

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

SHINING CHRISTIANS.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee."—Isaiah lx. 1.

I BELIEVE that this text refers to the Church of God. I am aware that it is considered by some to have a special reference to Israel; but I also know that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," and that this particular Scripture may be most justly and fitly applied to every child of God. I pray the Holy Spirit to bear witness to that fact, even while I am speaking, by applying the text to all believers who are assembled here.

The first word of it is "Arise." There is much need, dear friends, that we should be, sometimes at least, aroused. Here are persons in the light; the day has dawned upon them, but they are fast asleep; so the trumpet is sounded in their ear, and the watchman shouts aloud, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come." I believe that there are some Christian men who have wasted a large part of their lives for want of somebody or something to wake them up. There is more evil wrought in the world by want of thought than by downright malice, and there is more good left undone through want of thought than through any aversion to the doing of good. Some Christians appear to have been born in the land of slumber, and they continually live in their native country of dreams. They rub their eyes occasionally, and suppose themselves to be wide awake; but they are in the Enchanted Ground, and though they know it not, they are little better than sleep-walkers the most of their days.

All of us may be conscious that, at times, we are startled into something better than our ordinary mode of life. We have been going on quietly, doing some good; but, all at once, we have been impressed with the value of an immortal soul, we have been struck with the nearness of eternity by the sudden death of a friend, or we have been aroused by the special application to our conscience of some eminently-powerful Scripture, or even the sight of some grievous sin has shocked us into holy action. For a time, we have

been quite different from our ordinary selves, and those who have observed us have thought that there was more in us than they ever expected to see. Certainly, more came out of us than we had ever seen before; but, alas! we have soon slipped back into our former quiescent state until, perhaps, something else of an unusual character has happened, and startled us again. I have known some in whom, happily, the process of arousing has been a really effectual one. There came, once, to a meeting I was addressing, a brother who had been, for years, earnest after the ordinary fashion of Christian young men; and the Lord so guided me that I spoke about the usefulness that some men might acquire if they would but bestir themselves. I urged the desirability of some attempting to preach in the street, who might find their gifts abundant for that work. Well, this young man went back, and tried what he could do for Christ, and God greatly blessed him. That young man was Mr. W. P. Lockhart, of Liverpool, who is, at this moment, pastor of the church meeting in the Toxteth Tabernacle, a large edifice erected by the people whom he gathered by his preaching. Our friend has, with much acceptance, occupied this pulpit, and been of great service to our denomination; but, if it had not been for God's awakening him under that particular address, he might have remained just the ordinary trader that he was, serving the Lord in a very proper way, but nothing noteworthy might have come of it. I wonder whether there is anybody here, who needs, as it were, to be dragged out, and impressed into the service of Christ,—some brother, perhaps, from Liverpool, or Manchester, or Birmingham, or Glasgow, or from this great London itself,—someone who is “not slothful in business,” yet not “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” Such a man may be, really, a fine fellow, with great capacity; but most of his talent is latent and dormant so far as the work of God is concerned. My dear friend, you have been sluggish quite long enough. Is it not time for me to cry to you, “Arise”; and is it not time for you to lift yourself up from that couch of indolence, and to say, “Yes, I have been hearing sermons for a good long while; I have been a member of a Christian church, and have been attending communions for many years; it is high time that I ceased from sloth, and began to do something to show that God is with me, and in me; and, by his grace, so it shall be”? Happy will the preacher be if that shall be the result of calling your attention to this first word of the text: “Arise.” We all need to hear the clarion call of Charles Wesley's hymn, —

“Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son.”

It is high time that all of us did arise. “Let us not sleep, as do others.” Loved by our God from all eternity, predestinated unto everlasting life, bought with the precious blood of Jesus, helped by the Spirit of God, and indwelt by him; it is indeed time that we did something worthy of our pedigree, something worthy of the price with which we have been bought, something worthy of the love which set

us apart unto itself or ever the world was. I have no doubt that I am addressing some who do not lack grace; God has given them that. They are not without a saving knowledge of the truth; they do know Christ, but what they want is somebody to start them on a higher and nobler career. There are some who are just like Elijah's sacrifice, with the wood all laid in order on the altar, and the bullock on the wood. O Lord, send the fire from heaven, that the sacrifice may be completely consumed! Let the man be given to thee as a whole burnt-offering unto the Most High! It may be that this poor weak hand may strike the match that shall set that sacrifice on a blaze. So may it be, and God shall have all the glory!

