

THE JOY OF REDEMPTION.

NO. 2450

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
FEBRUARY 2ND, 1896,**

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

“Sing, O ye heaven, for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” — Isaiah 44:23.

WHEN the human mind is on the stretch of emotion, whether it be under the influence of grief or joy, it often thinks that the whole world is in sympathy with itself. It seems to wrap the mantle of the universe round about its spiritual nature as a garment. If it be joyous, it puts on nature as a spangled robe; and if it be wretched, it finds its sackcloth and ashes in the world round about it. You know how the prophet — poet as well as prophet — says of us in our joyous moments, “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” When the heart is happy, nature seems to ring marriage peals in unison with the music within the heart. Let the eye be clear, and all nature will be bright. The earth seems glad when we are so. On the other hand, it is a part of the nature of grief to be able to transpose itself into the world around. Does not old Master Herbert cry, —

*“O who will give me tears? Come, all ye springs,
Dwell in my head and eyes; come, clouds and rain:
My grief hath need of all the watery things
That nature hath produced. Let every vein
Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,
My weary, weeping eyes, too dry for me,
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,
To bear them out, and with my state agree”?*

Fain would he make the world weep with him when he wept, as others have made the world sorrow when they grieved, and rejoice when they were full of joy. The fact is, the world is one great organ, and it is man that plays it, and when he is full of joy and gladness, he puts his tiny fingers upon the keys, and wakes the world to a majesty of joy; or if his soul be gloomy, then he plays some pensive, dolorous dirge, and thus the world without keeps pace with the other little world within.

The prophet, in this chapter, had been studying the great redemption which God had wrought for his people, and he was so happy and delighted with it, so overjoyed, so charmed, so enraptured, that he could not help saying, “*Sing, O ye heavens.*” There were the angels looking down on man with eyes of sympathy. “Sing,” said he, “ye angels, that sinners can be saved, yea, that sinners have been saved! Rejoice to think that repenting sinners can have their sins forgiven them! Sing, ye stars, that all night long, like the bright eyes of God, look down on this poor world, so dark but for you! Sing, for God hath blessed your sister star, unwraps her from her gloom, and made her shine more radiant in mercy than any one of you! Sing, O blue sky of heights profound! O thou unnavigated ether, be thou stirred with song, and let space become one mighty mouth for melody! Sing, O ye heavens!” Then, when he must come down from those lofty heights, he looks upon *the earth*, and he says, “O earth, echo, echo with song, and ye lower parts of the earth, ye valleys and plains, the sea with its million hands, the deep places of the earth, and the hollow caverns thereof, — let them all sound with joy, because Jehovah hath redeemed man, and in mercy has come down to his poor erring creatures.” And then, as if he heard all earth getting vocal with the voices of happy ones, and felt it would not do for the praise to be limited even to the tongues of men, he thinks of those mountains where man cannot climb, those virgin snows, undefiled by human feet, and he says, “*Sing, ye mountains!*” Then he

thinks of the shaggy woods upon their brows, and he bids them sing in admiration, — "*Sing, ye forests! Let every tree break forth in melody!*"

Do you catch his thought? Do you not see how the great poet-prophet, in a mighty fervency of delight, wakes the whole earth, and even heaven itself, to one mighty burst of song? And what is the subject of it? "The Lord hath redeemed his people, and glorified himself in Israel." Oh, that I could stir in your hearts songs of joy for the redemption which God has wrought for his people, and for the glory which God has gotten to himself by this wonderful act of grace!

There are three redemptions which may well make all hearts rejoice: the first is, *redemption by blood*; the second is, *redemption by power*; and the third is the completion of the two, *redemption in perfection*.

I. The first is, REDEMPTION BY BLOOD.

You know the story. Man had sinned against his God, and God, the Just One, must punish sin. But it was agreed that, if a plan could be devised by which justice should be satisfied, mercy should have full play for all her kind designs. What a day was that when the eternal wisdom revealed to man the plan by which the Son of God should suffer instead of us, that so justice might have its claims discharged in full, and yet mercy enjoy its boundless, unlimited sway! Sing, ye heavens, because of the wisdom which devised so benevolent a scheme! Rejoice, O earth, because of the marvellous, matchless understanding which framed so wise a plan!

