

CHRIST'S REST AND OURS

NO. 2542

A SERMON

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1897.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 6, 1884.

"His rest shall be glorious."

Isaiah 11:10.

THE Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the root of Jesse"—"the shoot from the stock of Jesse," as the first verse of this chapter might be rendered—is the very center of all Israel! And He is also the rallying-point of the Gentiles, for He has made both Jew and Gentile to be one, having "broken down the middle wall of partition between us." And now, around the one ensign of His glorious name, all the believing hosts gather with glad accord. He is the King of the Jews, but He is also our King, and with Paul, we cry, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." Let us, dear friends, always look upon Christ as the great Standard-bearer of all the hosts of God, and let us pitch our tents as near His ensign as we can, and constantly follow where His banner leads the way.

The text says that "His rest shall be glorious," and I take it that the glory of His rest is in harmony with the glory of all that He has ever done. Rest is most enjoyable to the man who has toiled the hardest—the very labor which has gone before has prepared him for the sweetness of the rest. And the glory of Christ's rest lies very much in what He has passed through in order to obtain it. He Himself is glorious. His service, and His suffering were both glorious. His death was in the truest sense, glorious, and now, all the rest which has followed upon His consummated service is glorious in the very highest degree. Yes, it is itself "glory." If you look in the margin of your Bible, you will see that our text may be read, "His rest shall be glory."

Without any further preface, let us come to the consideration of these words, "His rest shall be glorious," or, "His rest shall be glory." First, I want to apply our text to *the rest which Christ Himself has taken*. Secondly, to *the rest which He has given to His people*; and, thirdly—to bring the subject very close home to this evening's communion service—to show the bearing of our text upon *the rest which Christ sets forth in this banquet of His love*. The rest which He gives us at His table is truly glorious. Oh, that we may all enjoy that rest very intensely, and very specially! If we do, I am sure that you will not need for me to tell you that it is glorious, for you will realize that it is—your heart will be ready to burst out with holy song as you delight in the rest which God gives to every believing heart!

I. First, let us notice the relation of our text to the rest which CHRIST PERSONALLY HAS ENJOYED, IS ENJOYING, AND WILL ENJOY.

The first rest that I know of, that ever fell to the lot of our Well-beloved, was *His rest in His Church*. We read in Zephaniah 3:17, "He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing." The idea of this passage seems to be that we had all gone astray, and were lost and ruined—and God fixed His love upon His people, and determined to save them. If such a metaphor can be tolerated for a moment, there was no rest for God until He had ordained and settled a plan by which He could justly save His own. When that great matter was completed, when the sacred agreement was made between the Divine Trinity in Unity, when the Lord Jesus Christ had become the Surety of His people, and had entered into covenant engagements with the Father on their behalf, then, but not till then, was He fully at rest! When the Father was able to look upon men—

*"Not as they were in Adam's fall,
When sin and ruin covered all,"*

but as they are in Christ, the second Adam, then His divine complacency went forth towards His elect as He viewed them in the person of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son—and He rested in His love. All was arranged, the covenant was signed and sealed, and He felt that the grandest of all His designs would certainly be carried out in due time—and He rested in His love. It never occurred to the heart of God to change His purpose concerning His people. Never once did He think of casting them away! They were to be bought with a great price, and in themselves they would be little worth buying, but He rested in the fact that He had chosen them, that He had set them apart to be His portion, that He loved them with all His heart, and that He intended to do them good. His purpose was worthy of a God, and therefore He rested in it. He had devised a plan which would bring even greater glory to His Deity, and therefore He was at rest concerning the objects of His love. He had set His seal to this covenant, that they should every one of them be redeemed, that they should be saved, perfected, and brought home to behold His face in righteousness as the dear children of His love. And the infinitely glorious One did, as it were, settle Himself down to rest in that “everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” And, beloved, you and I feel that His rest was glorious—it would occupy us throughout eternity to tell all the glory which lies hidden in that great settlement of eternal love! We talk of it, here, and it is a charming theme. We sing of it, and there is no higher and grander strain under heaven!

