

Phineas F. Bresee Sermon Notes - Isaiah 26:1-4

Every attempt has been made to transcribe these notes accurately. Indecipherable text appears in brackets [-]. Abbreviations transcribed as they appear in the notes.

Isa XXVI. 1-4. In that day shall this song be sung &c. Wreck & ruin. Exile & poverty. Slavery & suffering had come to Israel. It is dif. perhaps impossible for us to realize what captivity & slavery meant to the Jews. We know very well its cause. Being Gods people peculiarly favored with truth & light. With manifestations of his presence & revelations of his will. Enjoying his peculiar favor & blessing. They virtually forgot him yielding to the pagan inf. about them. Sought to be like other nations. Sought after their gods & corrupted themselves with their idolatries. Though they kept up the forms of worship yet their hearts &c. After repeated warnings. They were given over to their enemies & carried away into captivity. It was not a race of barbarians without refined feelings who had never known anything better. But cultured refined men & women driven from houses of [luxury]. To be driven as cattle beaten, insulted, enslaved with their life only given & that [a prey]. Driven barefoot & uncovered across the desert over the Mts. away to the Euphrates to be slaves or submit the best they could. The land was utterly emptied & the exiles in utter poverty. Isa. dwells upon this in much of the two preceding chapters. Poverty to these people meant much more [~~these people~~] than to us. To the Jew poverty & exile meant more [that] misfortune. More than the abuse of necessities more even than the oppression & pain inflicted by the oppressor. It meant the displeasure of God. The Greek stoic could look upon these things with indifference. But the Jew had a conscience and he recognized that these things came to him because of sin. It was because of the conscience of the Jew that God was able to transform these things into spiritual conditions of blessedness. His poverty, his heart hunger, his homesickness, his hunger after divine favor into elements of great moral excellence. Until poverty became poverty of Spirit. Heart hunger & homesickness & desire for divine favor. Real longing for pardon and spiritual worship & divine conversion. Until as they hung these harps upon the willows & cried "how can we sing" &c. "If I forget thee &c. And when these outward things were made spiritual conditions they were prepared to be led back to the home & worship from whence they came & to more spiritual things. For the temple was to be the center of their life as never before. But now Is. sees them returning from their captivity to find a home again in & about Jerusalem – at & near the alters of God. But in & through it all he sees spiritual things. Righteousness, peace & safety in the love & name of God. Is. looks through the local and the typical and sees the general & universal. That man is at home on the bosom of God &c. It is with this fact before him, absorbing him, filling him, that he utters these words. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judea. We have a strong city. Salvation will God appoint for walls & bulwarks &c. This is a personal song. Nobody can sing it but an inhabitant. "We have." It is the song of experience. A song is valueless only as it is the breath of the heart. Song as a performance is an empty sound. A ghastly thing. A hired singer in the house of the Lord whose eye is on the pay he is to get for the performance &c. This song wells up from the heart. A child who don't know a code of music can sing it. An old man whose voice has grown thin &c. An old lady with possibly [in] a broken squeaky voice &c. It is an exp. it is melody in the heart. Sets the nerves tingling &c. There are a few things in this song I desire to call attention to. The city of God & the dwelling place of Gods people is a place of safety & peace & plenty. I desire to emphasize who they are who dwell in the city of God & open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. The way back from Babylon to Jerusalem was a way of righteousness. Deserts had to be passed, wilderness gone through & hostile tribes to be passed. But as the prophet looked at it. He saw righteousness which made the way possible. As he saw them go out because of sin.

