

The Gospel Ball

Matt. xi, 28-30: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor & are heavy laden, & I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you & learn of Me; for I am meek & lowly in heart; & ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, & My burden is light." "

¹⁷³Braceville Sun. am. Feb. 6/76: - ¹³⁶Dover Sun. ev. Apr. 2/76: - Thirty-Fourth-st. Reformed, New York City, Sun. ev. April 9/76: - ¹⁴⁸Scranton Sun. am. Nov. 18/77: - Scranton Providence ch., Tues. Ev. Feb. 26/78: - ¹⁵³Scranton "Geoid" 9/78: - Sun. am. May 18, 1879: - Bridgeton June 7 am, 1885.

It requires but a little close observation of the general condition of mankind, to perceive that this ~~old~~ gospel message is addressed to all. Our world is one of sin & misery - full of these, so full as almost to seem to bear no other fruit in comparison. true, there is a happy period of life in which there may be no burdens - If we could take out from the multitudes of the world all who labor & are heavy-laden, & compare them with

the remainder, we should see that this
wonderful invitation is ~~conceded~~ so ad-
-dressed as to express the most profound
deepest & broadest love. ~~After Time~~
Who would remain? Not the poor, for their
sorrows are forever sung; not ~~the rich~~ ~~for~~
~~nobles~~ ~~from~~ the rich, for to them life often
loses its zest, is thwarted by disease, or con-
-tended by jealousy; not princes and nobles, for their
heads ~~are not no easier~~ even crowns press aching
brows, & death faces alike them and the poor.
-est. All men are named in this invite-
-tion. True, there are some whose sorrows
are yet far in front of them, too far
for youthful eyes to ~~directly~~ see; to these
~~this glorious call~~ it may perchance sound
but as ~~the~~ ~~door~~ ^{an} echo from some half-
doubted remote world whose realities are yet
but prophecies & whose refuges are not yet
desired. And alas! there are more —

Even the most of these whom our Lord
 here invites — who, ~~but~~ laboring thro' theybe,
 under burdened thro' theybe under the care,
 & afflictions & agonies that sin has laid on
 them, hearing the voice indeed, & soothed indeed
 by its magic word "rest", nevertheless yet dream
 that there are other resources, & account
 this only a very lovely song upon a pleasant
 instrument. Ah! how many that suffer

sorely, is added the misery of a deafened
 ear! ~~The ^{captives &} music of the world has mingled~~
 so ~~long~~ loudly & long in their ears, that
 the still small voice, thro' it ~~speaks~~, comes
 not to them. The blaze & glory of this world
 has ~~so long~~ dazzled their eyes

they have dwelt so long around the
 noises of the world's strife, that their ears
 do not catch the meaning of this soft
 low voice. Christ seems not to be ad-

dressing them; the way ^{His} of peace they know not; the rest ~~they~~ are acting for is not the rest that He proffers in our text.

Still, my hearers, every one is addressed. If there be here any who ^{suffer} ~~have~~ pain, any who have care, any who are troubled, any who ~~feel~~ bewail sin: ~~Jesus Christ~~ ^{the Lord Jesus Christ} ~~speaks to them~~: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor & are heavy laden, & I will give you rest." It is an invitation to you; an offer; a promise.

Some there may be here who labor strug-
-gling along in life with constant difficulties,
poor, & ~~needy~~ of this world's food, yet never
getting them; feeling themselves oppressed by
men, by circumstances; ^{knowing not where to look for relief} here ~~you~~ read what
God has spoken to you — are you not truly
described in the text?

Some, again, are heavy laden; care fur-
-rows their brow, or lies hidden, a sore at
the heart. O the heavy cases, there are to

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bear in this world! ~~to cherish the feeble, &
endure the constant strain of sympathizing
for them, doing for them~~ to cherish the
sick, when all that is done may seem in vain
but for the present moment only; to see others
suffer ~~and be unable~~ while one's own hands
are tied; to know so well what to do & be
hopelessly unable to accomplish it — are you
not described, too, by Him Who says, I will
give you rest?

