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Lapsiz Evening in Monthly Sermons 377

10/19/96  
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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed  
Chapel, Brighton, Sunday morning 1.12.1929

Matthew 11 v.28

"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"

A very familiar passage this, frequently spoken about, quoted it may be without that consideration which it is worthy of and particularly the context. The sovereignty of God is a striking context. At the time that Christ was teaching and comparing the cities in which He had done so many wonderful works, miracles with Sodom and Tyre and Sidon, and declaring that the cities would have repented had they seen the mighty works which these present cities had seen. Then He addresses His Eternal Father - "At that time Jesus answered and said "I thank Thee O Father" Jesus answered, answered no person, but as it were referring to what He had just said He should say "Yes, but I thank Thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent" hence the word by Paul that the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Thou hast revealed then these things, the teaching I have just given them, hast revealed them unto babes, babe like men, people answering to that word - "except ye receive the kingdom of God as little children" That is the frame of mind that the Spirit of God produces in people to whom it pleases His majesty to reveal divine things and if we are rightly affected by such a declaration it will cause us to seek that lowly spirit, that babe-like spirit. It will put out all human wisdom and natural qualifications to receive the truth and we shall enter into the spirit of the word - the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto Him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." That word would say to all of us - Do not think you can become acquainted with God or receive the things of God by any natural ability, by your intellect, by your learning, because the things of God are only received by the Spirit giving them, received into child-like hearts, babe-like spirits. A very crushing blow to our pride is this teaching. O proud man you will have to come into the dust if God gives you His grace and teaches you His salvation. "Even so Father for so it seemed good in Thy sight." The things that are offensive to our nature, stumbling to our

pride are good in the sight of God. Think of it. Are they good in your sight? Was divine sovereignty ever made acceptable to your hearts? Were God's dealings with men - calling nothingness on their greatness, foolishness on their wisdom, weakness on their strength, and giving His grace to whom He will give it, acceptable to you, making you say "I do not deserve grace but wilt Thou grant it to me for Christ's sake"? Divine sovereignty rightly received into the heart, always has a humbling effect. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father". This is a Mediator's word; this is the word of the Father's servant of whom the Father said by Isaiah - "Behold My Servant, Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth, I have put my Spirit upon Him". This is the Person speaking "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father" - what I am to say, what I am to do, whom I am to bless, and so Jesus is full, full of grace and truth. What a wondrous, glorious person He is. All things that I am to make known, that I am to do, My Father has delivered to Me and no man knoweth the Son but the Father in that ineffable mysterious relationship that has eternally subsisted between them. The relationship of Father and Son no man knows. Do not pry into it. God give us grace to ask Him to reveal it to us. That is the only way of knowing the Father; and no man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him and here we are, we are God's creatures, we are sinners, we are ignorant, we are unworthy, our ignorance is part of our sin. Our unworthiness, even if we never did an unworthy action among men, our unworthiness is infinite. Now, this being our position, the solemn question is - will Jesus reveal the Father to us. We are just dependent. This is a dependent congregation and some may be saying "O but we are so burdened, get so many difficulties, so much sin. We are hindered in many, many, ways. We are at a great distance from Him; we are distressingly unlike Him and what shall we do, and now He turns to such people, people who may even be distressed at the solemn teaching in the previous verses, He turns to them and says "Come to Me". Your difficulties, bring them to Me; your burdens and all the labour in which you are engaging yourselves, with them, come to Me. You are restless, you have no place of rest for the soul of your foot, you do not know what to do, where to go. You say there is no rest in your circumstances, that is true. You have no rest in yourself; I do not intend you to have any. You have no rest in the Church because the Church is passing away in its visibility. What then? "Come to Me" What a gracious invitation, what a condescending word. O the pity of it, the mercy of it, the kindness of it, the suitableness of it. "Come to Me" Almighty God ~~is~~ turns to poor sinners who tremble at His word, who are labouring for nothing in themselves.

