may be cleansed. "He wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."

Many years ago a young Russian officer became hopelessly in debt. By the law of that time he would have been expelled from the army on account of these debts. One night he sat up in his tent making an account of these debts and wrote under them these words, "Who will pay my debts?" Then in utter discouragement the young man fell sound asleep, with his head on the table. That night the Emperor was making his rounds of the camp. He saw the candle burning in the young man's tent and stepped in. There he saw the paper and the troubled look upon the young officer's face. He read the memorandum, and then he picked up the pen and wrote under the question, "I, Nicholas, the Emperor of all the Russias, will." To-day, like the Russian Emperor, Christ the divine sufferer, will pay the price of your sins; Christ the King will lift the heavy burden of our evil past, not at the foot of the cross, but at the foot of the cross, and take it now!

The Heavenly Father offers rest from financial distress. The older I grow the more I realize that the greatest struggle on earth is after daily bread. Most people are not fighting for the luxuries, but for the bare necessities. If a man gets \$50 or \$100 ahead in the bank then comes some dangerous sickness in the family. His daughter is threatened with blindness, and she has to go to the best oculist and have most expensive glasses, or his wife breaks down, and she must go off for rest, and extra servants are hired, and the whole sum of money is soon swept away.

The financial burden is the heavy one to bear. Most of us are ready to grant that. That burden, too, Christ will bear if you commit it to

his hands. Your anxiety, your distress, your sorrows, he will relieve, and he will give you rest. "Now," says some one, "the preacher is talking simple nonsense! If I do not get out and hustle and work and worry and get the money to feed and clothe and educate my children God will never do it for me. I do not believe in expecting that God will relieve me of my financial distress any more than I would expect the water to boil in the kettle if I did not have a fire in the stove or my cupboard full of food unless I could order it at the grocer's or the butcher's. When you begin to talk about God carrying the burden of financial distress then you are simply talking about something you know nothing about."

No, my brother, you are wrong. The mightiest men of God have always rolled at Christ's feet the burden of financial distress, and God has never failed them. By that I do not mean these men have been lazy or indolent. But I do mean that while they were physically and mentally doing their level best to earn the necessary amount for their livelihood they were at the same time placing their financial obligations before Christ and asking him to furnish in his own way the necessary means. Study the life of Moody. Who furnished him the money with which to carry on his great work? God; emphatically God. When Mr. Moody received his invitation to go and hold evangelistic services in England and Scotland he practically did not have a cent. He accepted the invitation. He engaged passage upon a trans-Atlantic steamer. The time grew nearer and nearer for him to sail. Some one asked him where he was going to get the money with which to sail. "I do not know," he answered, "but God will send it in time. I am going upon his mission."

About two or three days before he was to sail a gentleman walked into his office and said: "Mr. Moody, I hear you are going to Europe. I thought you might want a little money. Here is \$500, if you will take it. 'Thank you,' answered Mr. Moody. He took it. He took it as from man, but from God. The \$500 paid Mr. Moody's passage over to England, so that he could preach Jesus Christ in the home of Robert McChesney and John Robertson and Rowland Hill.

And, my dear Christian friends, this plea to roll the financial distress of your life upon Christ brings up a very pertinent lesson which ought to be practiced by all our churches. Do you know why the average Christian church is having such hard work to get along financially? At the end of the year a few rich men have to put their hands in their pockets and make up the heavy deficit. It is because these churches in looking after the temporal life of their members in the way of the material are not doing their duty. The one is to live long, full church treasury is not, as some people suppose, to have a bazaar, or an oyster supper, or an evening's entertainment of Mrs. Jarley's wax-works, or a concert. The true way to get a full church treasury is to have a full prayer meeting. If the rich men of a church, the leading men of the church, would set the right example to the average church members and come to the weekly meetings and take a Sunday school class and practice prayer in public as well as in private then there would be no difficulty in meeting the financial obligations of the boards of trustees.

The Heavenly Father offers rest also in reference to the salvation of our children and loved ones. Nearly every healthy normal man has two ambitions. The one is to live long. If I had my own way and could still live in health and strength and live amid the surroundings I am having to-day as far as I can make out I would like to live on earth at least 1,875 years. When I think of all the glorious opportunities of working on earth for my loved ones, I would not voluntarily change places with the brightest robed denier of all the redeemed immortals in heaven. I feel a great deal in reference to my earthly work as did the elder of a Presbyterian church. When he was very sick some one came to him and said, "My brother, how happy you ought to be that you may soon associate with the sick man." "Yes," answered the sick man, "that may be true, but as far as I can make out I would on earth for a little while at least rather associate with one woman of flesh and blood, called my wife, whom I know and love, than with any twenty angels with whom at the present time I am unacquainted."

The second ambition which nearly every healthy, normal man has is not only to live long in an earthly sense, but some day to own a large home, in which he can gather all his children and grandchildren and friends and loved ones about him. And if a man longs to have an earthly home, where he can collect his loved ones, how much more must the Christian long that in his heavenly home he may be able to collect all his dear ones, his children and brothers and sisters and parents and friends—those who are bound to him by ties of love as well as of blood. There is not a true Christian man or woman who has not felt at heart the heavy burden of an unsaved child or relative or friend. Ah, that is a heavy burden to bear! If I would throw this meeting open to ask for requests for prayers from all over this house people would rise and say: "Pray for my husband," "Pray for my child," "Pray for my brother," "Pray for my roommate," "Pray for my sister." But, friend, why do you ask this pulpit to pray for your loved ones? Why do you not bring that meeting open to ask for the salvation of your child or husband, to Christ? Does not Jesus want you to do this to-day? If Christ will carry the heavy burden of financial distress surely he will bear the heavier burden of the salvation of your children.