Now change the scene, and think of Christ's rest in His grave. The Divine Son of God, in due time, condescended to take upon Himself the mantle of our inferior race. He appeared at Bethlehem, a man-child, having assumed our nature in its utmost weakness. He lived here upon earth a toilsome life—little rest did He know. His labor afforded Him sweet solace, for in doing the will of His Father He had meat to eat of which even His disciples knew not. But rest was seldom His portion. He had come here to serve, not to be served. To toil with all His strength, but at last His labors were all over, and He bowed His head, and said, “It is finished.” Christ did not fall asleep until His work was all done—there was nothing more for that dear and most precious body to do. There it hangs upon the cross, still and quiet. I see Joseph, and his friends extracting the nails, bringing the body down the ladder, reverently washing it, wrapping it in fine linen, and costly spices, and then laying it in the tomb of honor. Men designed that He should be buried in a felon's grave, but it was not so, for He made His grave with the rich and honorable counselor, Joseph of Arimathea. This morning, (see sermon #1789, Volume 30—“Joseph of Arimathea” read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>), I conducted you to the place of His rest where Joseph and Nicodemus, and the godly women laid Him in the grave, and there He rested. I like to think of that Jewish Sabbath when He took His greater Sabbath, resting, seeing no corruption, as He would have done in that time, in such a hot climate, if it had not been for the preserving power of God, and the nature of His body, which could not see corruption because it had no taint of sin about it. There the great Champion lay and rested. I do not wonder that the angels came and sat, one at the head, and the other at the foot of the spot where He had lain, for there was something very glorious and sublime about that rest. While He lay there, He was the terror of His foes—they sealed the tomb, and set a watch lest He should escape them, after all. In the tomb, He was the grief of His friends, for they thought He was gone forever. Had they but known what they ought to have known; had they but remembered and understood what Christ had told them, they would have realized that He was but resting a little while, and that He would soon rise again in glorious triumph from the dead! I say that even while He sleeps there in that new tomb, His rest is glorious—

“All His work and warfare done.”

He has performed it all, and now He rests. He who is Himself life and immortality lies there locked in the arms of death. He who makes all spirits, and gives breath to every nostril that breathes, deigns, for a little season, to surrender Himself as a captive in the bonds of death—in that very act destroying death for all His people, putting an end to sin, achieving the eternal purpose of the blessed God, and opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers! Oh, tread lightly over the spot where our dear Lord once slept, for in that sleep He was truly glorious!

Now, beloved friends, our Divine Lord has gone away from us up into His *rest in glory*. “This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.” He is taking His rest now, for His work is done. There is nothing for Him to do, or for us to do, by way of perfecting righteousness and salvation—Christ has accomplished it all, and now He rests! It must be divinely glorious to Him thus to sit down at the right hand of God. He is not now fighting as a warrior, for He has already been to Edom, and has returned with His garments dyed in blood, having trodden all His enemies in the winepress of His wrath.

Now He rests, and with an unbroken calmness of spirit waits until the ages shall have rolled on, till the end shall come, till He shall have trodden Satan finally beneath His feet, till He shall send out that last great summons, "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Till then, He rests in glory, and His rest is glorious!

I suspect, however, that my text especially relates to the rest that is *to come to this earth in the latter days*. I will not go into the question of dates, or the arrangement of future events. If you read the chapter from which our text is taken, you have the great fact plainly foretold—"But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf, also, shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." I do not know that everybody will be converted, but everybody will be enlightened—and every harmful agency will be restrained from evil. If the wolf still remains a wolf, it will dwell with the lamb without injuring it. There shall be such days of happiness and peace on earth, that men shall hang the sword upon the wall, and study war no more! Children shall ask their fathers what was the ancient use of swords, spears, helmets, and guns, for they shall be no more employed in destroying precious lives. The power of sin shall be broken, and there shall be a general spreading of the principles of life, light, truth, love, and liberty, over the whole earth! Well may we sing—

