

HEARING, SEEKING, FINDING

NO. 2590

A SERMON
 INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 2, 1898
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
 ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 24, 1883

*“Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.
 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.”
 Psalm 132:6-7*

LONG before David's time, the ark of the Lord had been almost forgotten by the children of Israel. It formed a most important part of the ceremonial which God had ordained, I may almost call it the central portion of that pattern which was shown to Moses in the mountain. But the ark had been carried into captivity by the Philistines, and afterwards, the terrible judgment wrought upon the men of Bethshemesh may have made many afraid to go near it, so it remained a long time in Kirjath-jearim, and there David found it, and after leaving it for a while at the house of Obed-edom, brought it up to Jerusalem with great rejoicing.

David's heart was so full of zeal for God that he desired that every part of the Lord's worship should be carried out with due order and proper solemnity. He wished to see a sanctuary built, in which the ark of the Lord should rest in its place, and the worship of God should be carried out as He judged was meet and fit.

The first thing therefore, for David to do, was to find the ark, for as I have already said, it was a central portion of the divinely ordained ceremonial. The ark was put away in the most holy place, and it was an express and notable symbol of the presence of God among the people. It was there, from above the mercy seat that God met with man, and communed with him in the person of the high priest. It was there that the Shekinah glory, denoting the special presence of God, shone forth between the cherubim. It is clear therefore, that if David meant to restore the worship of God to its due and proper order, his first business was to find the ark.

Yet, without forgetting that fact, I am not going to talk so much about David finding the ark as to think of some who are in the condition in which I once was, when I desired to find God, I longed to meet with Him, in the person of Christ, in His own appointed way, but I could not find Christ. My heart was dark, my eyes were holden, and I looked everywhere but in the right place. I did not look where the true Light was shining, but at last, I resolved that I must find Him, and I did find Him. I found Him where I little expected to find Him, and now, having found Him myself, I have it on my heart to come and speak to every one who is saying, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!”

It may be that my message shall be like the voice that reached poor Hagar in the wilderness, when she and her son were ready to perish with thirst, though there was a well of water close at hand. As the Lord said to her, “What aileth thee, Hagar?” so would I ask, “What aileth thee, poor seeking soul, when Christ is so near? His people will breathe a prayer for you that you may find Him even while I speak to you.”

I. My first remark will be that, LIKE DAVID, WE WISH TO FIND THE ARK, THAT ARK BEING CHRIST.

Dear friends, most here present—and I should suppose, all—are well instructed as to where God will meet with us as our reconciled God. The symbol was the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat, the reality we know is Christ. We know this, I say, for most of us have been instructed in the Scriptures from our youth up. Oh, that we all knew it in our hearts!

Now, concerning that ark, the first point to be noted is that it was covered with a *golden mercy seat*, which was the place of forgiveness when it was sprinkled with the sacrificial blood. Those who came to it through the high priest, knew that God had accepted them, and forgiven their sin. You and I know that we can never meet with God except at the mercy seat which is Christ Jesus the Lord. Christ made an atonement, a propitiation, for our sin, He “offered himself without spot to God.” Though in Him was no sin, yet He was made sin for us, for our sake, He came under the curse of the broken law, and now, if we want to meet with God, it must be at the mercy seat, by the propitiation which Christ has made.

You say that you know this is the case, then never try to meet God anywhere else, for remember that He is a consuming fire. There is no safety in making any attempt to come to God except by Christ Jesus, the one Mediator between God and men. By the way of His pierced body, that rent veil, is the only means of access for a sinner to a holy God.

In addition to this, the ark was not only a mercy seat, but it was a *throne of grace*. God sat there, as it were, upon a throne of mercy, and to us today, the Lord Jesus Christ is the throne of grace. God in Christ Jesus is our reigning God, stretching out the silver scepter of His mercy, and accepting all who come to Him.

Do you want to pray, poor soul, so that God will hear you? Then plead the blood of Christ. Do you wish to pour out your burdened spirit before the God of grace? Then come with the name of Christ in your mouth, and with the blood of Christ trusted by your heart, and you shall not be refused. There is no meeting place with God, there is no place for prevailing prayer, but where you meet God in the person of Jesus Christ the one great Sin offering.