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He says "Come to Me" Whatever you need I have; whatever you desire I have to bestow;. "Come to Me" What minister could ever wish for a better subject and yet so great is it that a poor minister may well say "Lord I am not fit, as I am not able to speak of so glorious a subject.

First of all, claiming all attention is the Speaker, the inviter. He is first. He says it Himself "I am Alpha" He is last "I am Omega" Nothing before, none before; nothing after, none after. This is our Lord Jesus Christ. We have more familiarity with His name than we have acquaintance with His Person. I judge most of you who fear God, if not everyone of you, would say that is too true. To be intimate with His Person would sometimes make us less familiar with His name, for there is an awfulness as well as a blessedness and a suitableness in the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of His eternity as revealed in the word "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" Eternally with His Father as it is in the gospel according to John "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" It would certainly be the testimony of every gracious person here if it were put as a question "Do you know much of the Son of God?, the answer would be "No" Yet, each one saying "No" would add this "I want to know more of Him" The Father's delight is in Him; the Spirit lives to reveal Him. O that we were not so unacquainted with Him. If you were asked, O people of God, to find a key to your so quickly turning to vanity, what would you say? You would say this very likely, for substance, if not in word, the key is this - I know so little of Him and therefore I am so little held by Him and other things, with which I am so painfully familiar, attract and pull me away from Him and I believe that that is too true, a solution of the easiness with which we turn aside, at least I know one in whom that is too true. He is Jesus Christ; the Father has had Him in His bosom and the Father has delighted in Him eternally, and He has delighted in the Father and the Spirit has been with them both, equal to them both in His nature, in His eternity, and now this second adorable Person, the true and proper Son of God is in Holy Scripture known as the Lord Jesus Christ. "Let this mind be in you" says the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, which was in Christ who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God" He is God. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God, He, being in this glorious, eternal, ineffable, and to us inconceivable, form, humbled himself and took upon Him the form, the nature of a servant. - "Behold My Servant" He took this upon Him and so He is called our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. O why would He be this? What made

Him come into this state? What brought Him into this condition. the condition of a servant? Hart expresses it is question and answer - "And why dear Saviour, tell me why, Thou thus would suffer, bleed and die, what mighty motive could Thee move?, the motive's plain, 'twas all for love. For love of whom? Of sinners base, a hardened herd, a rebel race, that mocked and trampled on Thy blood, and wantoned with the wounds of God." And this is the Person speaking Are you attracted to Him? O could you go to Him now in spirit and say "Lord I fain would know Thee, see Thee as Thou art, see Thee in Thy own, Thy glorious condescension and love. Are you attracted to Him? The cords of love, if they are cast around you by the Holy Spirit will surely draw you to Him. "O could we know and love Him more" And this Lord Jesus Christ is before us in the Scripture as having condescended to be made sin. One of the mightiest and most wonderful passages in the scripture is that - "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" O the miracle of it, the mercy of it, the wisdom of it, the power of it, the glory of it, that God the Father took yoursins and O, the power of God in a man enabling him to say "My sins", and made them over by a just and legal imputation to His Son. The legal aspect of salvation is very beautiful when seen in union with infinite love and condescension and willingness on the part of the Saviour to be made sin. "He was made of a woman, made under the law" and we shall never fully know all that, never fully enter into the meaning of it - "Made under the law" but even on the face, the surface of it, it means this - that Jesus took the law place of His people, took on Him all their legal obligations, all the debts they contracted, all the sins they committed under the law, took them all on Himself, in order to pay the debts and bear the punishment and die the death of the guilty. This Jesus Christ, ah well may we sing "O could we know and love Him more, and all His wondrous grace explore, ne'er would we covet man's esteem, but part with all and follow Him" And another word concerning Him is this that I would say to you. He is exhibited in the scriptures as crucified, dead and buried and rising again. Crucified: cursed is everone that hangeth on a tree. One of the cruelest and most ignominious forms of death in that day and what brought our Lord Jesus Christ to that? - Sin, justice, love, grace, brought Him to that" "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor". Sin took Him there; love gave Him wings to fly to the cross and justice led Him there, truth led Him there and there with mercy and truth, righteousness and peace all coming and

