

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

REJOICING AND REMEMBERING.

A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, APRIL 19TH, 1896,

DELIVERED BY

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“We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.”—Song of Solomon i. 4.

It is a very blessed habit of saints who have grown in grace to enter into actual conversation with the Well-beloved. Our text is not so much speaking *of* him as speaking *to* him: “We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.” Of course, in prayer and in praise, we speak to God; but I suggest that we should seek to have much more of intense and familiar intercourse with the Lord Jesus Christ than the most of us at present enjoy. I find it good sometimes in prayer to say nothing, but to sit or kneel quite still, and to look up to my Lord in adoring silence; and then sometimes to talk to him, not asking anything of him, but just speaking familiarly with Jesus, realizing him to be present, and waiting to hear him speak until some precious word of his from Scripture comes into my soul as with living accents newly-spoken by those dear lips which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. The French have a word which they use concerning that conversation which is common among those who love one another, or are on terms of intimate friendship; they call it “*tutoyage*”, for they say “thee” and “thou” to one another, instead of the more formal language used towards strangers. I like that form of expression that is used in our text, and delight to meet with souls that are brought into so rapt a state of fellowship with Christ that they can speak to him in this familiar fashion, “We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.”

If you, dear friends, have not lately conversed with Jesus, do so now in the quietude of your own spirit. Think that his shadow is over you; do not let it be mere imagination, but let it be what is better far

than that, a true realizing faith, for if he be present where two or three are met together in his name, rest assured that he is not absent where this great assembly of his people has come together to commemorate his passion and his death. Thou art here, blessed Master; we are sure that thou art, and we worship thee, and speak with thee, as really as if we could see thee with that vesture on, woven from the top throughout,—as truly as if we saw thee now lifting that beloved pierced hand, and laying it upon us; and we would say to thee from the bottom of our hearts, “We will rejoice and be glad in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.” This text is not so much for me to explain, dear friends, as for you to enjoy. Forget all about the preacher, but take the text, and part it among yourselves; extract as much as you can of its spiritual nourishment, and feed upon it.

I. As you do so, you will notice, first, that we have here A DOUBLE RESOLVE: “We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.”

I may say of that resolve that it is, first, a *necessary resolve*, for it is not according to human nature to rejoice in Christ, it is not according to the tendency of our poor fallen state to remember his love. There must be an act of the will with regard to this resolve; let us will it now: “We *will* be glad and rejoice in thee, we *will* remember thy love more than wine.” There are so many things that try to come in between our souls and our Saviour, so many sorrows that would prevent our rejoicing in him, that we must be resolved to be glad in him, whatever our sorrows may be. Down with you, sorrows! Down with you! We have said unto the Lord that we will be glad and rejoice in him, and we mean to prove our words to be true. Then there are so many troublous thoughts that come flying in to mar our full fellowship with our Lord. However tightly windows may be closed, and doors may be shut, these thoughts will find an entrance, and we get remembering the sick child at home, or some care that has afflicted us during the week. Oh, but, Lord, we will not remember these things now! We say to thee from our hearts, “We *will*—we *will*—we *will* remember thy love.” Away with thee, care, sorrow, grief, away with thee! Come to me, O Holy Spirit, and help me now to have a happy time, to be glad and rejoice in my Lord,—and to have a holy time, to remember his love, and to remember nought beside! You must will it most intensely, dear friends, or it will not come to pass. It is not sufficient merely to walk into a place of worship, and put ourselves into the posture of devotion, and then to imagine that, doing whatever is proper to the place and the hour, we shall have fellowship with Jesus. Oh, no, beloved; oh, no! We must worship him in spirit and in truth, not in fiction and in sham; not mechanically, as though we could have true fellowship with him without earnest and intense desire. No, there must be these two utterances of our holy resolve, “We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine.”

And truly, dear friends, as this resolve is necessary, it is also a *right and proper resolve*. Should we not be glad and rejoice in Christ?

“Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days?”

Why should the children of the bride-chamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them? With such a Husband as we have in Christ, should not the spouse rejoice in him? Would it be becoming for a heart that is married to Christ to be in any other condition than that of rejoicing in him? I know you have many things in which you cannot rejoice; well, let them go. But you can rejoice in him,—in his person, in his work, in his offices, in his relationships, in his power, in his glory, in his first advent, in his second advent. Surely, these are not things that can be thought of without delightful emotion; it is most proper that we should be glad and rejoice in our Lord. There ought to be a reduplication of our joy; we should joy in him and then rejoice in him, we should “be glad and rejoice” in him.