Sin burdened. The way paved with sin. Scourged on by sin. So now he saw them returning because of righteousness. Their very path was righteousness. Righteousness on their brow in their hearts. They seem [winged] with right speaking of this return – so intense was the moral side of it that he said and a highway shall &c a way &c. The way to the dwelling place of God's people is a way of holiness. I mean to their dwelling place down here. The New Jerusalem which fulfills the prophecy of the typical Jerusalem came down from God out of heaven. I may not tell how high it reaches but one thing I know. Its twelve foundations which bear the names of the 12 ap. are laid down here. Its pearl gates open to hu. souls down here. The branches of the tree of life spread out over human souls down here. That river &c. That face the light of which turns the sun into darkness &c. That over [mastery] statement of no temple to worship in that the Lord God Almighty & the Lamb are the temple of it is true down here &c. This city is something more than locality. It is state. It is so living in Him that locality & conditions make little difference &c. The entrance is a way of holiness. Men say must I then be holy to be a Christian. Men ask it as though they feared to be holy as if it was something they could not brook. Something they could scarcely put up with. Requiring something of them that they could not pay, to be holy. It is a normal thing for a Christian to be holy. God is holy, his law, his gospel, his blood, His Spt. &c. His people &c. The abode of Gods people is in the Holy City. Washed in the blood nourished by the holy life of Jesus & I do not mean studying &c. I mean you eat his very life. He is the tree of life. It has been said John drank of his heart &c. One of the features of this dwelling place of the Saints, this city of God is the wealth of its provisions. Is. says in this same prophecy in this connection `In this Mt. shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast &c. This is put over against the poverty of the captivity which was so much deeper than the hunger for bread. A hunger for pardon, for home, for God. An Arctic Explorer was asked whether he & his comrades suffered much from the pangs of hunger during the months of slow starvation to which they were exposed. Ans., no we lost them in the sense of abandonment. In the feeling that our country men had abandoned & forgotten us. It was not till we were rescued & looked into human faces that we felt how hungry we were. So with lost humanity. There is a poverty of soul. A hunger. Longing of spirit after inf. things that swallows up all other need. Outward need is but as the needs of the hearts widowhood. Over against this is this divine supply. It is of God. It is God. His favor, his love, his presence which makes all other conditions blessed. Prisons, palaces, winter, spring time. The place of exile. Home. And would turn hell into heaven. The wines on the [L--]. The oldest, choicest, richest wines is the hearts blood of the Lamb of God. The inf. love of God put into the winepress of incarnation & distilled for men. It is the manifestation of the inf. love of God to a hu. soul to its satisfying. O love, love found me. [F--] things, the best things under or above the heavens are for Gods redeemed children. Chs. Wesley hymns ["Jesus - heaven below"] "Jesus all the day long" "O the [rapturing] heights" One of the foremost utterances of this text if not the foremost is safety. Great walls & mighty bulwarks. Riches are of little value if the enemy may come in at any moment and [disrupt] us. The reason we have hard times is because men feel there is an enemy abound who will [disrupt] me &c. The [-] of all the [-]. That is the dif. with earthly things. Makes me care so little for them. There is an enemy &c. [Even] the [price] of divine love is of little value unless I can keep them. If I am likely to be despoiled of them tomorrow. This is a great question & it is emphasized by the conditions of things. What is the strength of the church. Of an individual soul. We say of such in church it is a very strong church. In what does its strength consist. It is a very large church. The largest in the city &c. It has a great deal of wealth. There are several millionaires in it. There is a great deal of culture & they seek the most cultured & brilliant preachers & you ought to see what a brilliant assemblage it is. This magnificent place. You ought to have heard the eloquent sermon on "the inherent nobility of

manhood &c." Some little things about him that were not altogether beautiful. But these would slough off under the development of the nobler part of his nature. I never went home from church feeling so comfortable &c. You ought to of seen that brilliant audience on a Sunday night as they had that concert &c. The [Roman] ideas of the strength of a church is members, wealth & culture. Far be it from me to unqualifiedly condemn any of these &c. They all may be very desirable under certain conditions. I wish far more men & women to spread scriptural holiness &c. I wish for money &c. For more men and women of the best ability &c. But for the Lords work &c. But these are not what God has appointed for the strength of the church. Salvation hath God appointed for walls &c. What is salvation appointed but a saved people & what is a saved people but a people made holy through the blood of the Lamb &c. Salvation is the walls of strength & power in Gods church & salvation does not need great numbers to be strong for the soul trusts in the Lord & in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Gideon's army reduced to 300 with the power of God was invincible. What was it that made the powerful tribes of the land fear & tremble &c. Because they had heard that God was with them. Jonathan & his armor boy. The bulwark of this city is something more than its walls of strength. Defense often means aggressiveness. The Navy of Gr. Britain is the bulwark of the nation. Often by thundering at the gates of a city a 1000miles away. The Holy Ghost is our bulwark. And it is aggressive force.

End of notes