The text says, "Arise;" but then it goes on to say, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." In these words I see three things for me to do; first, *to remind you of your privilege*: "thy light is come;" secondly, *to rouse you to your service*: "Arise, shine;" and then, thirdly, *to rally you to this work*, by a few remarks which the context will suggest.

I. I am speaking now only to the people of God. There are some of you whose light has never come, but you are in darkness even until now. The Lord have mercy upon you; but, to God's own people who have believed in the Lord Jesus, this is my first message, **REMEMBER YOUR PRIVILEGE.** Your light has come.

Recollect, first, *out of what darkness that light has delivered you.* You are no longer in the darkness of sin, the darkness of spiritual ignorance, the darkness of spiritual death; neither are you any longer in that darkness of distress and despair which might be felt. You are now in the light; but think a little while of what your state of darkness used to be. It is not so many years ago that there was a young man, who did not know his right hand from his left in spiritual things; he put darkness for light, and light for darkness, bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; and that man, not so young now, knows the Saviour, he has learnt the evil of sin, and he has rejoiced in all the delights of pardon. Was that young man yourself? If so, you may well prize your present privileges. It is not so long ago that there was a man who was in the darkness of soul-agony. His sin was heavy upon him; God's hand pressed him till all the moisture of his being seemed to exude, and he was like a plant withered in the long droughts of autumn. He cried to the Lord, but for a while he received no response to his petitions. He begged for mercy, but it did not come. Now, that same person is sitting here, thankful that he is pardoned, and that he knows how he has been delivered from the wrath of God, and he blesses that Divine Substitute who took upon himself his sin, and with it that sin's penalty, and so delivered the guilty one from the wrath to come. Oh, what a change there is in that young man! That young man is yourself; is he not? Sister, it has been the same with you, too. Oh, what a difference there is between the knowledge which God the Holy Spirit has imparted to you, and the blindness in which Satan held you captive! Oh, the difference between the misery into which conviction and despair had brought you, and the peace and restfulness which you feel at this moment through faith in Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour! Is it

not true that your light has come, and do you not bless God for it? Oh, methinks you must do so, and that you will use that blessed fact to help me in my argument when I come to enforce the lesson of the text: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come." If God has given you light out of such horrible darkness, it well becomes you to shine to his praise as brightly as ever you can.

Please to notice, next, that *this light, which God has given you, is his own glory*: "and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Oh, but that is wonderful,—that God should not only give us light, but that that light should be his own glory. Creation is a part of God's glory, but it is only a moonlight glory compared with that of redemption. God, in the gift of Jesus Christ, displayed the whole of his nature. Creation is not a canvas large enough for the whole image of God to be stamped upon it. Byron speaks of God's face being mirrored in the sea; but there is not space enough for the face of Deity to be fully reflected in the broad Atlantic, or in all the oceans put together. The image of God is to be fully seen in Jesus Christ, and nowhere else; for there you behold attributes which Creation cannot display. Creation can manifest love, power, wisdom, and much else; but how can Creation manifest justice, and justice lying side by side with mercy, like the lion and the lamb? It is only in Christ that you can see this wondrous sight,—God hating sin with perfect hatred, but yet loving sinners with much more than the tenderness of a mother towards her child.

It is upon you, dear friend, that this light of the glory of God has fallen. In your history, in your case, the glory of God's attributes has been illustrated. You have seen it yourself in a measure, and others are also to see it in you. Your light has come, the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Henceforth, God's glory is to shine through you; and in you, and by you, and through you, God shall manifest himself to angels and principalities and powers in the ages yet to come. I confess that I am talking about what I do not fully understand; I am quite out of my depth here. I see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, but to describe it is quite impossible. When first I saw the electric light, if you had asked me what it was like, I could only have told you something about its candle-power or its brilliance in comparison with gas, but I could not have made you understand it. But what is the electric light compared with the glory of the sun to one who sees it for the first time? And what are all the suns that could ever be created compared with the wondrous blaze of the glory of God? Yet such a marvellous light as that has fallen upon you, my brother, my sister,—“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