It is most proper that we should be glad in the Lord, and what can be more proper than that we should remember him? What a shame it is that we ever forget him! His name should be so deeply engraven on our hearts that we cannot forget him. Let us remember his love, for surely, if there is anything that we ought ever to remember, it is that undying love which is our choicest portion on earth, and which will be the main constituent of our highest bliss in heaven. Then, by the help of God’s Spirit, let us make this resolve at this moment. Whatever we may do when we get out of this building, at any rate for the next half-hour, let us resolve to stand to this double declaration, “We will rejoice, and we will remember.”

Do you not think also that this resolution, if we carry it out, will be *very helpful to ourselves*? What a help it is to a Christian man to be glad in the Lord! I know what it is to be depressed; I do not suppose there is any person in this place who knows what it is to be cast down so low as I sometimes am. Then I feel that there is no help for me, and no hope of my living and working, except I can get out of that sad condition, and get to be glad in the Lord; and I cry, “My heart, my heart, what art thou at? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” There is no way of getting right out of the Stygian bog of the Slough of Despond like rejoicing in the Lord. If you try to rejoice in yourself, you will have a poor reason for joy; but if you rejoice and be glad in the Lord, you have the real, abiding, unchanging source of joy; for he who rejoices in Christ rejoices in him who is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever”; and he may always rejoice in him. Come, then, and for your own good hang up the sackbut, and take down the psaltery; put away the ashes. What if men do call this season “Lent”? We will keep no Lent to-night; this is our Eastertide, our Lord has risen from the dead, and he is among us, and we will rejoice in him. Come, beloved, surely it is time that we did, for a while at least, forget our pain, and griefs, and all the worries of this weary world; and for one, I must, I will, be glad and rejoice in my Lord, and I hope many of you will join with me in the happy occupation, which will be helpful to yourselves.

Certainly, it will also be *for the good of others*. I think that believers do much harm if they allow their depressions of spirit to be too con-

spicuous. There is another meaning besides the first one to that text, "Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast." But if you can get right out of your sorrow, and can actually rejoice in the Lord, and if you can so remember him as to be glad and rejoice in him, you will allure many to the fair ways of Christ, which else will be evil spoken of if you go mourning all your days. Come, ye weak ones, come and feast on bread that can make you strong. Come, ye whose eyes are red with weeping, take a handkerchief that shall dry your tears, and make your eyes as bright as diamonds. Remember Christ, and be glad and rejoice in him. Angels round the throne can have no higher joy than this; and they cannot enter so fully into it as you can, for he has not loved even them as he has loved you.

"Never did angels taste above,
Redeeming grace and dying love."

This, then, is what I earnestly commend to you, this double resolve, that we should all truly say to our Lord, "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." But, dear friends, *we cannot carry out that resolve without the help of the Holy Spirit.* Therefore, let us breathe it unto the Lord in prayer; and, as we tell him what we mean to do, let us each one add, "Draw me, O Lord; then I will run after thee. Help me to come to thee; manifest thyself to me, and then I will be glad and rejoice in thee."

II. Now I want to go a step further, and say that I think the resolve of the text is A SUITABLE RESOLVE FOR THIS OCCASION: "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine."

We are most of us coming to the communion table, to eat of the bread and to drink of the cup in remembrance of our Master's dying love. Surely, now is the hour, if ever in our lives, to be glad and rejoice in him, and to remember him, for the object of this supper is *to commemorate his dying love.* It is idle, and worse than idle, to come to Christ's table if you do not remember him; what good can it do you? The use that it is to the spectator is that you show Christ's death "till he come"; but if there be not in the spectator any thought of that death, of what use is the sight of the table with its sacred vessels? And if you yourself do not think of Christ, of what avail to you are the emblems of a forgotten or an unknown Lord? No, we are to commemorate his death; so let us in our hearts rejoice in him, and remember him. Well did we sing just now—

"Jesus, when faith with fixèd eyes,
Beholds thy wondrous sacrifice,
Love rises to an ardent flame,
And we all other hope disclaim.

