

Seven Stages of the Journey

from

EGYPT TO CANAAN.

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SEVEN STAGES OF THE JOURNEY FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

THE history of God's ancient people, from Egypt to Canaan, is fraught with richest instruction, especially when it is understood that their history was formed by a divine hand, moulded for a certain purpose. They were a typical people; and concerning this part of their history, it is written, "Now all these things happened unto them for types: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11. *R. V.*).

In the land of Egypt we learn of their degradation and bondage. Eleven chapters describe their real condition—their burdens, their sorrows and their bitter tears (Ex. i.–xi.); but God, whose compassions are great and fail not, beheld their condition; His heart was moved, and He remembered His covenant with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "and God had respect unto them" (Ex. ii. 24, 25).

In the person of Moses, God raised up a deliverer, a saviour, and sent him to them on an errand—an errand of mercy and of love, with power. When we reach chapter twelve of that very remarkable book, we find a great change—the dawn of a new day for that favored people whom Jehovah claimed as His own.

FIRST: The Passover (EX. XII.).

In this chapter God brings in a new beginning—openly connecting that people with His Name. His purpose was to bring them out of Egypt, through the desert, and into the land of promise—the land that “flowed with milk and honey” (chap. iii. 8). The first lesson He would teach them was the need of a passover lamb. Our chapter describes that lamb fully, and enforces the need on the part of each to see that the blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the door-posts of his house. For, it must be remembered, they were sinners as were the Egyptians, they were idolaters as were also the Egyptians; and in these things there was no difference; but when God spoke, they heard and obeyed His voice (chap. iv. 29–31); hence, God said, “I will put a division (literally, a redemption, *margin*) between My people and thy people” (chap. viii. 23). At this point we see the people turning to God from idols, as did the new converts at Thessalonica at an after date (1 Thess. i. 9). They also accepted God's appointed way as did Abel before them (Gen. iv. 4), and God provided a place of safety for His people upon that dark night, when He executed judgment upon the land of Egypt.

The lamb was God's appointed means of safety—of deliverance from judgment. The blood upon the door-posts outside was sufficient for God's eye to rest upon: “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” And this people, taken up in God's sovereign grace, could, behind the blood-stained lintel, *rest satisfied*, in perfect safety, and feast upon the lamb roast with

fire, with the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs.

In all this we see a clear, plain picture of Christ. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7). The blood gave Israel safety and peace; the blood of Christ secures salvation and peace, as well as forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life to every soul to-day who hears and believes the message, receiving the incorruptible word of God into the heart by faith.

Thus, Israel start on their journey a redeemed people, and that memorial month was for them "the beginning of months." So with us, when the soul accepts God's Lamb, there is a new beginning, a new birth, a new life, a new relationship—all based upon the blood of Christ, God's Lamb. Blessed start, blessed journey, and blessed end!

SECOND: The Red Sea (Ex. xiv.).

We leave the place of Israel's birth, the scene of their slavery—"the house of bondage"—and under the guiding of the Shekinah-cloud we journey to the Red Sea. For, be it remembered, the cloud guided them in all the journey from the place where the blood was sprinkled (Ex. xiv. 21)—type of the Holy Spirit indwelling and guiding God's people now, consequent upon new birth and redemption by the blood (Rom. v. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 19; Gal. iii. 2; iv. 6; Eph. i. 13):

At the Red Sea they encamped "before Pi-hahiroth" ("door of liberty"). The Red Sea was that door of liberty—God's appointed way of deliverance for them from the bondage of Egypt and Pharaoh, as the passover-lamb had been from divine judg-

ment. Thus we see in their history a double deliverance: one secured them from God's wrath against their sins; the other, from the terrible rule of Pharaoh.

That proud, haughty ruler had made them his slaves. They formed part of his dominion, and this extended as far as the Red Sea; but when God opened up the Sea and passed Israel through, they were free. Before this they groaned and wept; now, delivered, they rejoiced and sang (Ex. xv.).

