

COME TO JESUS NOW!

BY J. W. J.

He calls—the heavenly Lord and Master calls,
Before whose throne angels bow;
He knows thy need and waits to satisfy;
Come then to Jesus now!

He died a death of shame and agony!
Behold these wounded hands and thorn-
pierced brow!
For thee the Prince of Life hung bleeding
there:
Come then to Jesus now!

To compass thine own ruin still intent,
Long hast thou waded in sin's dreadful
slough;
Yet still his heart on cleansing thee is bent:
Come then to Jesus now!

His gracious promise still invites thee nigh;
His blood alone can cleanse as white as
snow;
His grace will give thee power to conquer sin:
Come then to Jesus now!

He wills that thou shouldst share that home
of light
Which his sweet welcome shall on all be-
stow
Who heed his call and follow his command:
Come then to Jesus now!

Visitor Pulpit.

ROMANS VIII.

Exposition by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

Verse 1.—“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” To my mind, one of the sweetest words of that verse is that little word “now.” To you who at this moment are walking under the power of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus, there is therefore no condemnation. It is a logical conclusion from something that went before.

Verse 2.—“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Sin and death cannot govern me, cannot condemn me, cannot destroy me. Another law has come in. A spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath brought me into another condition, wherein I cannot be affected by the law of sin and death.

Verse 4.—“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The law of God is a good law, a just and a holy law. It was weak not of itself, for verily if righteousness could have been by any law it would have been by the law of God, but it was weak through our flesh. We could not keep it. We could not fulfil the conditions of life laid down under it. Therefore, what the law could not do, God has done. He has found a way of making us righteous through the righteousness of his own Son, whom he has sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. He has found out a way of condemning sin without condemning us. For sin he condemned sin in the flesh, but we escape; and he has found out a way of making us practically righteous, too, through the abundance of his grace, enabling us no longer to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Blessed be God for this! for when we had broken the law he might justly have left us to take the consequences, but he has saved us. He has gone beyond all that might have been expected of him, and brought in a law by which a remedy is applied to all our ills. Glory be to his name!

Verse 5.—“For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh.” They live to eat and to drink for self-aggrandisement. They live for the world. It is according to their nature. Everything acts according to its nature. The wolf devours, the sheep patiently feeds. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” God has given us, then, the Spirit to dwell in us, and now, I trust, we can say that we desire holiness, and righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For these things are the things of the Spirit.

Verse 6-9.—“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.” It is so deeply vitiated, so thoroughly depraved, that, as long as the fleshly mind exists, it will be in rebellion against God. “Ye must be born again.” For “that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and only that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.” Unless we are renewed then by the Spirit of God, we never shall be sub-

ject to the law of God, neither indeed can we be. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Christ does not own any that are not indwelt by his Spirit. They may wear the Christian name, and may perform some acts which look like Christian acts, but this availeth nothing. Ye must have the Spirit of God within you, or else ye are none of his, that what a thing it is to be none of his. “Verily,” saith Christ, “I never knew you.” “But, Lord, we ate and drank with Thee,” “Thou didst preach in our streets.” But he says, “I never knew you.” They are none of his. Oh, dear friends, the highest point to which the human race can rise of itself falls short of being in Christ. We must have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, or we are none of his.

Verse 10.—“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin.” Therefore it suffers disease and pain. For the soul is regenerated but not the body. If I may so speak, the regeneration of the body happens at the resurrection. It is then that it will receive its full share of the blessed work of Christ. “The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.”

Verse 11.—“For if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” So there is a great deliverance provided for body, soul, and spirit. As Moses said to Pharaoh when he would let the people go in, but they must leave their flocks, “not a hoof shall be left behind.” So not a particle of our real manhood shall be left under the thralldom of sin and death. The soul is already emancipated, and the spirit shall be by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Verse 12.—“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.” We owe the flesh nothing. The flesh has dragged us down. The flesh has ruined us. We owe it nothing.

Verse 13.—“For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die.” So ye who make it your master. “But if ye through the Spirit do mortify [kill, put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Verse 14.—“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” There may be a great many weaknesses and infirmities about them, but if they follow the Divine leadership of God they are the sons of God.