"Hence, O my soul, a balsam flows
To heal thy wounds, and cure thy woes;
Immortal joys come streaming down,
Joys, like his griefs, immense, unknown."

Recollect, next, that in coming to this communion table, we also

commemorate the results of Christ's death. One result of our Lord's death is that he gives food to His people; his body broken has become bread for our souls, yea, it is meat indeed. His blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins, has become drink indeed. By his death, Christ has given us life; and by the completion of his great redeeming work, and by his ever-living intercession, he has given us bread and wine by which that life may be sustained. He has finished it all, and he has gone into the glory to secure the results of his finished work. Sitting around his table, we are reminded of all this; the bread is ready, the cup is filled. We have nothing to do to prepare the feast; all we have to do now is to come and partake of it, and feed even to the full upon heavenly food. So, dear friends, if we come to this table in a right spirit, we must rejoice in our Lord, and we must remember his love.

I think also that there is this further reason why we should rejoice in our Lord, and remember his love, because at this table *the commemoration is made by our Lord to be a feast.* They miss the meaning of the Lord's supper who kneel around what they call an "altar." The very point of the supper is that it should be taken while sitting around a table. It is not meant to be an adoration, it is a communion; we come here that we may have fellowship with him who sat at the table with his disciples, and made them to be his companions at his last supper. Joy is becoming at a royal feast. What! will ye come to the King's table with sorrowful countenances? Will ye come sadly to see what he has brought you? Now that he has prepared the bread and wine as a feast for your souls, will you come here hanging your heads like bulrushes? No, but let this be your resolution, "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." Do kings make feasts, do they lift high the flowing bowl, are there shouts of joy and exultation at their banquets; and shall it be that this world's poor vine, whose juice is often to men like the wine of Gomorrah, shall bring even the semblance of joy superior to ours when we drink of the wine that comes from the Vine of God, and the clusters that Christ hath trodden in the wine-press? Nay; higher far be your joy than ever came to them that have made merry at earthly feasts, more delightful, more intense, more real, more true be your hallowed ecstasies than anything that wine or wealth can ever bring. "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." O God, help us to carry out this resolution! It seems to me to be specially right, and proper, and fit, when we come to this high festival of the Church of God, that we should rejoice in the Lord, and remember his love.

Let us also recollect that, when we come to the table of our Lord, *we commemorate a very happy union.* Our text speaks in the plural: "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." I do not know how you feel, brethren and sisters; but I should not like to go to heaven alone. If nobody else will go on pilgrimage, Christian must set out by himself, and march alone towards the Celestial City until he finds a suitable fellow-pilgrim; but I like best to go with Christiana, and Mercy, and the children, and all the company together. Though I should enjoy fellowship with

my Lord if I were his only loved one, yet it greatly increases my joy as I look at the faces of many of you whom I have known a score of years, and with whom I have lived in such happy union year after year. Many of you who were once "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," have been plucked, like brands out of the burning, through the preaching of the gospel in this pulpit; and it seems such a happy thing for us to be communing together around the table of our Lord.

Some of you, my dear venerable brothers and sisters, will soon be home; come, we will be glad and rejoice in our Lord, will we not? Before you quite go away from us, join us in another holy song; give us another of your patient, quiet, happy, restful looks. One dear sister went home this morning, at twelve o'clock, while we were worshipping here. I am sure that her spirit is now rejoicing before the throne, and some of you will be going soon; but till you do go, we will rejoice and be glad together, will we not? We will take the cup of blessing still at the Lord's table, whatever our infirmities and sorrows may be; and we will remember him until we drink the new wine in our Father's kingdom above. And you men and women in the very midst of the battle of life, with all your trials and struggles, we will stand shoulder to shoulder, will we not? We are one in Christ, and there is between us a bond of union that never can be snapped; it binds us for time and for eternity. We came to this communion table to eat and to drink, not each one for himself only, but each one in fellowship with all the rest; and this ought to make us glad. If I am not glad about myself, I will be glad to think that you are glad. If I have a heavy burden to carry, I will be glad that you have not; and if you have a burden, and I have not, try to be glad that I have not one; or, if you have one, and I have another, let us rejoice that we both have the same God to help us to carry them, and let us believe that, as our days, so shall our strength be.

