

Our Daily Homily

By
F.B. Meyer
VOLUME Five
Preface

With the issue of this volume of "Our Daily Homily," the top stone is placed on a structure which has occupied many of my brightest hours for more than three years.

Amid the pressure of a busy life, and the inevitable demands of a considerable church-organization, it has been an untold refreshment to turn to the devout study of successive chapters of the Bible, with the view of obtaining a message for oneself, and to pass on to others.

We must all have our "Temple of Peace"; and if this may not be a spacious and well-stocked library, it may at least be that collection of sacred literature which contains the noblest thoughts of the holiest men, inbreathed and borne along by the Spirit of God. Here is the secret of serenity, the treasure of tranquillity, the clue to perennial comfort.

It has been impossible altogether to exclude the personal element from these pages, because the sheets have been printed from the types of my own daily experience, set up by the many altering circumstances of joy and grief, conflict and peace, which befall each of us. But the one refrain has been the reality of the unseen; the nearness of God; the vindication of the Christian, as the only true policy of life; the duty and blessedness of doing all God commands, and bearing all He permits; the uplifting and light-bringing power of simple trust in Him who liveth, and was dead, and who is alive forevermore.

None of my books is dearer to me than this, or seems to contain more of my innermost thought; but at best it is only a handful of meal in the barrel, which may God multiply till He send rain on the earth.

Note: This devotional can be accessed at: www.lifebpc.com/devotions
It is also available for downloading on to Palm handheld devices.

FREDERICK BROTHERTON MEYER (1847–1929)

*British preacher, author, and
spokesman for public righteousness*



Meyer's ministry was worldwide, but his base was London. He was born and educated there, held pastorates at some of London's largest free churches, and conducted his moral crusades from that city.

An ardent Baptist and premillennialist, Meyer applied Christian principles to social ills such as drunkenness, prostitution, unmarried mothers, and unwanted children. One of his best crusades occurred in 1911 when he

successfully stopped a prize fight that was to be held at Earl's Court between Jack Johnson of the United States and a British contender. Meyer endured scorn for his efforts: a London newspaper called him "Meddling, Maudlin Meyer."

Meyer was involved in the Blue Ribbon movement (prohibition); the Purity, Rescue, and Temperance work of the Central South London Free Church Council (which closed brothels and counseled prostitutes); and the Homeless Children's Aid and Adoption Society. He served as president of the National and World Sunday School Unions, president of the National Union of Christian Endeavor, and founder of South London Missionary Training College. He was also the author of more than seventy books. He preached around the world. Melbourne Hall (Leicester), a center of social and evangelistic activity, was built in 1881 under his leadership.

- *Who's Who In Christian History* - Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

THERE is probably a deeper truth in these words than man has ever fathomed. Why that reverence for blood; that horror when it is unrighteously shed and gurgles forth; that perpetual reference of Scripture to the blood of Christ? Probably the answer to such questions would be given, if we perfectly understood the affirmation of this remarkable verse.

When Jesus gave His blood, He gave His life, the life of His holy soul. — We are accustomed often to speak about the blood of Christ, by which we mean the life of Jesus, shed forth for us substitutionally and sacrificially. The sinner takes this blood, this life, in his hands, and presents it to God as his plea. Does the broken law require satisfaction, homage, acknowledgment? Here it is in this priceless, pure, and sinless blood, never infected by pollution, never heated by passion. Let this shed life atone for thee! “God be propitious (because of the sacrifice on the altar) to me the sinner.”

*Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers,
They strongly plead for me
“Forgive him, oh, forgive,” they cry,
“Nor let that ransomed sinner die.”*

When we are bidden drink His blood, it is of His life that we partake. — At the table of our Lord we symbolically drink of His blood; in doing this we identify ourselves with His death, and give up our self-life to the cross. Yea, we do more; we testify our desire to receive into our natures more and more of the soul and life of our Blessed Lord, so that we may dwell in Him, and He in us.

Leviticus 18:30

“Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.”

LITERAL obedience was God’s perpetual demand of His chosen people. Why should we claim to be exonerated from an equally exact obedience to the commands of Jesus? And yet how few of us do exactly as He has bidden! Let us take some tests.

The Lord’s Supper is a case in point. In the present day there are many who, from year’s beginning to year’s end, never go to the Table, though Jesus said that His disciples were to do it in remembrance of Him.

Baptism is another. Christians shelter themselves under the excuse that it is not essential, and therefore may be omitted. But what do they mean by essential? It is not essential to salvation, because that has been achieved by our Lord; but it may be essential to show that we love Him, that we have a genuine faith, that we are ready to take Him as King. Surely a soldier is not freed from obeying the command of his officer because he cannot see it to be essential!

Going to law is another. If there is one thing clearer than others, it is the reiterated charge of the New Testament that we should rather suffer wrong than avenge ourselves. Yet how many professing Christians will this day issue a County Court summons against defaulters!

Forgiveness is another. “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Yet there are hundreds of Christ’s professing followers who are at feud with their relatives or fellow-members.

Let us remember the imperative tone of these words, and ask God to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Leviticus 19:2

“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.”

THIS is the refrain of the entire chapter; count how many times it recurs. Evidently the thought of God should ring out in our lives, as a perpetual chime.

Sometimes as *an inspiration to duty*. We should seek to be holy because He is holy. “Imitators of God.” Or as *a remonstrance against yielding to temptation*. Lo, God is in this place; His pure eye is upon me: how can I do this great wickedness! Or as *an incentive to liberality*. We can afford to be generous to the poor and hireling, because we are children of so great and rich a parent. Or as *a reason for merry and gentle kindness*. How can we act otherwise than lovingly, when His love encompasses us with its persuasive bands?