Who some are laden with trouble. Ah!
does not the dove know them who say at eve-
ning Would God it were morning & at morning
would God it were evening? Who 'toss on beds
of sickness, or bear about them their chronic
maladies, burdens long since familiar but
never endurable? Or those whose eyes are
red with the tears of bereavement, for whom the
light of life almost seems darkened — you
too may hear the All-Seeing One cry
Come unto Me for rest!

But some there may be, bearing perhaps
~~some one or other~~ ^{of these sorrows}, who have
 sufficiently ~~well~~ understood the great secret
 of ~~these~~ ^{these evil's sorrows} all, to have felt also their chief mis-
 -ery: who have looked into the truth, &
 know that they are sinners against God, &
 bemoan it. There is no sorrow like this sor-
 -row, but yet it is the nearest to the invi-
 -tation. Who is heavy laden as the ~~condemned~~
 sinner? What burden so desperate, to whose
^{case is} not so needful, as the sinner's? He feels that
 God is angry with him; he ~~with~~ melts un-
 der the terrible shadow of his Creator, his
 Judge Master, his Judge's displeasure. My
 heart, sinner, Christ names you in his in-
 -vitation. You of all men; the struggling, the
 careworn, the afflicted, he calls, indeed; but
 you who have heard his voice before, as the
 voice which shod the earth at Sinai; you
 who do not need to realize, as perchance the

others, that God ⁷ does speak to men, you
whose ears are attentive toward the heavens,
who are not crying for the poor comforts
of this brief world, but who wantest God's
mercy — dear ~~sinning~~ sinner, Jesus calls
to you, expecting you to hear, Come unto Me!
Has He not described you? Are you not labor-
-ing, like a poor traveler on a snow-
covered hill? as one who runs in a dream?
Who is heavy laden, if you are not? Would'st
you not be willing to bear the heaviest
care, the sorest trouble, the dearest pov-
-erty, rather than this awful load of sin
that you bear? Would'st the relief from any
~~worldly care be~~ earthly evil you suffer
compare to you with the rest which a sense of
pardon would give you? Jesus means you;
come, He says to you, come unto Me &
I will give you rest.

Let us recall for one moment ere we pass

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on, the miserable world that has been
brought up to our thought by this text.
O shame! that any word of grace that can
issue from Heaven must needs be as the
sunlight-illuminating a valley of death! Here
is a world which God made & pronounced very
good; beautiful to the eye, full of all manner
of causes & means for noble lives, friends
our race to replenish & subdue for God's
glory thro' our own delight; ^{but become} a world full
of unhappy, ~~suffering~~, failing, dying, despair-
ing sinners, whose best works are empty vain-
ties, & whose highest proudest wisdom
is to acknowledge the day of their death
better than the day of their birth. This is the
world we live in. Sin has made it what it
is - a miserable world. It is not that you,
or you, or I, or a few, ~~have~~ endure sorrow;
it is a world full of it. When we life find
rest, it is still a miserable world. ~~We have~~

Each one of us, each one of the race, has contributed his part to swell the total; all have sinned; our race started in sin; & the great misery of the world is now ~~at~~ ~~most~~ ~~infinitely~~ beyond the power of any one, or any company, to stop, or to suspend. No trades' union can reach this evil. No secret club can ~~change~~ produce this revolution. It is a wretched, froaming, dying world, this world ^{Such is the lot of those who have not yet rec'd & drunk in sin. Such is the} & hopelessly ~~drunk~~ ^{a favor} in sin. ^{enjoyed this world} ~~reality~~ ^{reality} pictured to us by our Savior's words: "All ye that labor & are heavy-laden".