The terms or preamble thus agreed upon, it was necessary that someone should suffer instead of man, in order that man might escape. *Will the Eternal Son undertake to do this?* He is God; his glory is excessive; angels veil their faces as they adore him. Is it possible that he will ever become a man, to bleed, to be spit upon, to be scourged, to be crucified? Will he undertake to do it? He said unto his Father, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will." "O my God!" Sing again, ye heavens! Let your hallelujahs rise aloft, ye angels! The Son of God has undertaken the redemption of men! That which was once only a scheme, has now become a covenant. That which was but a plan in the divine mind is now a compact between the Father and the Son.

But though Christ has undertaken it, will he perform it? The years roll on, the world gets grey, and yet he does not come. But on a sudden, when the

shepherds were keeping their flocks by night, there was heard a sound up yonder, and straightway a multitude of the heavenly host appeared, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" What means this? It is Jesus, the Son of God, come to do what he undertook to do; and there he is, lying in a manger, wrapped in swaddling bands, and God is born into the world. God has become flesh. He, without whom was not anything made that was made, has come down to tabernacle among us, that we may behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, and yet a man of the substance of his mother, like ourselves. Sing, ye angels! Let the carols of that first Christmas night never cease, for that which was once a scheme, and then a covenant, has now commenced to be a work in real earnest.

He has come to do it, *but will he ever fulfill it?* Will he ever accomplish the stupendous obligation? Two and thirty years roll over him, during which he is despised and rejected of men, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But will he ever achieve that last, that dreadful task? Will he ever be able to perform it? Will he give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluck off the hair? Will he verily be led like a sheep to the slaughter? Can it ever be that the Lord of life and immortality will actually die the death of a criminal, and be buried in a borrowed tomb? My brethren, not only will it be, but it has been. Recall to memory that eventful night when Judas betrayed him with a perfidious kiss, when, in Gethsemane, he was covered with a bloody sweat, a sweat caused by your sins and mine. Do you not see him led away by those who have arrested him? Do you not see the Lord of glory mocked and set at nought, made an object of ridicule, the jeer of sarcasm, and the butt of scorn? "*Ecce Homo!*" Behold the man covered with an old robe, the cloak of some common soldier, and his back laid bare to show you that it is covered with another crimson, the crimson of his own most precious blood, fetched by the accursed scourge from those blessed shoulders? Do you see him staggering along beneath the weight of that heavy cross, hurried and hounded through the streets of Jerusalem? Do you mark him as he bids the daughters of Jerusalem stay their tears, and weep not for him, but for themselves and their children? Can you not see him as they fling him on his back, stretch out his hands and feet to the wood, and then drive the cruel nails through their tenderest parts? Can you not see him as they lift him high between earth and heaven, and then dash the cross into its place, dislocating all his bones, till he cries out, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are

out of joint. Thou hast brought me into the duet of death"? Yes, he is accomplishing it all. Jehovah's wrath is pouring over him, wave after wave, and he is meekly bowing his head to it all! Jehovah's sword is being driven into his heart, and he is baring his breast to receive it, for your sakes and for mine! Sinner, he does it altogether. He can do it. He is doing it, he has done it, for he bowed his head, saying, "It is finished!" and gave up the ghost. That which was first a purpose, then a covenant, and then a work initiated, is now a work achieved. Jesus Christ has redeemed his people with his own most precious blood.

But they took his mangled corpse down from the cross. They put it in the tomb. It remained a question whether he really had accomplished the work, for if he had, God would set two seals to it: first, by his rising from the tomb, and secondly, by his ascending into heaven. See then, believer. On the third day, the mighty Sleeper unwound his grave-clothes; an angel came from heaven, and rolled away the stone, and in the glory of a life unshackled by the trammels of vanity to which our poor creaturehood is made subject, he rose from the dead. And when he had shown himself to his disciples, and to others, for forty days, he took them out to Olivet, and as he communed with them and blessed them, he went up into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Can you not, in the devout exercise of imagination, track him past those clouds? Do you not see heaven's heroes as they meet him and welcome him? See you not his chariot waiting for him? Do you not behold him as he mounts it, and they sing in advance of him till they come to the crystal gates, and then, from over the gates, the watchers cry, "Who is this King of glory?" while others shout, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in!" Yes, in he rides, up to his Father's throne, and there he sits in state, God over all, blessed for ever; the Lamb once slain, no more to die. Sing, ye heavens, and be glad, O earth! The work which was accomplished is accepted. The deed which was finished is stamped and recognized by heaven, and now there is peace "through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

