HAPPINESS—THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY OF CHRISTIANS

NO. 1359

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 10, 1877
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD,
the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!
and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;
and thou shalt tread upon their high places."
Deuteronomy 33:29

THESE are the last recorded words of Moses, and they are significant, for they show us that he found comfort in his dying moments in considering the happiness of the people for whom he had labored all his life. From the day when, by God's power, he led them up out of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness, they had never ceased to lie near his heart.

They had been a very heavy burden to him at times, but with marvelous meekness and patience he had borne with their many rebellious provocations, and only once spoken bitterly of them. Oftentimes had he stood in the gap and made intercession for them, when otherwise they would have been destroyed.

He had for their sakes given up the most glorious prospect that was ever proposed to the mind of man, for the Lord had said to him in secret, "Let me alone, that I may destroy them; and I will make of thee a greater nation." But no, even such a proposal could not divert him from his patriotic zeal for his people.

He loved Israel, erring Israel, ungrateful Israel, as a mother loves her child, and family aggrandizement was relinquished for love of the nation. Still he continued to instruct, and lead, and guide the stiff-necked race, having no thought but God's glory in the midst of Israel, and no ambition but to see the tribes brought at length into the promised land.

When about to die, the ruling passion was strong upon him, and from it he draws his consolation. He seems to say to himself, "I can no more go out and come in—also the Lord has said unto me, You shall not go over this Jordan, but though I must leave the beloved nation, yet they are a happy people, and are safe in JEHOVAH'S hands."

He looks with sparkling eyes at the privileges with which God had enriched them, and he feels that he may quietly go up to the mountain and fall asleep, for they would be blessed when he was gone, and saved of the Lord.

Ah, my dear young friends, you who are children of godly families, you cannot tell what joy you will give to your parents if you are converted to God. For when they come to die they will find it one of their sweetest consolations to see their children walking in the truth. They have loved you dearly, and they will feel a pang in leaving you, but if they can feel that God has blessed you, and saved you, they will die in peace.

I have heard saints when dying say, "There is but one thing that I want, and for which I could wish to be spared a little longer. I could wish to live to see all my family believing in the Lord. O that all my offspring were lovers of Jesus."

I have heard dying saints express themselves in language somewhat similar to that of David, "The LORD hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, although my house be not so with God as I could desire."

That, "although my house be not so with God," has been a thorn in their pillow, and they have felt it painful to quit their household while yet their children were so unhappy as to be out of Christ and unreconciled to God. Think of this, dear young people, I pray you, and perhaps natural affection may be blessed in the hand of God to lead you to seek after eternal salvation.

Thus you see how Moses consoled himself. But why was not this expression of the great lawgiver left as a soliloquy unrecorded? Moses had cheered himself with this reflection, "Happy art thou, O Israel," what need to write it down, or to utter it before the people?

It is frequently an unwise thing to tell a man of his propitious surroundings, for he may become vain of them. You may commend a man's estate until he foolishly dreams that you are commending *him*. When you praise a man's position, it is the next thing to flattering the man, for the most of men do not divide between themselves and their condition, but read a commendation of their condition as a commendation of themselves, though it be not so.

Hence one has sometimes to be very chary of calling men happy, and all the more so because we cannot generally be sure that they are happy—external circumstances being but a poor means of judgment. The fairest apple may be rotten at the core. The finest linen may be a cover for a corpse.

Moreover, according to the truthful rule of the ancients, no man is to be counted happy till he is dead, seeing that you do not know the whole of his life. And it may happen that the circumstances which now appear to be the foundation of a happy life may turn out to be a preparation for increased bitterness in the after part of existence.

Yet Moses speaks thus openly to Israel without a word of qualification or caution, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee!" Now, we are quite certain that Moses did not err in this. It would be great self-conceit to imagine such a thing. We may confide in the clearness of his judgment, in the maturity of his experience, and in the fidelity of his spirit.

We are sure that he did not speak with rashness, for he was of a meek and gentle disposition, and somewhat slow in speech, and not likely, therefore, to warm into unreasonable enthusiasm, and go beyond the sober truth.