Here we can compare scripture with scripture again, and find the beautiful analogy between the Old Testament and the New. In the New Testament we learn of the reign, rule, or dominion, of *Sin* (Rom. v. 21; vi. 6; vii. 23), which has sway over the whole human race—in every human heart away from God. Pharaoh's dominion had a limit, and so has that of Sin; one ruled as far as the Red Sea; the other, as far as death; but in either case the rule extends no further. The Red Sea is thus another illustration of Christ's death; and His people being now associated with Him as Head of the new creation, have died *with Him*. This is God's appointed way of deliverance for them from the world (Egypt), and from the power, rule and dominion of Sin (Pharaoh). This lesson is fully given in Rom. vi.

Thus as Israel passed through the Red Sea and were free, so we pass through death *with* Christ and are crucified to the world—separated from it forever, and freed from the dominion of sin under which the world is. It can be easily seen that this is a further lesson for us to learn than that of forgiveness of sins and justification, as in Rom. iii., iv., and v., just as

the Red Sea lesson differs from that of the passover. As all Israel passed through the Red Sea, so in God's sight, all believers "have died"—have passed through death with Christ (Rom. vii. 2-8; Col. iii. 3, *Gk.*)

Many believers may not have grasped this truth in their souls, and thus lose the blessing which surely follows every ray of light which we truly receive. Israel were free from the dominion of *Pharaoh*, and we are free from the dominion of *Sin*; not yet free from the *presence* of sin, for it still exists within us, as all around us, but we are free from its rule. So we are enjoined "let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body" (Rom. vi. 12). This truth gives great rest to the soul, when apprehended. It gives rest in God's way—not in the way many think, *i. e.*, give battle to indwelling sin with the hope of exterminating it. The principle of evil we all inherit from natural birth abides as long as we abide here; but when the believer grasps the Red Sea lessons with their application as set forth in the sixth chapter of Romans, its fruits are both deliverance and sanctification.

This is experimental progress from what we have in Rom. iii.-v.,—a progress of faith, as the Red Sea was a further lesson for Israel from the passover. Many are confused in their minds as to these different and important steps in the Christian course, and thus lose much blessing. It is of immense importance we should learn that the truth of the passover, and of Rom. iii.-v. which corresponds with it, is for the establishment of our *relationship* with God. The first moment the soul accepts Christ, there is forgiveness of sins (Acts xiii. 38); there is

deliverance from wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 10); there is no future judgment (Jno. v. 24), for all these questions are settled, and the relationship, as born of God, is all established: the eternal issues are settled forever between the soul and God. But this is not all. There is the wilderness to go through, with sin still dwelling in us, the world full of sin all about us, and a holy walk with God through it all incumbent upon us. It is for this the truth of the Red Sea, with its corresponding lessons in Rom. vi. and vii., has been given to us. May there be earnestness to grasp, and profit by, these divine provisions.

After Israel passed the Sea, Pharaoh's rule passed away from them. That slavery, under his dominion, was a thing of the past; and now *Moses*, God's deliverer, was the appointed ruler and guide of that people across the desert to Canaan. Moses took the place of Pharaoh.

In Rom. vi. we find the rule of *sin* is broken—is annulled by the death of Christ. We are delivered from sin, as the old ruler, and free now to serve another—Him who is alive, risen—Jesus Christ our Lord.* We have, as Israel, changed masters, and are free to serve righteousness, to serve Christ the Lord. Glorious and blessed is this further deliverance, proclaimed to a people already under the shelter of the blood, who may be already rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins. The progress is progress

* The reader will do well to read with care this whole chapter in the epistle to the Romans. *Sins* are the great question of chaps. iii., iv., and up to chap. v. 11. Then, from chap. v. 12 to vi. 23, the subject is not guilt, not *sins*, but the evil principle within, that produced those sins. That evil principle within is called "*sin*."

experimentally, progress in the truth, progress in the faith; and this is also progress in sanctification, according to John xvii. 17—"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."

Third: Edom (Num. xx. 14-21; Deut. ii. 4-15).

THE believer's life is one of continued progress toward the end, as was Israel's: but all their exercises did not cease with Egypt, nor yet at the Red Sea. Onward and upward was their march toward the land of their inheritance, with further lessons to be learned in God's school. These lessons, however, are of a different order, and belong no more to the book of Exodus, but to that of Numbers. "Edom" lay across their path to the promised land (Num. xx. 14-21). It lay side by side with Israel the whole forty years across the desert. It represents the flesh now in the believer. God warned His people not to meddle with it; they were not to war with Edom (Deut. ii. 4-8.)