II

But these words proceed from One who speaks with sympathy, with comfort, & with power. In the midst of this wretched, hopeless world, His voice alone could ~~spread~~ bear peace, and it does. It is not that there is a mere

promise, the ~~more~~ ^{awakening of a} brief hope, in His words: ~~that are the words~~ ^{of absolute} they bear the ineffable assurance of absolute power. It is Christ Jesus—God in man. He says: Come unto Me; I will give you rest. O mighty promise! Who is He that thus speaks?

It is One who speaks as one from among us. He has spent 'a life in the midst of this miserable world, ~~not~~ without sin, but in all other respects as ~~others~~ all of us. He has borne all its miseries & wept, & groaned, & died under them. He endured poverty; tho' He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, & took upon Him the form of a servant. He ~~tried~~ ^{was} ~~about~~ ^{among} the happy houses, whose eyes behold, longingly, the peace that belongs to a well-ordered home, ~~that~~ to the ordinances of society, & to all the usages

of a settled & orderly ^{as upon things after of} condition, ~~but~~ ~~said~~
~~he said of himself: Foxes have holes & the~~
~~birds of the air have~~ ~~said~~ ~~upon~~ ~~the~~ ~~holes~~ ~~&~~ ~~the~~
saw even upon the ~~holes~~ of birds & the holes
of foxes, as he reflected, & said, that he
had no claim on any place where he
might lay his head. If he went into
the house of a rich man to eat, when
the Sabbath delayed his ready journey,
he was annoyed at the door & insulted
at the table. When he went into the public
places to speak, men ^{did} ^{not} ^{try} ^{to} ^{entangle}
him in his talk, ^{or} ^{tried} ^{to} ^{kill} ^{him}. His dearest friend
sickened & died, & he sorrowed at the
grave. He carried a burden for others all
the days of his life. He staggered under
the abiding consciousness of awful trials
in his latest days. His ~~saw~~ ~~his~~ ~~most~~ ~~near~~
~~set~~ tender heart was torn by the cruel

His own relatives' disowning Him; and
 in the hour of His darkest trial the men He
 had chosen for His friends all forsook Him
 & fled from Him. He was despised & rejected
 of men; described as a Man of sorrows. He en-
 -dured once even the horror of feeling the
 favor of His Heavenly Father withdrawn from
 Him, so that He cried out in agonizing
 -ending that of crucifixion: "My God My God
 why hast Thou forsaken Me?" O Sinner!
 such is He who calls thee heavy-laden! He
 speaks of a familiar condition; He has felt
 your sorrows & your wants, & thro' He has
 not ~~been a~~ had sin He has borne the bur-
 -den of your sins.

But it is not ~~the~~ a word of mere
 sympathy that the Lord Jesus utters. It
~~is~~ ^{is} sweet indeed to the sufferer to meet
 with sympathy; the clasp of the hand, the

mute ~~to~~ embrace of one ¹³ powerless to help, is more
precious than gold; but it is more than this
that Christ brings you in our text.

His voice speaks out to us from Heaven, with the
encouraging sound of triumph. No one who has
passed thro' the ~~danger~~ ^{great & terrible} & distresses of a ^{mild-}
ness may refresh those who are now disheart-
ened in the midst of its perils, so the Redeemer
of men speaks to us. His sympathy is of infi-
nite preciousness because it comes from One
who has conquered what by you is unconquer-
able. O how helpless we see we are, when we
behold the mighty power of Christ! - but how
certainly we see that He can help us, if His
sympathy move Him to give the aid! Gases
did not beat Him down; torments did not
crush Him; He ^{used} ~~used~~ the force that we
have ~~hopeless~~ rejected, to overcome every evil
conscious of that holy power, He went
down into the grave as one who bids his
friends wait for his present return; ~~He~~

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as Samson laughed at the Philistines,
causing off the gates of their stronghold,
he ~~triumphed over the principalities & powers that~~
~~are our masters~~, broke the bars of death, &
triumphed over the grave. Oh how comforting
to think that He Who says I will give you
rest, has conquered in the struggle by which
we lose; that He has the rest, He is the
King over all now.