Above all, the Holy Ghost has adopted the lawgiver's words, for He had Himself inspired them, and we have them here in the infallible Word of God, so that it is quite certain that Israel was happy, even as our text declares. The people were favored and it was right for them to be told so. A wise design led to their being reminded of the blessed fact.

I think that Moses thus eulogized the nation by way of consoling them for his departure. He did as much as say, "I climb the mount to go away to God, but happy are you, O Israel. Whether Moses be with you or not, God is with you." No doubt many would say, as the great lawgiver departed, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." But Moses reminds them that the shield of their help, and the sword of their excellency would still be with them, and they would still be a people saved of the Lord. What better comfort can be offered to bereaved hearts?

I think also that he had in his mind's eye the fact that they were now about to face new difficulties. Under Joshua they were to cross the Jordan and fight the Canaanites. They had known occasional brushes in the wilderness with Amalek and Bashan, but for the most part they had led peaceable lives.

Now, however, each man was to be a soldier. From the day in which his foot pressed the promised land, each man was to contend for the mastery, and therefore Moses sustains them with rich and nourishing meat to strengthen them for the new service.

"Happy art thou, O Israel—you are about to throw yourself into the midst of ferocious tribes, who will all conspire to cut you off. But you are a people saved of the Lord. Your enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

"My never-ceasing songs shall show
The mercies of the Lord,
And make succeeding ages know

How faithful is His Word.

"The sacred truths His lips pronounce
Shall firm as heaven endure;
And if He speak a promise once,
The eternal grace is sure.

"How long the grace of David held
The promised Jewish throne!
But there's a nobler covenant seal'd
To David's greater Son.

"His seed for ever shall possess
A throne above the skies;
The meanest subject of His grace
Shall to that glory rise."

So, then, I gather from the example of Moses that to commend a man's condition, if you have a wise motive for it, and can either console him under trouble, or inspire him for future service, is a right thing to do.

This morning we are going to repeat the experiment. Whatever was said about the happy condition of the natural Israel is emphatically true of the spiritual Israel. The tribes were our types, and what was true of them is true of us.

Without any sort of wresting of the text, we shall this morning apply to all believers, to all who rest in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh, the words of Moses to the tribes, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD." We are the true Israel, the spiritual seed of the father of the faithful, and to us unbounded happiness belongs.

This shall be our point this morning. First, *let us consider the happy condition of God's people.* And then, secondly, *let us consider the result of our fully realizing this happiness*. May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, fill us with all joy and peace while we commune upon this subject. May the blessed God now bless all His children.

I. Let us dwell upon THE HAPPY CONDITION OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

The Israelites were so favored that Moses himself was astonished at the eminently desirable condition in which they were placed. We may readily imagine that we see him lifting up his hands with surprise, and saying, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee!" He considered the nation to be incomparably favored, and therefore inquired in astonishment, "Who is like unto thee!"

He had seen Egypt with all its wisdom and its wealth, and the desert tribes in all their rustic simplicity, and doubtless he knew the condition of most of the nations under heaven, but having his eye upon them all he, nevertheless, looks upon the chosen race which God had brought up out of Egypt, and he says, "Who is like unto thee!"

Beloved, you who are in Christ are favored by God beyond all others. None in the whole universe are so happily placed as you are, "Ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people." If you have been born again and saved, you are the pick and choice of all God's creatures, and He has indulged you with a measure of love and kindness such as He has shown to none else.

I address believers as a body, and I ask you, would you change your estate with the rich of this world? Would you barter grace for gain? Surely not. There is much that is comfortable connected with the possession of wealth. But if you look at the opulent, as such, there is no reason to believe that they are the possessors of any great amount of happiness.

Gold cannot lighten the heavy heart or cool the burning brow. Far oftener it cankers the soul, and lies like a weight upon the spirit. It is a heavy metal and has weighed many down to hell. You, even though

you are the poor of the flock, the despised and rejected of men, are a people infinitely favored beyond those who possess the treasures of this fleeting world.

Select even a company of princes, and let them stand before you in all their pomp, half worshipped by their subjects. But they will not excite your envy, for "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," and those who climb to the high places of the earth commonly confess that there is little peace of mind to be found there.