Edom is a word almost identical with *Adam*, and the fact of this enemy of God's ancient people being left beside them day by day for forty years, was a humiliating lesson for them; it was a trial calculated to lead them to continual prayerfulness and watchfulness to the end.

They had escaped one enemy—Pharaoh, but afterward needed to watch against another—Esau, or Edom. These were very real lessons for Israel; and when we consider that they convey parallel lessons to us, we search the New Testament to find what these lessons are, and what it is that answers to this new and hateful foe of God's people of old.

Romans vi. 14, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," answers, as we have seen, to the rule of *Pharaoh*—the previous part of the epistle telling how it was broken. Rom. vii. "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," answers to *Edom*. It is the flesh which remains in the believer until the end, and which, though condemned, is side by side with the new nature, as was Edom also with Israel. With neither of these enemies was Israel to fight. Deliverance from their power was not by the effort of man, but by God. We have seen how He set them free from Pharaoh and what answers to this in ourselves. In the same way, with Edom they were not to meddle; it teaches us that the way to gain mastery over the flesh which is in us is not by meddling with it, but by treating it as *condemned*, and reckoning ourselves *dead to it*. Esau and Jacob are yet along side each other. That which is born of the flesh, (the elder) yet dwells beside that which is born of the Spirit (the younger); and the only way to overcome the flesh which dwells in us is to walk in the Spirit. Thus shall we not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and thus only shall the elder be subject to the younger. The power now in those born of God is on the side of right, not of wrong; on the side of holiness, not of sinfulness. Occupation with good is our only means to escape the power of the evil in us.

Other enemies there are, ahead of us, which demand battle (such as Eph. vi. 10-18), but in Romans vi. and vii. the key to and secret of victory is not to fight, but faith treating it as condemned, and placing God between us and it. If Christ and the

blessed things which are in Christ are kept before the heart, and communion is cultivated with Him where He is now, and the truth of His Word searched and loved, we will realize indeed that the flesh is yet in us, as Edom was alongside Israel, but its presence need be no hindrance, for the Spirit in us gives us power to refuse its workings. It will keep us humble however. It will produce prayerfulness and watchfulness at every step of the way. It will cast us upon God as our only wall of defence against it, and for the needed grace to ever treat it as an enemy and a thing utterly condemned by Him. What immense relief this gives the soul! and how much unnecessary trouble is saved by following God's thought, grasping His mind in this, and being truly subject to Him day by day which is the path itself of practical sanctification and true holiness.

Fourth: The River Jordan (Joshua iii., iv.).

In the *Passover* we saw what removed God's judgment from His people and what lays the ground for their redemption and relationship with Himself.

In the *Red Sea*, what further blessing we have in Christ's death, as God's appointed way for our deliverance from the bondage of law and the power of sin.

In Edom, God's way with His people in relation to the principle of sin, the flesh, which abides in them to the end.

Now in the *crossing of Jordan* the Spirit puts another touch upon the canvass, and thus completes the picture of what and where the Christian is in the

eyes of God—that is, how God views him in Christ, and the place he occupies.

The passing of the Red Sea had let them out of the place of slavery. The passing of Jordan gives their entrance into “a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it” (Deut. viii. 7-9.).

Jordan sets forth *our death with Christ*; and as the twelve stones were brought up out of Jordan and placed on the Canaan side, it is a reminder that the people who descended in Jordan had also risen up and had entered their possessions in the land of promise. We have here the lessons of Colossians iii, “risen with Christ.” We have died with Him, but we are also risen with Him. The step from Romans vi. and vii. to Col. iii. is, as in Israel’s case, from the Red Sea to Jordan, from Exodus to Joshua. Christ has died, was buried, but He now is alive and risen; and God sees all His people in living association with Christ, the glorified Head of the new creation—those redeemed and brought to God. Has He died? so have we. Has He been buried? so have we. Is He risen? so are we. Has He entered the heavenlies? (as we fully see in Eph. i. and ii.) so have we—as *seen by the eye of God*, in the person of the Lord our living representative. True, we are not there *with* Him yet, but we are seen *in* Him there, and that is the fullest and most perfect pledge and assurance that, at His coming, we shall be also *with* Him. Thus, in

God's reckoning, we have passed over Jordan because the Lord has passed over; we have died with Christ and are risen with Him; and further, in Christ we are seated in heavenly places.

