

THE BACKSLIDER'S DOOR OF HOPE

NO. 2569

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 8, 1898
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 22, 1883

“And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”
Hosea 2:15

A FORTNIGHT ago, you will remember that we considered the very terrible description which the prophet gave of the sin of God's ancient people [See Sermon #2564, Volume 44, “*Strange Ways of Love*”]. They were described even coarsely, because only such imagery could set forth their disgraceful filthiness in departing from JEHOVAH, the living and true God, and setting up false gods, the rites of whose worship were indescribably obscene. I should not dare to mention what these men did under the guise of religion when they turned aside from JEHOVAH, and set up Baal, and Ashtaroth, and other idols that were no gods.

You will also remember how the Lord, in His holy jealousy, dealt with His people. He sent them affliction after affliction, He took away from them those mercies which they had prostituted for the purpose of sin, He made them poor, and sick, and wretched. They were invaded and enslaved by the neighboring nations whose deities they had set up in the place of the Most High.

Further, you remember—for we tried to describe it—they were so desperately set on mischief that they would not be turned from their wicked ways, they revolted more and more. The more it cost them to sin, the more extravagant they were in it. Then it was that the Lord, in great mercy, changed His mode of operation, He told His servant Hosea to say that He would try another plan of working. The law had failed, in that it was weak through the flesh, so He would use the Gospel, He would bring the omnipotent power of love into the field.

Our text a fortnight ago was, “I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart,” and I sought then to set forth the strange ways in which God, with wondrous love, allures His people to Himself—how He draws them away from all their former confidences and hopes, and brings them into a wilderness alone with Him, where He must feed them, or they must die—where He must guide them, or they must hopelessly stray—where He must be everything to them, or else they must be destroyed with a great destruction.

When the Lord, in love, brings His people there to be alone with Him, then it is that He makes His promises to come home to their hearts, and His person, and His purposes, and His ancient love, and all the great preparations of that love as to the eternal future, are laid home to the hearts of God's backsliding children, and they are made again to rejoice therein so that they are comforted. That was our subject, as you may remember.

Now we follow with this next verse, which is intended to show yet more the goodness of God towards backsliders when they return to Him, or if you like, towards sinners when for the first time they approach His feet. On this occasion, I intend mainly to speak to those who have lost a sense of God's love. Perhaps there may have strayed in here some who were once professors, but they are not professors now—some who were once members of a Christian church, but no Christian church would own them now. Once they could, perhaps, speak to others in Christ's name, but they would be afraid to say a word for Jesus now, for they have gone far astray from Him. The message of infinite mercy to

such people is, "Return, ye backsliding children," come back, come home to your God. There is no other place of rest for you in the whole world, you will be as a bird that wanders from its nest. Sinners may rest content in their sin, for as yet they know no better, but you are disqualified even for that. You have so much knowledge still left, and so much of conscience still remains, that you are spoiled for this world, spoiled for the pleasures of sin, spoiled for all confidence except the one confidence which you used to have in Christ Jesus your Lord. There is no alternative for you but to return, for you cannot go elsewhere, therefore, come home to your first Husband—that is God's own metaphor—for it was better with you then than now.

Oh, that the blessed Spirit would now allure you, draw you apart, get you alone with Christ, and speak comfortably to you! While He is doing that, permit me to tell you something, first, concerning *restored blessings*, "I will give her her vineyards from thence." Then, next, concerning *revived hopes*, "I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope." And then, thirdly, concerning *renewed songs*, "She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

I. First, then, let me talk to returning backsliders ABOUT RESTORED BLESSINGS.

You have lost a good deal by losing Christ. In fact, to your own consciousness, you have lost everything. All that made you joyous and glad has departed from you, like a dream of the night, as a man awakes, and finds himself in darkness, even so have you awakened out of the brightness of that foolish dream of yours, and you find yourself undone. Now come back to God, for in coming back you shall have fulfilled to you the promise of our text, "I will give her vineyards from thence."

By this is meant, first, that *God will give back to returning penitents that which He took away*. Read the twelfth verse, "I will destroy her vines and her fig trees." Now the Lord says: "I will give her her vineyards from thence." When you come back to Christ, the very things that were taken away from you shall be restored to you.