You who believe in Jesus are kings of a nobler sort already, and enjoy honors and blessings which emperors might covet. You reign in Christ after a far higher manner than princes and emperors, for you rule in a superior realm, since the spiritual far exceeds the material. Who is like unto thee, O believer, amongst the mighty ones of the earth? for the Lord JEHOVAH is your strength and your song, your portion and your praise, your comfort and your crown.

Turn, if you will, to those who are famous for knowledge, men of skill, and wit, and research, yet among these there are none to be found comparable in happiness to Christians. To know yourself forgiven, to know yourself eternally saved, to know yourself ordained unto eternal life, to be assured that you will enjoy bliss unspeakable when yonder sun turns to a coal, and the moon is black as sackcloth of hair—to know all this is to be unspeakably favored. The utmost learning cannot compare with it.

Nor if you take the sons of pleasure, with their wine and their music, and their sensual joys, can you find any rivals for our happiness. Solomon tells us concerning laughter that it is mad, and sums up all earthly joy with, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Our consecrated pleasures are not such. Our holy joy has no delusion in it. It is solid and real and can never be taken from us, and therefore those who possess it are a people unparalleled for blessedness.

Wealth, rank, learning, fame, pleasure, and all else that man holds dear, we would gladly renounce for the joy of our Lord. He has satisfied us with favor, and filled us to the brim with content, now that He has given us Himself for our portion. Blessed are our very dwellings, and the beds we lie upon, and the tables at which we sit. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

Am I speaking to some believers who are not enjoying this happiness? Is it not strange that men should be in a position which angels might envy, and yet they fail to realize their blest estate? Just as some men with thousands a year will live like paupers, so are there others who, with a boundless income of eternal love at their disposal, nevertheless starve their souls with small delights.

Just think for a minute, O downcast believers, of this singular fact, and chide yourselves into a more joyful frame of mind. There was a time when you would have given your eyes to be what you now are. Do you remember when sin lay heavy on your conscience, and a dread of death and hell brooded over you? What would you have given then to have been able to say, "By grace I am forgiven"?

You know you used to envy the very least, and poorest, and most afflicted of God's saints in those days, and you were wont to think that if you could lie in a dungeon, and be fed on bread and water all your life, yet if you could but once get rid of the burden of sin, you would never murmur again. Yet here you are, accepted in the Beloved, and conscious of being adopted into the family of heaven, and for all that your joy is at a low ebb. Should it be so?

Remember also the time of your espousals, the season of your first love. Why, in those days you wondered how a Christian could be unhappy. As for yourself, you were so full of intense delight that when you heard some older Christian lamenting over anxiety, doubt, fear, and the like, you looked at him as a prodigy, you could not comprehend his speaking after that fashion.

You felt that to say, "My beloved is mine and I am his," was the very essence of heaven to you, and you could not make out how a man could be an heir of glory and not be as overflowing with delight as you were. Therefore, I say, chide yourself to think that you should have fallen from your eminency, and come away from those sweet delights.

Beloved, if we are not as happy as the days are long in these summer months, it is entirely our own fault, for there is plenty of reason for being so. Come, Christians, why are you cast down? Why are you

so disquieted? Have you forgotten your redemption, forgotten your adoption, forgotten your justification, and forgotten your safety in Christ?

Have you not also somewhat neglected to survey your hopes? What if you have little of this world? See what is laid up in store for you hereafter. Within a few years at the outside, you are to be with the angels, where no dust of toil shall ever stain your garments again, where no sweat of labor shall stand upon your brow, where no care shall scourge the heart, and no sorrow dim the eye. Grief, loss, bereavement, or want shall never approach you there.

You are of the imperial blood, and you are soon to be acknowledged as a peer of heaven's own realm. The day of your accession to sacred honors hastens on. It may be but a week or two that the bliss will tarry—even a few hours may be the only interval, and we shall stand beatified amongst the perfected ones who see God's face without a veil between.

We have every reason to be happy, and if we are not so, it must be because we fail to remember the privileges which our Lord has bestowed upon us. Let me stir you up, my brothers and sisters, to happiness this morning.

"Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days?
Come, cease to groan, and loudly sing
A psalm of gladsome praise."

What a blessed task is mine—to urge my brethren to be happy! How highly favored are you to be exhorted to so delicious a privilege. When happiness becomes a duty, who will not be glad? What a blessed people are they to whom to be delighted is but to obey the divine command, to whom rejoicing in the Lord is an obligation as well as a privilege.