Ah! I know what would make some of you very happy. Should you come to-night to the cross, look up and trust Christ to save you, your joy would then be unspeakable. Never did a soul trust Christ in vain. You would receive pardon, you would get peace, you would feel as if heaven did sing, and as if earth did rejoice. You would say, "Here am I, a poor, guilty sinner, having nothing to trust to of my own, but I know my sins were laid

on Christ, and if they were laid on Christ, they cannot be in two places at one time; consequently, they cannot be put on me when I trust in Jesus; they were put on his bleeding back, and they are gone, and there is not one left in the Book of God against me." O dear hearer, if thou believest in Christ, thou art perfectly absolved. Thou needest not a priest to say, "*Absolvo te,*" "I absolve thee." There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, since Jesus died? If you rest in Jesus Christ, he has paid all your debts; you are out of debt; Christ has discharged all your liabilities, and you are free. Let your soul, then, be happy. Let your soul be so happy that it transfers its joy to all nature, and makes heaven and earth glad with its own gladness.

This is the first redemption — redemption by blood.

II. Let us strike another key, and celebrate the second theme that redemption unfolds, — REDEMPTION BY POWER.

Those for whom the Savior shed his blood, and so redeemed them by price, are by-and-by redeemed by power. The Spirit of God finds them, like other men, fond of sin; like other men, blind to the beauties of the Savior, deaf to the commands of Christ; but if Christ has bought them with his blood, he never paid for what he will not have. The price was too precious to be paid for those who are not saved. If Christ has paid his blood for a soul, he will have that soul. Neither will God's honor rob him of his purchase, nor will Christ be content to lose what he so dearly bought.

This second redemption, which is conversion and regeneration, is equally a subject of holy joy; very briefly I will set it forth. What sort of people are those whom Christ saves? Why, *some of them were the very worst of the worst.* Some of them were the companions of the lost; nay, they were lost themselves. But when the grace of God met with them, it washed them, and made new men of them. There is many a man who has been a captain in the devil's service, but whom the Lord has taken, and made a valiant man for the truth. Oh, what a great sinner John Newton was before his conversion! You who have read his life know that he went about as far as a man could go. What an offender was John Bunyan before this Lord met with him! What a blood-thirsty wretch was Saul of Tarsus! What a horrible life had the thief led with whom Christ met at the last! Now, when I think of these being saved, I feel as if I could say, "Sing, ye heavens, and be joyful, O earth!" Sometimes, at our church-meetings, when some brethren have told the story of their past lives, we have felt inclined to stop and sing.

Some have said, "I never entered a place of worship for years; I cursed at the very thought of it; the Sabbath I never regarded; yea, the very name of God himself I despised; but eternal mercy met with me." "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Ay, and the greatest wonder to every one of you will be that ever God's mercy saved you! I can understand very well his saving any of you; but I often cannot comprehend why he should save me. Oh! this will be the wonder of heaven to each one of us, to find ourselves there; and how will we say, "Sing, O heaven, and be joyful, O earth!" if once our poor guilty feet tread that golden pavement; and if, once being washed in the precious blood of Jesus, we shall be permitted to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven! Oh, the joy to think that such sinners should be saved!

Does it not enhance the joy that *they were in such a miserable plight before they were saved?* They were prejudiced against the gospel, but God knew how to knock their prejudices over. They were blind, and would not see the beauties of it; but the Lord has a blessed way of opening blind eyes. Their hearts were as hard as granite, but God knew how to use the hammer, and shiver the rock in pieces. Very likely they derided the very idea of being converted, and yet they were made partakers of the saving change. Ay, and I have noticed that some of the most hardened are the very first who are met with; some of those who seemed the most unlikely subjects of divine grace have been chosen by divine sovereignty, and have been made wonders of divine power. Herein lies the matter that makes us sing and rejoice, because the blind have been made to see, the deaf have been made to hear, and the dead have been made to live. O ye forests, sing of this wonder of mercy!