There is also this blessed thing to be said about this light; *you will never lose it*. I dwell upon that thought for a minute, that you may rejoice in it. Read the 30th verse: "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." The light that God has given you will never be taken away from you. Ah! you have feared a good many times that it would be; but it never has, and it never will be. You have put your hand

before your eyes, and then you have thought that the sun was blotted out; but it was not. Clouds have sometimes arisen between you and your God, but the light of his everlasting love has gone on shining all the while; so it always will. We bless God that we have not to preach to you of temporary salvation, a salvation that saves people for a quarter of a year, or that saves them for a few years, and then away they go back again to the world. Nay, nay, our comforts may be slower in the making than are those of others; but they last when they are made, for they are made by the grace of God. We are not saved by a sudden jump into something,—we know not what;—but by a new creation, by a new birth, by a total and radical change. Now, if the light of God has risen upon you in that way, so as to change your very heart, and the whole nature of your being, that light will go on shining for ever. Just drink in that thought. You have, by grace, laid hold of that which you will never lose; and One has laid hold of you, who will never let you slip out of his grasp, for it is written, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” I must not get on to that glorious theme of the final preservation of the saints, because it is one that always sets my heart leaping with delight whenever I turn to it; but I protest to you that, if you take away from me the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, and all that is involved in it, I have not anything left that is worth keeping. I should not care about the gospel if that essential feature of it were gone; that truth seems to me to be the very soul of it,—everlasting love making an everlasting covenant, and taking the objects of that everlasting love into everlasting union with Christ, and giving them everlasting life by virtue of that union with him. So, believer, that light of yours will never burn out; it shall shine on for ever and ever. “Thy light has come,” and it shall never go away. Oh, joy, joy, joy! Let God be praised continually for such a blessed boon as this.

Now I must leave that part of my subject, only asking you to turn it over in your minds, and to rejoice if the text is true of you, “Thy light is come.” I wish that some here, who have been in the dark up till now, might know it to be true in their case, and each one be able to say, “I do believe, I will believe, in Christ Jesus as my Saviour.” If you do, your light has come.

II. But I am going to speak further to those who know that their light has come. Dear friends, as soon as ever you have received this light of the glory of God,—this very same light that makes heaven what it is,—this light which never will be dim, and which you will never lose,—I want to push you on to my second point, which is this, TO ROUSE YOU TO SERVICE: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come.” A man cannot shine if he has not any light; but as soon as ever he has the light, what is he to do? Why, shine, of course; he must not put away his light as in a dark lantern, but the moment he receives it, he is bound to show it.

First, my dear friend, since your light has come, shine *by holy cheerfulness*. I am very sorry whenever I meet with Christians who have

no joy. I am most of all vexed with myself whenever my own joy burns dimly, for we who have the light of the glory of God ought to have shining faces. We have been forgiven; we are God's children; we are on the way to heaven; then, surely, if anybody's mouth ought to be full of laughter, and if any tongue should be tuned to sweetest music, it should certainly be ours. There are none who have such a right to lead perfectly happy lives as Christians. I know that there are some who I cannot doubt are good people, but who are a very surly sort of folk. Dear hearts, they will be all right when they get to heaven; but I should not like to meet a heaven full of them if they are in heaven as they are here. There are some persons who never can be content. Providence never pleases them; the weather is always wrong; their dinners are always ill cooked; nothing goes right, nothing has gone right with them for years, and they are very snappish and snarling. This style of living will not do, my brother. "Arise, shine." I would like to lay those words on your breakfast plate to-morrow morning. Before you go out to business, just put this passage between two pieces of bread and butter, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come." It may be that you will wake up in the morning rather gloomy, and you will say to yourself, "I have to go out and battle with the world again." Take this text, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come;" and say to yourself, "I must shine. Come, come, come, come, come; I must not let myself get down in the dumps, I must not begin the day mourning; God has given me light, so I must and I will shine to his praise and glory." May God help you to do it, for that is one way in which we can adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ our Saviour, by the cheerfulness of our deportment.

