

How often is the living water taken in Scripture as an illustration of the word of God! Once for all, it was given to man by God; God's heart and mind miraculously infused into man's; the invisible taking visible form, as the invisible vapour in the evening is condensed into the drops of fresh cold dew; then entering on its wondrous work all through the ages. Take this single chapter, Isa. lv. Written some two thousand six hundred years ago, how many thousands of times do you suppose those sublime words of the first verse have been read to the comfort and joy of sinful hearts? How many thousands of thirsty souls have "come to the waters," "without money and without price," and have "stooped down to drink and live?"

And never, to those who thirsted indeed, has this proved a stagnant pool. It has been living water, a perennial source of life. For God has, as it were, caught up the old words to heaven, and has vitalised them anew with a Divine electricity without which even the water itself has no life in it. The old revelation in God's Word is ever new. God touches it again with power Divine, and sends it forth as fresh and life-giving as on the day on which it was first spoken, and it accomplishes its purpose, and returns once more to its Giver. God is ever present with His Word. He has not left it on earth a dead book; the Spirit Who inspired is in it and with it still.

And so we come to ask further for what purpose is this Word of God, this water of life, sent?

The chapter answers the question in the first and tenth verses

1. It is given to us *directly*, to satisfy our spiritual thirst. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no

money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Here, incidentally, the freedom and variety of the Word of God are alike indicated. Its *freedom*: "without money and without price." Its *variety*: in this very verse it is likened, not only to both meat and drink, but to various kinds of drink; not water only, but also wine and milk, the typical refreshing and strengthening drink of both adults and children. It is divine food for all human want.

2. The rain from heaven, besides directly giving drink to the thirsty (ver. 1), indirectly (ver. 10) gives "seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." The order of nature is here followed: first sowing, then reaping; first preaching the Word, then receiving it. But consider these in inverted order, and see how all depends on the living water.

(a) *Bread to the eater*.—It is remarkable how large a part water bears in the formation of all organised and living things used for food. The grape or pear you eat is made up almost entirely of water. Bread itself is nearly one half water. The prophet was probably no chemist to know these facts; but the inspiring Spirit used no heedless or inappropriate illustration when He spoke of the rain from heaven giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater. It not only causes the food to grow, but forms one of its chief constituents.

The fruit you eat on a summer day is in large measure composed of what, a few weeks before, formed part of a broad Atlantic roller, whence the sun caught it up into the cloud, and the wind wafted it to the land, and it fell in showers in the garden, or the field, and now is stored in the peach or grape or corn.