Thus the perpetual consciousness of God becomes the source of holy and happy living. But how may it become ours? We may make many resolutions, only to break them. We forget after our most definite purposing. There is no help but in the Holy Spirit, whose office is to teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance. He is able also to help our infirmity: “for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

In the morning let the thought of God’s presence with you in your secret closet sink well into your heart. Wait till His presence is made real to you, and you cry, Lo, God is here. Then entrust yourself to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to keep you in the current of the love and thought of God. Reckon on Him to do so. Now and then in the course of daily duty, stop and remember God. Thus you will live in His fear and love all the day long.

Leviticus 20:26

“And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.”

“SEPARATE me Barnabas and Saul,” said the Holy Ghost. Paul spoke of himself as being separated unto the Gospel of God. It is a mistake to make the act of separation our own resolve and deed. We shall inevitably drop back unless God has come into the transaction, and has set us apart for Himself. We must be separated from sin and sinners unto a holy God.

We are needed for a specific purpose. — God can bless men only through men. As once He used the Jews to be the medium of communicating His truth to men, so now He is eager to use His Church; if only she will allow Him to deliver her from the taint of sin and the world, and separate her for a peculiar possession unto Himself. Let us individually yield ourselves to the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit, that He may realize in us the purpose for which He has called us.

We are required to satisfy God’s heart. — He needs love for love. Throughout the world He seeks for those who can afford Him pleasure, as His enclosed gardens, His sealed fountains, His peculiar treasure.

This separation is effected by the Holy Ghost, and is referred to in the word “sealing.” “He hath sealed us unto the day of redemption.”

What an honor is this! To be for God Himself: to do His errands, to fulfil His behests and give Him pleasure! Rejoice greatly when God says, “Thou art mine.” We also can take up His words, and answer back, “Thou also art mine.” Let us be glad, if we know that the oil of separation has come on our needs, and let us walk worthily of our high calling, separated to the Holy Ghost, and counting it sacrilege to be used for any unholy purpose.

Leviticus 21:8, 15, 23

“Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy. ... Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the LORD do sanctify him. ... Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.”

THIS chapter is full of restrictions and cautions against anything that might defile the priests, the sons of Aaron. The holiness of God was set in a clear light by the care that there should be no ceremonial pollution or personal defect in those who ministered before His presence. What Aaron and his sons were in the ancient typical worship, that Jesus and His people are in the spiritual dispensation which has taken its place. “Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.”

How holy we should be “in all manner of living”! What may be innocent and natural for others would be wrong and inconsistent in us. Even the pointing of the beard after the fashion of the nations around, and for appearance’ sake, was forbidden then; and contact with death in the home of domestic mourning. These, with many such like cautions, indicate that our spiritual separation for the service of God must enter into the minutest details. The clothes we wear, the books we read, the amusements we engage in, the details of the home-life — will all be affected by the thought, “I have been set apart for God; the anointing of the Spirit is on me; I am called to offer Him the bread of a holy life; I may not do as others, who have not realized the sacredness of life, as I do; and who may permit without compunction what I forego.”

This is a high ideal; and it is only practicable to those who realize the thrice-made announcement of our text, that God will sanctify us: setting us apart for Himself — by the precious blood of Christ, by the anointing of the Spirit, and by the separation of our thoughts, and aims, and practices.

Leviticus 22:4

“What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue; he shall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him;”

THE holy things referred to here are the offerings made by Israel to Jehovah, a part of which was presented to God in fire, and the rest partaken of by the priests and their families. None, however, might feed on them whilst ceremonially unclean. This suggests some useful precautions for ourselves, if we would fully enjoy the privileges and blessings attending the worship of the holy God.

We must be clean before we can enjoy the private reading of the Word of God. — We would wash our hands, soiled with the dust and grime of toil, before opening an exquisitely printed copy of the Scriptures; how much more should we seek cleansing at the hands of Christ before we feed on the holy things of Scripture!

We must be clean before entering the House of God. — It is a holy habit for each intending worshipper to be quiet before entering the house on the Lord's day; or to use carefully the moment of the bent head at the commencement of the public service, in order that the soul may be made clean from any contracted stain, and resolve henceforth to abstain from all evil.

We must be clean before partaking of the Lord's Supper. — There we feed upon the bread of God; and as we wash our hands before we sit at the table of a friend, so should our hearts be cleansed ere we partake of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ. Holiness becomes God's house. Those that ascend the hill of the Lord must have clean hands and a pure heart. The reason why religious exercises do not profit you, may lie in your failure to comply with this demand. “He shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean.”

Leviticus 23:27, 29, 32

“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. ... For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. ... It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.”

WHILST Aaron was making the solemn atonement for the people, confessing their sins on the victims and sending them away, the camp was pervaded with the atmosphere of the Sabbath rest. No servile work was done on penalty of death. Probably for the most part the people abode in their tents. No sound was heard save sighs, and groans, and cries of penitence. The people afflicted themselves for their sins.

Sin is forgiven by God, but it should not be forgotten by us. — We should remember it, in order to refresh our memory of God’s great grace in putting it away; in order to deepen our sense of gratitude and to promote our self-humiliation; in order to make us watchful and careful in our daily walk and conversation. Holding the hand of our Savior, we need not dread to look down into the abyss from which He has redeemed us. We shall turn from it to Him with more tender love and gratitude.

Repentance is once and for all; penitence is perennial. — We repent when we turn from the kingdom of darkness to that of God’s dear Son; it is the act of the will, the utter reversal of the course we had been pursuing. But we are penitent after we have seen the face of Jesus: it is the act of the emotions; the sense of Christ’s love and of our unworthiness together makes us weep, as the forgiven sinner did at His feet.

Penitence does not purchase forgiveness, but accompanies and follows it. — Could our tears forever flow, they could not bring God’s pardon into our souls. That is secured by the offering of our Substitute on Calvary. But being forgiven, we wash His feet with our tears, we break our alabaster boxes on His head, and love much.