All those stages in Israel's history were planned by a divine mind and traced by the divine hand. What a new scene spread before them as they passed over Jordan! The land (for us, type of the heavens) spread before them with its hills and valleys, fountains and streams, its wheat and barley," etc., a glorious, pleasant land. *They* were our types, and so is their land; the better things were reserved for us, and those blessings are ours now. As to the apprehension of the truth, many believers never pass beyond the wilderness, if even, as to their experience, they pass the Red Sea. They, according to the beggarly thoughts of the natural mind, suppose that the enjoyment such as is presented here is only for the end, when we are taken home to heaven. But God spreads all our inheritance, His gracious gift to us, before our souls, and He would have us, by faith *now*, lay hold of all of it. As to our bodies we are yet in the world—in Egypt; as to our day by day experience we realize that this world is but a wilderness through which we are passing; but, being in Christ, we are already heirs of everything, and God our Father would have us exercise the faith which apprehends our heavenly portion *now*; and by the help of the Holy Spirit we are led into our heavenly place and blessings, there to rejoice in the riches of God's *grace* and the riches of His *glory*.

Fifth : Gilgal (Joshua v. 1-9).

The people are now in the land of their inheritance. To us, the parallel is that by faith we have apprehended the place which is ours in Christ Jesus—a place full of heavenly blessings. Israel was to take possession step by step of the land and all that was in it. So are we, when once we know our place in Christ, to take possession by faith of the blessings we have in Him. But enemies were there, and they were now to battle with the enemies, and enter into the enjoyment of all their possessions, as we too must give battle against our spiritual foes in order to lay hold of our heavenly blessings. Israel proved slack in this. And do not we ?

Gilgal was their first camping ground in the land, and the place of their circumcision which had been neglected in the wilderness. Their exercises and trials did not cease when they crossed Jordan, but they changed. So we are not to suppose that our trials end when we have found our place in Christ, but their character is changed. They had to contend with the seven nations there, and drive them out; but in this, alas, they often failed. So have we to contend with enemies such as mentioned in Eph. vi. 12. As a matter of fact, their conflicts in the wilderness were few; they had a skirmish with Amalek, but after they crossed the Jordan they were in frequent battle. Their pilgrim character in the wilderness becomes a soldier character in Canaan. At Gilgal, upon their entrance in the land, they are circumcised; they roll away the reproach of Egypt. This reproach was their slavery, their bondage; in being circumcised

they declared that they were no longer Egyptian slaves, but God's freemen. Free indeed! Free from condemnation, from the power of sin with all its degradation; free from all, to be only God's forever! What a declaration!

Gilgal to us is in Col. iii. 5. After we have learned that we have died with Christ and are risen with Him, we reach also our spiritual Gilgal, and there we are to use the sharp knife as did Israel. We are not to tolerate in ourselves anything unsuited to, or inconsistent with, the Lord and His holiness. "*Mortify* (put to death) therefore your members." At this stage we are beyond the lessons of Pharaoh and Edom, but we are to remember *the flesh* is in us still, even though we are born of God, and ever desirous of being indulged. When its tendencies arise, we are to judge ourselves—use the sharp knife upon all that comes from it; and by this spiritual exercise we declare that we are subjects or slaves of sin no longer (Rom. viii. 13). We are God's freemen, free to serve God, to serve righteousness, to honor and live unto Him who died for us and rose again.

Gilgal was Israel's camping ground in the book of Joshua. From this point they start for every fresh battle, in dependence upon God; and here they returned after every victory, to give God the praise and glory. A suited place this is for God's people—indeed the only suited one if we desire to make spiritual progress. For all service, for all progress, the place of self-judgment is the only one from which we go to victory; and after victory, to return again to our knees in self-judgment, taking no glory to ourselves but giving God all the praise, is the only

safe place. From this spot let us start each morning, and here return each evening. Here is the key to all *true* success and victory, power, joy, fruitfulness, and practical sanctification.

Sixth: The Old Corn (Josh. v. 12).

The next lesson, after Gilgal and circumcision, for Israel was their change of food. The *old corn*—product of the land—was now to be their meat, and this before they raised the sword against their enemies to drive them out of the land. Jordan was past, Gilgal had been reached, the sharp knife had been used; and now God shows them the precious *wheat*, yielded so abundantly in the land that the grain of the previous year had not all been used. They had long been promised this, and now the Lord is fulfilling it. They can now eat of it, and prove the sweetness and sufficiency of it, and gather strength to go forward and meet their foes.