But in the love which this text brings
to our attention, we must observe Him Who ut-
ters it not as a ^{mere} man who has ~~suffered his~~
~~triumphant~~ undergone the trials of a sinful
world & overcome them, but as the holy
One Who ^{inhabited} ~~has~~ from all eternity, ~~the Lord~~
~~in the Godhead~~ Who for our
sakes has assumed a human ~~body~~ life &
manifested His power ~~in this~~ to the eyes of
men. It was not of necessity that He endured
sorrow; it was ~~the sovereign choice~~ of His
a Divine choice. He would show us what
a world we have made of this, by showing

that in it even ^{& die} the Divine Person must
~~find~~ ^{find} ~~meq~~ & ~~sway~~. He would teach men that
 it is not merely an unhappy state that we
 are in; but that the choice that we have
 made, as a race in Adam, & each for ourselves,
~~brings misery & nothing~~ naturally produces ^{this} ~~this~~
~~unhappy state & this only.~~ He would lead men to
~~admire, not his freedom from misery while~~
 in the domain of sin, ^{for which we gave rather than} ~~but that help~~
~~dispositions which see the inherent evil~~ ^{of sin}
~~of disobeying God, &~~ ^{his freedom}
 from the spirit of love for sin which has
 enabled Satan to make this ~~to~~ his Kingdom.
 The Lord Jesus Christ has ~~set~~ ^{lived}
 before us to show us how to live; not merely
 to point out our errors to us, but to illu-
 -trate the good way itself from which we
 have erred. You may read, today, a carefully
 written narrative that contains enough of a
 picture of His life to enable you to see what
 the good way is; ^{you may} use it for a copy; ^{you may} ~~it~~

drink refreshment from it when you are discouraged with looking at our evil race as they daily illustrate the other way.

Now when we ~~see the glory of this~~ consider that this was a work which ~~God~~ ~~only could do~~ the divine character that had this lofty knowledge of the goodness of a holy course, & the miseries of sin; the love of ~~his~~ our savior appears. He who knew how evil sin was, who wholly abhorred it, came voluntarily to live in its domain. It is as tho' you gave your life to be spent in the midst of a people whose ~~drapes~~ ~~creations~~ & hearts you knew to be not only wholly loathsome to you, but so deeply vile that they would scorn, & buffet, & murder you. He did murder Christ. He knew he would. But

.....when he knew

The price of pardon was his blood,
His pity ne'er withdrawn.

This is his love, that speaks to us in the text. He knows us & expresses a sympathy

for us, yes; His voice has the reas-
 -uring tones of power; but above all, it is
 a living voice; He loved us even unto death.
 For me ^{For me before the shameful cross,} ^{and carried all my grief.}
 But we have not yet considered what
 His love ~~sets~~ offers to do. We have, ~~found~~
 I hope, enjoyed the contemplation of what He
 is, & ~~in a measure of part of part of what~~
~~He has done.~~ But what is the unseen
 work that He accomplishes in Heaven, not
 on earth, for us? For it is a great work ~~that~~
 accomplished that He undertook, I name
 to us in the words I will give you next.
 You want relief from your burdens? Ah! He
 has more relief to offer you than you have
 yet dreamed of, if your thoughts are chiefly
 upon your cases & sorrows only, not your
 sins. He offers you such a rest, not as you
 think would be rest, but ^{as} ~~what~~ He knows. Your
 eyes see only earth; He beholds earth & Hell &
 heaven. He Who could see Superior to the

miserable condition of men after enduring
 its lowest deeps, ~~does not~~ ~~offer~~ ~~you~~ ~~anything~~
 & now ^{dwells in 8 miles} ~~dwells in~~ ~~8 miles~~ a blissful ^{world} compared to which
 the best peace of earth is wretchedness, of-
 fers you a rest worthy to come from
 His hand. How often ~~beggars~~ ^{the poor} complain of the
 pitaunces which the rich throw to them?