Leviticus 24:4–8

“He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually. And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.”

THE light of the candlestick and the twelve cakes of fine flour were to be before the Lord continually, as symbols of the twofold office His people were to sustain, on the one hand to the world’s darkness, on the other to God Himself.

We must shine as lights in the world. — As a candle in the hand of the housewife, who sweeps her house diligently; as a lamp in the hand of the virgin expecting the bridegroom; or as the lighthouse on a rocky coast. We must dispel the darkness, and guide wanderers through the murky night. Light is soft and still, and is thus a fitting emblem of the influence of a holy life, which burns steadily before the Lord continually, and is unaffected by the heed or comment of man. If no one seems the better for our consistent testimony, aim to satisfy the Lord. The lamps of the pure candlestick of a holy life are not for man only, but for Him. But they can only be maintained through the constant supply of the pure oil of the Holy Ghost, ministered by Him who walks amid the seven golden candlesticks. “Ye are the light of the world.”

We must be as bread to God. — In a blessed sense we feed on God, but God also feeds on us. He finds satisfaction in beholding His people’s unity and love, in receiving their sacrifices of praise, and in watching their growing conformity to His will. The two rows of six cakes foreshadow the unity and order of the Church; the fine flour, its holy, equable character; the pure frankincense, the fragrance of Christian love. There is a testimony in all these to the world; but we do not always realize the satisfaction afforded to the great God, who has made such costly sacrifices on behalf of his Church.

Leviticus 25:25

“If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.”

IN the case of Naomi this was Boaz; in our case it is Jesus Christ. Redemption, as described in this chapter, had to do with persons and lands; and each illustrates Christ’s work on behalf of believers throughout all ages.

He has redeemed our Persons. — It often happened that a Hebrew waxed poor, and was compelled to sell himself to some wealthy Gentile who sojourned in the land. He who had owned his own patrimony now wrought as a bondservant for another. But after he had sold himself he might be redeemed by his next kinsman. So we had sold ourselves for nought; we wrought the will of the flesh; we were enslaved to the fashions of the world; we obeyed the promptings of the prince of the power of the air. Alas for us! But we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ. We have been made free by right, and have only to claim and act upon the freedom with which the risen Christ has made us free.

He has redeemed our Inheritance. — What we lost in the first Adam we have more than regained in the second. For innocence, we have purity; for external fellowship with God, His indwelling; for the delights of an earthly paradise, the fullness of God’s blessedness and joy.

He is our nearest Kinsman. — “My brother, my sister,” He says of each who will do the will of his Father. He has made Himself one with us by taking on Himself our nature, and identifying Himself with our race. We know that Jesus, our *Göel* and Redeemer, liveth; and that He will come to redeem us from the power of the grave, and receive us to Himself.

Leviticus 26:6

“And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.”

BUT we are afraid, often very greatly so. How can we be secured from the dread of men and things which so easily besets us?

We must be absolutely right with God. — To walk in God’s statutes, and keep His commandments, was the first condition of Israel’s immunity from fear. When we know that there is no cause of controversy between us and God, we feel able to count confidently on His protection and deliverance. “Perfect love casteth out fear.”

We must count on God’s faithfulness. — He has put us where we are, and we dare not think He will withdraw from us, as Joab did from Uriah. We are His partners, summoned to co-operate with Him: will He allow us to incur responsibilities in His name, and then leave the burden on our unassisted resources? Fear will yield before a clear sense of God’s might; but it is still more likely to yield before a deep sense of God’s perfect faithfulness.

We must rely on the environment of angel keepers. — When David, during his flight before Absalom, slept in the open, he believed that the Angel of the Lord encamped around him. More are they which are for us than those that be against us. The mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire. Lord, open our eyes that we may see!

We must believe that our enemies are less formidable than they seem. — They surround us with their bluster and threatenings, they come against us in embattled array; but if we dare to go forward and do the right thing in the sight of God, they will vanish like a puff of smoke. “For, lo, the kings assembled themselves.... They were arrayed, they were dismayed, they hasted away.”

Leviticus 27:28

“Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD.”

THERE is a great principle involved in these words. When once a person or possession had been solemnly dedicated to God, it was not permissible to withdraw from the obligations which had been assumed. Once given, the offering was regarded as God's property, and might not be resumed by the offerer, or placed to any inferior use.

This regulation is specially applicable to our conception and practice of consecration. We are Christ's: by the gift of the Father, by the purchase of the blood of Christ, by the sealing of the Spirit; but a moment often comes in the life of the earnest believer when the Lord appears to claim a more earnest recognition of his rightful claim. Then thoughtfully and earnestly, spirit, soul, and body, are laid upon the altar, and we solemnly declare, “I am thine, O Lord!”

When once this is done, we must reckon that God has accepted us, and that we cannot repeat the gift. We may perpetually refer to it, and acknowledge its abiding obligation, and apply its principle to all those new departments and functions which are perpetually increasing on us; but we can no more repeat it, than could the Israelite give God the firstling lamb, since it was already His (Leviticus 27:26).

If we go back from the attitude we have once taken up, we must confess our relapse with tears and deep contrition, asking to be restored, waiting to be put back again into the old place by our merciful and compassionate High Priest. We cannot undo that past; but we may ask Him to restore us to the place we occupied before we went astray. Oh that we might never withdraw from the altar of entire consecration!

Numbers 1:18

“And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls.”

IT was not enough to be a true-born Israelite, a man must be able to show his descent. The genealogical tables were kept with the greatest care; and there was a holy pride in being able to vindicate the claim of having the blood of the patriarchs in the veins.