The next way of shining is *by a gracious godliness*. True Christians ought to shine by their lives. The stars do not say anything, but they keep on shining. Did you look up to the sky, the other night, and see Jupiter hard by the moon, and Saturn apparently just a little way off? There has been a wonderful beauty about various planets during the past month; perhaps never was the sky more interesting than it has been of late, but never a word was said among the shining bodies in the heavens. I kept company with the pole star, I think for twelve long hours; as I came travelling home from the South of France, I kept on seeing him out of the carriage window. He never said a word to me all the time; but one thing he did do, he continued shining; and I also gazed at all the stars of Ursa Major, as I remained wakeful the whole night long, but not a syllable did they say to me. They do not need to speak, for they shine. In like manner, you Christian people who cannot talk,—the women especially,—I mean that you cannot preach, you are not allowed to preach,—I want you to shine. Some people seem to think that there is no shining without talking, whereas the very best shining is that of Christian women, who, if they have little to say, have a great deal to do. They make the house so bright with heavenly grace, and decorate it so sweetly with the flowers of their cheerful piety, that those round about them are won to Christ by them. Therefore, shine, dear brothers and sisters, by your gracious godliness, for so you will bring glory to God.

Then, thirdly, shine *by zealous earnestness*. We do not often meet with people who are too much in earnest. I can only thank God that I hear, in certain places, an outcry against fanaticism. We have been such a long time without it, so we may be almost glad to have a little of it, especially as the so-called fanaticism is probably only zeal thoroughly aroused. If there are some people who seem to be wildly enthusiastic, let us imitate them. We have had so much slumbering, so much coldness, so much death, that we can put up with a little extravagance and excess. Still it would be better if, judiciously, one went steaming straight ahead in the service of God with a resolution never to be beaten, never to cease every earnest endeavour to make known the gospel of Christ, and to reflect the light which has shone upon us from above. Oh, for a zealous earnestness! May God pour it out upon this church yet more abundantly! May you go into your Master's service with all your might and main, and may the Spirit of God, as a spirit of burning, rest upon every one of you far more abundantly than in the past!

This would lead, dear friends, to your shining *by a secret bravery*. There are some dear people whom I must encourage to be a little more bold. We have some friends, here and there, to whom I could hint, only very gently, that they are quite forward enough; but there are many good people who always keep in the background. They might do so much for Christ if only they had a little courage. Do, dear friends, break through the ice this year. If you have felt that you ought to do something for your Lord, and yet have never begun to do it, begin at once. Do you ask, "What is the best way to try to serve Christ?" Well, I think the best way is to do it. "But how should I begin?" Well, I would begin by beginning. "When shall I begin?" Begin now; this very hour. "But in what way?" In the first way that comes to hand. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," for our text says, "Arise, shine." If you have the light, emit it, distribute it, scatter it somehow or other. Have pluck; that is a plain English word, but I do not know how to put my meaning better. Have pluck enough to come out, and be a Christian; do not for ever be like a rat behind the wainscot, but come out, and own yourself on Jesus' Christ's side, and publish the everlasting gospel wherever you have the opportunity.

So runs the text, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come."

III. Now, in closing, I want to RALLY YOU TO THIS SHINING BY ONE OR TWO ARGUMENTS.

And, first, *by the world's great need*. Read the second verse of this chapter: "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Oh, the darkness and the death-shade over the people still! Over this London of ours there hangs a pall of deadly nightshade, a darkness that may be felt. Then, little glowworm, even you must not hide your light! Sparks, tiny sparklets, you that have but one little flash, you must not conceal it, for the night is dark, and the darkness deepens! The devil, drunkenness, and lechery, Jesuitism in all its forms, false doctrine, infidel teaching, scepticism in a thousand shapes, all these make night

hideous, and further deepen the dense shades of darkness. You who have the light, do show it. If it is not the light, say so, and abjure it; but if it be the light, in the name of the eternal God, good man, I pray thee, let thy light be seen! Arise, shine; for darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.