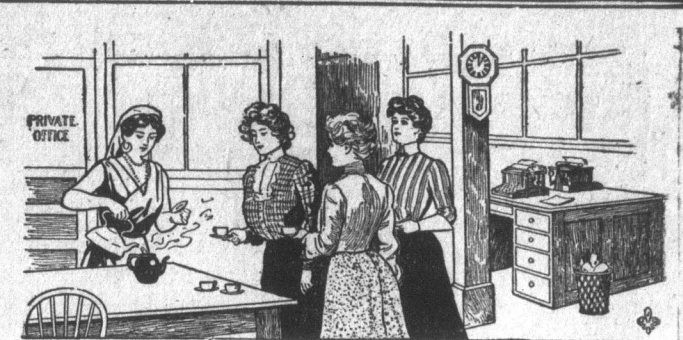
Some years ago a noted evangelist was holding a series of meetings in the church of which I was then pas-

tor. Among the thrilling incidents which he told was one that appeared to me at that time very far-fetched. I said it could not be so. He described how a mother had a wayward boy who had run away to sea and was at that time in an Asiatic port. This mother carefully studied the Bible and came to the conclusion that she had a right to ask for the salvation of her boy and that she would then and there throw the burden of his salvation upon Christ. She went to her room, after giving word that under no condition was she to be interrupted. Then she opened the Bible, laid it upon a chair and knelt down. Then she began to pray for the salvation of that boy. She said: "Oh, God, Jesus has said that if I ask anything in his name thou wilt grant my request. I am going to stay here pleading upon my knees the salvation of my child until thou hast given to me the sweet consciousness that he is saved." She stayed there from 6 until 7, 7 until 8, 8 until 10, 10 until 11, until 5 o'clock in the morning that woman stayed. Then she arose from her knees and said, "My heavenly Father thou hast answered my prayer." "At that very time," said the evangelist, "the boy in the foreign port was convicted of sin and sent a letter home to his mother that he had given his heart to Christ." But as I afterward began to ponder over the story, in the light of the Scriptures and of personal history, I came to the conclusion that that story was true or at least by gospel promise could be true. We have a right to ask for the salvation of our loved ones. And if we ask and plead faithfully and truly God will answer our prayers.

Oh, that we might, one and all, here and now, enter into a holy conspiracy of prayer for the salvation of our loved ones! This was the way a great revival wave was started in one of my old churches. It was by Christian people, members of that church, getting together week after week and praying for distinct individuals. It was in this way that my grandmother and grandfather were converted. Some of you may have heard the wonderful story written by the pen or spoken by the lips of my father. It was a company of earnest and fearful mothers gathering together at a certain time of the day in the barns to pray for the salvation of their children until scores and hundreds stood up in the little village church of Somerville to confess Christ, and the whole region as moved by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is by a conspiracy of prayer that a revival can always be started in our loved ones swept into the kingdom by a tidal wave of mercy.

The great trouble with the Christian church as a whole and with Christians as individuals is that we have broken away from the old anchor of gospel truth. We have lost faith in God that he is able to do all things; we have lost faith in prayer; we have lost faith in the power of the Holy Ghost. And the great mission of the Christian pulpit to-day is to revive in the pew the old gospel seeds of faith and hope. The people are hungering and thirsting after the simple gospel truths. And it is because the simple, salient gospel beliefs are so much needed to-day that I am preaching this sermon upon faith and the belief that Christ can save our loved ones if we only pray.

Thus, my dear friends, tired and heavy hearted, tramping along the highway of life, I want to lift the heavy burdens of your hearts. It is these burdens that are crushing you, not the journey. It is these extra burdens which we can cast at the foot of the cross that make us labor and heavy laden. Will you not accept the invitation of my text? Will you not live in the faith of that blessed promise and die in the hope, as did the beautiful Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles I. of England? Upon her marble monument in Newport church, erected by Queen Victoria, is recorded the fact that she was one morning found dead, with her head pillowed upon the open Bible and her finger pointing to the simple words, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To-day I urge upon you this wide invitation, with its glorious promise. Christ bids you come with all your burdens and trials, and he will bear them for you. He offers you rest in this life, rest in death and eternal rest beyond the grave. "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and he will give you rest."



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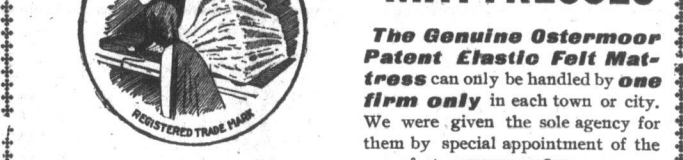
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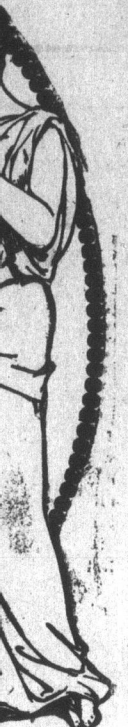
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