It is sometimes so even in temporal things. The rod is put aside when it has answered its purpose, many a man has been kept poor, or sick, or grievously depressed in spirit until the time when he has heard the rod, and Him that did appoint it, and then, when he has turned again to his God, he has once more prospered. I do not say that it is always so, for there may be other reasons why the affliction should continue, but I do say that it is often so in the experience of God's people. While they have gone astray, they have had affliction upon affliction, but when they have returned to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, He has made them to lie down in green pastures, beside the still waters. I am sure that it is so as to spiritual matters.

If you have backslidden, the house of God ministers no comfort to you now. When you come to it, it is no longer a home to you, but if you come back to the Lord, you shall find the same pleasure in the house of prayer that you used to find in it. Now, perhaps, the Sabbath has become a weariness to you, for it does not bring you any holy joy, but it only sounds the knell of your departed blessings. Come back to God, and the Sabbath bell shall have all its silvery music restored, and you shall wake up on the morning of the Lord's-day, and begin singing—

*"Come, bless the Lord, whose love assigns
So sweet a rest for wearied minds;
Provides an antepast of heaven,
And gives this day the food of seven."*

You shall have the house of prayer made none other than the house of God to you, and the first day of the week shall become to you the best of all the seven.

Possibly, also, you continue to read your Bible, but it appears to have lost all its former interest. You fall upon your knees, and try to pray, but you do not meet with God there. You associate with the Lord's people, but you find no charm in that intercourse which was once so hallowed, the very essence seems to

have gone out of every means of grace. You go out in the morning, but there is no manna, the dews of heaven are withheld, so no blessing comes to your spirit.

Now, if you return to the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, and His great love restores you to Himself, then all this shall come back to you: "I will give her her vineyards from thence." Do not wait till all this blessing comes back, and then return to Christ, do not try to put the effect before the cause, but come you now, just as you are, in all your dullness and your deadness, back to your first love, and trust in Jesus as you did at the very beginning, for then the Lord will restore to you all the privileges that made your life so happy and bright.

Notice, next, that not only are these things which are restored to the backsliding nation those that were taken away, but *they are now made to be more hers than they were before*. Read again verse twelve, "I will destroy her vines and her fig trees." Now God says, "I will give her *her* vineyards from thence." She shall feel a peculiar possession about what she now has, for she shall see that there is a deed of gift by which God has again given to her those mercies which she had lost.

Oh, I do love to feel, when the Sabbath day comes, that it is God's day, which He has hedged about for me! And when I go to the house of God to worship, I like to think that it is appointed for me there to draw near to God, to open His Book, and to feel that the Bible is my Father's letter to me, a gift from God to me, and that the mercy seat was the gift of infinite love and divine grace, prepared on purpose that I and others like me might come to it.

How precious do even our common mercies become when we see them given back to us by a Father's hand! I reckon that there is no man who loves the means of grace like the man who at one time felt them to be dry and barren. When the Lord fills the dry beds of the rivers with the torrents of His love, then we come and drink abundantly, and we rejoice exceedingly. When, for a while, all outward means have seemed to become a wilderness to us, oh, how glad we are when, once again, the Lord appears, and puts life, and power, and efficacy into them, so that our soul rejoices in them!

Poor backslider, ask the Lord even at this moment to give you back all that you have lost, and to make you feel that He is giving it to you by a double act of grace, and that therefore it is yours, you have a covenant right to it, and what He gives you is now your very own so that you will enjoy it to the fullest without any idea that you are presuming when you do so. Thus you will understand the meaning of God's gracious promise, "I will give her *her* vineyards from thence."

Further, notice that, when the Lord restores a backslider, *He does not withhold even the sweetest of His former blessings*. The Lord gives him, not only that which is needful—that might be described as cornfields—but He gives that which tends to luxury, to joy, to exhilaration, "I will give her her vineyards." Vineyards are not necessary to the life of man, but God does not stint Himself in giving to His people barely bread and water, but He gives them things not absolutely needful, that He may further increase their joys, He gives after a royal manner. The house of God's mercy is not a workhouse, where they weigh out so many ounces of bread, it is a banqueting house where the Lord, as King in Zion, makes His guests to rejoice as He distributes the riches of His grace, "I will give her her vineyards."

Oh, listen, you who are now distressed! You shall not only have back your former peace of mind, but you shall have even joy in the Lord. You shall not merely be permitted to sit at the Lord's table, and eat a little morsel, and then go your way hungering for more, but He will satiate your soul with goodness, He will make you to eat of fat things full of marrow, and to drink of wines on the lees well refined. Never imagine that the Lord will let in a poor backslider to a sort of second-rate Gospel feast—put him in the back rows, and give him something less than he gives to his brethren.