It is a blessed thing to be sure that we have passed from death unto life, and are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. True, our eternal destiny does not hinge on it. Many will doubtless be saved at last, who have spent their lives between hope and fear. But it is very needful for our comfort and growth in grace to be able to declare our pedigree, and to know that we have been translated into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son.

The Gospel of John was written that we might *believe*; the Epistle that we might know. But many seek this knowledge in the wrong way, and are exposed to endless questionings. They try to discover the date, place, or experience in the past, when they were incorporated into the Divine family; and because they cannot point to these, they imagine that they are still outside. Now for every one that has had a definite experience of the new birth, there are perhaps a score who entered the Divine family almost as a sailor passes the line of the Equator. Yet it is possible for you to know that you are born again, though you may not be able to tell your birthday.

If you are trusting Jesus, if the Spirit witnesses with your spirit that God is your Father, if you are full of a holy fear of grieving Him, if you are becoming like Him, if you love the brethren — you may certainly declare yourself as His child.

Numbers 2:2–34

“Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

OUR God is a God of order; and it was needful for the order of the camp, whether at rest or on the march, that each man should know his place, and keep to it. But though there were different standards and positions, there was one center, the ark, and one host of redeemed men.

Each believer has an appointed place in the great army of God. It is indicated by the voice of God, and by the circumstances of our life; and it should be jealously retained. Repeatedly the Apostle bade his converts abide in the calling wherein they were called. Yours may be towards the bleak north of difficulty, or the warm south of privilege — in the home, the country parish, or the difficult foreign post. But, on the whole, you should stay where you are; unless the Captain of our salvation moves you by some unmistakable indication of His will. The apostle Paul ever lived in such dependence on the Holy Spirit for guidance, and for the unfolding of the Divine purpose, that from some apparently trivial circumstance he would “gather” the movements of the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. And interval there was none between his apprehension of the Divine purpose and his endeavor to strike his tent and follow wherever it might lead (Acts 16:6–7).

The main point with us all is to face the ark, to which the doors of all the tents looked, so that we may ever catch the first symptom of the movement of the cloud. On the whole, we do best to pitch and fight under our own standards. There is a closer bond of brotherhood possible between those who think alike. But whilst we are positive in what we affirm for ourselves, let us not deny that other standards represent necessary aspects of the common faith.

Numbers 3:45

“Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD.”

EACH firstborn son was God’s. On the day of the Exodus, as the firstborn of Egypt were stricken, so the firstborn of Israel were hallowed. God claimed the right of their service in His Temple, to serve there as priests and attendants. But instead of them, He accepted the whole tribe of Levi; and for the over surplus of firstborn sons above the number of Levites, He accepted redemption money, which went to maintain Aaron and his family. Thus, each firstborn son was represented, either by a substitute, or by a money payment.

An Appeal to Parents. — Would it not be a blessed custom if, in all our churches, the firstborn child was, in a special sense, regarded as God’s, and trained for some branch of His holy service in the home and foreign field? What a blessing would rest on our homes if this were the custom! It would lead to very definite prayer, that the young soul might be truly converted and led to realize the parents’ ideal.

An Appeal to firstborn Children. — Either go yourself into the service of God, at home or abroad, or send a substitute. Consider yourself under obligation to do some special work for Christ and His Church. And if you cannot, earn money to support your representative. This is laying up treasure in heaven.

An Appeal to Families. — Why should not each Christian family become a missionary society, sending one of its members forth in the name of the rest, who should bind themselves solemnly to “hold the ropes;” and thus obey the Master’s parting commission, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”?

Numbers 4:19

“But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden:”

IS this what the Apostle referred to when he said that every man should bear his own burden? There are burdens which we cannot share or depute, to bear which we need special grace, and must continually seek the aid of the Divine Spirit.

The burden of our own existence. — Each of us must give an account of himself to God. We were created for a specific purpose; and our failure to fulfil it cannot be settled on another. God will require each man’s soul of himself. “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). You have a charge to keep, a soul to save, and a God to glorify.

The burden of our life-work. — What makest thou in the world? The Maker of all waits for thee to enter His great workshop and become his apprentice and co-worker. To be an idler, or an absentee, will land thee in inevitable disgrace. The appointed place cannot be left vacant, and thy tools untouched, save at thy grave peril.

The burden of the souls of others. — We are our brothers’ keepers, liable at any moment to be called upon to give an account of how they fare; and we cannot rid ourselves of this responsibility by annual donations or subscriptions to charitable or missionary institutions.

The burden of daily intercession. — Jesus bears the burdens of His people as He intercedes for them in heaven; and there is a sense in which we are called to bear up His hands in this holy service. We must consider the work of daily prayer for His Church, for sufferers, and for the world, as part of the burden of the Lord, allotted to us because we are members of His body.

Numbers 5:3

“Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell.”

WHAT a sublime conception! — *God dwelt with His people.* The Tabernacle was His tent amongst theirs; the cloudy pillar was His ensign. To attack them was to come into collision with Him. All the expense and anxiety of the march rested on His shoulders, as the care of a family of young children on a father. How needful it was that nothing should be permitted which could grieve or offend Him!

What the camp of Israel was in those long-ago days, the Church is now. It is the host of the redeemed, the representative of God, the pilgrimage of the saints. Amongst His people God still walks and dwells. Their griefs, conflicts, and experiences, are shared by their ever-present Almighty Friend.

The presence of God in the Church is by the Holy Spirit. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). He is with her and in her as the Body of which the risen Lord is Head. When the one Advocate went up, the other came down; when the Second Person in the Holy Trinity ascended to His throne, the Third Person came down to perpetuate His work in the world, through the Church. “He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

How careful should we be in the ordering of our church-life, as well as of our individual lives, so that there may be nothing to offend Him! “What will the Holy Spirit think of this?” should be always our first inquiry. We must walk in the Holy Ghost, if we would be edified and multiplied, as were the churches throughout Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria (Acts 9:31).