Their food in Egypt—fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic—speak of their slavish condition; in the wilderness, manna told of their humiliation and strangership; but now having reached their land, the place of God's purpose for them, the food of a free, exalted people is to be theirs.

Manna was bread from heaven truly, and that is Christ; but Christ *come down* from heaven, in humiliation and sorrow on earth. It is thus He is presented to us in the four Gospels. Here we trace His holy path, behold His deep and tender compassions, hear Him speak as never man spake. His being God is declared at every step of His way, that the humiliation to which He has stooped for our sakes may ap-

pear; drawn thus to Him in love and adoration, He is our wilderness food which enables us to suffer the humiliation of being linked with Him in this scene of His rejection. The cross is at the end of His journey, and His sufferings in it present different lessons: as the Lamb "roast with fire" He bore our sins on the cross, sustained the judgment of a holy God against us, and made full atonement; and as the Ark He passed through the deep depth of judgment all alone, to bring us on the other side, to reap with Him the fruits of His victory. In this however, we are not partakers of His sufferings, but are made worshipers. We joy and delight in Him, and will forever.

But in Joshua we are carried further than this. We are in the land of promise, type of the heavenlies. "The manna ceased" now, and the "old corn" is given them. This, of course, is Christ also, but Christ in heaven from whence He came and to which He has returned—the heavenlies. Faith has made acquaintance with Him in humiliation, and now carries the believer's heart and mind where He is (2 Cor. iii. 18; Col. iii. 12; Heb. x. 19-22), and the Holy Spirit feeds and delights the soul upon His beauties and glories there: this is, for us, the "old corn."

Thus, on account of being as yet in our mortal bodies, we are still in Egypt (this world); and on account of the experiences, sorrows, discipline we pass through, we are still in the wilderness; so, by virtue of the faith in us which can take in the counsels of God for us, we are already now, by the power of the Spirit, enjoying our heavenly inheritance. At times the soul finds special comfort in the Sa-

viour's life of suffering here. This is feeding upon the *manna*. Then we think of Him as glorified in the heavens where He now is, and where our portion is with Him, and thus we feed upon Him as the *old corn*. As viewed thus the manna ceases. But whether as manna or old corn, it is the same person, the selfsame Jesus. Nor do we ever get so far in our experience and into the realms of faith as to need the roasted lamb and manna no more,* but for the time being, when carried on by faith to where He now is, it is of His glories we think. Those different views of the Lord will be before the redeemed as food and delight forever; only, when we view Him in the heavens it greatly changes things, especially in His relation to Israel as the Messiah; for in this aspect we know Him no more (2 Cor. v. 16).

The One who suffered, and purged our sins upon the cross, is now upon the throne of God, at the right hand of the majesty on high; Christ, in His most highly exalted position. And, as a consequence, the Holy Spirit is now present with and dwelling in each believer, to link each one with Christ *where He is*, and give us the present enjoyment of the wonderful place grace has given us.

Israel's food in their bondage in Egypt is men-

* This is important to notice, as a very *misleading* teaching has gone forth, that there may be a stage of soul reached where "manna" is no further needed, and that only a low state of soul feeds upon manna! But the lowly life of Jesus on the earth is ever food for God's people now; and it is *manna*, "the hidden manna," that will be our food in highest glory, and is the precious promise to the faithful in the Church (Rev. ii. 17). The thirty-three years from the manger to the cross will ever be the "sweet savor" to God, and food for the redeemed.

tioned, in Num. xi. 5, 6, as of six kinds. That of Canaan has seven kinds—the number of perfection, the perfections of the Lord Jesus—wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey; but the *old corn* (wheat) was the first upon the list (Deut. viii. 8).

Seventh: The Captain with the drawn sword (Josh. v. 13-15).

At this stage the Lord appears in a new form, to lead them on to battle and to victory: without Him they could do nothing: with His presence and His guiding, no foe would be able to stand before them, as their after-history fully demonstrates.

The Captain with the drawn sword identifies Himself with them. To us it is the Christian warfare now, as depicted in the epistle to the Ephesians (ch. vi. 10-18).