No, the prodigal's father killed for him the fatted calf, which he had not killed even for the elder brother, and if you will come back to God, my wandering friend, He will give to you the chief things which He has stored up, even the abundance of infinite love, till your heart shall leap within you, and your life shall become a psalm, and your whole being shall be as a harp upon which the fingers of God shall play, to bring out sweetest music henceforth and forever. Only do you return, and you shall see

what lies before you. Go on in your sin, and your way shall become blacker and blacker, the pitfalls and snares shall multiply every step you take, and the darkness shall deepen into a tenfold night.

But return unto your rest, and the way shall become smoother beneath your feet, your heart shall grow stronger in the Lord, your ways shall be established, and a new song shall be put into your mouth, even praise unto your God. Thus runs the promise, "I will give her her vineyards." She shall have all the mirth and all the joy that a ransomed spirit ought to know, oh, what comfort there is in this to any who have wandered away from God, but who resolve to return to Him!

I want you also to notice, before I leave this first point, that it is said, "I will give her her vineyards *from thence*," which means, I think, that *God gives these blessings in the wilderness into which He allures her*. He promises to give her her vineyards in the solitude into which He allures her, when He takes her away from all her earthly trusts to be alone with Himself. And mark you; the vineyards given "from thence" will be worth ten thousand of the world's vineyards. I mean, by this, that a joy which is found in Christ alone is true joy, one single particle of which will outweigh the joy of all the world besides. The joy that springs from the garden dies when the garden is dry, but the joy that is given in the wilderness is a root out of a dry ground, so it can never lose its moisture, it can never decay, for it is nourished from above, not from beneath.

The joy that I get in the creature dies with the creature from which it comes, but the joy that comes from Christ the Creator, is like Him from whom it comes, it never can expire. "I will give her her vineyards from thence," that is to say, I will fetch her gains out of losses, her crowns out of crosses, and her sweet out of sweat. I will bring her honey out of a lion. I will bring her life out of Christ's death. I will bring her heaven out of all His woes, "I will give her her vineyards from thence."

I should like everyone here, who is very happy, to be asking himself, "What is the secret of my joy? Am I rejoicing in the Lord? Or is mine like the mirth of the ungodly that sustains itself on corn, and wine, and oil, and on the abundance of these perishable things? Have I peace at this moment? Then, on what is my peace founded? Is it built on something which I can see, and taste, and handle of the world's goods? If so, it will fail me at the last, but if I get happiness that springs from Christ my Lord, who has become everything to me, then I have a peace that I may grasp and hold fast in the article of death as well as in the trials of life, "I will give her her vineyards from thence."

Come, poor backslider, whatever be your sad case, the Lord can give you joy in Himself. All the joy that your soul can hold, He can give you when alone with Himself. Poor sinner, if you are sorely grieved with a sense of your sin, and if outward trials are pressing you very heavily, the Lord can give you joy that shall fill your heart to overflowing out of Himself alone if you will but come to Him. He can give you the resolve to come, oh, that, with all your heart, you would now seek His face, and live in Him! May His blessed Spirit work this grace in you, and to Him shall be all glory!

Many here well know what these vineyards are which the Lord gives to His returning people. I will tell you of some into which I have been myself, and I wish to live in those vineyards all my days. One of them is access to God in prayer. The wanderer is shut out from God, he cannot come near to God in prayer, but when he returns to the Savior, he finds that the mercy seat is open still, and he can speak with God as a man speaks with his friend. That is a vineyard bearing the sweetest clusters.

A second vineyard is that of communion with God—to feel that God dwells within us, and we dwell in Him—that we are His children, and that He is our Father always manifesting Himself to us. That is a glorious vineyard, if a man can but eat the fruit thereof, it will make him long to go into the hill country of heaven where the best grapes are ripening for the perfected ones.

A third vineyard is that of full assurance of faith. May a backslider ever come back to that vineyard? Ay, that he may! If you, poor wanderer, do so, you will be a happy man—not only to hope and to trust that you are saved, but to know it, and not only to know it, but to know it infallibly, to know it so that all the devils in hell cannot shake your confidence that it is so, to know it by the witness of the Holy Spirit's inward sealing of the truth to your soul. This is a blessed vineyard indeed, God will give it to all those

who truly come back to Him, and may those who have not wandered, often go and dwell amidst those sweet-smelling vines!