Verse 15.—“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father.” Is this true of you? Dear friends, hear these words. Can you respond to them?

Verses 16, 17.—“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Many of you make a profession of being the children of God. Can your own spirits say it is true, and is there any witness of the Spirit within you that it is true? If not, unless there is a witness to our testimony, it availeth nothing. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true,” and if he chose to put himself on a level, as it were, with the rest of humanity in that respect, we cannot expect that our witness shall go for much if it stand alone. No. There must be the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” “And if”—oh, that if!—“if children.” There are some who get over that. They believe in a universal fatherhood, which is not worth the words in which they describe it. This is a different fatherhood altogether—“if children, then heirs; heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.” Oh, this blessed co-partnership, this fellowship! The joint heirs of Christ take part in the whole heritage, as well the heritage of suffering as the heritage of glory. It shall bruise thy head but thou shalt bruise its heel. There is to be a heel-bruising for the Christ as well as for us, but there is to be

the head-crushing for him and for us too.

“Verse 18.—“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Glory in us! Only think of that. You know the revelation that is in the Book, but how grand will be the revelation that is in man. The glory shall be revealed in us. We shall be full of glory, and a part of God’s glory which otherwise must have remained concealed, will be revealed in his people, to his own praise for ever and ever, but also to our own eternal joy.

Verse 19.—“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. There is something that the whole creation is waiting for, and it cannot come until God’s children are manifested, till the glory is revealed in them.

Verses 20-22.—“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” The whole world is in its pangs and birth throes, and there can never come its complete deliverance into the new heavens and the new earth, except there shall also be a manifestation of the children of God, and that deliverance from all that now hampers and hinders the Divine life that is within them.

Verse 23.—“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” This is what we look for. Our manhood is not all soul. It is body too, and here, as yet, this poor body seems to be outside the gate, like Lazarus, while the soul rejoices in God; but its time shall come. The trump of the archangel shall proclaim it.

Verse 26.—“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.” That is a grand thing. We have the first-fruits of the Spirit to be the pledge of all the glorious harvest. The very fact that the Spirit dwells in us is a proof that our bodies shall be raised from the death. Meanwhile the Spirit helpeth us, as we groan and labor towards the complete perfection.

Verse 27, 28.—“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Nor is it only the Holy Spirit who is thus helping us onward towards the grand finale. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called, according to his purpose.”

Verse 29.—“For whom did he foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” And you know that he is the firstborn in this sense. Not only as the greatest, but as the first begotten from among the dead. He has risen from the dead, and in this he has risen for us.

Verse 30.—“Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” No slips by the way. The foreknown are predestinated. The predestinated are called. The called are justified. The justified are glorified.

Verse 31.—“What shall we then say to these things?” Shall we succumb under the sufferings of the body? Shall we yield to doubt because of all our heavy feelings and the dullness that comes from the flesh. By no manner of means. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” We can get through all these difficulties if God be with us.

Verse 32.—“He that spareth not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him also, freely give us all things?” “Oh,” but says one, “It is sin still that we have to contend with. Sometimes we feel as if the shadow of sin fell on us.” Still, beloved, it is not so.

Verse 33.—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” Cannot he meet every accusation? Ah, silence the enemy before the accusation is made!

Verse 35.—“Who shall separate

us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? All these have tried their worst upon the Church of God. For the saints have been stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they have wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, “being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” But what came of it?

Verse 36.—“As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day along; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Did the love of Christ forsake his people?

Verse 37-39.—“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded,” &c.

Blessed be the Lord for such words as these.

THE WORLD GROWING BETTER.

There are those who insist that it is not; that we only go from bad to worse. We however would not say that the conclusion is based upon too narrow a collation of facts, or too contracted a survey of the field. The world is a big thing to handle, and its moral condition, as a whole, is not a theme upon which to dogmatize. That it is growing worse in spots it would not be safe to deny, but had we the data for striking a general average, we have no doubt but that we should find it higher than a hundred years ago.