We could not complain if ~~He~~ gave us only
 what we ask - riches, friends, or some other
 earthly good; but if we will ~~receive~~ ^{come} to this
 invitation in our text, we shall never have
 the opportunity to be snubbing beggars. What
 then is His offered rest?

It is the restoration of divine favor, ~~that~~
~~anger~~ ~~which~~ ~~our~~ ~~consciences~~ ~~tell~~ ~~us~~ ~~that~~
 a just God must feel at our iniquities,
~~lies~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~foundation~~ (as it was to
 Adam & Eve before the fall; the bliss of
 Heaven on earth, & the promise of Heaven
 itself. ~~He~~ ~~who~~ ~~that~~ ~~then~~ ~~present~~ ~~&~~ ~~future~~ ~~can~~

It raises the dead soul to life again,
 that is to the knowledge & welcome of
 God as his Father, to the possession of
 a new family relation that, ~~puts~~ while it
 does not take him out of this world, puts
 a new aspect upon all its affairs. To as many as
 receive Christ, to them gives He power to
 become the sons of God. ~~bare~~ life is
 made no longer a hopeless flight from
 evil; labor ~~has an end in view, it~~
 is for Christ is performed with the encourage-
 ment of an ever-present Friend who directs,
 approves, & rewards it. Care is laid on
 him who has borne our greater cares &
 sin. Poverty is covered by peace of mind
 & joy in the Holy ~~Ghost~~ Spirit. And
 death is but the ^{distressful} entrance into an unending
 life of all the joys that Christ himself
 has in Heaven. The rest that is offered

is a spirit & condition of love - who can be miserable whose heart is warm with love? of joy, that depends on no uncertain, outside power, but dwells by divine force within; of peace, that the world cannot ~~fire~~ take away any more than it can fire it; of long-suffering, which robs evil of its power to wound the soul; of gentleness & ^{& meekness} goodness, which disarms foes enemies & surrounds the happy one with a little world of friends; of faith, that is the ~~substance of~~ ~~what is desired~~ gives substance & shape to unseen, expected glories; of temperance, that uses what is good in this world & avoids its dangers thro' abuse.

The question naturally suggests itself to you, hearing & welcoming our gracious Saviour's call: How shall I come? This only remains for us to consider.

The Lord Jesus invites you to believe on Him. You cannot come, in the sense of the text, to one in whom you have not confidence. But, you may say, How can I believe, if I do not?

~~There is a ^{serious} difficulty about this only because of the unreasonable demands so often made upon our minds. ~~as to~~ We are confronted, with all the positiveness ^{that shrouds before only to} of those who have the authority of truth, by newspapers, lecturers, advertisers, and all manner of selfish schemers, until ~~we~~ in the hard struggle to resist what is false, we ~~find~~ close our ears to good & bad~~

It is not so difficult as men sometimes
think, to believe in the truth. There is, in-
-deed, so much that is false, proposed by selfish
mortals to us as true, that we ~~become habit~~
form a habit of distrust which turns a
deaf ear sometimes even to truth properly
proven. Christ has graciously considered this
difficulty of our life, & has so introduced ^{to us} his
~~invitation~~ ~~was~~ offer of peace, that only a
~~hostile spirit hostile to his face~~ it can
fail to perceive that it is true. You have the
great volume which shows him to you. Search
the Scriptures; in them you think you have
eternal life, & yet they are the book which
testifies of him. Do you not already believe
that the Bible is from God? It tells you
more of the secrets of your nature, in the
myriad pictures of your fellow-men, than any
other ~~book~~ original source in the world. It
occupies a place in this civilized land, in every
church pulpit & in every dwelling, which

is proof of the universal power men agree
it contains. It is the charter of an institu-
-tion, viz. the χ^{c} Church, whose existence
cannot be accounted for except by admitting
that it has always had a like welcome ~~by~~
in the world. You believe in this book —
read it & see for yourself what it tells
of Him who offers this text. bids you come
to Him. Put yourself in the way of believ-
-ing in Him; ~~that~~ ^{that is} the first essential step.