***"O long expected day, begin!
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin!"***

When that day of the Lord comes, "His rest shall be glorious." Then shall men say, "The King of glory reigns, His unsuffering kingdom is established on the earth." We may not live to see that day, and we cannot tell when it will be. It is a pity ever to dogmatize about *prophecy*, which will only be understood when it is fulfilled, and probably most of it not till then. When all the prophecies in that wonderful Book of the Revelation have been fulfilled—in the light that we shall then have, we shall wonder that we did not understand them before! But we do not, we cannot, we shall not comprehend its mysteries until Providence shall loose every seal, and spread the Book open before us! But, certainly, whenever Christ's reign on earth begins, "His rest shall be glorious."

And, after that, when the Lord shall have let both death and hell see that, on the battlefield where Adam was routed and ruined, another Adam shall rout the foes of God and man—when that great conflict is over, and the long millennium of peace is over, too—when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father that God may be all in all, then *Christ and His people shall together enter into an everlasting rest*. "There remains, therefore, a rest to the people of God." Oh, the bliss of that heavenly rest! Oh, the deep, unruffled calm of our spirit throughout eternity with Christ, for even there we shall find our rest in being one with Him, forever to behold His face, forever to adore Him, forever to delight ourselves in heavenly communion with the God-man, our Savior and our Lord! To me, it always seems to be the climax of heaven to be with Christ forever. I believe in the communion of Saints above, and in our recognition and love of one another. I believe in all those heavenly employments that shall occupy our eternal life. I believe in a thousand sources of joy in that blest land, for there are *pleasures*, as well as pleasure, at God's right hand forevermore! But, as the summit of Mont Blanc rises above the surrounding hills, and with its snowy whiteness seems to pierce the very sky, so the summit of my expectation of heaven is to be where Christ is, to behold Him, to see His face, and to share His triumphant joy and rest, for, "His rest shall be glorious," and His rest, and ours, too, shall be glory! Therefore, prepare yourselves for this rest, my beloved. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." A few more rolling years, and we shall be in the eternal summer, in endless daylight where no eventide shall ever come—"forever with the Lord."

II. Now let us turn to the second part of the subject, on which I must speak more briefly. That is, **THE REST WHICH JESUS GIVES TO HIS PEOPLE IS GLORIOUS.**

Is it not so? I remember when I first enjoyed *rest in the pardon of sin*. It was so glorious that I wanted to shout, "Hallelujah!" all day long. He who has groaned under the lead of guilt, when Jesus comes, and touches it, and it all disappears, and he realizes that he is absolutely, perfectly, and eternally forgiv-

en—why, he is ready to leap for joy! There are no words in the hymn book that are rich enough, or good enough to express the delight of a pardoned soul! The glory of it lies in the fact that we are justly forgiven. God is “just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.” A sinner is forgiven by an act of mercy, it is true, but by an act of mercy which does not sully the snow-white garments of Divine Justice. My heart never knows how to express its delight for that forgiveness which, through the precious blood of Christ, is as just an act on the part of God as condemnation would have been! Oh, how wondrous is the blending of the divine attributes so that justice and mercy can meet together, and that righteousness and peace can kiss each other in the salvation of the poor, guilty sinner who believes in Jesus! Truly, the rest of pardoned sin is glorious!

Do you and I ever get to fretting after we have enjoyed that rest? Yes, alas, even when our sin is all forgiven, we are often worried with anxious cares about this thing and that—our families, our business, our poor frail bodies, all sorts of things. Oh, but when we take all that burden, and lay it down where we laid our load of sin, and Jesus gives us rest about it all, that *rest in relief from care is truly glorious!* It is not the rest of carelessness—quite the opposite. When I thus rest in Christ, I have done with my care the very thing that ought to be done with it—I have laid it on Him who cares for me! Now, having done the best that could be done, what reason remains for giving my heart any trouble? I know that the bitterest medicine I shall have to take will be most salutary, and I know that the sweet will not sour upon me, the Lord will take care that it shall not. He will make all things work together for my good, so I can confidently say, “Do what You will with me, Lord; I have no care, no fret, no worry, for I have left all with You.”