Yet another vineyard is usefulness, when backsliders return to the Lord, He condescends to employ them, and honor them, in bringing others to Himself. This is indeed to live in a vineyard where the grapes are very sweet to the palate, for surely men can hardly have greater joy than that of leading others to the Savior's feet.

And then, besides these vineyards, there are the manifestations of Christ to His own, there are openings up of the Word of God by the blessed Spirit, there are the tokens of divine love even in providence in a thousand varied forms. I cannot tell you all the sweet and precious things—the joys unspeakable—which the Lord gives to His own people when they come back to Him, and dwell with Him. Therefore, come you back, poor wanderer, and you shall find it out for yourself, and you who have never come before, come you also by simple, humble faith, and the Lord will receive you graciously, and bless you this night and forever.

So much, then, for the first part of my subject—restored blessings.

II. The second division of my discourse is this, REVIVED HOPES, “I will give her....the valley of Achor for a door of hope.”

What was this valley of Achor? It was *the place of their first victory over their enemies*. It was the first land upon which the Israelites entered after they crossed the Jordan, and the walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground. Hard by the city of palm trees was the fertile valley of Achor. If ever the Israelites were to go back again, they must enter Palestine by the same door if they crossed the Jordan at all, the key of the position was the valley of Achor, the first region of which they would have to take possession if they wished to win the rest of the land.

And surely, the spiritual meaning of the metaphor is this—*the Lord will give to backsliders, when they return to Him, a renewed realization of His grace*—the old joyous feelings, the consciousness of their first love coming back, their first simple faith being revived. This taking possession again of that which was theirs at the first, shall be to them “a door of hope” that they shall in time take possession of the whole of the land. I tell you, brother, it is a very blessed thing to get back to our first days. We may have better days than our first ones if we go on and make the progress God desires for us, but though they may be in some respects deeper and fuller, yet I do not know whether we do not all look back upon the first days of our conversion with very fond memories and some regrets.

Other days have become indistinct, like coins in general circulation, but so far as I am concerned, that first day of my spiritual life is, in my memory, as clear, and fresh, and sharp-cut as when it first came from the mint of time. Oh, the bliss of that first joy when Jesus told me I was His, and my Beloved was mine! That first moment of rest when the burden rolled off my shoulder—I can never forget it, I cannot help remembering it at this moment. And it is a very sweet way of putting it, that the Lord will give you back that first valley into which you then came—that valley of Achor where first you set your foot, and you shall feel again as you felt then.

To use another figure—though now you are covered with leprosy, your flesh shall come again to you as the flesh of a little child, you shall feel as if you were *beginning your spiritual life over again*. That shall be to you “a door of hope,” for you shall say to yourself, “Surely, the Lord means mercy to me, He has led me back to the very spot where He blessed me at first, He has made me feel just as I felt then, and He has brought me to the same simplicity of faith which I exercised in the young dawning of my spiritual life. Therefore am I persuaded that He means now to lead me on from strength to strength that, as I capture Achor, I may capture all the rest of the land, and all the blessings of the covenant may be mine.” Listen to this, backslider! Pluck up heart of hope, may God help you so to do, and to come back to Him, for He will give you that valley of Achor to be a door of hope!

But we cannot help remembering that *the name of that valley of Achor signifies trouble*. You have only to look in the margin of your Bible, at Joshua 7:26, and you will find that it was the valley of trouble, and the trouble came in this way—when the walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground, there was

one Achan, or Achar, or Achor, who took some of the spoil which was all to have been either dedicated to God or else destroyed. Before the children of Israel could have God's blessing, they had to clear themselves from the guilt of this accursed thing. They went out to battle, and were defeated at Ai. Then there had to be a searching, and a digging, and at last they found the godly Babylonian garment, and the two hundred shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold, and then they took Achan, and all that he had, and brought them into the valley of Achor, and destroyed and burned them, and buried them under a great heap of stones. That valley of Achor was indeed a valley of trouble, but after Joshua and all Israel had purged themselves from the evil, it became a door of hope to them.