And still further, think of *what these souls are saved from*. But for grace, the very hottest hell would have been our portion; but we are saved from it. We should have been made to drink of the bitter cup of wrath for ever; but we shall never drink a drop of it now. And then consider *what the man of God is saved to*. He is saved for heaven. He is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. His head shall wear the crown. His hands shall sweep the strings of harps of gold. Sins O heavens, and be joyful, O earth! Saved from hell and lifted up to heaven, let the bass notes of our songs go down to hell, and make the devils grind their teeth

with rage, and let the alto notes go up to heaven, and make even the angels glad as they see how sinners saved exult in Jesus' name.

Mighty as is the power, are we not often constrained to marvel at the weakness of the instruments which the Lord employs? Sometimes a soul is saved by Christ's grace through a poor preacher, who is despised by many, and who in himself is humble, and weak, and feeble. By means of a tract, or a quotation from the Bible, or something of that sort, the heart is turned. Any instrument in the hand of God, though it seem most unlikely, is capable of bringing a soul to Christ. Oh, rejoice, ye heavens, for God is glorified in using poor instruments to work his will!

And then see how *some are saved in the teeth of ten thousand obstacles*. It seems as though they only escape by the skin of their teeth, as though all the devils in hell came after them, with their mouths open, like roaring lions, seeking to devour them. Yet the hand of divine grace has been upon them, and they have been saved. Are not some of you perfect miracles to yourselves? Do you not wonder that you have not gone back long ago? When you see what temptations you have had, and how base your hearts, are you not astonished that grace should have made you a Christian at all, and kept you in the way of righteousness until now? Oh! with the tears in our eyes, let us bless God that we are what we are; let our hearts be glad to-night, and let us make all nature seem glad, as we remember the hole whence we have been digged, and the mire or the clay whence we have been drawn by the irresistible, effectual grace of the Spirit of God.

III. And now, lastly, what a song will that be as heaven and earth, mountains and forests, rejoice **WHEN THE BELIEVER IS PERFECTLY REDEEMED!**

On earth he was still the subject of temptation, and he wrestled hard with inbred sins; but when death comes, he shall be perfect. There shall not be a rag of corruption, nor a relic of the old man. Brethren, will you not make the heavens and the earth ring when you find yourselves made like unto Christ; when you shall find that nothing that old Adam gave you is left, but that all sin is gone, and that you are like the angels of God? Surely there shall be no voice in heaven more exulting, more joyous, than that of men delivered from strong passions and deep depravity, and made perfectly like the Lord Jesus.

And there we shall be perfectly free from all the cares and troubles of this mortal life. No sweat to wipe from aching brows! No tossing upon beds of weariness! No nights of languishing! No question of “What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?” “The Lord God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” There shall be no more spiritual battles and conflicts. Death and hell shall no more annoy us, nor sinners vex the righteous with their ungodly conversation.

*“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in,
They are for ever blest.”*

Oh, blissful hour! Oh, happy moment! when —

“We shall be near and like our God!”

Brethren, does it not make you long to be gone, when you think of the perfection of redemption? The body will be redeemed. It will rise from the dead. This poor dishonored body will be made like unto Christ’s glorious body; and then body and soul together shall, like twin angels, glorify God throughout eternity.

*“There shall I bathe my weary soul,
In seas of heavenly rest;
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.”*

Do you not wish you had wings to fly away? Well, it is but for a few minutes that you are detained here. “Minutes!” you say. “Why, they are months and years!” Ay, but what are they? When once they are gone, they shall be but as a watch in the night. You shall think of them then as God thinks of them now, as but a very small moment. Courage! Wait with patience, and you shall make all eternity sing because the Lord hath redeemed his people, and glorified himself in Israel.