My brethren, I would urge you to rejoice, this morning, because if you are indeed believers in Christ, you are "*a people saved by the LORD.*" If you only read as far as the word "saved," and there pause, what music there is in the words, "a people saved"! Not a people who may be saved, who are in process of being saved, but a people saved. For he that believes in Jesus is saved.

The work is done. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Unto us who are saved," says the apostle, not speaking of salvation as a future boon, but as a deed accomplished. It is ours at this very moment, for in Christ Jesus we are "a people saved."

The Israelites were saved from Pharaoh's domination. With a high hand and an outstretched arm did JEHOVAH bring them forth, even as at this day, you and I are saved from the reigning power of sin. We are no longer held spell-bound by Satan, so that we cannot bestir ourselves and seek after holiness. We are saved from the bondage of evil, even from the iron furnace of our ruling passions.

The Israelites were saved also from the destroying angel. On that night when the avenger flew through the land and smote all the firstborn of Egypt, the blood mark on the lintel saved the families of Israel, and even so are we saved by the precious blood of Christ. No angel of vengeance can smite the man who is sheltered beneath the atoning blood. He shall feast securely when Egypt sends up her mighty cry.

The chosen tribes were saved when Pharaoh pursued them, and his hosts overtook them at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Then came the fiery cloudy pillar between Israel and Egypt, brightness to Israel but darkness to their foes. They could not come near them all that night, and in the morning Israel was safe, for the Lord's redeemed marched on foot through the Red Sea, and saw their enemies no more—they were drowned in the midst of the sea—for God had saved His people.

Even so has He saved us from being overtaken and overthrown by temptation. He has rescued us from the renewed attacks of the old, corrupt nature combined with the cunning of Satan—He has saved us up to this hour from besetting sin and its fierce pursuit.

When the people came into the wilderness, they were like to have perished of thirst, but He saved them by bidding the crystal stream leap from the rock. They were ready to die of hunger, but He saved them, for the manna fell from heaven round about their camp.

They were attacked by Amalek when they were weary, but He saved them, for Joshua's sword and Moses' outstretched hands brought victory for them till their foes were utterly defeated. Israel knew what it was to be saved in many ways, and so do we. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, fed with the bread of heaven, and made to drink of water from the Rock of Ages. And as for our adversaries, they have not been able to harm us, for the Lord has saved us unto this day.

Mark the emphasis which Moses puts here, "A people saved *by the LORD*." You and I know that if we are saved at all it is of the Lord. We cannot talk of merit. We abhor the very word. Nor dare we attribute our salvation to our own free will—free grace must wear the crown if ever we are saved.

Bethink you, brethren, what a blessing it is to have a salvation which is altogether divine. If you had saved yourself, that poor work of yours would, like all man's work, one day pass away. But salvation is of the Lord, and therefore it will stand forever.

It is God that appointed and arranged it, even the Father, who is the God of our election. It is Jesus who worked it out, even the Son, who is the God of our redemption. And it is the Holy Spirit who applies it, even the Holy Ghost, who is the God of our regeneration and our sanctification. The Triune God has wrought all our works in us and for us, glory be to His name.

"Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD!" I wish I could speak as I feel this morning—I would fire your hearts with enthusiasm towards Him who loved you before the earth was—who, having chosen you, purchased you with an price immense, brought you out from among the rest of mankind by His power, separated you unto Himself to be His people forever, and who now loves you with a love that will never weary nor grow cold, but will bring you unto Himself, and seat you at His right hand forever and ever.

You are saved. Remember that, O believer. Not half-saved, but completely saved—saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. You shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Why, that one word "saved" is enough to make the heart dance as long as life remains. "Saved!" Let us hang out our banners and set the bells a-ringing.

Saved! What a sweet sound it is to the man who is wrecked, and sees the vessel going down, but at that moment discovers that the lifeboat is near, and will rescue him from the sinking ship. To be snatched from the devouring fire, or saved from fierce disease, just when the turning point has come, and death appears imminent—these also are occasions for crying, "Saved."

But to be rescued from sin and hell is a greater salvation still, and demands a louder joy. We will sing it in life, and whisper it in death, and chant it throughout eternity—*saved by the LORD*. "Happy indeed are you, O Israel".