When States and nations were isolated from each other, commercial interchange limited, and the interest in each other’s welfare, in consequence, slight; before steam and electricity had changed all these relations, and facilitated the getting of knowledge and the fact of communication, with the increase of wealth tempted an inundation of travel, to and fro, it was possible, as least theoretically, to carry up to a high pitch of moral culture the isolated state or people. But now isolation is unknown. It follows that immigration and the mingling of peoples, on the face of the whole earth, will change the moral and intellectual temperature of localities, raising it in some and lowering it in others, as icebergs moving south leave less of frost at the north, but carrying more into the regions where they float and melt away. This nation has given to Europe some things that have been uplifting, and taken thence some things that have been depressing to our moral atmosphere.

But who can well doubt that, taking Europe and America together the general average is higher than it was a hundred years ago. Or, take the Chinese, and the islands of the Pacific into which they largely emigrate. They displace a population of much less intelligence and a deeper moral abasement, and they elevate the average as to China and the island world, taken as a unit. As a matter of fact, the tendency to a general average, lower in respect to some, higher in respect to others, was never so marked as now. Until this modern era it was never possible! Now it can not be stayed if we would. It is the inevitable outgrowth of the close proximity into which remotest parts are drawn to the central fires, by the changed methods of intercommunication. No nation can husband its good or its evil. It will repeat itself in the ends of the earth, a blessing or a curse.

Nor is the missionary the only agent helping to bring about a general moral uplift. Whatever takes light into darkness; whatever breaks down walls of separation; whatever shames barbarism and reveals to savage and secluded people the elements of power in civilized lands; whatever diffuses the word of God in the many tongues of the world; even commerce and exploration, often at first more a curse than a blessing; must be regarded as ultimately helping to speed the kingdom and make the world better; not, of course, by reason of a virtue that is in them, but because of what is certain to follow, where they do not attend or even go before—the evangelizing spirit of the gospel and the ministers of peace and good will. Fairly to deal with this great question, we should not even confine ourselves to

facts achieved, but embrace a great variety of preparatory movements indicative of vaster results, sure, if it is safe to interpret the teachings of divine Providence by history and by the sure word of prophecy, to issue, in the near future, in such manifestations of power and grace as the world has never seen.

So, let everybody that love Christ and his kingdom take courage. There is just enough of truth in the pessimistic view of things to forbid our sitting down at ease, as if the world were getting on well enough. There is abundant reason in the progress of these last ten years and in the outlook of the immediate present to stir up every energy and enlist every halting soul in the work of the world’s regeneration. We are by no means following a vanquished foe. There are tough battles to fight, but the Captain of our Salvation is with us, and his word to the church of our day is, “Forward! Lo, I am with you!” The combat thickens, but they that fight for the truth are multiplied, and so are their resources.—*Gospel in All Lands.*

Rev. Dr. J. E. Rankin has this beautiful illustration of christian experience:

In fresco-painting, the colors are applied while the plaster is fresh, and it is the drying of the plaster that fixes them. They thus enter into the very constituency of the material painted. Thus our Great Master lays on those colors which are to endure through the eternal years, when the spirit is melted and tender through sorrow.

When the love of God has taken possession of the soul, and the whole man is consecrated to his service, life loses its fragmentary character, and one guiding stream seems to run through it. Then all varying and disjointed duties find a fixed and appointed place, and though, through the weakness of the flesh, the surface of things may seem to be ruffled, there is a strong undercurrent that cannot be diverted from its object, but is ever flowing on to its one point, widening and strengthening as it goes, and so mastering all that opposes its progress. The very hinderances that thwarted are turned into ministers to help its course. The stronger and more fixedly the soul is set on one object, so much the more does it find power to overcome all difficulties and despise all that may be only outward or accidental.—*Mrs. Augustus Hare.*

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Louis Miller, John Chas. Dent, Dr. C. P. Mulvany, Wm. Houston, George Stewart, Jr., E. Blake Crofton, John Keable, G. Mercer Adam, Mrs. Kate Seymour McLean, J. Hunter-Duvar, Miss Maehar (Fidells), R. W. Phillips, and many other writers of note.
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