Alas! I fear there are some of you who will have no part or lot in this matter! If you would have this last redemption, begin with the first. Faith first! Look to the price, — to the blood, — and then the Holy Spirit will graciously give you the redemption which is by power. Your faith will be the first proof that you are so redeemed, and will lead you on until you attain that perfection for which we groan, that adoption for which we wait, to wit, the redemption of the body. Bought with the blood of Jesus, quickened into newness of life by the power of his resurrection, and at

length gathered unto Jesus, to be with him where he is, the joy of his salvation shall swell into a mighty chorus, in which heaven and earth shall ring out their loud-sounding music, while our tongues shall sing Immanuel's praise for ever and ever. Amen.

**HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"
— 488, 136 (SONG II), 116 (SONG III).**

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON.

ISAIAH 44. AND 45; AND 2 SAMUEL 33:1-5.

This evening, we will read two chapters from Isaiah's prophecy, the forty-fourth and the fifty-fifth, and a few verses from the twenty-third chapter of the second Book of Samuel. May the Lord bless all these passages to us as we meditate upon them!

Isaiah 44:1. *Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen:*

See, the chapter begins with a "yet." There is a great deal in God's "yets." Notwithstanding all the sin and provocation mentioned in the previous chapter, the Lord still reveals his mercy and goodness to his ancient people.

2, 3. *Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground:*

Be not cast down, ye thirsty souls, think not that you must perish of drought, you who are like the parched earth; God is ready to bless, and to bless largely, too: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

3, 4. *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.*

God's grace to our children is also grace to us, for there is nothing that we desire more than to see them saved. It will be well for all of us who are

parents to grasp this promise, and to plead it before God, — "Lord, send such floods of thy grace that our children may grow like the willow trees that flourish wherever the brooks and rivers wander!"

5. One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

They shall come in different ways, but they shall come unto the Lord. Some can perhaps only write out their resolve to be the Lord's, while others can boldly speak it, whoever may hear; but they shall come when grace is given to them.

6, 7. Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.

God claims to be the one great source of all true prophecy. He challenges the gods of the heathen to arrange future providences, or even to foretell what those providences will be.

8. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

God himself, who knoweth all things, knows of no other God beside himself indeed there is no other, and there can be no other. The unity of the Godhead must be accepted by us; we cannot think of there being two Gods, since the one living and true God filleth all space.

Now the Lord, through the prophet, holds up to ridicule the unreasonableness and folly of those who worship graven images.

9, 10. They that made a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit, and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god,

The very question is absurd.

10, 11. Or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workman, they are of men:

Doth man make God? What kind of a god must that be that man can make?

11, 12. *Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.*

This maker of a god is faint! How utterly ridiculous is the idea that one who can make a god should himself be faint.

13-16. *The carpenter stretched out his rule; he marketh it out with a line he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it he for a man to burn; for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image and falleth down thereto.*

It has often happened that, when this passage has been read in the hearing of idolaters, they have been convinced by it of their folly. It is a very simple description of what takes place in an idol-maker's workshop; yet, simple as it is, it shows the absurdity of the idea of worshipping that which can be made by man's hands.

16-18. *He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god, They have not known nor understood:*

There must be a failure-of knowledge or understanding where such folly as this is possible.

18. *For he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.*

They have been so full of sin that God has given them up to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart has come upon them as a punishment for their rebellion against the Most High.

19, 20. *And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes:*

He is like a madman who takes to eating ashes: —

20, 21. *A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant:*

You who fear God, remember these things, and keep clear of idolatry, — the setting up of crucifixes, the hanging up of crosses or any kind of symbol whatever. Even though it be merely the simple triangle, or the sacred Alpha and Omega, away with it, for the people of God must be clear from even the slightest traces of idolatry. See how many so-called Christian churches are nothing better than congregations of idolaters, such as the Church of Rome, and even the Greek Church the one with her images and her relics, and the other with her pictures and her icons. We must have none of these things, for the command still stands, “Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” In days like these in which we live, the people of God should be more particular than ever not to countenance any form of idolatry lest, by slow degrees, we come back to the old abominations which God abhors.

21-23. *I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*

Glory be to his holy name, it shall be our delightful occupation, as long as we live, to glorify him who “hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.”

Now turn to the fifty-fifth chapter of this prophecy; might we not almost say, the fifty-fifth chapter of this gospel?