Our captain is the Lord of hosts. He associates Himself with us, His own people, to lead and guide us in the conflict with our spiritual foes (which the seven nations illustrate), and to make us take possession of our spiritual heritage, that we may enjoy our spiritual blessings even now. Many of God's people fail to grasp this aspect of New Testament truth, and vainly think that all the blessings, as well as the enjoyment of heaven, are only at the end. But the taking possession, as illustrated by the book of Joshua and Ephesians, chap. vi., does not refer to heaven after death, or at the Lord's second coming, but rather to heaven as enjoyed by the believer while here on the earth, and the spiritual conflict which is necessary to this end.

The seven nations united to keep back Israel, under Joshua's leadership, and sought to hold the land, still in their own power, from the true and rightful heirs. So does Satan now, with the principalities and powers of the heavenly places which are under him, seek to hinder believers from pressing on and taking possession of what God has given them with the Saviour glorified in the heavenlies.

Israel was not to fight Edom in the desert, but they were to drive out the nations which occupied the land. So we are not called upon to battle with sin which is within us (Rom. vi. and vii.), but we are bid "to wrestle against spiritual wickedness (wicked spirits) in heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12). Israel's warfare was for an earthly inheritance, ours for a heavenly one. But for this we need to "be strong and of good courage," as Israel was bidden to be. To this end, we feed upon Christ, the old corn, and the Captain with the drawn sword takes His place at our head.

The enemy will contest every foot, yes, every inch; hence we are exhorted, "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day." Our foes are spiritual foes, and they are also strong and numerous; but we have the Captain also with the drawn sword, and our Lord who leads the battle is stronger than all our foes. But in this great conflict we need the exercise of faith; for it is the fight of faith—the spiritual conflict against heavenly foes. No carnal weapons can avail in this war.

Faith looks on, and sees the fertile fields that lie before it, to go in and possess them: it values them,

and counts them well worth fighting for, and they well repay the aggressive believer.

As Israel, with the Captain before them, marched on, their enemies around them fell and were overcome; when they were self-judged and obedient to the Lord, success attended them at every step and turn. See how Jericho fell before them, a great city, and fortified; and yet, when their hearts were lifted up, and they neglected the prayerful, dependent spirit, a very small place, such as "Ai," drove them back, and they were defeated and put to flight.

How often have we experienced the same, as the people of God, in our day! But these very failures became sanctified lessons for them further on, as all ours should also. Past failures and defeats ought to lead us to tread the path more carefully and guardedly, seeking to be guided by Him at every step (Prov. iii. 5, 6).

After Israel's failure respecting Ai, they achieve wonderful things. Many places are taken, and the enemy driven away: they capture hills and valleys, cities, towns, villages and outlying fields, with treasure and spoil.

This is the record of the book of Joshua, and a very delightful book for every spiritual mind to read and meditate upon; for their whole history is but the type of our own. Every earthly good they find and get possession of in their land illustrates spiritual blessings laid up for us in heaven. If their blessings, being only temporal, were worth fighting for, how much more ours, which are eternal!

They fought for and possessed much of the land; yet there remained much that they never possessed.

Their full blessing they never entered into, and never shall until the second coming of the Lord. Then they shall enter into it all: every enemy shall be driven out of the land; "and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts," for Israel shall occupy all, from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt (Zech. xiv. 21).

So with us. The spiritual, heavenly inheritance is before us; and though we may already possess much, there yet remains much to be possessed—quite enough to prevent spiritual pride in us. It is at the return of the Lord Jesus for us, as the bright Morning Star, that we shall enter into the fulness of all that belongs to us through Him. We shall then enter our home in the heavenly sphere, with no foes to hinder; as Israel, now cast off, shall enter their earthly home and possessions. All shall then enjoy complete possession, according to God's purpose.

Practical Results.

The various steps we have gone over in the history of God's people have brought us to where we can now look at the practical results, and at the ways of God with them.

As we have seen, Israel failed to take possession of all that God had given them; and this failure leads us from the book of Joshua to that of Judges.