Shine, next, because of *the great results that will surely come of it*. If all Christians were once to shine, and that means if *you* were to shine, and your next neighbour, and I and my next neighbour, and all of us were to shine, then it would come to pass that Gentiles would speed to the light, and kings to the brightness of the rising. Then, from all lands, and from the sea, would converts come, till nations should crowd to Christ, like flocks of doves flying to their dovecotes, and the Church of God would be multiplied beyond all count. We often keep from work for Christ because we despair of its success; we neglect effort because we are afraid that effort will be useless. Doubt no longer; he that bids you sow intends to give a harvest; and he will bless your sowing if you will but sow in faith. We may well be encouraged to do so when we think such thoughts as these, "Shine, for thy light shall be seen; shine, for thy light shall be useful to save life, like a lighthouse on the rock; useful to direct others home, like the cottager's candle in the window, to guide her husband to his resting-place." Shine, then, because of the good that will come of it to the world.

Shine, next, because of *the great blessing that it will bring to the Church*; for, if all Christians shall rally to serve God as they should, then shall the Church have the days of her great glory: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." A shining church will be a happy church; if we do not shine, we shall be miserable. But if we will shine for Christ, we shall see great prosperity for the Church of the living God.

And, best of all, we must do this because of the argument used in the 21st verse. I will not speak upon it, I shall leave it with you: "*that I may be glorified.*" It is God your Father who says that, it is Christ who has bought you with his blood who says it, it is the Holy Ghost who is your indwelling Comforter who says it. There is no argument that eloquence could state, or that reason could suggest, that can have such force with a loyal heart as this,—"*that I might be glorified.*" Do you not pray, "Father, glorify thy Son"? Now, in the power of the Holy Spirit, prove the sincerity of your prayer by giving out whatever light God has given to you; and, since your light has come, arise and shine, as you have ability, from this very hour. The Lord grant it, dear brothers and sisters, to me and to you, for his name's sake! Amen.

Expositions by C. H. Spurgeon.

PSALM CIII.; ISAIAH LIX. 16—21; AND LX. 1—16

What more appropriate passage than the 103rd Psalm can we read, on this first Sabbath night of another year, to express the gratitude of our thankful hearts. I will only interject a sentence here and there; but let me beg all to try to worship God in the spirit while we once more read together the familiar words of this much-loved Psalm.

Psalm ciii. Verse 1. *Bless the LORD, O my soul:*

O my soul, be not thoughtless and wandering, but give this holy hour to the sacred employment of praising and blessing thy God!

1. *And all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

Let every string of my heart be now touched by the fingers of the Holy Spirit, let every faculty of my being wake up to praise the Lord: "and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

2. *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

They are very memorable; they deserve to be "engraved as in eternal brass." To be forgetful of them, will be a base form of ingratitude. Come, my memory, wake up: "Forget not all his benefits."

Here are a few of the choicest of the gems in this cabinet; the jewels are too many for me to exhibit them all.

3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;*

The Lord has done it, and continues to do it: "who forgiveth"—not some of thine iniquities, but all of them, so that you can sing, "The depths have covered them: there is not one of them left." Why, there is enough to sing of in that alone; we need never leave off praising God for that one mercy of sin forgiven; it is the first of God's favours, and prepares us to enjoy the rest.

3. *Who healeth all thy diseases;*

Many times has my heart had to sing about the gift from my God of this precious pearl: "who healeth all thy diseases;" and some of you have also had occasion, in your restored health, to praise the Lord for this privilege. But, oh, to think that, every day, he is healing us of the great disease of sin,—our very afflictions being, often, but the lancet and the knife with which he is removing from us the foul taint of evil! "Who healeth all thy diseases."

4. *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;*

Thou hast a life that can never die, for he has redeemed it; then, bless thy Lord for redemption. If thou dost not sing for this cause, the very stones in the street will cry out against thee.

4. *Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*

What a crown! What gems bestud it! No gold or silver can ever equal this: "lovingkindness and tender mercies." Every child of God is a crowned king; shall we not for this also sing aloud, "Bless the Lord, O my soul"?

5. *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

If you enjoy sweet inward contentment and satisfaction with your God, you must praise him, "who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." With renewed strength, can you, will you, be silent? I am sure you cannot; but you must use all the strength that God has given back to you to his praise and glory.

6. *The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*

Blessed be his name for this! He is the supreme Governor of the world,

and he will rectify all its wrongs in his own time and way. There is a great power that makes for righteousness, and that power is on the throne. "The Lord reigneth."