But doubtless you do believe that Jesus
is the Son of God; that He died to save
men; that He ever liveth to make in-
-tercession for them. Come to Him, then.
Hear & believe His words, that they are spoken
to you. Your confidence in His truth should
shake away all your doubts that He can-
-not mean you; ~~that~~ for He says to you
Come. If you believe in Him, believe Him;
~~when~~ He says Come, stop doubting & come.

To hear & believe that He means you, ~~then~~,
is the second essential.

But how come? If He stood before
you here in this room, how would you come?
Would you not walk away from where
you stand, & walk up to Him, & stand by
His side? Then turn your back on every-
thing you know to be sinful, or believe to
be sinful, and ~~come into~~ ~~so~~ come & take
your place among those who pray to Him.
He says that where two or three are gath-
ered together in His name, there He is in
the midst of them. Do you say that is a
strange saying? Come & join His peo-
ple & understand it; that is the only
way to understand it. You will never
learn by wondering. ~~Join His church -~~
~~that is a third thing you may in which~~
~~I may describe coming to Him. I do not~~
~~bid you join the church as a means to~~

~~come to Him; join His Church because your~~
~~heart you have come to Him, & you desire~~
turn away cordially from wickedness. Never
be seen any more as a participant in the
company of the bad. that is a third step.
And come in among His people; that is
the fourth step. Do not ask whether there
may be some false professors among them,
like Simon the sorcerer in ^{Jesus'} Peter's church
in Samaria; come ~~among those~~ where the
name of Christ is held up, & because He
bids you come. Believe in Him, & declare
it by your professions. Be not ashamed, nor
afraid of Him, but say that He is your Savior.
Say so first to Him. Pray; thank your Savior
for His gracious promise. O Lord Jesus Christ!
I am a poor unhappy mortal just such as
Thou hast described — laboring & heavy laden;
I praise Thee that Thou knowest it; that
Thou carest for me; O Lord, blessed be Thy dear

& holy Name for thy ~~wonderful~~ invitation to me
to come to Thee. Show me how to come. Give
me that Holy Spirit whom Thou didst prom-
ise to such as should love Thee. May He bring
all things to my remembrance that Thy word
has recorded for me. Let me serve Thee, Help
me to be a Christian at heart, a Christian
in name, & a Christian in deed.

Say this, dear friend, to Him Who hears you
in heaven His dwelling place. And then
tell men that you say it to Him. Not to boast,
alas! for the day when there is a temptation
to boast of our need of a Savior, & of His
sorrows! But say it that men may know
that you are not too proud to own that
yourself a sinner, & that you expect trust &
hope in & love the unseen Jesus. You
have been professing by actions & words loudly
enough, that you looked to money, or friends,
or something else, not divine, for rest, nor

acknowledge this with shame & say as plainly
that you now look to Jesus Christ. The world
does not believe that He will save them - it
is pleasing to Christ that they who do believe
should confess it to their fellows. ~~For any~~ Whosoever
shall confess Me before men, He said Matt. x,
32, him will I also confess also before My Father
Who is in Heaven.

And finally, ~~now~~ live to Him. Conduct your
business for Him; let it be your motive to
obey these commands & providences of His
which your daily life ~~shows to your~~
~~advances~~. ~~He has~~
~~bidden you be fervent~~ Be fervent in business be-
-cause His Bible bids you; provide for your
household remembering that it glorifies Him to
do it; improve your talents because He has
gone into a far country leaving them with
you for that very purpose, that when He comes
you may say, Lord here is Thy talent, lo! it
hath gained one other talent. Give to the poor

because He loves them. Be very jealous for the
house of the Lord, & the good name of them whom
the world knows as His brethren. This it is to
come to Christ. May God bless the invi-
-tation to every one who hears.