Then, next, what a glorious rest Christ gives His people *in the satisfying of the heart!* No human being can fill a human heart. It would be an easier task to fill a bottomless pit with leaking buckets than for man to fill a human heart as it is by nature. Here! Pour in worlds, as though there were as many worlds as there are drops of water in the sea—what is there in all worlds that can ever fill a human heart? We all know the story of Alexander, with the whole world in his grip, sighing because there was not another world to conquer—and if he could have conquered another world, he would have cried quite as much to conquer two more! When he had vanquished two more, he would have had a fourfold hunger for more, and if he could have won those eight worlds, he would have had eight times as much ambition for eight more! And if he could have obtained them, his hunger would have grown in proportion to that which he thought would satisfy him. But now look at a child of God when he enjoys rest in Christ. If he is in a right state of heart, he says, “The Lord Jesus Christ is mine, and the providence of God is mine for this world, and for that which is to come, and the heaven of heavens shall be mine in due time! I have all I need. My passions shall no more lead me astray, for I am married to Christ, and my heart finds its utmost satisfaction in Him. If I may but glorify Him here, and enjoy Him forever hereafter, I could not wish for more.” Such a man feels like David when he went in and sat before the Lord, and said, “Who am I, O Lord God? And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?” I wish that Christian people would more often feel, enjoy, and talk about this rest. If you do not know what it is, go to Christ for it at once! Some of us bless the Lord that we know what it is. We cannot yet sing that—

*“Not a wave of trouble rolls
Across our peaceful breast,”*

but we do feel that when the waves roll, they do not break the quiet calmness of our spirit. When troubles come, they do not disturb the blessed serenity that reigns in the deep caverns of our soul.

Now, beloved, only one more remark upon this point, and that is concerning *rest in the perfection of our joy.* We are hastening on to the end of this mortal life. Some dear members of this church are in the deep river even now. They began to enter the stream some time ago; they gradually waded in till they found the waters knee-deep, and some are chest deep in the cold stream, but it has not quenched their joy, or dampened their ardor, or stilled their song! I believe that the happiest members of this church are those who are about to die. My observation enables me to say that they are more joyful by far than any of us who sit here! The most of them that I know are full of holy transports, and a desire to depart—a kind of heavenly homesickness is upon them—they long to be home! They have heard the ringing of the bells of the mother country, the New Jerusalem! They have caught the music of the heavenly harps, for the wind sometimes blows that way to God's people, and bears a few notes of the eternal anthem to ears that are being prepared for it. I say again that the happiest members that we have are those who are just going home, and, beloved, you and I are on the road; our faces are already lit up with some gleams of the glory yet to be revealed! Our hearts are charmed with the prospect of enjoying this eternal keeping of

Sabbath! The very anticipation of it gives us a young heaven here below! We have not yet come into possession of the inheritance, but it is ours by purchase, by promise, and by gift divine. We have the buds of heaven that we can wear even here—wait a little while, and we shall have the full-blown roses in the land where flowers never fade! I congratulate some of our beloved friends on the certainty that it cannot be very long with them before sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away! We will follow you, dear brothers and sisters who will get home first. We younger folk are growing old as fast as we can, and we are glad of it, because we shall be the sooner in the home country of the Well-beloved to whom we are married, and we long for the wedding feast. We have already had the kiss from His lips, and we can never be satisfied till we are with Him to all eternity! Our good Lord has sent some manna down to let us know what angels feast upon. He has given us sips of sweetness while yet we linger here in the valley of bitterness. We will struggle on, and press on, and we rejoice that time flies faster with us now than ever! The wheels of our chariot are being quickened until the axles are hot with speed—and we shall soon be with the Well-beloved—and then, His rest and ours will indeed be glorious!