They did not drive out all their enemies; "the Canaanite dwelt in the land" (Judges i. 27-30). Their failure arose from the self-confidence which prevented their drawing upon the never-failing resources in Jehovah their God. The enemies not driven out, became aggressive and bold until they over-

powered Israel. Similiar failure has occurred among God's people in our dispensation. It is recorded in the parable of our Lord, "while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares" (Matt. xiii. 25). God's people may become careless and indifferent, but the enemy never sleeps. If we neglect to judge ourselves constantly, and cease to be governed by the word of God, little by little the evil increases and develops; and, instead of being overcomers, we are overcome.

If we leave the aggressive, triumphant spirit of the book of Joshua, we drop into the entanglements and defeats of the book of Judges. How important, therefore, the apostle's exhortation in Eph. vi. 13, "and having done all, to stand." Having gone in and taken possession, there needs to be the strength to hold and maintain the same; and for this we need "the whole armor of God," and the continued aggressive spirit to march on and lay hold of the further possessions which lie before us, leaving no enemies behind. Not one foot of the ground taken should ever be surrendered. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Alas, declension is now seen everywhere; those who once possessed, are being driven back, and the enemy is encroaching. This is especially true concerning the Church testimony as a whole: the vigor, freshness and spirituality of the first days have been given up, and we are in the difficult days predicted in 2 Tim. iii. 1-15; Jude 25; outlined in Rev. ii. and iii.; and all illustrated by Israel in the book of Judges. Joshua passes away, then the elders. Then departure is very marked; declension, and even open

apostasy from what their fathers had fought for and won at great cost.

Indeed, throughout the Old Testament striking illustrations are furnished us of the declension and failure of Israel as a nation; whilst bright and happy exceptions to the rule shine out, also, here and there.

Never did they enjoy so much of the whole land as in the days of David and Solomon; but after they pass away, failure develops again, and the conditions described in Judges return. It is written concerning Rehoboam, that he "forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him" (2 Chron. xii.). Those words give us a clue to all the after sorrow and disaster—the key that unlocks the mystery of their weakness and of the strength of their enemies. God's government there is over all, and His chastening hand falls upon them; for God is true to Himself and true to His people. After this it is further written, "Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the Lord. . . . And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem. . . . So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all; he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made." The enemy is triumphant.

In Joshua's day the people were strong, for they walked in self-judgment and obedience. Jehovah could be with them then, and they drive out the enemy and take possession. But with Rehoboam it was different; they were in possession of what their fathers

had won by many struggles, but had become indifferent and careless; so they transgressed "and forsook the law of the Lord." Then the enemy came in, and they were weak as water; God was not with Rehoboam; so defeat and loss follow.

Shishak represents the god of this world—the prince of the power of the air—who ever watches the people of God and seeks to get a point of attack in their weak hours. The record of his victory, so soon after the bright, golden days of David and Solomon, leads faithful hearts to weep even now, three thousand years later. "Be not high-minded, but fear," is a needed word of admonition in our day; for human nature, even in God's people, changeth not, whether in the past dispensation or the present—with Rehoboam or with us.

In Paul's day, like failure in the Church gave the devoted apostle and Timothy, his son in the faith, much sorrow of heart: "All in Asia have left me" were among his last words. They were turning away from the truth at the very time he was about to go to a martyr's death for the same, because he knew its value, its power, and what it had cost. Whole companies, as "fenced cities" were taken away by the tide, as individuals also had been severed from him and the testimony of the Lord. All this was but the beginning of grievous departure, an earnest of what we may now observe on every hand in the closing of the history of the Church. Yet Paul had rest of heart; for he could say, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." God never fails; His truth, sacred and precious in every part, is ever the same, and is a stay and guide to the de-

vout believer—no matter how difficult the days may be. Moreover, the Holy Spirit abides with the Church until “the Morning Star” appears. The land lies still before us, with its fruitful hills and fertile valleys flowing with milk and honey; the smile and favor of our God rests continually upon it (Deut. xi. 12): let us therefore maintain and defend with spiritual energy what we already possess of it. While the failure is general, it is not *all*. God preserved true witnesses for Himself amid the darkness of their day and time, and they did shine in their sphere amid all the departure and gloom in Israel.

Two such bright exceptions we will especially note here, for our encouragement and profit. They are taken from the list of David’s mighty men (2 Sam. xxiii. 8–12).