Numbers 6:12

“And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.”

HOW solemn is the suggestion of these words! If the separation of the Nazarite was broken by his sudden contact with death, he might start afresh; but all the days that preceded that untoward event would go for nothing — they would not be counted.

How many days in our life have been lost! Days in which we have learned no new lesson from God; have had no access into His presence; have done no kind and helpful act; have spoken no loving, tender word. It is all-important that even our days of rest from active engagements should be days of learning deeper lessons, of vision, and of reception from the fullness of God.

Each day comes to us fresh from God, like soft metal, waiting to be stamped with our inscription; or like a piece of yielding clay, to be moulded into some shape of beauty or use. Each morning the slate is brought for us to write on; the canvas on which we may paint. But too often we miss our opportunity, and a blurred, marred, confused result is all we have to show.

If you would avoid this, let God plan each day; follow the guidance of His Spirit; do all your work with might and for His glory; put away all known sin, and be separate from evil; in everything learn to submit to His dealings, and to commit yourself to His faithful keeping. Then each day will have something to keep in charge, and resemble a chalice filled to its brim with holy service. We must ever remember that “every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Corinthians 3:13).

Numbers 7:89

“And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.”

THE meaning of this verse seems to be that when Moses went into the Holy Place to speak with God he became conscious of the Divine voice, that opened out to him the thoughts and purposes of God in such a way that he was caught up on the current and borne back to God.

This is the true conception of prayer. We often go to God with *our* thoughts and desires, and having uttered them we go our way. We do not wait long enough to see the cherubim and the light of the Shechinah, or hear the Divine voice. Thus our prayers failed to be answered. We do not ask what is according to the will and mind of our Heavenly Father; and the heavens seem like brass. We have not because we ask not, or because we ask amiss. We must ask in faith, nothing wavering.

The true conception of prayer is that it originates in the purpose of God, and passes from the Father to the Son, who is also the Head and Representative of His people. From Jesus it is brought into our hearts by the blessed Spirit, who unites the Head with each member of the mystical body; and from the saints it returns to the source from which it came.

If, then, we would pray aright, we should wait before God until the Holy Spirit suggests what we should pray for, and indeed begins to plead within us for the saints. Silence, solitude, waiting before God; the return to God of his own thoughts; the being burdened with the weighty matters that lie heavily on the heart of Jesus — such is the noblest kind of prayer. It is those who wait upon the Lord that renew their strength, that mount up with wings as eagles; that run and are not weary, that walk and are not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Numbers 8:11, 13, 15, 21

“And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD. ... And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD. ... And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. ... And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.”

THIS is interesting and instructive. The Levites were substituted for the firstborn of Israel. They were first separated from the rest of the people, cleansed, sprinkled, shaven, and finally presented to the Lord by the act of Aaron, who, according to the Hebrew word, *waved* them before the Lord. This waving must, of course, have been done in symbol and figure. But it was not enough that they were thus waved, they had thereafter to go in to do their service. In other words, they were called to realize actually that which was their position and standing in the sight of God.

There is a precise analogy for the work which the Lord Jesus has accomplished for us all. He said, “I consecrate Myself, that they also may be consecrated.” When He offered Himself without spot to God, to do His Father’s will, though it cost Him the agony of Calvary, the heavenly Aaron waved us before God to be His. We were separated by His most precious death, that we should be wholly for God. But what is ours in the great deed of Christ, must become ours by our own choice and deed. We must go in to do the service for which we have been chosen and set apart by the Holy Ghost.

This can only be through the grace of the blessed Spirit. Ask Him to realize in you the purposes of God: trust Him to keep you trusting: each morning say, “Holy Spirit, I rely on Thee to keep me in the Divine purpose.” Then dare to go forth to do the day’s duties, believing that you may be always engaged in God’s holy service; that in everything, whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, you do all to the glory of God.

Numbers 9:19

“And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.”

THIS was the supreme test of obedience. It was comparatively easy to strike the tents, when the fleecy folds of the cloud were slowly gathered from off the Tabernacle, and it floated majestically before the host. Change is always delightful; and there was excitement and interest in the route, the scenery, the locality of the next halting-place. But, ah, the tarrying! Sometimes the cloud tarried for two days, or a month, or a year; then, however uninviting and sultry the location, however trying to flesh and blood, however irksome to the impatient disposition, however perilously exposed to danger — there was no option but to remain encamped. The Psalmist says, “I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.” And what He has done for the Old Testament saints He will do for believers throughout all ages.

Still, God often keeps us waiting. Face to face with threatening foes, in the midst of alarms, encircled by perils, beneath the impending rock. May we not go? Is it not time to strike our tent? Have we not suffered to the point of utter collapse? May we not exchange the glare and heat for green pastures and still waters? There is no answer. The cloud tarries, and we must remain, though sure of manna, rock-water, shelter, and defence. God never keeps us at a post without assuring us of His presence, and sending us daily supplies.

Wait, domestic servant, before you give notice! Young man, do not be in a hurry to make a change! Minister remain at your post! Until the cloud clearly moves, you must tarry (Numbers 9:8). Wait, then, thy Lord’s good pleasure! He will be in plenty of time!

Numbers 10:32

“And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.”

HOBAB was a Gentile by race, but he was invited to fellowship with Israel in all the blessings of their covenant. Moses reckoned that Israel was called to a stewardship of the manifold blessings of their lot. Whatever good was entrusted to them, they were called upon to distribute and pass on. As the Lord did them good, they would do Hobab good; making him, Gentile though he were, a fellow-heir, a fellow-member of the body, and a fellow-partaker of the promises of God.