III. I will not trust myself to say more about that heavenly rest, but I will finish up with my third point which is this, **THE REST SET FORTH AT THIS COMMUNION TABLE IS VERY GLORIOUS.**

I do not believe in coming up to a set of rails, and kneeling down to receive the bread and wine. It was never so done in our Lord's day, nor for centuries afterwards. Look at that famous picture of the Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci—our Lord and His apostles are depicted sitting around a table. So it should always be—any posture but that of sitting as much at ease as possible violates the very meaning of the supper! Is it not strange that when Christ bids men *sit* or recline at the supper table, they will not do so, but they will kneel? Then, as it is a *supper*, the first principle with many is that it must be taken in the morning before breakfast—with some people, everything must be contrary to Christ's command! High-churchism means high treason against Christ—that is the plain English of the matter—at least as to the symbolical teaching, though I thank God that there are many of those who fall into that error who are right at heart, and true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that the communion is not the Lord's breakfast, but, "the Lord's supper," so I like to take it in the evening. Though any time in the day may be acceptable to God, yet certainly the evening must be preferred. And it never was meant to be the *adoration of a wafer*. It was just an ordinary meal at which Christ reclined with His disciples, one of them actually leaning his head on the Savior's bosom, and all of them lying as easily as they could, for that was part of the teaching of it. The Passover in Egypt had to be eaten by the Israelites with their loins girt, and every man with his staff in his hand, for they had not, then, come to their rest. They were still in the land of their taskmaster, and they had to go through the wilderness to get to their rest. But when you come to the Lord's Supper, there is no eating in haste with your staff in your hand—you have reached your journey's end, for, "they which have believed do enter into rest."

What, then, is the rest we enjoy at the Lord's Table?

Well, first, we shall have the *sweet rest of knowing that we are His children*. I remember the time when I longed to have the crumbs that fell from His table. If He told me that it was not meet to give the children's bread to dogs, I felt that I could answer, "Truth, Lord, yet the little dogs may eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master's table, and a few crumbs will be enough for me." I think I sympathized once with the prodigal son when he resolved to say to his father, "Make me as one of your hired servants." I should have been glad to take that position, but that is not the way our Lord acts towards those whom He receives—Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him, and that is your place if you are a child of God—you are Christ's table companion! King Arthur and his knights sat at a round table that no one might seem superior to any other, and "One is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren." We shall sit together to receive of His flesh, and of His blood, and by His own sweet Spirit's aid, we shall feed upon the same food, and drink of the same cup. May God grant that we may find sweet rest as we realize that we are His children!

Then, the next rest set forth at this communion table is that *we are eternally provided for*. On the table there will be bread and the fruit of the vine, but, *spiritually*, there will be the flesh of Christ and the blood of Christ. We shall eat of the bread, and drink of the cup, but we shall never consume the divine food of which these are the emblems. That flesh of His shall always be the meat of His redeemed. That blood of His shall always be our spiritual nutriment. We are eternally provided for—we have manna that will never become corrupt, we have wine that will never turn sour—we have food unto life eternal. Therefore, beloved, be quite at rest. You have, first, the spirit of adoption, and then you have everything provided for you which you can possibly need between here and heaven.