Another source of joy for the Israelite indeed is found in the grand truth that the Lord's beloved are also *shielded by God*—"who is the shield of thy help." God's people are a warring people, and yet a happy people, for though dangers surround them, omnipotence preserves them. No sooner are we saved than we have to contend with foes.

Now, these foes are very apt at warfare, and ready to smite us even to the death. Hence the necessity for this blessed word, "The shield of thy help." The sword shall be lifted against you, but God Himself will interpose between you and that sword. The arrows shall fly winged with malicious design, but God shall hold His sacred protection over you and protect you from even the thought of ill.

He is "the shield of thy help." Think of this and rejoice. Many evils would injure you, and even destroy you if they could, but JEHOVAH Jesus interposes between you and them.

"Many times since days of youth,
May Israel truly say,
Foes devoid of love and truth

Afflict me day by day;

"Yet they never can prevail,
God defends His people still;
Jesus' power can never fail
To save from all that's ill."

See how the Lord our God *has* interposed already on innumerable occasions. We have been laid low by sickness, but it has wrought our spiritual health. We have experienced losses, but we have been enriched by them in the highest sense. We have even endured calumny, but our character is still as bright as ever through the gracious protection of our God.

We have been assailed by temptation, but the evil influence did not enter our spirit, so as to pollute it, for just then grace came in to prevent our yielding to the vile suggestion. We have been the subjects of many doubt and skepticisms, but always, when these have flown at us like vultures, God Himself, in infinite love, has turned aside their fierce attacks.

We have been preserved in Christ Jesus, for He is our shield. We have been strengthened by Him, for He is our help, and being helped, we have escaped every assault, for He is our help and our shield. Brethren, you *shall be* shielded throughout the entire battle of life. If all the quivers of hell are to be emptied out against you, behold the Lord God is your salvation. You may trust and not be afraid, for the Lord says to each one of His chosen, even as unto Abraham, "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

This also *is* true today. As you have been protected, so are you now shielded by the Lord. Your present troubles are only like a shower rattling upon the window pane—you shall not so much as be damped by them. Your adversaries appear to be let loose against you, but their fiery darts will stop short upon that wondrous shield of God, which will blunt their points.

"Trust ye in the LORD for ever, for in the Lord JEHOVAH there is everlasting strength." "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

Will you not be happy after that? As you cower down beneath those mighty wings, even as the little chickens shelter under the hen, are you not happy? As you hide behind that mighty shield, do you not feel restful and content? If not, pray that you may be, for so you ought to be.

Besides defensive armor we need offensive weapons, and we ought to be happy in the next place, because we are *divinely armed*, "Who is the sword of thy excellency." This wondrous Word of God, when blessed by the Holy Spirit, is our sword with which to fight the battles of life. Does sin invade us? The precept smites it, and the story of Calvary slays it.

Does the flesh rebel? The Word of God smites the flesh, and helps us to mortify it. Does Satan come against us? With "It is written," we meet him as our Master met him in the wilderness of old. There is no weapon like the Word of God. This is the true Jerusalem blade that will cut through bone and marrow, which was never been known to bend or break yet in the hour of conflict. Take you good heed that you have it by you. Gird it on your thigh, and wield it well, for victory ever goes with it.

We are armed with the Word of God, not only that we may smite our own spiritual foes, but that we may win men for Christ. As the Israelites had to conquer Canaan, so have we to conquer the world for Jesus. Go you up against the ramparts of error. Go you up against the hosts of evil, with no weapon in your hand but the story of the cross, the revelation of the Most High, the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus, for by this sign we conquer—it is impossible that we should fail with the Gospel in our hands.

How happy God's people ought to be when they think of this. Armed with an invincible weapon, ought we not to rejoice in anticipation of victory? A man who has a Bible of his own—I mean not the paper and the letterpress, but all that is in the inspired volume—is there anything more that he can

desire? He finds, from Genesis to Revelation every promise his, every dear assurance of almighty power and love all his own—what more does he need?

He who can use this two-edged sword may defy doubt, fear, anxiety, care, temptation, worldliness—yea, death and the devil. At the very sight of this sword our adversaries tremble, for it cuts through joints and marrow, and leaves a deadly wound wherever it cuts. Be happy, Christian, the Lord help you to be happy as you see this sword of the Spirit to be yours.