Then further, the ark was *the place of God’s manifestation*. As much as could be seen of the glory of God was seen between the cherubim, it is said that a bright light ever rested there as a token of JEHOVAH’s perpetual presence, and if you would see the glory of God, you must look into the face of Jesus Christ. “No man can see God’s face, and live,” but we may see the face of Christ, and live by seeing it, but only through the veil of Christ’s humanity can we see it. I have noticed that, when men look at the sun, it has to be through smoked glass, and when we look at God, it must be through the incarnation of Christ, who was found in fashion as a man, though He thought it not a prize to be grasped to be equal with God.

Furthermore, David knew, and you also know, that there were within the ark three notable things—first, *the tablets of stone*, which God had ordered to be placed there for preservation, there was next, *the golden pot with manna*, and then there was also *Aaron’s rod that budded*. Now, if you come to Christ, you will find in Him all that these things represented, and all that you want.

First, there is preserved *the complete, vindicated, and honored law*. You will never be able in your own strength, to keep the law of the Lord, you will break it as surely as you live. Yet you cannot be accepted without a perfect righteousness, unless God sees you clothed in the garments of righteousness, He will never admit you to the wedding feast, but where are you to get that spotless robe? It is in Christ, for faith is imputed for righteousness to him who believes in the Son of God, even as Abraham believed in God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

But how is righteousness imputed to the guilty? Why, the believer lays hold of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and it is reckoned as if it were his own, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” That “one” is the Lord our righteousness, and when we put on His robe of righteousness, we stand before God “holy as the Holy One.”

If then, you want a perfect law, you will only find it in Christ. If any say that they have it in themselves, I believe that is only setting up another and a false Christ, for it is a derogation to the special glory of Christ, of whom alone it can be said that He has magnified the law and made it honorable, by perfectly keeping it.

I have no righteousness in and of myself, nor has any child of God any of his own, any that we once thought we had, we do count but dross and dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in Him, not

having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Oh, how we need then, to find the ark, Christ Jesus, that we may see there the unbroken tablets of the law!

But every child of God also needs *spiritual food*. If the Lord has quickened you, He has given you hunger with your new life, for spiritual hunger always goes with spiritual life, and you are saying, “Oh, that I might but eat of the crumbs that the little dogs get under their master’s table, but I must have some spiritual meat!”

You will never have it till you get where the golden pot of manna is to be found, there is the food of the saints treasured up in Christ. There is no food for a soul even in heaven except in Christ Jesus. He is the manna whereof, if a man eat, he shall live forever. This shall satisfy his soul, and strengthen him, and build him up, and develop him into a perfect man in Christ Jesus, but you must come to Christ for the food that was typified by the golden pot full of manna.

I think that I hear someone say, “I remember that a third thing that was in the ark was Aaron’s rod that budded, and that reminds me that I need *a power that can rule me*, that can say to my rebellious passions, ‘Be still,’ and that can make me walk in the way of God’s commands, bringing even every wandering thought into captivity.”

Well, there is no rod that I know of that can rule our rebellious nature but the rod of Christ Jesus, the great High Priest of God. Once let that blessed rod be all-powerful over us, and with it shall come all manner of buds, blossomings, and ripe fruit to our soul. Jesus said, “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.” From that rod alone can come the perfect fruit bearing that every true child of God desires to produce.

II. This leads me to my second remark, which is that, knowing what we do about Christ the ark, WE DESIRE TO FIND HIM.

I hope that I am addressing some who could even use the language of David, and say that they intensely desire to find Him. They cry to the mighty God of Jacob in their affliction, and with their whole heart and soul they long to find Christ. David made a vow about it, for his heart was set upon finding this ark.

Dear friend is *your* heart set upon finding Christ, or are you merely trifling with Him? Have you been so thoroughly awakened by the Holy Spirit that within you there burns a strong desire, insatiable as death itself, so that you feel that you must find Christ? If so, I am happy to be addressing you, and you are a happy person already to have this hungering and thirsting after Christ, for that holy craving shall be fully satisfied with Him.

David thirsted to find this ark *immediately*, and so much in earnest was he that he said, “Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the LORD.” Oh, when it comes to this pass—that you must have Christ, then you shall have Christ! When with every breath you seem to say, “Give me Christ, or else I die,” then you shall not die, but you shall have Christ and live.

