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COME, O COME TO CHRIST!

BY REV. DR. PLUMER.

THE Gospel is the good news sent by God to dying men. It offers pardon to the guilty, mercy to the ill-deserving, salvation to the lost. It declares how God can be just and yet justify the ungodly. It proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. It gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment
of praise for the spirit of heaviness. It tells of Christ shedding his blood in the room and stead of sinners, obeying the law for them and then ascending to heaven as the great Intercessor and only Mediator. Its provisions are ample, its promises are sure, its kindness is infinite, its offers are the most gracious ever made.

No wonder those whose hearts are right in the sight of God love and embrace the Gospel. They never acted more wisely than in forsaking all their own righteousness to trust the merits of God's Son. Christ's laws are all wholesome; his grace is rich, his service is freedom, and the end of a life of piety is everlasting rest in glory. "He that is wise, shall be wise for himself."

But some despise all the grace, contemn all the mercy, refuse all the offers, and resist all the calls of the Gospel. Yet none need the blessings of salvation more than they; for none are more helpless, more estranged from God, or further from righteousness. Indeed, they are dead in trespasses and in sins; nor
can they ever be free from death, unless Christ shall give them life. Reader, if you are not a penitent believer your condition is exceedingly dreadful, and will be more and more so the longer you live out of Christ. Look at your case:

“He that believeth not is condemned already.” You have broken the law, and it pours its curses on your head. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” If you have not fled for refuge to Christ, you have no other refuge. And how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? If you remain unaffected by so glorious things as are revealed in the Gospel, what can ever incline you to that which is good? No creature that God has ever made has a darker prospect for eternity than you have if you just remain as you are. The close of your life, which may occur at any moment, will be the beginning of eternal wailings if you but continue as you are, unsanctified, unholy, and unpardoned.

And how can you bear to be eternally forsaken of God—and not only forsaken of him,
but forced to lie under his terrible displeasure? “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” O that you believed this necessary though unwelcome truth! “He that despised Moses’s law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?” How awful these words, “died without mercy,” and yet a “sorer punishment” must come on him who slights the Gospel! Is no fear left to startle you? Have you no desire for happiness beyond the grave? Dying without repentance and without Christ, you will forever wish that you had never been born. The memory of mercies slighted, of opportunities misimproved, of Sabbaths misspent, of Christ rejected, of the Spirit grieved, and of heaven lost, will be itself a terrible element of hell. Never to forget that you might have been saved, but would not
that heaven might have been won, but was not; that more than once, perhaps, you were almost persuaded to be a Christian, but declined giving your full consent, must make your ruin inconceivably dreadful. If you lose your soul, as you must, unless you lay hold on Christ, and that speedily, every thought on your past life will be full of bitterness.

Repentance will come, live as you may. Either you will repent in time, and turn to God, and accept Christ, and save your soul, or you will repent forever in despair. No men repent so bitterly, so long, so hopelessly, as those who on earth make a mock at sin, and slight the offers of redeeming grace. Their eternity is spent in fruitless lamentations over their own wickedness and folly. There is a madness in sin which has never been fully explained. No mortal has ever solved the whole mystery of iniquity. Why will you die?

This life is a vapor that soon vanishes away, but the next life has no end. All the largest thoughts of endless duration ever formed by man fall infinitely below the truth. Suicide
may be called in to aid a poor godless, hopeless sinner out of this world, but it cannot help him out of eternity. Annihilation, sometimes hoped for by the wicked on earth, shall bring no cup of forgetfulness to lost souls in hell. While God exists, while seraphs sing, while saints rejoice, the despiser of the Gospel must lie in sorrow, and mourn with a perpetual mourning, and say, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!"

And all this loss and ruin are as unnecessary as they are terrible. The calls of the Gospel could not be more kind, or free, or urgent than they are. Listen to a few of them: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.” Listen, too, to the very words of Christ while he was on earth: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;” “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;” and, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” Even after Christ ascended to heaven he sent out the same blessed offers in his own name: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;” “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.”

Will you not accept these gracious offers? Have you no heart to love the Lord Jesus Christ and flee to him? Let not pride, or un-
Come, O Come to Christ!

belief, or love of the world, or sinful shame, or anything else, keep you away from Christ. Greater grace, freer mercy, richer blessings never were offered. Make them yours by yielding yourself to God, by renouncing all sin, and by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Come, O come to Christ!

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