What a joy it adds to this festival when we see the young folk coming among us, the sons and daughters of God's people being brought into the church! Do you not notice how dear Mr. William Olney, whenever he prays for a blessing upon our ministry, always breaks out into thanksgiving to God that all his family have been brought to Christ? There are many others of us who can praise the Lord for the same favour, and it is a great joy to us. Yes, Lord, we will remember thy love,—husband and wife, sons and daughters, and some of us can say grandchildren, too,—we will all come clustering around thy table, and together we will remember thy sweet love to our fathers, and to ourselves, and to our children. We cannot help remembering it, and rejoicing and being glad in it.

I must give you just one more thought upon this point. It does not become us to gather at this communion table with a heavy heart when we recollect that *it is not only a commemoration, but an anticipation*. We are to do this "till he come." Did I not try this morning* to sound the trumpet of his coming? It would not have startled me if he had come while we were assembled, and I was speaking of "the glorious

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,894, "The Two Appearings and the Discipline of Grace."

appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Nor should it startle any of you, if, in the dead of this very night, while you are in your beds, you should hear the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," for he may come at any moment, and he will come "in such an hour as ye think not." Let us leap up at the remembrance of this gladsome hope. We are coming to the table, keeping up the memorial of our Lord's first appearing in the fond hope and sure belief of that second appearing when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Wherefore, let us keep the feast with high hope. With joy-notes sound aloud the silver trumpet of the great jubilee; and as ye come to the table, let your hearts be glad in the Lord, whose love you specially remember at this hallowed festival.

III. I will close in a very few minutes, but I must dwell for a brief space upon what I meant to make my third point concerning this double resolve,—LET US CARRY IT OUT. That ought always to be the practical conclusion to every sermon,—let us carry it out. We have said to our Lord in the language of the text, "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine;" very well, now let us carry out this resolve.

"We will remember thy love." Dear Saviour, what we have to remember is *thy love*,—thy love in old eternity, or ever the earth was, thy prescient love, which,—

"Saw us ruin'd in the fall,
Yet loved us notwithstanding all."

We remember the love of thine espousals when thou didst espouse thy people unto thyself, and didst resolve that, whatever might be the lot of thine elect, thou wouldst share it with them. The Lord Jesus made up his mind that he would be one with his Church; for this purpose he left his Father that he might be one with his bride. I shall get into great deeps if I go much further in speaking about Christ's love.

"We will remember thy love,"—that love which, having once begun, has never wavered, never diminished, never stopped.

"Love, so vast that nought can bound;
Love, too deep for thought to sound;
Love, which made the Lord of all
Drink the wormwood and the gall.

"Love, which led him to the cross,
Bearing there unutter'd loss;
Love, which brought him to the gloom
Of the cold and darksome tomb.

"Love, which will not let him rest
Till his chosen all are blest;
Till they all for whom he died
Live rejoicing by his side."

We remember the love which Jesus bore in his heart right up into the glory at the right hand of the Father; that love which is still as great as when he hung on Calvary to redeem us unto himself. The

wonderful part of all this to me is that it should be the love of such an one as Christ is. That ever so divine a person should set his love on us, is very wonderful. I can understand my mother's love, I can understand my child's love, I can understand my wife's love; but I cannot understand Christ's love. Oh, brothers, we are nothings, we are nobodies; yet this glorious Everybody, this All in All, did actually set his love upon us! Suppose that all the holy angels had loved us, and that all God's redeemed had loved us; all put together, it would be only so many grains of dust that would not turn the scale, but Christ's love is a mountain, nay, more than all the mountains in the universe. I know of nothing to be compared with it.

That is the first way in which we are to carry out this double resolve, we are to remember and to rejoice in Christ's love.

Next, let each one of us say to Christ, "I will remember thy love to me." Brothers and sisters, I can believe in Christ's loving you; but there are times when it seems a great mystery that he should ever have loved me. I can truly say that, often, I have felt that if I might sit at the feet of the poorest, meanest, least of God's servants, and serve them, I would count it a heaven to do it if I did but feel sure of Christ's love to my own soul. I see so many beauties in my brethren and my sisters that I can admire the grace of God in them; but, often, I do see and feel so many imperfections in myself that I can only wonder that ever Christ should have loved me. I suppose that each of you feels the same; I am sure that you do if you are in a right state of heart, for, truth to tell, there is no beauty in any of us that he should desire us, and there is no excellence in any of us that could have made it worth his while to die for us. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly," and died for us as ungodly. Come, then, will you not be glad and rejoice that ever Christ should have loved you? Will you not be glad and rejoice, and yet wonder all the while, that ever it should have been possible for him to draw you "with cords of a man, with bands of love," and bring you into living, loving, everlasting union with himself?