I have heard of some who have at last been driven to such a pitch of vehement determination that they have gone into their chamber and said, “By the grace of God, I will never leave this place until I have found my Lord.” I knew one who said, “I dare not eat till I have found Christ, lest every morsel should choke me,” and in the ardor of his spirit to roll himself upon his Savior, and to be cleansed in His precious blood, he cast himself upon his knees, and cried unto his God, and the Lord revealed Himself to him. If you must have Christ, you shall have Him, but if you can be put off, you shall be put off.

Next, David sought the ark *most reverently*, for he recognized it as being a token of the presence of “the mighty God of Jacob,” and you and I must seek Christ reverently. I do not like to hear the irreverent appeals of those who speak of Christ as though He were to be seized by main force, and carried off against all law and justice. Truly, “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence,” but it is the violence of humble men and women who dare to act with holy boldness because they are encouraged by their God.

That I, a poor sinner, should ever speak with God in a sort of bullying tone, as I have heard some do, as though they said even to their God, “Stand and deliver,” this will never do. Your mouth is in the best position when it is in the dust, and your heart is nearest to prevailing with God when it is bowed even to the ground. “Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O LORD,” should be the language with which we humbly approach His throne of grace.

But while David thus sought very reverently, yet observe that it was *with intense desire that he might receive this ark when once he found it*. He wanted to find it, but his ultimate objective was to harbor it, to give hospitality to it, to find a resting place for it. And oh, dear heart, if you want to find Christ, let it be with this desire, “Oh, that He may come, and live in my soul, and be my own personal Christ! I do not want merely to hear about Him, to be taught about Him, I want to have Him, and if He is to be had, I will have Him. If there is grace beneath the sky for a poor sinner, then I, the chief of sinners, will not rest until I find rest in Him.” If I am speaking to any here of that kind, I say again that I am thrice happy.

III. Proceeding still further with our subject, and coming directly to our text—first, knowing what this ark is, and then desiring to find it—thirdly, WE HAVE HEARD WHERE IT IS, “Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah.”

“We heard of it.” And is it not a blessed thing that *we have heard about where Christ is?* Where did you first hear of Him? I do not know whether, by Ephratah, David meant Bethlehem, some think he did. That was the place where he was born, and in his own father’s house David had heard about the ark, and there are some of us who can say, with overflowing gratitude that we heard about Christ in our Ephratah, in our Bethlehem.

His dear name was mingled with our mother’s hush of lullaby, amongst the earliest recollections I have, are memories of hymns about the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God was our first school book, do we not remember, as little children, spelling out in Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, something about that dear Lord? “We heard of it at Ephratah,” in our earliest home—if that is the meaning of David’s words.

Oh, but if you heard of Christ so soon, why have you not found Him yet? You who go to market know that there is nothing like the morning market, and there is nothing like seeking Christ early. They that seek Him early *shall find Him*. If others do not, they shall, they shall find Him with an emphasis—find Him to a degree and in a measure in which some others do not. Oh, go to Christ in the morning market! Be the first there to buy the truth, and never sell it.

But Ephratah means—well, I do not know what it means, nor do any of the critics—it probably means some town of Ephraim. And I do not know, and some of you do not know perhaps, where you did not hear about Christ. You went to Sunday school, and you heard of Him there. You went home, and you heard of Him there. In these days, there are agencies that surround men so that they are often hearing of Him.

Some here present have long heard of Christ, and you are always hearing about Him, is it not time that you should get further than merely knowing and hearing, and should intensely seek until you find Him? You have heard of Christ from ministers, they have told you many a time, where Christ is. You have heard of Him from Christian men and women. I hope that you will hear of Him again tonight from some brother or sister who will buttonhole you before you get out of this place, for there are some here who are very quick at that blessed work, and they will be sharp after you, for their love to you is great, and they cannot bear that a soul should ever come within these walls, and then at last be lost. I do pray the Lord that none ever may.