all finding fulfilment and glory on Him who is crucified. O sinner you will never know God's mercy except by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. You will never have peace with God except through the trouble of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will never have God's presence except through the desertion of Jesus Christ by His Father. What a wondrous death. If you have faith you will pierce beneath the ignominy and the shame of that death and see a vicarious death, a wondrous death, reconciling unto God all given to Him to redeem. You will see a pure death, a just death, a living death, a vicarious death, Jesus in the place of others, and you will behold, as the hymn has it, as sometimes we sing "Behold a scene of matchless grace, tis Jesus in the sinner's place" and if we be sinners in the way God speaks of it in His word, then the sight will be wondrous and welcome and He rose from the dead. He could not be holden of death. There is a mystery in that statement; there is omnipotence in that statement. "He could not be holden of death" It was more than death could do to hold this Victor. He had destroyed death. How could death hold Him? He could not be holden of it. I have seen in my mind the perfection of Deity, the absolute justice of God and the love of God and the mercy of God as it were, going to the grave and rolling away the stone and saying to the Victor, the glorious conqueror of death - "Come forth" and Jesus came forth and He ascended into heaven. After showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs, He ascended into heaven and there He is interceding, ever presenting the infinite merit of His death, so as that all for whom He died shall infallibly reach heaven. Now this, dear friends, is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking in this word "Come unto Me".

Next we must look at the condition of the invited people. Scripture does distinctly speak to characters, to conditions, distinctly - "Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" Here labourers, burdened people, labouring, all ye that labour, working, tugging away at something, labouring in the depth of their own iniquity, unable to conquer, unable to free themselves; labouring against the lusts that prevail, labouring against the death that they frequently feel, the prayerlessness into which they sink, the hardness of heart that is holding them, the ingratitude of their spirits, the pride of their minds, the worldliness of their dispositions. Labouring, labouring to be holy and growing in sin more and more; labouring to be humble and more and more feeling pride; labouring to be godly and more and more finding worldliness and transgressions in their hearts; labouring to be acceptable and getting worse and worse and more and more defiled and deformed; labouring to be fit for heaven and growing in a feeling of worthiness for hell: and these labourers.

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pitying themselves sometimes, are spoken to and they have got a burden, a burden on their consciences, called in the Hebrews dead works, and of all the burdens a man has to carry who is born again, I think that that is the heaviest - a load of dead works. Works done in unregeneracy, works in unbelief, in pride, in worldliness, in infidelity, works done against God. "Sins immense as is the sea" Those of us who have carried this load know the intolerable nature and weight of it. A load that if not removed must sink the sinner into hell. This the sinner knows, feels, confesses and he has also a burden of unbelief. He says with Newton, "O could I but believe then all would easy be" It is a great burden to a man reading the scriptures and unbelief tells him he has no interest in them. Hearing of Christ unbelief says He is nothing to do with you. Hearing of infinite merit, unbelief says, it is not for you, hearing of the intercession of Christ, O says unbelief, you have no interest in that and everything that comes of a divine nature before the eye of this person has this objection raised instantly against you, you have no interest in it and if God is spoken of as being interested in His people, unbelief says to the poor creature, He has no interest in you. If He had would He let you be in this state; if He had would He allow that trouble to drive you and that devil to hunt you? He has no interest in you, and this brings a burden on the mind, and the sinner has no rest on this account by reason of this working of unbelief and he is heavy laden also with many painful, vile affections. The scriptures that describe vile affections touch him. He says "They are just mine", he is laden with them. He would fain worship and these affections hurry him away. He would fain attend to the scriptures and these affections drive him away from them. He would listen to the ministry while sitting there listening; O these affections rush away with him and he is carried to the ends of the earth. He would observe God's providence but these affections tell him that it is all a matter of chance, and he has got another burden, he has got a burden of prayerlessness, drowsiness in his spirit, goes to sleep in his spirit, no prayer; he is conscious of it, conscious of not wanting to pray, according to his fallen nature, he is conscious of it, it is a burden to him. O the places he gets into are all too innumerable and all these bring about and put on his shoulder, on his heart and spirit, a burden too heavy. It was written of the labourers who were labouring to build the walls of Jerusalem "that the burden bearers were faint and the rubbish was great" and so it is in spirit, a great deal of rubbish. A rubbishy religion, a great