There is something that you may rest upon even more sweetly than these blessed truths, and that is, *you have become one with Christ*. Do you see that symbolized at the communion table? Surely, there can be no closer union than when the flesh of Christ is our spiritual food, and the blood of Christ becomes our spiritual drink. That is a real, living, loving, lasting, indissoluble union! We are one with Christ—"we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." I once saw in a work by a man who ought to have known better, a statement charging me with uttering something akin to blasphemy, for I was actually heard to say, "We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." Yes, Sir Critic, I did say it! But I quoted it from the Scriptures! Let those who find fault with that sentence settle the matter with the Spirit of God who inspired Paul to write it! It is true that every believing soul is as much one with Christ as the hand is a member with the head—as much one with Christ as the body is one with the soul which quickens it—then who shall separate us? Who shall tear the limbs of Christ away? Who shall take away from Christ so much as His little finger, and leave Him a maimed Christ? Some people believe that children of God can fall from grace. If that were true, the members of Christ's mystical body would be severed from Him, and He would be no longer a perfect Christ! I believe no such teaching as that! If I am one with Christ, I defy the devil himself to tear me away from Him—

***"Once in Him, in Him forever!
Nothing from His love can sever."***

Now fall back on that glorious truth, beloved, and rest. There is no such pillow as that for an aching heart. There is no such peace as that which springs from a consciousness of eternal safety by virtue of a living, conjugal, marital union between you and Jesus Christ, the Well-beloved of God, the truly-beloved of His people. There is good reason for rest there.

A further rest that we enjoy as we come to the communion table arises from the fact that *we are sure of His coming again, and of His eternal reign*. How long are we to come to this table? How long are we to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup? "Till He comes." There is nothing needed to complete our bliss, but that He shall come again. He said to His disciples, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Possibly, some of us will live till Christ comes. I do not know, and I do not particularly care. This I do know—if we fall asleep in Him before He comes, those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will have no preference over those who are asleep in Jesus, for when the trumpet shall sound, the dead in Christ shall rise *first*, and *then* they who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air! And so shall we always be with the Lord! What if somebody shall put his finger on your eyelids, and close them in death, and you shall sleep in the dust? Yet let me whisper in your ear that word of Job, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself: and my eyes shall behold, and not another." I do not see what more you can need to make you restful and happy! You say you do not wish to die? Well, perhaps you never may, but why should you fear death? Why should you dread the grave? Our Lord Jesus left His grave clothes behind for our use, and He carefully laid the napkin apart for our friends to wipe their eyes with. We go not to a bare, unfurnished chamber when we go to our last sleep on this earth—

***"'Tis no mere morgue to fence
The ruins of lost innocence,
A place of sorrow and decay—
The imprisoning stone is rolled away!"***

Therefore, comfort one another with these words, and believe that the rest which Jesus gives us will be glorious, indeed!

I wish that everybody here had that rest. I am afraid that some of you have no rest at all. I pray that you never may have any until you come and take Jesus Christ by an act of simple faith to be your rest forever and ever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ISAIAH 51:1-13.

Verses 1, 2. *Hearken to Me, you that follow after righteousness, you that seek the Lord: look unto the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you are dug. Look unto Abra-*

ham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

This is for your comfort, dear friends. If God could make out of Abraham and Sarah so great a nation as that of Israel, what is there that He cannot do? Do you say that the cause of God is brought very low in these evil days? It is not so low as when there seemed to be none but Abraham faithful in the whole world! Yet God made that one mighty man to be like a foundation upon which He built up the chosen people, to whose keeping He committed the sacred oracles. And if He did that, what can He not do? However low you may individually sink, or however weak you may feel, look back to Abraham, and learn from his experience what God can do with you!

3. *For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.*

Then what will her gardens be in those glorious days? When her very wilderness is like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord, what will her cultivated places be? Oh, what grand times are yet in store for the Church of the living God! Let us hope on, pray on, and work on, never doubting, for as John Wesley said, "The best of all is, God is with us." And if He is with us, all must be well!

3. *Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.*

For God's Church is no prison, no den of dragons, or cage of owls. It is a place for joy and gladness, for thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. Come, then, and let us bless the Lord with all our hearts! God is still good to Zion, and He will not desert her. He did much for Abraham—He will do much for us. We may find many precious things in the hole of that pit from which we were dug!