We get by giving. — If the river-bed were to hoard up its waters, they would become stagnant and noisome. It is only in parting with them that it receives constant supplies from the crystal fountainhead. So, if we keep God’s good things to ourselves, we make it impossible to receive more. You cannot put more water into a full glass. But as we part with them we get more and better. Distribute five loaves, and you have twelve baskets of fragments.

We learn by teaching. — To stay in a class till you feel fully educated, is to miss one prime means of education. There is no way of discovering what we do not know, and getting grounded in what we do, like that of imparting what we have learned to others. Do you want to learn? Teach. Do you want to grow in grace? Tell of the grace which has saved you.

We keep what we give away. — Hoard your money, and you lose it. Give it away, and it is caught in bags that wax not old, and stored beyond the reach of moth or thief. “There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want” (Proverbs 11:24). This is folly to the worldling, but sober fact to the child of the King.

Numbers 11:29

“And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!”

THIS one saying proves the incomparable greatness of Moses’ character. Little souls are monopolists. They like to be good and gifted, because it gives them a kind of superiority to others; but they dislike to see a leveling-up process at work by which the Eldads and Medads are lifted to stand by their side.

This was the mistake of Joshua. — When he heard that Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, he said, “My lord Moses, forbid them!” But he was immature, a saint in the process of manufacture, and smitten with jealousy, for the sake of his master and friend.

This was the complaint of John’s disciples, when they saw the crowds ebbing away from their great teacher.

This was the quarrel of the Pharisees, that Jesus made religion so cheap and accessible to all, that even the publicans and sinners received His priceless wares.

But when a man is really great and good, he longs that all should be as he is, and better; he takes a deep delight in the spread of vital godliness; he is glad when others are endowed with greater gifts than himself, that they may make the Gospel better known than he could ever do; he is content to decrease, if Christ may only increase; he is willing that affliction should be added to his bonds, if only Christ may be magnified; he prays that the Lord would put his Spirit on all his people. This is very unnatural to any of us; but God, the Holy Spirit, waits to baptize us even into this, and to make the glory of God the object of our life. Make haste, O blessed Holy Spirit, and do this for me!

Numbers 12:7-8

“My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

THE meekest of men was vindicated by God Himself. He held his peace, but his Almighty Friend spoke up for him. It is thus that the meek inherit the earth and rejoice themselves in the abundance of peace. Oh, keep still, ye afflicted and tormented souls, God will not let you be trodden underfoot, if only you commit your cause to Him, and are faithful in all that He has committed to you. “That good thing *keep* which was committed to you: He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.”

Notice to what faithfulness leads! The vision of God is not given to great intellectual ability or mental gift; but to those who as servants are faithful in the administration of God’s Household, and the performance of such duties as are entrusted to them by the Great Householder. Such are they that enjoy the face-to-face fellowship, and the mouth-to-mouth speech.

These words about Moses are quoted in Hebrews 3, as though it was pleasant to the Holy Spirit to commemorate in all ages the faithfulness of his servants: and there is this further thought added, that the Household is one, and that all dispensations are included in its precincts. “Whose house are we?” It is inspiring to know that we are in the same house with Moses, and may have the same blessing. Are God’s dealings with you in dark speeches, in mysterious and perplexing enigmas? Be patient and faithful in well-doing: He is but testing you, and soon He will say, I have called you not servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but all things I have heard of the Father I have made known unto you.

Numbers 13:33

“And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

THERE is a good deal of talk in this chapter about giants and fenced cities. But the way of speaking about them was very different on the part of the ten, and on that of the two. The ten said: “The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.” But the two said: “Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” They saw the same spectacles in their survey of the land; but the result in the one case was *panic*, in the other *confidence and peace*.

What made the difference? It lay in this, that the ten spies compared themselves with the giants, whilst the two compared the giants with God. “The Lord is with us, fear them not.” Faith looks away from the greatness of her difficulty to the greatness of her God. “If considered in itself, it is clear that this difficulty is too great for me to combat; but it is nothing to my God. The wall is too solid and high for me; but before God’s touch it will fall down like cardboard. These ropes are stout; but before God they are only as tow before flame. I will not consider the man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be made as grass; but will look away resolutely to my Maker, who made heaven and earth, and who can still the roaring of the sea.”

If you want a fearless faith, be careful not to measure the comparative forces of yourself and others; but remember that God is working for you to will and do of His own good pleasure. If He is for you, who can be against you? When compared with Primrose Hill, Snowdon is high; but where is it when compared with the Himalayas?

Numbers 14:13

“And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)”

WHAT a noble concern for the credit of God! Here was a great opportunity for Moses. God was testing him by the proposal, that, the entire nation of Israel being cut off as a judgment for their repeated shortcomings and transgressions, Moses should become the slip or stock of the Hebrew race: “I will disinherit them, and make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they.” This was not the settled purpose of God; but a suggestion to test his servant, who would not entertain it for a moment. All thought of the honor to be done to himself was submerged in his great eagerness for the Divine credit. “The Egyptians shall hear it: the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able....”

The Egyptians are always around us, watching and listening. They can only judge of God by our behavior and the course of our experience: and are only too ready to catch up anything which they may interpret to the discrediting of the Eternal. How careful we should be in all our life and conversation so that the ungodly may have, not lower, but loftier conceptions of our God.

When tempted to anything which is not perfectly noble and honorable; when inclined to murmur and complain of God’s dealings with you; when an opportunity comes, as it did to Moses, to make gain at the expense of others; then remember the name of God, and the urgency of need that exists, to maintain it unsullied and untarnished. We should be restrained by a double fear: first, lest we should grieve God; second, lest the Egyptians should have a handle against Him, and should be prejudiced against religion.