The fourth thing which is mentioned as a great privilege is that we have *security of victory*, "Your enemies shall be found liars unto thee." Now I ask any Christian man of experience here whether he has not found this true? What a shameless liar the devil is! What a many times he has been found a liar to us.

"Ah," says he, "in this trouble the hand of the Lord has gone out against you. He has forsaken you, and He will be gracious no more. He has deserted you as He did Saul the king, and henceforth dark and brooding thoughts will overshadow you which no musician's hand shall be able to charm away. The Lord will no more answer you from His holy oracle, for behold, He has cast you away."

But brethren, we are not deserted after all, for here we are this morning to sing of divine loving-kindness and to tell of all our past troubles as trials and proofs of eternal faithfulness. We are not in the asylum, nor the prison, though the arch-enemy has threatened us with the one or the other. God has enabled us to triumph over all difficulties, though the enemy has predicted our utter defeat.

The devil came to us once, and he said, "Now you will assuredly fall. Already your heart is beginning to go back to sin. You are not faithful. You have been treacherous in your inmost thoughts, and you will apostatize altogether, and bring great disgrace upon your profession. You are a fool ever to have joined the church—there is no stability about you. You are a mere flash in the pan. You blazed like a firebrand, but you will die out into black ashes."

But beloved, we have not died out yet, blessed be JEHOVAH'S name. Year after year has passed and the faint are still pursuing, the feeble still hold on their way, utter weakness still triumphs over strong temptations. Satan has been a liar to us, and so has that wicked unbelief of ours, which is rather worse than the devil, for, at any rate it has less excuse for its existence.

Unbelief has whispered a thousand accursed falsehoods in our ears—this labor was to be too difficult, that trial was to consume us, that adversary would swallow us up quick. Nothing of the kind has happened, but so our enemies said, and they have all been liars. What fools we were to have believed them, and what greater fools we shall be if in days to come we shall lend an ear to them.

Let us not listen to anything which opposes itself to the sure truth of God. He cannot forsake us. Leave His chosen to perish? Cast away the people whom He did foreknow? Renounce the purchase of His blood, the darlings of His heart? Impossible! He may sooner cease to be than cease to be the Father of His own-begotten. He may sooner quench the sun and moon, and bid the whole universe pass away as the sere leaves fall from the forest trees, than He can ever say unto His children, "I have loved you, but not now. I have chosen you, but have cast you away. I have brought you thus far to put you to shame."

No, beloved, His mercy endures forever, and never does He turn from His covenant. What a God you have to deal with! There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun! In the chapter from which our text is taken we see a singular God and a singular people. There is none like JEHOVAH and none like His people.

He is blessed forever, and they are blessed forever in Him and by Him. Therefore, let us be happy this morning. O you mourners, take down your harps from the willows and tune them afresh. Put away the sackbut, and take the dulcimer, and upon an instrument of ten strings praise the Lord. Let your heart be glad in His name, and rejoice, yea, exceedingly rejoice.

II. Secondly and briefly, LET US CONSIDER THE RESULT OF REALIZING OUR BLESSED ESTATE.

Upon this subject there ought to be no need to dilate, for each heir of heaven should live in the hourly enjoyment of his divine inheritance, but alas, few are doing so. Surely spiritual blessings are the only ones which men decline to enjoy. Bring a thirsty man near a brimming cup and see how long he

will linger. See how he hastens to enjoy the draught. Bring a poor man near an estate, and tell him that he has but to sue the court to gain it, and tomorrow morning he will be asking where he has to go.

Alas, Christian people seem to be stupid about their privileges. They are not so wise as the ass which knows its master's crib. They have great blessings, but they do not always enjoy them. The good which the Lord provides is set before them, but they do not grasp it as they should. May the Holy Spirit teach us wisdom.

Now, there are many reasons why you should enjoy your privileges and be happy. And the first is because it tends to keep our allegiance to God unshaken. Israel would never seek after another god while she knew that none could bless her as JEHOVAH had done. Those who were happy with JEHOVAH would not be likely to wander off to Baal.