deal of worldliness and a quantity of things and the burden bearer is faint and does not know how to go on, cannot stand upright. This is his condition - a labouring man, labouring against his own nature, labouring under some painful, untoward providence. What is he to do? And now sometimes the old enemy comes and says "The best thing for you to do is just to throw the reins on the neck and go whithersoever your affections and desires would lead you. Ah but the Lord intervenes mercifully, graciously, He intervenes, and turning to these labouring people with burdens on their backs He says "Come unto Me" "Come unto Me" and the sinner goes. He goes impelled by need, attracted by the Saviour the sinner goes. It is written in the gospel by John "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out", and again "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" and yet again in that passage Christ says "Every man therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh to Me" Now learning and hearing of the Father respecting Christ is to hear the Father saying "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased", and the Spirit opens to the gaze of this poor sinner the riches of grace, and the virtue of the atonement and the sufficiency of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus and that is learning of the Father, by the Spirit and that learning and that hearing will always have this blessed effect - the sinner goes to God, that is to the Lord Jesus "Come unto Me" This is not a legal thing, it is the motion of faith. It is the work of faith and a sinner in his heart goes with all his trouble, all his sins, all his temporal fears, goes about eternity, about salvation, about deliverance, about guidance, asking for all that he feels to need, this is going. It is going by faith. It is applying to Christ; going to the physician. Now I would like, if enabled, to say two or three things about this. Here is a sinner lost. He goes to the Saviour. That will meet some of you. The sinner is lost and says the Saviour "I came to save the lost" "I came to save the lost" Does not it meet you; a sinner lost, lost in feeling, lost in law, lost in fact, lost by sin, lost by sinning, and now the Saviour appears, a great one, greater than sin, greater than death, greater than hell, and the sinner goes, being drawn. "I" said the Saviour "if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me" and I repeat it, He is greater than death; He is greater than sin, He is greater than hell. Come then poor sinner to the Saviour. Come to the Saviour. What doth hinder? The very thing that you have to go with hinders - sin. The devil would keep you away but Christ is greater than the devil. He is Almighty God. The devil is a creature. "Come unto Me" O but these burdens, these burdens, these sins, these lusts. "Come unto Me with

them."The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. But I am a sinner. The Son of Man came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance. Sinners are high in His esteem; they are high in His esteem. O He thinks kindly of sinners and He will speak kindly to sinners. He will have sinners come to Him. He was made for sinners, born for sinners, lived for sinners, suffered for sinners, died for sinners, rose again for sinners, entered heaven for sinners, intercedes for sinners, so He says "Come", come ye poor and wretched come hungry and thirsty for salvation. Men go to Him for salvation. They need it; they feel to need it; they must have it; they cannot be put off without it, though the enemy comes in and sins rise they cannot be put off without it. O bless God for such a Saviour. They come to Him for salvation. They come to Him to get what they are afraid they never shall get. They come to Him to purify their defiled consciences, to remove from their consciences a load of dead works. Nothing more troublesome to a sinner than his conscience when it has dead works on it. It keeps him awake sometimes; it distresses him wherever he is. This conscience of his. God troubles it; the law troubles it, justice troubles it, holiness troubles it, sin troubles it and now the Saviour looks on this poor sinner labouring and staggering under a load too heavy for him to bear and feeling that one day he will take a step by which he will stumble into hell and the Saviour says "Come to Me" He staggers, he fails, he falls, he is offended with himself for his staggering, and his falling, but the Saviour is not offended with him. The step of faith is attended with much infirmity but it is a step that the Saviour is pleased with. Do not expect to take steps without falling, without misgiving, but O the Lord Jesus is full of pity. The parent teaching its child to walk is not offended at the child's attempting to walk, though the child falls and the Lord Jesus kindly looks on His people and when they are falling He raises them up. "The Lord raises up all that be bowed down" Bless God for His pity to a coming sinner. "Come unto Me" One child was being taken to Christ and the devil got hold of him and threw him into the fire. O sinner, sin and the devil may throw you into some great trouble as you are coming to Christ for salvation but He knows it. O every step and every feeling and every fear He is fully acquainted with. That is a beautiful passage that may have little or no influence with us because we do not see it - "He is able to succour them that are tempted in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted"