Still, even that is not all. The text does not merely speak about Christ's love, and Christ's love to me, but it talks about *Christ himself*. "We will be glad and rejoice in *thee*,"—not only in his love, but in himself. Do try, dear friends, to let your thoughts dwell upon Christ, his complex person, God and man, and all the wonders which lie wrapped up in Immanuel, God with us. Thy work, Lord, is fair; but the hand that wrought the work is fairer still. All thy designs of love are full of splendour, but what shall we say of the mind that first gave creation to those designs? The glance, the look of love which thou hast given me, is blessed; but oh, those eyes of thine, those eyes which are brighter than the stars of the morning! The Lord Jesus is better than everything that comes from him; his gifts are infinitely precious, then what must he himself be? Come, then, beloved, and let us be glad and rejoice in him, and let us remember his love more than wine.

The text says, "we will remember," but some of you cannot

remember because you do not know. A man cannot remember what he has never heard of, or seen, or known. But, brothers and sisters, *let us remember what we do know of Christ's love.* I remember the first day I ever tasted of his love consciously to myself. Ah! but I look back, and think of the rivers of love that came streaming down to me when I did not even know that I was receiving them; and I remember that many days have passed since first I could give back the glance of love in return for his love to me; but oh, what his love to me since then has been! His love in sickness, in sorrow, in labour, in backsliding, in prayer, in tears, in unbelief, in faith, in varyings and changings as many as the changes of the moon! Yet, his love has always been the same. What a book some of you could write concerning Christ's love to you if you had but a facile pen! What a story some of you could tell of Christ's love if some guest could be detained while you told out the wondrous story! I sometimes think within myself that, if all the interesting things that are written in all the works of fiction could be put together, I could surpass them all in the literal simple facts of a common life like mine; and I believe that many of God's people here could say the same. A Christian's life is full of interest; last Thursday night, I called the life of a Christian a cluster of Koh-i-noors threaded on a string of divine faithfulness, and I am sure that it is so.

“ Wonders of grace to God belong,
Repeat his mercies in your song.”

Repeat his mercies as you remember them, and be glad and rejoice in him even more than in the mercies that come from him.

In conclusion, I would say that I think the people of God, in gathering to the communion table, should try to *be glad and rejoice in their Lord, and in nobody else, and to remember him, and nothing else.* Let all be a blank except what Christ has written on your memory, let all be a blank except where that dear face appears,—

“ The head that once was crown'd with thorns,”

but—

“ Is crown'd with glory now.”

Think only of him. Put the glass to your eye, and shut out all the rest of the landscape, and let that glass take nothing within its circle but just the face of the Well-beloved which we soon hope to see without a cloud between.

God bless you, dear friends! I wish that all of you understood this truth of which I have been speaking. Some of you do not; may the Lord lead you to do so, for there is no life like that which is spent at Jesu's feet, and no joy like that which comes from our dear Lord. I wish you knew it. Believe on him, and you shall know it, and shall know it at once. Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

PSALM XXII.

This Psalm is a sort of window, through which we can look into the heart of our crucified Saviour. We see all the external part of the crucifixion through the four windows of the Gospels; but this 22nd Psalm brings us into the King's innermost chamber, and here we perceive the secret sufferings of his soul.

You can very well conceive of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he was on the cross, beginning to speak in the language of the first verse of this Psalm, and closing with the last words of the Psalm: "He hath done this," which might properly be interpreted, "It is finished." I have often read this Psalm with you, especially on the evenings of our great communion services. If we are spared, we will read it together many more times. It is a very wonderful Psalm; the Lord give us to understand it as we read it!

Verse 1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

That was the very climax of our Lord's grief upon the cross, that it was necessary that the Father himself should forsake him. The penalty of sin is that God must leave the man who has sin upon him even by imputation; and God left this wondrous Man, this perfect Man, in whom was no sin, but upon whom the sin of his people had been laid. He "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and therefore the Father must forsake him; but it was a bitter experience for our Saviour that even his prayers should not be heard when they had become so hoarse as to resemble rather the roaring of a wounded beast than the articulate utterance of a man: "Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?"