Oh, that your coming here might be the result of God’s grace working upon your soul, that you may be saved! I remember one friend coming to me, and he said to me very earnestly, “I should like, sir, to take a seat in the Tabernacle.” I answered, “Well, do so, by all manner of means, I am very glad when people do so.” “But,” he said, “I may not come up to what you expect of me, for I have heard that if I take a sitting here, you will expect me to be converted, and I cannot guarantee that.” “No,” I replied, “I

do not want you to guarantee it, I do not mean the word *expect* in that sense at all, but I do hope that it will be so.” “Oh,” he exclaimed, “and so do I, I am going to take a sitting with that very view.”

And it was so, of course, it was so. When the man wished it to be so, God accepted the wish, and heard the prayer, and he was brought to Christ, and joined the church. May everyone who comes here have to say, “Well, wherever we did not hear about Christ, we did hear of Him at the Tabernacle, that was our Ephratah. We were told where He was, and we received plain and clear directions as to how we might find Him.”

IV. Now, fourthly, the next words are, “WE FOUND IT.”

You remember the learned Grecian who, when he had made a discovery while in the bath, leaped out of it, and ran down the streets crying, “Eureka! Eureka!” “I have found it! I have found it!” Oh, those are the best words in my text, “We found it.”

Well, where did we find it? David said that he found it “in the fields of the wood,” that is, *where he did not expect to find it*. Have not many of us found Christ where we never thought we should find Him? “Oh!” says one, “I shall never go to heaven, I am sure, through the preaching of Mr. So-and-so, I cannot stand him. I am sure I would never get a blessing among such and such people.” And perhaps, dear friend, the very man that you have thought could not be a blessing to you is to be made a blessing to you, and the very place where you did not expect to find Christ will be the exact spot where you shall meet with Him.

In the case of David finding the ark, it was not only where he could not have expected it, but it was *in a place that was despised*—a rustic place—“in the fields of the wood.” Perhaps the Lord may lead you to some very plain minister, without any polish, or talent, or ability—a rustic speaker—a very Amos, and lo! There you will find the ark of the Lord. If the Lord will guide you to heaven through the word of a chimney sweep, it would be far better than that you should go to hell under the ministry of the most eloquent orator or the greatest bishop who ever lived.

If you are brought to Jesus Christ by one who murders the Queen’s English—it is a pity that he should do that, but still, it does not matter much so long as he does not murder the Lord’s Gospel, for the Gospel comes out straight and clear, despite his broken words—then you will, as it were, find Christ “in the fields of the wood.”

I have known some who have found Christ in a very lowly place, they have gone away from all companions, and up in their own little room they have sought and found Him. I knew one who found the Savior down a sawpit, and another who found Him in a hayloft. Some have walked the streets of London, and have been more alone there than anywhere else, and as they have trudged along, men have seemed to them like trees walking, they have found Christ, figuratively, “in the fields of the wood.”

Get alone, dear friends, it is horrible to live in a crowd. I do not know how a man’s spiritual life is to be maintained constantly in a crowd, he must often be alone. “Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.”

“We found it in the fields of the wood,” may perhaps mean, brethren, that you will find Christ *where you lose yourselves*. You know that it is very easy to lose yourself in a wood, you get in among the trees, and you do not know whether you should turn to the right or to the left. Or you are in “the fields of the wood,” and you are quite lost, for you cannot tell which way to go.

The nearest thing to being saved is, knowing that one is lost. When a man is really lost in his own consciousness, the next thing is for him to be saved. The end of yourself is the beginning of Christ. May the Lord cause you to know that you are thoroughly lost, and then soon you shall sing, “We found Christ in the wood where we lost ourselves.”

It has struck me too, in thinking over our text, that often, we find Christ *very near to us*. Where did Adam go after he had disobeyed his Lord? He went and hid himself among the trees. And you and I found Christ where we were hiding, we did not know that He was among the trees of the wood, we thought that we were out of sight of God, and far away from heaven and grace and mercy, yet all the time, there was the mercy close at hand.