Numbers 15:38

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:”

THROUGHOUT their generations the Israelites were bidden to wear it. It is the symbol of depth, of love, of Heaven. The azure sky, the glacier-rift, the deep lake, the far horizon, the eye of the hopeful, buoyant, tender nature — all tell the same story of deep and constant love, which mirrors below God’s heaven of love above. Therefore to wear this ribband of blue was to be kept in mind of the eternal and unseen. No outward symbol is needed by *us*. The very best, after awhile, becomes tame and commonplace. We get so accustomed to it that it ceases to stir our thoughts. But if we will entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit, He will teach us all things, and keep us always in mind. He is the blessed Remembrancer, whose mission is to bring Christ to our thought and keep Him there, the prominent object of our soul’s vision.

The object of this ribband of blue was to restrain the people from going about “after their own heart and their own eyes.” We need to be kept from the same, that we may walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. In our resolutions, our energies, our acts of consecration, our Christian activities, we are all too apt to go at the dictates of our heart and eyes. May God forgive us! It has been the source of our perpetual failure and defeat. There is a more excellent way. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to keep the blue cord of the Christ-memory ever before our gaze, that we may become utterly absorbed in His beauty and glory, in doing His will, and in executing His commands. Let us seek to be bound to our Master, who is Love, by that same cord, that we may never for a moment forget the demands of the unseen and eternal.

Numbers 16:5

“And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.”

IT was on these words that the Psalmist founded his exclamation, “Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto Thee.” This is what we all need. We often endeavor to approach unto God, but meet with many disappointments. Thomas Welsh said, on one occasion, that he had been wrestling to obtain access from six in the morning until nine! There is something better. If you are His, you may humbly count on God to cause you to come near; believing His promise: “Draw nigh to God, and God will draw nigh to you.”

In your morning prayer, or at any other time which you set apart for devotion, let this be the cry of your soul: “My God, cause me to come near.” When for long you have been dwelling afar off, and the distance threatens to become chronic or permanent, let this again be your petition: “Cause me to come near.” And throughout the rush of daily life, let your dependence be on Him who alone can cause you to come near so that you may dwell in His courts.

But God cannot do this unless the soul is utterly surrendered to be His; for “if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” We must be unanchored and unbeached if the tide is to bear us on its bosom. We must be free from the touch of other hands if we are to respond to His. We must sit loosely by the things of the earth to feel the drawing of heaven. This is, in part, the meaning of holiness. “Who are his, and who is holy?” Those who have experienced separation to God and sin. Give us this, O Lord; then draw us near to Thyself, and we will run after Thee!

Numbers 17:5

“And it shall come to pass, that the man’s rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.”

THERE was deep significance in this method of indicating the man of God’s choice. Too many have taken God’s election as referring exclusively to their enjoyment of God’s grace and their preservation to His heavenly kingdom. Here we are taught that one of its chief results will be, and must be — buds, blossoms, and fruit. “The rod of Aaron budded and bloomed, blossomed and bare ripe almonds.” It would almost seem that spring, summer, and autumn; the promise, maturity, and fruit — were simultaneously present in that marvellous rod. So should it be in those who have been chosen in Christ to be holy.

The bud of spring. — There is a perennial freshness in the true saint. He may be old in years, but his leaf is green with vernal tenderness, and there are the budding promises of richer and better things than he has yet attained. The youths faint, and are weary; but he renews his strength. The outward man decayeth, but the inward renews his youth like an eagle’s.

The blossom of early summer. — There is exquisite beauty in the blossom of orchard and garden. No painter has ever yet learned God’s secret of mixing his colours. Such is the beauty of the character of the believer. Men say involuntarily, “How attractive, how beautiful!”

The fruit of autumn. — That we should bear fruit is the end of Christ in our redemption and discipline. We can only do it in fellowship with Himself. He must bear it through us. “From Me is thy fruit found.” “I have chosen you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

Numbers 18:20

“And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.”

WE are God’s portion, and He is ours. The Lord’s portion is His people; Israel is the lot of His inheritance; and He says to the soul, I am *thy part* and *thine* Inheritance. We, with all we have, for God; and God, with all He has, for us. “Heirs of God.”

We are like settlers on the fringe of their estate. — The emigrant to the Far West has a plot of land allotted to him; but how little does he know of its contents! – There may be coal, or iron-ore, or rivers full of fish, or a rich soil; he settles on the outskirts, but every year he pushes his fences further back to take in more of the land, which is all his, but it is not yet brought into use, or under cultivation. So each year we should increase in the knowledge of what God is, and of what He is willing to be to us. Not as though we were already perfect; but we follow on to apprehend that for which we were apprehended, and to be filled full with His grace and heavenly benediction.

Our possession of God will largely depend on His possession of us. — There are some who wonder that God is so much more to others than to them. Is not the answer to be found in their withholding so much of what they might yield up to His occupation and use? If you would have all from God, you must give all to God. Your enjoyment of God will be in precise proportion to the deepening and widening consecration of your life.

Why should any of us be poor, or without strength, or fearful, when all the Godhead is stored in Jesus, and awaits our appropriation? Go up and possess His infinite continent that flows with milk and honey; watered by the rain of heaven; and rich in treasure.

Numbers 19:17

“And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:”

IT was very easy to become unclean without realizing it. To touch a corpse, to be in the same room as the dead, to stumble over a grave, was enough to defile the Israelite, and excommunicate him from the Tabernacle with its holy rites. Could anything more graphically set forth the contagiousness of sin? We cannot be in contact with those who are dead in trespasses and sins, or breathe air defiled by their filthy speech, or read books which contain their thoughts, without suffering in some way by it.