Are you tempted as you are coming? He was tempted of the devil. Come then. Let not conscience so troublesome to you, make you linger,

nor of fitness fondly dream, all the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him. Come then, repenting sinner come, approach with humble faith, owe what thou wilt, the total sum is cancelled by His death. And then again - Sick soul you need a physician. Said the Saviour "Come to Me". He is the Good Physician and He has balm. There is balm in Gilead and a good physician there. <sup>the whole need not a physician but they that are sick</sup> It is a great thing to be sick enough for Christ. There is more health of soul in that felt sickness than the subject of it can believe. It is a healthy feeling that you have when you believe and feel that Christ can cure you. "The blood of Christ can cure thy soul" Think of it. "The blood of Christ can cure thy soul", so the Saviour says "Come unto Me". Do not expect to be healed away from Him, by any medicine that may be prescribed by nature, by false doctrine. All is here and then an ignorant person labouring with his ignorance and against it and feeling he needs knowledge and wishes to obtain it but cannot, such a person labouring and burdened with a sense of his ignorance, is invited "Come unto Me", a prophet; Jesus is the prophet; Jesus is a teacher. He was sent by His Father with heavenly words to teach; He had the tongue of the learned given to Him that He might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, weary of his ignorant moving and failings and turning aside. It is a great thing to believe that your ignorance will never ruin you, if you come to this Lord Jesus. Think of it - ignorance. It is a bar to us but not to Him. It is a stumbling to us but not to Him. It is a weakness in us but it does not affect His gracious word "Come unto Me" He is a prophet dear friends, He is a prophet, and O how acquainted He is with the Father's love and came on purpose to reveal it, with the Father's sovereign goodness, and came to speak it and with all the mysteries of grace to justify sinners and save sinners; He is acquainted with all, so He says "Come to Me" What a great thing it is to take one single step by faith to the Lord Jesus and say to Him "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." to say again - "What I know not teach Thou me" Job went with his ignorance "I have uttered that I understood not. I will lay my hand on my mouth and say no more, for mine eyes have seen Thee, therefore I abhor myself" but he came to Him and that is what you will do and the more you see Him, the more you will find that there is self-abhorrence in you and the more hateful will your sins be and the more terrible will your ignorance of yourself be and you will want to be taught. "Come unto Me" O ignorant sinner, come unto Me" It is an awful thing to believe you know something and yet be a fool. If any man will be wise in this world,

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let him become a fool that he may be wise , and the self wise people said to Christ "Are we blind also?" and He said "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin, but now ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth." O sinner, go with these blind eyes of yours and cry unto Him- "O Son of David have mercy on me." and if He says- "What wilt thou that I should do unto you"? You will say "Lord that I may receive my sight." "Lord teach me, show me Thyself, show me Thy love and Thy mercy and apply to me Thy redemption." "Come unto Me." Here I must leave it for the moment. It is a great word, a very great word as I see it and I wish I might be enabled to speak well and properly about it however inadequately, and may the Lord open it to you and open it to all of His people.