Poor sinner, you do not know how easy it is to be saved. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” You do not know how near that salvation is to you. “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

V. Fifthly, and very briefly, “WE WILL GO,” “We will go into his tabernacles.”

Now that we have found where Christ is, and we can go to Him, *we will have Him*. We will go to God in Christ, “we will go into his tabernacles.” We will not delay a minute longer, but we will, even now, by faith, go to the great Father in His own appointed way. We will go to Him for all that He is prepared to give, “we will go into his tabernacles” to find the mercy seat, to bow before the throne of grace, to behold the glory of God, to eat of the manna, to see the perfect law, and to come under the governance of the blessed rod that buds. “We will go into his tabernacles,” first into the outer court, then into the inner court, and last of all, into the holy of holies. It is a blessed thing to see a soul on the go towards God when Christ becomes the Way.

“We will go into his tabernacles,” and *we will dwell there*. We will dwell with God, we will get back to the Father’s house where there is “bread enough and to spare,” and there we will stop. We will go to learn of God, we will be the disciples of Christ. We will go, and we will go at once. Oh, I wish that I could hear some saying, “We will go. We know about Christ, we have found Him near us, we will now go, and simply trust and rest, and so dwell in the great Father’s love.” God grant that you may do so!

VI. And then the last word is, “WE WILL WORSHIP,” “We will worship at his footstool.”

In lowly reverence, we will bow ourselves down in the very dust, for we are but dust and ashes even when we are saved. “We will worship at his footstool,” that is, *with deepest solemnity*, for even His ark, His temple, is but the footstool of the great King. Oh, what must He be! Heaven is His throne, but the earth is His footstool. This world is a wonderful place. I have looked upon mountains, and hills, and valleys, and mighty seas, yet the whole earth is nothing but the footstool of God. Let us go then, and worship before Him in lowly reverence and with deepest solemnity.

But let us worship there *with great joy*. His “saints shall shout aloud for joy,” and as they bow at His footstool, it shall not be as slaves, but as His chosen and accepted ones. Let us also bow there *very gratefully*, blessing God that He has brought us to His feet. Part of the preparation for heaven is to worship at God’s footstool on earth, but by and by, we shall worship in His palace above. “We will go and worship” because we have found Christ, and He is ours. May this be true of all of you, dear friends, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 132

This psalm is a prayer and pleading of the covenant, such a prayer as might have been offered by Solomon at the opening of the Temple, or by any of the descendants of David, either in their times of joy or in their seasons of affliction. It divides itself into three parts. In the first seven verses, mention is made of David’s zeal for the ark and for the house of the Lord. Then, in three more verses, there follows the prayer at the moving of the ark, and then the last verses mention the covenant which God made with His servant David, which is pleaded by David’s descendants in after years. The psalm begins thus—

Verse 1. *LORD*, (or JEHOVAH), *remember David, and all his afflictions:*

We cannot come before God in our own name, so what a mercy it is that we have a good name to plead! You and I do not approach the Lord in the name of any saint or holy man, we plead the name of “great David’s greater Son,” and with the utmost emphasis can we say, “Lord, remember Jesus, and all His afflictions—His griefs and sorrows on our behalf.” This was a most proper prayer, however, as it

stands, from those who belonged to David's race, they pleaded the name of him with whom God had entered into covenant on the behalf of all his seed, "Lord, remember David, and all his trouble—his trouble which he took about Thy house, and about Thine ark."

2. *How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;*

Jacob was the great maker of vows, and you will remember also that Jacob, on his dying bed, made mention of "the mighty God of Jacob." David in this psalm imitated his forefathers, he made a solemn vow to the Lord that he would build a house for God, even as Jacob did when he said, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house."

3-5. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*

He used strong words to signify that his house would be no house to him, and that he would not regard his bed as a place of rest until he had discovered where God would dwell. It means that he would give himself wholly up to this project, it should be his life-work to find a suitable place for the worship of the Most High.

I wish that this same zeal would take firm hold of all Christians. How many there are who dwell in their ceiled houses while the house of God lies in waste! They can provide abundantly for themselves, but for God's cause, for God's Gospel, for a place wherein the poor may meet for the preaching of the Word, they do not seem to care. May the Lord give us to feel something of this self-denial and devotion to God that moved the heart of David!

6-7. *Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.*

This is what David did, and you see what trouble he took in the matter, but you know that he was not permitted to build a house for God. Yet he had the same reward as if he had done so, for God built up his house, and established his dynasty for many generations. God often takes the will for the deed with His servants, and when they wish to do a good work, and there is some reason why they may not carry out their plans, the Lord looks upon them, and gives them the same reward as if they had accomplished their design.