So, dear friends, when you and I began our spiritual life, it was not long before our joy was marred. Sin was still in our heart, and before long it broke out. There are many poor sinners, who want to find peace, who seem to me to be searching their hearts exactly the wrong way, they are seeking for any good thing there may be in them, but that is a sheer waste of time. The proper thing to do is to search your heart for the bad things that are in you—to do as Israel did in the case of Achan when they cast lots that God's will might be known, and that His Spirit might reveal the criminal, and then go and dig until you turn up the evil, and find the accursed thing.

"Why, sir!" you say, "I can see quite enough of my sins already." Can you? I think that the fault of most sinners is that they do not see half enough of their sin. "Oh, but!" you cry, "I see enough to drive me to despair." I wish you saw enough to drive you to double despair, for when a man heartily and thoroughly despairs of himself, then will he begin to hope in Christ, but many men try to find out some good thing in themselves, and they dig all over the camp to discover something of great price. Believe me, there is not a grain of pure gold in all your mines, there is not anything worth the finding in all Israel's camp, dig as long as you may, you will only dig out the evil thing on which God's curse is resting.

There is many a sinner who cannot find the door of hope because he is holding on to some evil thing. There is, for instance, the man who is clinging to strong drink, he never can have peace with God when perhaps only once in six months can he walk home in an upright fashion, he cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. There is another man who is practicing some secret sin, I dare not say what it is, but he knows. Yet he says that he is trying to find peace with God. Ah, sir! you will never obtain it while you cling to that iniquity, you must cut off the evil thing, even if it be your right arm, you must pluck it out, even if it be your right eye.

Here is a person who does something in business that he ought not to do, and here is another man who omits to do what he knows that he ought to do. They think that God will make peace with them on their terms, but He makes no terms with sinners unless they will part with their sins, and trust in Christ alone. God will not save you, and let you save your sin, that cannot be. The place in which a man shall honestly give up every willful act and thought of sin, and by the help of God's Spirit, shall quit everything which is revealed to him to be evil, shall be to him a door of hope.

The place where he troubles himself because of his sin, where his conscience frets and worries over it, the place where he puts away the sin, and buries it, and piles stones upon it because he abhors it, that is the place where God shall come, and manifest Himself to him in the fullness of His grace, "I will give her...the valley of Achor for a door of hope." The place of grace and the place of purging, the place of chastisement and the place of turning away from sin—this is the place that shall become the backslider's door of hope.

Now, beloved, we will not spend all our time in talking about the door, and forget what the hopes are, but who can describe the hopes that come trooping through that door? The hope of being kept, and preserved, and sustained through every struggle of this life's campaign—the hope of entering into rest eternal with Christ—the hope of the resurrection from among the dead—the hope of infinite glory for body and soul with Christ, world without end—all those hopes, which your backsliding has cast away, shall come back to you, and filled with hope, your spirit shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

III. I have but a minute or two to dwell upon the last point, whereon one might well speak for an hour—that is, RENEWED SONGS.

You must have noticed, dear friends, that *whenever men turn aside from Christ, they go away from all the music of true religion*. A little religion is a very miserable thing, if you have just enough religion to let you know that you are wrong, and not enough to make you right, you are spoiled for the joys of the world, yet you do not possess the joys of the world to come. I cannot help telling you again the old American story about the apples in the orchard. There is said to have been a gentleman, who asked a friend to come and have some of his apples, which he said were among the finest apples in the State, yet his friend did not come, though he was invited several times.

The gentleman thought that there must be some reason for his refusal, so he asked him why he did not come, and he answered, "The fact is, while I have been driving by your orchard, I have picked up an apple or two that fell into the road, and I can't say that I have at all pleasant memories of those apples, they were the sourest that I ever ate in my life, they set my teeth on edge even to think of them." "Oh!" said the owner of the orchard, "now I understand. Why, I sent a great many miles to buy those particular apples that grow just by the side of the hedge, and fall into the road. I bought them for the special benefit of the boys who might be inclined to steal my fruit. Whenever they taste them, they say to themselves, 'It is no use to rob that orchard, the apples are horribly sour.' But," he added "if you will come inside, where those boys do not come, you shall then see what a good apple is like."

So is it with religion, all along the outside of the hedge, where those people come who have just a little religion, the fruit is as sour as it can be—repentance that needs to be repented of, and that gripes the very spirit of the man who has it. There are plenty of those things on the outside, but you have no idea of the luscious sweetness of the fruits that grow in the center, and these shall be yours if you come back to the Master, and give yourself up wholly to Him, and the result will be that you will again begin to sing.

