

to be looked at. They are meant to be possessed. They are especially recommended to two classes of people, to "every one that thirsteth," and to "him that hath no money." But something has to be parted with for them; and so the exhortation is not only "come," but also "buy."

2. How are they to be procured? What is to be parted with in order to get them? The answer is given first negatively. They are to be had "without money, and without price," or rather, for "not money and not price." What the world accepts in exchange for its good things is of no use here. Gold and silver cannot buy them. Good deeds cannot buy them. God's good gifts are not bestowed on a man because he is rich, or great, or clever, or benevolent. But if we look a little further on we shall find the answer given definitely. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." And why forsake them? Because a wicked man's way, an unrighteous man's thoughts, cannot be to his displeasing to God. But what if he think himself good and righteous? It is of no use such a man coming to buy. The thirsty are invited, the penniless are invited, but the righteous are not invited. To buy God's gifts a man must part with his fancied righteousness, and confess himself a sinner; he must part with his own way, and part with his own ideas. Then he can receive what the suffering Saviour (last lesson) has purchased for him with his merits and his death. Now we can answer the questions.

3. What are these good things? The first thing a sinner needs is pardon; the first thing the man dead in trespasses and sins needs is life. "Let him return unto the Lord and he will . . . abundantly pardon." "Hear, and your soul shall live." And there is more than this. The world works hard for its good things, and they can never satisfy; it pays dear for its food, and is still hungry. But whoever is willing to part with his own merits and accepts God's provision shall eat "that which is good," and delight himself in "fatness." The things God gives nourish and satisfy; his gift is food for the soul. Many of the most valuable of this world's gifts cause much anxiety, trouble, and uneasiness. Riches multiply cares. How vexed we are if some valuable possession is lost or injured! God's gifts are "joy" and "peace," and wake up glad songs of rejoicing all around. Ver. 12. Again, the best of earth's possessions are perishable; but here we read: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." There is more still, upon which we have not space to enter—the glory and usefulness of verse 5, and the prosperity and growth of verse 12. We must pass on to the last question:

4. When are these blessings to be procured? The answer is short and simple. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: call ye upon him while he is near." Man's thoughts are all wrong about this. He not only fancies he may buy God's salvation for "money" and "price"—by his own merits and his own works—but he imagines he

may get it at any time: God's thoughts are not so. His gifts are to be had in his way, and must be had at his time—"now," 2 Cor. 6. 2. To-morrow may be too late. But where God's word—"Come;" "buy;" "hear;" "forsake;" "return"—is accepted, it will prove like the gracious rain, bringing life, riches, and blessing abundantly.

### Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

#### The Gracious Invitation. Isa. 55. 1-11.

1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth," ver. 1. The gracious, convicting Spirit causes all men thus to thirst. "And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come." John 16. 8; Dan. 9. 8; Luke 15. 17; Acts 2. 37; 16. 29, 30.

2. "Come ye to the waters," ver. 1. The divine invitation to drink of the thirst-assuaging waters of salvation is a universal one. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." John 7. 37; Isa. 49. 3; Zech. 13. 1; Mark 16. 15; John 3. 5; 4. 10; Col. 1. 23.

3. "He that hath no money," ver. 1. If any man will obey Christ he shall receive his Gospel, his water of life, as a gift. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7. 17; Deut. 7. 7, 8; Eph. 2. 8; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Titus 2. 11.

4. "Come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price," ver. 1. So believing in Christ as to obey him buys God's favor. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15. 14; Exod. 23. 20, 21; 2 Cor. 7. 15; 10. 5; Rom. 6. 16-18; 1 Pet. 1. 2.

5. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" ver. 2. No form, or forms, of worldliness can satisfy the human soul with peace. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and the labor that I had labored to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." Eccl. 2. 11; 11. 8, 9; Matt. 6. 24; Rom. 12. 2; James 4. 4; 1 John 2. 15, 16.

6. "Let your soul delight itself in fatness," ver. 2. Holiness of heart and purity of life are the "fatness" of the soul. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matt. 5. 8; Psa. 24. 3, 4; Eph. 5. 5; Heb. 12. 14; 1 John 3. 2, 3.

7. "Incline your ear, and come unto me," ver. 3. Man is free to "come" to Jesus, that is, to obey the Spirit and words of Jesus, and be saved, or not to do so, and be lost. "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." John 5. 40; 3. 19; Eccl. 12. 13; Matt. 11. 28-30; Mark 16. 16.

8. "I will make an everlasting covenant with you," ver. 3. Man's obedience to Christ secures in his behalf, to afford him pardon and purity, all the weight of infinite wisdom and power. "For I the Lord love judgment; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them." Isa. 61. 8; 2 Tim. 1. 9; 1 Tim. 2. 4; Acts 4. 12; Heb. 2. 10.

9. "Even the sure mercies of David," ver. 3. What was God's great promise to David? "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." 2 Sam. 7. 16; 1 Chron. 17. 7-27; John 12. 34; Heb. 1. 8.

10. "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people," ver. 4. The holy One of Israel, the Messiah, the perfect Revealer of God's character to man. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28. 18; Psa. 2. 6; 89. 19; Isa. 9. 6, 7; Luke 1. 32; Rom. 14. 9.