After all, dear friends, David wish to build a house for God, although it was very right and proper in itself, yet in the sight of God, was but a small matter. He took little account of Solomon's Temple, though it was "exceedingly magnificent." You remember how Stephen said, just as a sort of passing remark of no great importance, "Solomon built him an house. Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And it is a very curious fact in history, that from the very day in which the great Temple was dedicated, spiritual religion began to decline in the land.

God's worship was never more pure than when it was rendered in a tent in a humble way, but as soon as the great gilded Temple was erected, and priestly pomp began to display itself, it seemed as if men began to depart from the spiritual worship of JEHOVAH. How often it is that, the more gorgeous the ceremonial, the less hearty and the less spiritual the worship becomes!

Our great and glorious God, who fills heaven and earth, takes small account of noble architecture and earthly pomp and splendor, or of the sweetness of music, or the fumes of incense. He is far above all that is merely sensuous, but He delights to dwell where there are broken hearts that He can bind up, and where genuine believers worship Him in spirit and in truth.

8-10. *Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.*

Turn back for a minute to the eighth verse, "Arise, O JEHOVAH, into thy rest." This exclamation was very similar to the language which Moses used whenever the ark set forward, "Rise up, JEHOVAH,

and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.” And when it rested he said, “Return, O JEHOVAH, unto the many thousands of Israel.”

So David did well to use similar words, when the ark was at last brought to its resting place. He calls it the ark of God’s strength, for such it really was. It had done great wonders. It was when the ark was borne by the priests into the midst of Jordan that the river was divided so that the people could pass over dryshod. Even when the ark was taken captive, it brought disaster to the Philistines, and when the men of Beth-shemesh irreverently looked into it, great numbers of them were slain. It was truly the ark of God’s strength—the great type of the power of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the ninth verse we read, “Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness.” That is the best robe that he can wear who serves God, and you know that all of us who believe in Jesus have been made kings and priests unto God. Righteousness, therefore, should be the garment which we wear from head to foot.

“And let thy saints shout for joy.” God’s holy ones should be happy ones. No man has so much right to be happy as he that is holy. When we serve the happy God, we may well be happy ourselves, and we are not to keep our happiness hidden within our own hearts, “Let thy saints shout for joy.” Let them exult, let them triumph, let them express their delight.

The tenth verse is a prayer for the king, and for the whole line of kings, the psalmist pleads with the Lord to continue to look upon them for the sake of David with whom He had made His covenant.

Now the psalm finishes with the covenant made with David.

11. *The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*

That was literally fulfilled in a long line of kings, but it is more gloriously fulfilled in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. David the prophet-king is dead, but he, seeing before that God would raise up Christ, laid hold upon this precious promise, “Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” Our Lord Jesus Christ is the King of the Jews, but He is also King of kings and Lord of lords, and as God has set Him on the throne, neither devils nor men can ever pull Him from it.

12. *If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.*

And so it would have been, the kingdom of Israel would never have been broken up, either by internal rebellion or external attack, if it had not been that the kings flagrantly turned aside from God. He bore with them very long, but they waxed worse and worse, and at last God’s covenant had to be kept, through their default, by a deed of vengeance against them. Yet today, in spirit, this covenant stands fast, for the Lord Jesus has kept it on His people’s behalf, and now He shall sit upon the throne of David for evermore, blessed be His holy name!

13. *For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.*

Here are some of the sweetest words that ever were written, there are fathomless depths of sweetness in them, for here we have the truth concerning the election of the church of God, “The LORD hath chosen Zion.” Some men cannot endure to hear the doctrine of election. I suppose they like to choose their own wives, but they are not willing that Christ should select His bride, the church. Everybody is to have a free will except God. But let them know that God still exercises a sovereign choice among the sons of men. Jesus said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” Blessed be His name, the truth still stands, “The LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.”

We delight to dwell with those whom we love, and God so loves His church that He desires to always dwell in it, and He does dwell in it by His Spirit, and a day shall come when the perfected church, the new Jerusalem, shall come down out of heaven from God, having the glory of the Lord, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof.