2, 3. *O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

Notice that the Lord Jesus, in his greatest agony, does not impugn the justice of his Father's treatment; in his bitterest sufferings he still adores the holiness of God: "Thou art holy." It was because God was holy that therefore his Son must suffer so, in order to save the unholy.

4—6. *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man;—*

There is a little red worm, which seems to be nothing but a mass of blood; and the Saviour compares himself in his agony to that tiny creature: "I am a worm, and no man;—"

6—8. *A reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

What vinegar and gall that mockery poured into the Saviour's wounded heart! How these cruel words must have stung his sensitive spirit! It was necessary that God should leave him while he was bearing his people's sin, but how shameful it was that evil men should turn that stern necessity into a ground of accusation against him! Yet they did so; they taunted him with it: "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

9, 10. *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*

Our Saviour remembers his own marvellous birth, which differed from ours in some respects; and he thinks of how the Father took care of him then. Did he not preserve him when Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt from the wrath of Herod? Was there not a singular power that controlled the movements of the wise men, and warned them to return to their own country another way, so that the infant Christ should not be discovered and destroyed? Jesus on the cross remembers that remarkable preservation; and I suggest to you who are getting old that you may draw comfort from the fact that when you were infants, and could not help yourselves, the Lord took care of you; and if you come to a second childhood,—if you should live to be as helpless as when you were infants,—the God who watched over you in the beginning will watch over you to the end. Remember how he has said, “Even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

11. *Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*

Peter, James, John, and all the disciples had fled. “There is none to help.” The women could weep, with pitying eye and sympathetic heart; but they could not help. “There is none to help.”

12. *Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*

There stood the chief priests and the rulers, and the Roman soldiery with their massive bulk and brute strength.

13. *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*

There was nothing but cruelty and spite and fury all round the tender heart of that lonely Sufferer. Ah, me! was there ever sorrow like unto his sorrow?

14. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint:*

This was caused by the rough dashing of the cross into the ground when they lifted it up, and plunged it into its place.

14. *My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

It was a living death, a deadly life. Christ's very heart, which is the centre of life, had become dissolved by pain and weakness and sorrow.

15. *My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

The terrible death-thirst was upon him, through the fever generated by his wounds.

16. *For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

The common multitude, with ribald jest and execrable mockery, stood there taunting him. He was encircled by them, like a poor hunted stag surrounded by the hounds.

17. *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

They stood mocking at his nakedness, jesting at his emaciated form.

18, 19. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be thou not far from me, O LORD:*

That is still the very centre of our Saviour's suffering, so he turns his pleading in that direction. He does not ask that the dogs may be called off, nor that the bulls may be driven away; but his cry is, “Be not thou far from me, O Lord.”

19—21. *O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*

He recollects former days wherein God had helped him, and he prays that the Lord will help him still, and bring him safely through this terrible trial, as indeed he did.

Now the tone of the Psalm changes. A gleam of sunlight plays across the scene. The agony is over; the life is poured out; and now the Saviour begins to contemplate the result of his sufferings. Think, dear brothers and sisters, how the Lord thought of you; he says,—

22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

The risen Christ is in the midst of us; he has come hither to tell us of his Father's love; he has told it to us by his death, and now he bids us praise the Lord, and himself leads our song. This is the reward of his passion, that he and his brethren should bless and praise the Lord for ever and ever.

23, 24. *Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye, the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

Is not this delightful? Your Lord has gone through the black darkness, and has come out into the light; and when your turn comes to go through the darkness, you, too, shall come out into the light even as he did. Therefore, rejoice in his name. If the Head has conquered, the members shall conquer, too. You shall all share in your Saviour's joy, as you are partakers of his sufferings.

25, 26. *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied:*

He thought of you, poor, timid, trembling ones, you who are humbled before God under a sense of your sin. Because he died, because he accomplished your redemption, you "shall eat and be satisfied."

26, 27. *They shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

See what solace Christ derives from the spread of the faith, the conquest of the world by his death.

28—30. *For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*

This is in accordance with Isaiah's prophecy: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed."

31. *They shall come,—*

The passion of Christ shall work for a certain deliverance for his people; what he has purchased, he shall surely have: "They shall come,"—

31. *And shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

Or, "it is finished." When our Lord had uttered these words, "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."