7—9. *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*

Let your heart keep praising the Lord as we read every one of these sentences, for there is a theme for everlasting music in each line of this Psalm. "He will not always chide." Hallelujah! "Neither will he keep his anger for ever." And again we say, "Hallelujah!"

10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins;*

Blessed be his holy name!

10. *Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

For ever adored be his longsuffering and his tender mercy.

11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*

Therefore praise him.

"Loud as his thunders shout his praise,
And sound it lofty as his throne."

If he be such a God as this, you can never overdo his praises, it is impossible to exaggerate in your exaltation of him.

12. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

They are gone; they are removed to an infinite distance; they will never come back. It is not possible that they should ever again be laid to our charge.

13. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*

Do not stop the music of thanksgiving; let your hearts, if not your voices, keep on saying, "Bless the Lord! Bless the Lord!" Oh, what pity you and I have needed! What tenderness and compassion! And—

"Such pity as a father hath
Unto his children dear,"—

such pity has God had upon us.

14—16. *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

As a congregation, we have had most grievous proof of this truth during the last two or three months. It has seemed to me as if everybody was dying; our ranks have been thinned wondrously;—

"And we are to the margin come,
And we expect to die."

17—19. *But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

Do not believe the people who attribute sickness and death to the devil, and so try to make it appear that God has left his throne. He reigneth still; he reigneth ever, "King of kings, and Lord of lords, Hallelujah!" "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."

20—22. *Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.*

For well thou mayest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee! Lead thou the song, and may the whole world join thee in joyful adoration of the Triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit!

Now we will read the passage that specially relates to the message I have to deliver to you presently in my Master's name. Turn to Isaiah lix., verse 16:—

Isaiah lix. Verse 16. *And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.*

Man's extremity was Christ's opportunity. There was no one left to save poor fallen manhood, no one who could lift a hand or a finger for our rescue; therefore, Jesus came, and fought, and bled, and died, and conquered on our behalf.

17—19. *For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.*

Christ came once, and he is to come a second time, because he will be again needed here; and when he returns, he will ease himself of his adversaries, and speedily win the victory for truth and righteousness. Then shall the whole earth know what Christ can do.

19—21. *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.*

The Church of God shall have the Spirit of truth and the Word of truth ever abiding in her midst. God will not break his covenant by withdrawing his Spirit from his Church. The Redeemer has come, and his work of redemption is accomplished. The Spirit also has come, but his work is not as yet done; it is being performed from day to day, and the Spirit will never be withdrawn while any part of his ministry remains unfulfilled.

The consequence of all this is the glory of the true Church of the living God. There are better days coming for the cause of Christ and of truth. Listen, and be encouraged, all ye that are heavy of heart!

Chapter lx. Verses 1—3. *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

The Church of God is one, whether it be among Jews or Gentiles. That poor Church seemed left and forsaken; dark days came, and it looked as if the Church must even cease to exist, but it did not. Now, God has brought in many sinners of the Gentiles, and he will bring them in much more numerous in the future times of refreshing. They shall come in armies, in hosts, in nations, and the Church of God shall be exceedingly glorious.

4, 5. *Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.*

All the strength of the land and of the sea,—the armies and the navies shall come and prostrate themselves before the Church of God. The supreme power on earth shall yet be the Christ in the midst of his Church.

6. *The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come:—*

The Easterns shall bow before the King; they that of old had some light shall come to the yet greater light. In those holy lands, which afterwards became so unholy, there shall yet be a return to the truth, and all the false prophets shall be expelled. Where Mohammed's crescent has cursed the nations, there shall shine again the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings.

6, 7. *They shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.*

Wandering tribes of wild Arabs shall come and bow before Christ, and lay their wealth at his feet.

8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?*

The growing Church sees a greater multitude coming to her than even the populous East could muster; whence come they? Listen, brethren, and look around, and see for yourselves.

9. *Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.*

In ships from these remote islands, and from countries that were dimly spoken of, in the East, as "lands of Tarshish," far away, great multitudes were to come to Christ. Are they not coming to-day from this *Ultima Thule*, this distant land beyond the pillars of Hercules, are they not coming to Christ "as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows"?

10—16. *And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.*

In God's good time, all this shall come to pass.