4, 5. *Hearken unto Me, My people; and give ear unto Me, O My nation: for a law shall proceed from Me, and I will make My judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near. My salvation is gone forth, and My arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on My arm shall they trust.*

God will not always be forgotten! Man will not always trust to his fellow man to save him, or put his confidence in the idols he has made. The day is coming when the King of kings shall come to claim His own again, and His loyal people shall see the kingdom spread as it never has done yet! Blessed be His name, this promise shall certainly be fulfilled, "The isles shall wait upon Me, and on My arm shall they trust." It is remarkable that there are so many prophecies made concerning the isles—and that it is in islands, at this day, that the gospel seems to have spread so marvelously. In our own British isles, in the isles of the southern seas, and in Madagascar, what wonders of grace have been worked!

6, 7. *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished.*

What a mercy it is to get a hold of something that will never wear out, and that can never be dissolved—something against which the tooth of time may fret itself in vain! This abiding, indestructible thing is the eternal salvation—the everlasting righteousness—which the Lord Jesus has worked out and brought in for His people! Happy people who have this treasure for their eternal heritage!

7. *Hearken unto Me, you that know righteousness.*

In the first verse of this chapter, there is a message for those who *follow* after righteousness. Here is a word for those who *know* it—"Hearken unto Me, you that know righteousness."

7. *The people in whose heart is My law; fear you not the reproach of men, neither be you afraid of their reviling.*

If you are true to God, they will be sure to revile you. A Christian should not expect to go to heaven in a whole skin—it is a part of the nature of serpents and snakes in the grass to try, if they can, to bite at the heel of the child of God, even as that old serpent, the devil, bit at the heel of Him who has broken the dragon's head. "Fear you not the reproach of men, neither be you afraid of their reviling," for your Master suffered in the same fashion long ago.

8. *For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.*

Let them snarl and let them bite, if they will! They can do no harm to that righteousness which shall be forever, or to that salvation which is from generation to generation.

9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.*

We long for God to come again upon the stage of action, to interpose in the world's affairs, and to let men see what He can do. Time was when He was to be found by the burning bush, or on the mountain's brow, or in the cave, or by the well, and earth seemed then like the vestibule of heaven! Come again, O Jehovah, great Lord and King, let Your goings be seen once more in the sanctuary!

9, 10. *Are you not the arm that cut Rahab apart, and wounded the dragon! Are you not the One who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that has made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?*

Our prayer is that God may do all this again—and the answer to our prayer is found in the following verse.

11. *Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion.*

Just as they came out of Egypt of old, and with singing and with sound of timbrel, marched through the Red Sea, so shall God bring His people “with singing unto Zion.”

11. *And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.*

Just as Pharaoh turned his chariot to flee from Israel, and the depths covered him and all his Egyptians, so sorrow and mourning shall flee away from the redeemed of the Lord.

12. *I, even I, am He that comforts you.*

Oh, the beauty and blessing of these glorious words! Let me read them again—“I, even I, am He that comforts you.”

12. *Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?*

You see the grass cut down by the mower's scythe, lying in long rows, and withering in the sun—are you afraid of that grass? “No,” you say, “certainly not.” Then be not afraid of *men*, for they shall be cut down after the same fashion!

13. *And forget the Lord your maker, that has stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor?*

Why, in the hand of God, and He can let it out, or hold it in according to His infinite wisdom and almighty power! Why, then, are you afraid? Is there any might in all the world except the might of the Omnipotent One? Can anything happen but what He permits? Be still, then, and rest in Him—“Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and forget the *Lord your maker?*” In your fear there is something of egotism, something of your own self. Lay that aside, and as a babe does not feel itself wise enough to judge of danger, but sleeps calmly upon its mother's bosom, so do you! All is well that is in God's hands, and you, also, are in God's hands if you have received His atonement in the person of His dear Son. Therefore, give up your heart to joy and gladness, and let sorrow and sighing flee from you! Even now, let this be your happy song, as it is also mine—

*“All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to the King!”*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—337, 386.

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