

ISAIAH... who loved drawing water out of wells
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(ISAIAH 12:3)

Not many men are capable of expressing much in little, and more often than not inflation turns little into much. Isaiah was one of those remarkable men whom God enabled to express the whole range of truth within the astonishingly small compass of six verses. His message primarily refers to the future glory of Israel, but the truth expressed therein may be found in any act of God's saving grace. These thrilling facts are as evident in Israel's exodus from Egypt, and a sinner's deliverance from sin, as in the future reconciliation of the Jewish people. Let us consider the three divisions clearly outlined by the prophet.

God My Salvation—a great pardon

" And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord . . . though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid " (vv. 1-2). Isaiah's opening statement limits the scope and fulfilment of the promise. This glad experience belongs to a certain day when necessary conditions are forthcoming. It is the day of Christ's coronation, when people bow at His feet to acclaim His royalty. When Christ is enthroned in human affection, God mercifully dispenses forgiveness, and " in that day " men and women are able to say, " though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." Three stimulating words seem to be evident in this theme. (i) Compassion. God's mercy has been revealed to man. The sin which caused divine wrath has been put away. (ii) Conversion. The sinner has turned from his sin, to accept and kneel before the Lord. Rebellion has given place to redemption. (iii) Comfort. The forgiven heart has now become the home of peace. Soothing comfort has banished worry, and the peace of God which passeth understanding now floods the soul.

God My Strength—a great provision

" . . . for the Lord Jehovah is my strength . . . therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. . . . Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee " (vv. 2-6). The challenge of the new life makes men tremble, for they fear inherent weakness. The prophet points out that the strength of the redeemed is in the Redeemer. The God who saves is the God who strengthens. The ransomed of the Lord are not left to wander alone along the paths of life. "The Holy One of Israel is in the midst of thee." This wonderful truth was clearly illustrated by the presence of the ark of the covenant in the midst of Israel. In all the wilderness journeys the sacred emblem of God's presence accompanied the tribes, and unless sin offended God, its presence guaranteed divine favor. God never left His people alone. God valued fellowship, and came down to tabernacle among men. It is this sublime fact which deepens desire, and strengthens arms to " draw water from the wells of God's salvation." We do well to remember that God's bounty is in wells. The first taste of living water does not exhaust the supply. Conversion is but the glorious introduction to the inexhaustible riches of Christ. Nevertheless, water does not run automatically from wells, Someone with intense desire must draw it forth. God's provision does not minimize human responsibility. God supplies strength, but I must use my arms.

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God My Song-a great peace

" . . - the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. . . .
Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of
salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord . . . "
(vv. 2-4). " In that day." Joy naturally follows when people
walk with God. Forgiveness, fellowship, fearlessness, contri-
bute their quota to the enrichment of all who have acclaimed
and accepted the King. Sorrow and sighing disappear, and
deep content fills the soul,. Three additional words seem to
appear on Isaiah's manuscript. (i) Confidence. God's wells
never run dry ; the Lord in the midst of His people, will never
leave His redeemed children. (ii) Courage. This is good news
which should be told to all nation,. The eyes of the saints
are turned toward other people, and a desire to witness springs
in the heart. (iii) Confession. " . . . declare his doings among
the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto
the Lord ; for he hath done excellent things: this is known
in all the earth " (vv. 4-5). Isaiah put down his pen. His re-
markable chapter abruptly ended, as though lie had lost his
inspiration. Probably he was busy with a new job-drawing
water out of a well!

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