Eleazar (“help of God”) comes first, at the time when the Philistines “were gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away.” Those enemies of the Lord had moved up over the fields of Sharon, and entered the possessions of Judah, “Ephes-dammim”—border of blood, as it implies; and the narrative is quite conclusive that the place fully answered to its name. At this place there “was a parcel of ground full of barley” (1 Chron. xi. 13, 14). “He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword; and the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil.”

In Eleazar we see a man who answers to his name. A weak man was made strong, because his help was

in God. The people gave him none; they forsook him and fled when they saw the Philistines; but he arose and smote the enemy one by one. He was a man like the rest, but dependent upon Jehovah, and true to Him and to Israel's heritage. Such, in the hands of the Lord, are worth a thousand. In the conflict he became weary, *but his hand clave to the sword*; he felt the force of what was written afterward, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully (negligently), and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood" (Jer. xlvi. 10).

The ground was not only God's gift to His people, but food for them—a field full of barley. Those who fled before the enemy did not think it worth contending for, but Eleazar valued it, and stood in the midst of it and defended it. "Having done all, to stand" was a principle that governed him that day; if all the rest of the Israelites turned away, he encouraged himself in the Lord, and got the victory.

Every part of the truth is our heritage from the Lord; we are here to care for and defend it: and the weapon with which to meet the enemy is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

After the battle and victory, the people return to share the benefit; but no credit to them: had it not been for Eleazar, Israel would have suffered loss. The Lord wrought through a dependent man, and the result was a great victory—the might, the battle and the victory all the Lord's. How blessed to be thus used of God!

After Eleazar was Shammah. "The Philistines

were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles; and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord wrought a great victory." Here we learn, as in Eleazar's time, that the same enemy surrounded Shammah, and the people again had fled. History was again repeating itself with both the Philistines, as the enemy of God's people and of God's heritage, and with His people, for their lack of confidence in Him; for they fled as did the people in Eleazar's time. This was a very discouraging time if Shammah had put his trust in men. But, as David long before, he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God," so did Shammah; he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it alone.

At a later time his Lord did the same—"all forsook Him and fled"—even the disciples; but He with a firm step went to the cross, faced the battle and, by the sufferings that He endured, overcame the enemy, put all the powers of darkness to flight, and gained for those timid disciples, as well as for us, a glorious victory (Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14, 15).

Still later, when Paul's life was in danger because he would not surrender the truth entrusted to him, and "all forsook" him, he wrote, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me" (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17).

In Shammah's case it was a piece of ground full of lentiles. It was little in man's eyes, but faith values all that is of God, and this man of God would not surrender it.

In the case of the Lord Jesus, God's glory was at

stake respecting sin, and the everlasting blessing of millions of precious souls; hence He endured the cross and despised the shame.

In Paul's case, after Christ returned to glory and all men sought their own, he stood for the truth which circles around a glorified Saviour, and defended it.

God would encourage His people in our days by the noble example of such men and their soldier-valor to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The truth given us is a priceless gift, a sacred trust to guard and keep as our spiritual heritage. The whole land is ours, and we need to guard every part, great or small, even if but like the little patch of *barley* in Eleazar's day, or of *lentiles* in the time of Shammah. All is needed, every part is intended to serve as food, to nourish and sustain the new life in the children of God. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every* word of God," said our Saviour.

What Eleazar and Shammah achieved at those two different periods may have been considered of little importance by many; but when David got his rightful place upon the throne, and all the acts of those who followed him in the days of his rejection were brought into review, Eleazar's and Shammah's names were placed first upon the list. In his kingdom they were his mighty men, and did shine as the stars of heaven.

Many now also may achieve much by faithful adherence to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, by their refusal to surrender any part, known, loved, and enjoyed; and amid the constantly renewed assaults

against it, yet, with a firm, unyielding grip, as Eleazar, "cleave to the sword."

We are nearing the end of the dispensation. The dark clouds are growing thicker and darker each day in our sky, and the Scripture of truth has announced that in the last days perilous times should come, and that men should depart from the truth. We need Calebs now, men who will *wholly* follow the Lord; Gideons, who keep close by the wine-press, threshing out the grain to guard it from the enemy; Eleazars and Shammahs, who, single-handed, will defend and save the fruitful fields; Pauls and Peters, willing even to give up their lives for the truth; men like Timothy, as the others pass away, to commit the truth to others also, and not be discouraged by the repeated failures of men (2 Tim. ii. 2).

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