Isaiah 55:1. *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.*

“Ho, ... come ye to the waters, ... to buy wine,” saith the Lord by his servant the prophet. It is just like it was at the wedding-feast at Cana, when the servants went to the water-pots, and found them full of wine. God often gives us more than we even think we need. Water would suffice to quench our thirst, but the Lord adds, “Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Wine and milk were among the blessings that old Jacob pronounced upon Judah, and they are symbolic of the special blessings which come to believers through Jesus Christ, who is our true Judah. He gives us joy, he gives us nourishment, he gives us everything we really need. Whatever you lack, you shall find it in Christ; you have nothing to do but to come for it. You have no money; but even if you had, the blessings are priceless, they cannot be purchased. The price of mercy is without price. This is all you have to do in order to receive it, come and take it, take it freely, come and take it now. Never did a salesman plead with a customer more earnestly than the Spirit of God here pleads with sinners, yet it is not God who is to be profited by the transaction. He gains nothing except the indulgence of his love, we are the eternal gainers by his gracious gift, yet the Lord saith, “Come ye,” and then again, “Come ye,” and then a third time, “Come.” When he saith, “Come, come, come,” who will refuse to come?

2. *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?*

All your care, your toil, your anguish of heart, are spent in a vain desire to get this world; and if you do get it, it is nothing more than bread, and bad bread, too; it cannot satisfy the cravings of your immortal spirit, why do you waste your time and money trying to get that which is not worth the having? Will you hunt after shadows? Will you pursue the wind?

2. And your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

True religion gives substantial joy to the heart; it is no dream; it is a blessed reality, as those of us know who have tried it. If you will come and have it, you shall eat what is really good, and your soul shall find such a satisfaction in it that you shall delight yourself in fatness.

3, 4. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

These words refer not only to David, but to Jesus, great David's greater Son. The next verse is spoken specially to him, not to us, yet as we overhear it, we suck comfort for ourselves out of it.

5. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Christ must have a people. He did not die in vain. God will give him a following; he shall not be a Commander without troops; he shall not be a Leader without disciples. I shall preach to-night in strong confidence that many will be saved in this place to-night. Where there is faith, God will respond to it. Pray, you who are the people of God, that this promise may be kept. It is a promise to Christ, and the Father will keep his promise to his own Son. Be ye sure of this, he will glorify him, but he would have us pray for him. Let every heart that knows how to pray be breathing out the petition, "Father, glorify thy Son."

6. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

There may come a day when he cannot be found, a time when he will not be near. When the great Judge of all has once said, "Depart," when once the Master of the house has risen up, and shut to the door, in vain will be all your seeking, and your praying, and your knocking at the door that will never open again. Therefore, "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."

7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

The marginal reading is, “He will multiply to pardon.” We multiply sin, but God’s multiplication table goes farther than ours: “He will multiply to pardon.”

8-11. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

What comfort there is here for Christian workers, for you who proclaim God’s Word! Yours is no hap-hazard business; look at the “*shalls*” in this eleventh verse: “It *shall* not return unto me void, but it *shall* accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” When we make known God’s Word, we are not drawing a bow at a venture we are not sowing seed which may or may not beget a harvest: *it shall, it shall, it shall*. God saith it three times. He is very fond of the number three, the Trinity is constantly revealed throughout both the Old and the New Testaments. When it is not spoken and declared so such doctrinally, you see its practical effect in the frequent threefold utterances of God.

12. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

There shall be demonstrative delight. All nature is in sympathy with the man who is in harmony with God; the world itself echoes to the joy of the little world within man’s bosom.

13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and indeed of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

We read, in the third verse, about “the sure mercies of David.” To explain that phrase, let us read a few verses from the second Book of Samuel, and the twenty-third chapter. I might have selected another passage, but these being David’s dying words will be the more striking.

2 Samuel 23:1-5. *Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God;*

He remembered his many sins, and the many tribulations in his family which had come upon him in consequence of those sins, and the dying man felt a sad heart-ache so he thought of the errors of his life, so well he might.

5. *Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*

What blessed words his last words were! His sorrow is turned into joy; his own house grieves him, but God’s promise comforts him. I think we must read this verse again; perhaps there is some father here who is growing old, or some mother upon whom years are multiplying. May these last words of David be such as your last words may be! “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.”