You know how the last chapters of the book of Revelation describe the glorified church, and God dwelling in the midst of it. “The LORD hath chosen Zion,” that is the first thing—election. “He hath

desired it for his habitation,” that is the next thing—the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the church, and this is one of the greatest marvels of which we have ever heard.

14. *This is my rest for ever:*

Is it not wonderful that God, JEHOVAH, should say of His people, “This is my rest for ever”? Now, if He rests, I am sure that we may. It is very remarkable that, when God was making the world, He never rested till He had fitted it up for His child, and everything was ready for Adam. God never stopped His work till there was everything that Adam could desire, and when it was all complete, then He rested the seventh day.

So, when He has done everything for His church, when His work for her is all completed, then Christ rests, but not till then. He says, by the mouth of Isaiah, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth,” but that being once accomplished He says, “This is my rest for ever.” God does not rest in the work of His hands as a Creator, He rests in the work of Christ as the Redeemer.

14. *Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*

God dwells in His church, and will dwell in it. He has desired to do so, and His desire will certainly be realized, who can cause Him to be disappointed?

15. *I will abundantly bless her provision:*

By which I understand that there will be provision, that there will be abundant provision, and that there will be abundant blessing on that provision. God grant that we may always find it so! Let us plead this precious “I will,” “I will abundantly bless her provision.”

15. *I will satisfy her poor with bread.*

Poor, and yet satisfied, satisfied with bread! Ay, but what kind of bread? The Bread that came down from heaven, the Bread of God, which is Christ Jesus, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed.

“I will satisfy her poor with bread.” The Lord does not say anything about her rich. No, but we read in another place, “The rich he hath sent empty away.” I wish ever to remain among the poor of the Lord’s flock, not to put my name down among those perfect people who are so rich in grace that they are obliged to tell everybody about it. No, I would be poor in spirit—emptied more and more, lying lowly and humbly at my Lord’s feet. I am the more ready to do this because I perceive that the Lord has prepared all His goodness for the poor in spirit, “I will satisfy her poor with bread.”

16. *I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*

The prayer in the eighth verse was, “Arise, O LORD, into thy rest.” In the fourteenth verse, we read the answer, “This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell.” Then in the ninth verse was the petition, “Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness.” Now the Lord gives the response, “I will also clothe her priests with salvation.”

Righteousness is only a part of salvation, but oh, what glorious raiment it is when a man once wears the silken dress of salvation! Talk of “cloth of gold”—there is nothing among royal array that can be compared to the vestments of the saints. I go in for vestments when they are those of which the Lord says, “I will also clothe her priests with salvation.” They shall be covered over with it, from head to foot, so that there shall be nothing of His people to be seen but His own salvation.

Notice the prayer in the ninth verse, “Let thy saints shout for joy.” And the answer is here, “Her saints shall shout aloud for joy.” God always gives more than we ask. Silver prayers get golden answers. “Open thy mouth wide,” He says, “and I will fill it.” Ay, and then open it again, and He will fill it yet again, for He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud:*

As a stag’s horn grows, putting out fresh buds and branches, so shall the power of David be increased and enlarged. We see that promise fulfilled spiritually in the growing Kingdom of Christ.

17. *I have ordained a lamp for my anointed.*

His name shall never go out like an extinguished lamp. If it be blown out once, as it were, in the death of Solomon or any other king, yet from that lamp shall another be lighted. The Lord says, “I have ordained a lamp,” and Christ will always be a source of brightness in the world, He will ever be “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.” As the holy lamp in the sanctuary was never to go out, so has God ordained that Christ shall ever shine to the joy and delight of His people.

18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame:*

In this psalm two sets of clothing are mentioned, and you can have which you like. Here is one, “I will clothe her priests with salvation,” and there is the other, “His enemies will I clothe with shame.” Shame is a terrible thing, many a man has thrown away his life to try to escape from the shame of a guilty conscience, but the ungodly will be forever clothed with shame, and they will be eternally condemned. “His enemies,” that is the description of the ungodly. It is of small account what your outward character appears to be, if you are an enemy of Christ, these are the garments in which you will die, and these are the garments in which you will continue to suffer forever: “His enemies will I clothe with shame.”

18. *But upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

Upon Christ the laurel wreath, or rather, the crown of glory, shall never wither. “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—617, 130

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