"*She shall sing,*" says the text, she shall not be able to talk out her joys, she shall feel that she must sing. "She shall sing *there,*" that is, in the wilderness, alone with Christ. "She shall sing there," "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." "She shall sing there, *as in the days of her youth.*" Youth is the time for singing, young converts are usually full of song, and if we return to our Lord, after having backslidden from Him, we shall get back the songs of our spiritual childhood as well as all the other good things that were with us when first we knew the Lord.

Ah! poor wanderer, if you come back to Christ, you shall relish again the hymns that you began to despise when you acquired that fine taste that some have, which scorns the precious things that please God's humble people. I know some who have become so lofty and proud that the Gospel is not good enough for them, they want something much more refined to suit their precious wisdom and their wonderful culture! Yes, but when the Lord puts them on short commons for a while, and whips them well for their ill manners, they are glad to get back to the simple hymns and to the elementary truths they once loved. You know how dear, good Dr. Guthrie, when he was dying, wanted those around him to sing him a bairn's hymn, and in another sense, when the children of God are spiritually reviving, they always want to have the hymns that were good for them when they were in their spiritual childhood.

The text further says, "*She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.*" I read you that song, oh, that our hearts might beat time to its tune! May we come back to the Lord so perfectly that we shall be able to say, "Let us sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously." May we see so much of His conquest of our sin that we may magnify His name, and exalt in Him! May we take Him so wholly to be ours that we may say again, "He is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him." I want you, who have gone back from God, to get such a renewed hold on Him that you will not know how to make enough of Him, and not know how sufficiently to praise and laud and magnify that infinite love which has brought you, as it were, through the very depths of the sea, and landed you safely on the other side.

Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord! If your feet may not dance, yet let your heart dance, and if you want no timbrel, as you are not under the old dispensation in which such instruments were allowable, yet let your fingers seem to beat the heavenly tunes, let your whole being praise and glorify the Lord who has brought you back from the land of your captivity. If you blessed Him when you first came to Him, bless Him yet more now that you are allowed to come to Him for the second time. If you praised Him when first you plunged in the fountain filled with blood, oh, bless Him still more now that He comes and washes your feet which have wandered so far from Him. If the first homecoming was with music and dancing, what shall the second homecoming be?

“Angels, assist our mighty joys.”

Rejoice with us over brothers who were dead, and are alive again, over lost ones that are now found. So may it be. Poor wanderers do come home, do come home! “The door is shut,” you say. Who shut it? Certainly not the Father, for He has sent His Son to be the open Door for all who will come unto Him. Christ Himself invites you to return, the Spirit is given to draw you back to God, and if you have never come before, come now. Oh, that you might be persuaded to come, ere yet you leave this house of prayer, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

HOSEA 2:14-15, EXODUS 15:1-21

You remember that, a fortnight ago, we read the second chapter of the prophecy of Hosea, and I preached from the fourteenth verse. I am going to continue that subject tonight, so we will read two verses of the same chapter over again. I am sure we shall never exhaust it, and you will not be weary of hearing it. We will begin with the text from which I then spoke to you.

Hosea 2. Verses 14-15. *Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.*

Now I want you to hear how she did sing in the days of her youth, in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. Turn to the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Exodus, where we have the joyful song of the emancipated chosen nation.

Exodus 15. Verses 1-10. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.*

They were all noise, and bluster, and boast, but observe the sublime attitude of God, how readily He eased Himself of His adversaries: "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters."

11-14. *Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.*

That is, the heathen nations who, at that time, inhabited the land of Palestine, "Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina."

15. *Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.*

This great deed of God would be told, and told again, all over Palestine, and the inhabitants would feel that their end was come, for who could stand against Israel's mighty God?

16. *Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.*

And how still they were! All the forty years that the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were scarcely ever attacked, and even then, it was not by the inhabitants of Canaan, but by the wandering Bedouin tribe of the Amalekites, who slew the hindmost of them. It was wonderful that no troops ever came out of Egypt to molest God's people after the destruction at the Red Sea, neither out of Canaan did any come to block their way. When God strikes, He makes His adversaries dread all future conflicts.

17-21. *Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

They sang as in an oratorio, Miriam singing the solo, and all the women joining in the jubilant chorus, and well might they rejoice after the great deliverance which the Lord had wrought for them.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—709, 548, 34 (VERSION 2)

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