

"My word"

Isaiah 55: 6-13

G. Davison.

June 1962

I have it in mind to show how necessary and important the word of God is to us if we are to bring forth fruit for His pleasure. In this descriptive passage we see how God Himself, through the Prophet, speaks in such terms of His own word.

The appeal in verse 6 carries our minds back to the time when we first sought the Lord. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found" would remind us of the words in 2 Cor. 6: 2, "behold, now is the accepted time"; while "call ye upon Him while He is near" would remind us of Romans 10: 13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." We sought Him and we found Him; we called upon Him and He heard our cry, and the result is we have received abundant pardon through the mercy of God. Furthermore, in accord with the appeal in verse 7, we did forsake our way (called by the prophet in Isa. 53 our "own way") and we did judge our unrighteous thoughts when we turned in true repentance towards God and in faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result we know that our sins are forgiven, and we are conscious of being in right relations with God.

Then as having been brought into a condition where we could be taught of God, we soon realized that His thoughts and His ways were as high above ours "as the heavens are higher than the earth." James in his epistle speaks of such a difference when he writes, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where emulation and strife are, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits," James 3: 15-17. Having come under divine control, we are taught these heavenly things with a view to our manifesting a heavenly character, If we ask, How can we know these thoughts and these ways which are as high as the heavens are above the earth? we have the answer to that question in this chapter, and that is what is in mind in turning to it.

In verse 10 God likens His word to both rain and snow. They both come down from heaven; we have not to reach up for them, they are beyond our reach, but God graciously sends them down. It is not difficult to discern in this an application to the ministry of God's word for the nourishment of our souls. How imperative it is if we are to grow in our souls to be where this ministry can reach us. Just as the earth is dependent upon the rain and the snow, so are we dependent upon the ministry of the word of God. God first puts into the earth all the elements which are needed to produce the fruit, then He constantly waters it with rain and with snow, to cause it to bring forth fruit. As born of God we are capacitated to bring forth fruit for God, but we are as dependent upon the ministry of the word to do so as the earth is upon the rain and the snow. Neither the rain nor the snow give life, but apparently they are needed to stimulate it. How soon parched pasture will burst forth into life after a refreshing shower of rain! So it is with ourselves. It is important to remember that we need both the snow and the rain. Many noxious weeds, etc., are killed by the snow, while the earth itself is tempered by it. How many weeds there are in our sinful hearts which need constantly to come under the death-dealing power of the Word. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," Romans 6: 11.

We see in verse 10 the threefold product of the watering; bud, seed, and bread. The bud would suggest the evidence of life, and would be seen in our walk and ways, and a life productive of the features of Christ. The seed would have provision for sowing in view; that is, truth in our hearts with

which we can sow, whether it be by gospel preaching, teaching the young, or a word of ministry to the saints. Then last of all we have the thought of bread, which would suggest our souls being nourished by the Word of God. It is for this God gives these resources of rain and snow, for in verse 11 we read that He gives His word to accomplish that which is well pleasing to Him. Could we believe that God has no objective in view when He sends rain and snow, or that He has no objective in view when He gives to us His word? We have the assurance that it will not return to Him void, but we each have to ask ourselves, whether while it is productive in others, is it to be unproductive in me? Rather may we see to it that it is prosperous with us, and that it produces through us that which is well pleasing to God.

We have the assurance that if we are receiving and responding to His word we shall be marked by joy and peace. So the apostle Paul desired for the saints at Rome, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing," Romans 15: 13. Mountains and hills are used typically of governing powers and have in view the powers that be to whom we are told to be subject. We both "Fear God," and "Honour the king," 1 Peter 2: 17. The trees of the field would have in view individuals of eminence, or perhaps those whom we serve. Why not so serve them in true christian piety and honesty that they will figuratively clap their hands in showing their approval of us? Moreover, the useless, harmful marks of sin will begin to disappear, and in their place will be seen that which the fir trees and the myrtles indicate. Thorns and briars came in as a result of sin, but the fir tree speaks of strength and the myrtle of sweetness. Why be a cause of irritation to those around us, when we may rather benefit them as we are marked by the features and fragrance of Christ?

In result, praise will ensue for God and His Name will be honoured. That we are subjects of His grace will be evident, and we read that this will abide both for the pleasure of God and for a blessing to men. Thorns and briars are burnt up. Why then allow such features to mark us? Rather let us see to it that we are producing something which is of worth in the estimation of God; something which will abide when all that which sin has produced will have been burnt up. This we shall do if we continue to appreciate the ministry, which comes down from heaven, and if we allow it to form us according to the mind of God. Solomon used fir for the rafters of the temple roof. It was strong and dependable, and we also can become strong and dependable if we assimilate God's thoughts, and walk in God's ways.