God's people will not go astray from Him when their hearts are thoroughly happy with Him. It is because you lose the sweet flavor of the waters of the flowing fountain that you dabble in those muddy, stagnant gatherings which linger in the broken cisterns. If you would delight yourself in the Lord, all the world could not tempt you from Him. A man will never be dazzled with gold who has his heart satiated with God.

Unhappy Christians, when tempted, are very apt to seek pleasure away from the Lord, but those who rejoice in the Lord always shall find the joy of the Lord to be their strength, for it shall be cords of love and bands of a man to hold them fast to their King. When your joy begins to slacken, say to yourself, "There is something wrong here. I must get back to where I was in my earlier days. I must return to my God and to the sunlight, for now that I am in the cold shade, my love may soon cool."

Beloved, if you will be happy, it will create warm enthusiasm and a grateful love within your bosom. Have you begun to be lukewarm? Has your heart declined in affection? Nothing can make your soul return to its first love like the Lord's return and the restoration of the old happiness.

Yes, I am saved. Yes, I am shielded. Yes, I bear His sword with which to smite my foes. Yes, I shall triumph through the blood of the Lamb, and there is a portion for me at His right hand. Well, then, the next thought is, therefore blessed be His dear name, I do love Him. I thought I did not, but when I begin to see what He has done for me, and what He has given me and provided for me, I find my sluggish heart beating at a quicker rate.

"Yes, I love Him and adore,
Oh for grace to love Him more."

That is a good result to come of being happy. "Therefore comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the LORD; speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem."

Joy also will have another effect. It will give you confidence to expect other blessings. Because God has dealt so well with us in the past, we are persuaded that goodness and mercy will follow us all our days. If now today, beloved, you will survey the goodness of God to you in the past, you will feel confidence that when new troubles arise you will be helped in them, and when new mercies are wanted, they shall be supplied you, "new every morning." Gratitude for the past inspires us with courage for the future.

And so too you will gain strength for bearing all your burdens, and courage for facing all your enemies. Has the Lord done so much to make us happy? Then He will not deny us anything. He who has given us so much already will be sure to sustain us, and supply our needs out of His all-sufficiency until we have trampled down every foe, and shall rest forever at His right hand.

Lastly, for Christians to be happy is one of the surest ways to set them seeking the salvation of others. If we found religion to be a bondage and a deception, we should be inhuman if we wished to introduce others to it. He who enters upon a tyrant's service, with little food and no pay, and much misery, ought not to stand at the door and invite others to come in. He should rather warn them to seek some happier service.

Now, we have found religion to be true happiness. I am sure I speak the sentiments of all here who know the Lord when I say that if we have not been perfectly happy it has not been the fault of God's grace, but entirely our own. For had we lived up to our calling and our privileges we should have been as happy as the birds of the air, and our lives would have been one perpetual song.

Despite our shortcomings, blessed be God, we have been supremely happy. If we could begin life again we would only ask to begin it with Jesus, by the power of His Spirit. If we had our choice of all the various positions and conditions of our fellow men, we do not know one that we prefer to our own, so long as we can say, "Christ is mine."

Because we have found this honey, we desire our friends and kinsfolk to partake of it. Oh, my hearers, I would you were all happy. I would you were every one of you supremely happy, and especially some of you into whose faces I have looked these many years, and see that you are not clear of your anxieties yet, not sure about your souls yet, but you still hesitate and linger in the border land.

O come and rest where God has provided rest for sinners' souls. Beloved, trust in Jesus Christ this morning. Make no more delay. May His divine Spirit enable you to do so—then shall your peace be like a river, and you shall confess that we did not deceive you. You will cry, "The half has not been told me," when you perceive the deep peace, the holy calm, the blessed restfulness, and sometimes the ecstatic, overflowing delight which is the portion of the child of God.

If I had to die like a dog, and there were no hereafter, I would still choose to be a Christian, for of all lives that can be lived there is none that can compare with this. We drink the wine on the lees well-refined, and are satisfied with marrow and with fatness. But as for worldlings, they do but champ the husks that swine do eat, with which their bellies cannot be filled.

The Lord grant His people grace to be happy in Him, and may He also bring in the wanderers, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—DEUTERONOMY 33

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—89 (Ver. II.), 758, 787

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.