This is the reason why, at the end of the day we often feel unable to pray, or hold fellowship with God: we are excluded from the Most Holy Place, because of this defilement. Indeed, there is only one way of escaping it, and that is in being covered, hermetically sealed, by the Spirit of God. “Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

For this reason also, we should perpetually seek fresh cleansing in the precious blood of Christ. He is represented in this heifer without spot, slain in its prime, whose ashes were mingled in running water to testify their perpetual efficacy and freshness. If the ashes of a heifer availed for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse our consciences! Ask perpetually for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, that you may have access with confidence into the Most Holy Place. The red heifer of Numbers answers to John 13. Let us apply the ashes and the water of purification to each other. Jesus said: “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

Numbers 20:8, 11

“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. ... And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”

WHAT a miracle of grace is here! Nothing could have been more explicit than the Divine command that Moses should, on this occasion, simply speak to the rock. We cannot fathom the deep reason; perhaps it was because the Spiritual Rock of our salvation could not be smitten by the soldier’s spear twice. “Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many.” Moreover, we are taught to wait on God each time we perform duties which appear similar, for the ways in which they should be performed may vary widely. It is clear, whatever the reason, that Moses was to speak, not smite.

However, he grievously disobeyed; largely, probably, because he could not believe that mere speech would suffice for the miracle. He thought that he must do something to aid God, not realizing how slight a part man’s is in the Divine esteem. No flesh may glory in His presence. God must be all in all. We must believe that a word is enough; and that God will do the rest.

But, in spite of his irritation, disobedience, and unbelief, the water gushed out. The sin of the servant did not annul the love and faithfulness of God. “If we believe not, He remaineth faithful.” It is a sweet lesson. We are worthless and unprofitable servants; we fail to believe and obey. But God’s grace flows over the bank, and inundates the wilderness with crystal streams. The Psalmist says the waters did not trickle, they *gushed* out. Oh, miracle of Divine faithfulness! But Moses himself had to pay the penalty in later years. Disobedience in God’s servants cannot be condoned. In proportion to the saintliness of their character is the rigor of their punishment.

Numbers 21:17

“Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:”

THIS was a sweet song. It must have been a stirring scene, when Israel, in its thousands, sang forth this command to the waters that were under the earth, to show themselves, with the musical accompaniment of the gushing rill.

Spring up, O well, in our hearts. — Too long has the soil been arid and bare. A great drought has smitten it, and devoured every green thing. The flowers wither, the fruit falls. But Jesus promised to open in believing hearts a well, the waters of which should spring up unto eternal life. Not a stagnant pool, but a spring. Not a failing Cherith, but a perennial Siloam. Let that promise be realized in us here, and now; and if we have permitted rubbish to accumulate, or the weeds to grow rank, may we have grace to put them away, that there may be a clear course for the living water to flow through us and refresh the lives of all with whom we come in contact.

Spring up, O well, in the Church of God: — This is a petition with which we may enter the place of worship where we meet God's people. Spring up, O well, today! With this petition, we may plead for distant mission stations, and for the entire Church. Jesus dug the well with the staff of His cross; but we wish that the Spirit, who is as a fountain of living water, fed from eternity and returning to its source, may spring up within it with greater volume and force.

Spring up, O well, in the world. — It is weary with sorrow and sin. Too far and long have the desert sands swept their devastations. Hasten the millennial day, when springs shall break out in the desert, and wildernesses shall blossom as the rose!

Numbers 22:22

“And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.”

THE Angel of Jehovah is often referred to as a very present help, and as encamping round about those that fear God; but here, as an adversary with a drawn sword. When we serve God His sword is for us, as for Joshua at Jericho; but when we turn as here from His way to our crooked paths, it is drawn against us. That which seems to be full of menace is, when we look deeper, an angel force seeking to stay our further progress toward destruction.

Look for the Angel with His drawn sword in every pain of body, anxiety of circumstance, or suffering of mind. You were intent on pursuing your own way, and obtaining the rewards of unrighteousness, when suddenly you were stayed in your course. Another step would have brought you to the edge of the precipice; but you were suddenly arrested by that which forbade advance. Do not curse the hindering obstacle. Beneath it is God’s gentlest angel, endeavouring to turn you from your evil purpose; and though His sword may be drawn against you, yet He is but keeping you from taking that step which might result in lifelong regret.

Too often our eyes are holden. We fret and chafe against God’s kindest providence. Our anger is kindled at the ass which sees the angel, and thrusts herself against the wall. Let this day be one of humble searching of heart. Try to learn the reason why God has frustrated your plans, and blocked your progress. Ask for the opened eyes. Be sure that there is mercy in every broken plan. He sees the end from the beginning. Bow your head, and acquiesce in His appointments. Fall on your face, and bless Him whose kindest angels sometimes assume the roughest disguise.

Numbers 23:20

“Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.”

BALAAM would have reversed the blessing into a curse, had he been able. Large rewards were depending on his doing so. But he was restrained. The current of blessing was running too strong for him to stem: the music was too overpowering for him to alter the air. Is not this also the despair of Satan? God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and he cannot reverse them.

The blessing of adoption. — When the soul believes in Jesus, it is adopted into the family of God; the new life begins to throb within; it is constituted an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ (John 1:12). This position is irreversible. We may be tempted and overthrown, we may go for a season into the far country, we may even bring the family-name into contempt; but Satan cannot untie the knot with which God has bound us to Himself.

The blessing of acceptance in the Beloved. — We are in Him, chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, risen and ascended and seated in Him in the heavenlies; and as our God views us in Jesus, He cannot behold iniquity or see perverseness in Him, and He accepts and blesses us as His well-beloved. This, too, is irreversible by the arts and machinations of the great Accuser.

The blessing of the covenant. — God has taken us to be a people for His own possession. His name is named on us, His character is implicated in our ultimate deliverance from evil, and glorification. If we could be cast away, He would suffer irreparable dishonour. Therefore, though Satan do his utmost to discredit us, as he did the patriarch Job, he cannot reverse the covenant in which God and we are forever and indissolubly joined.

Numbers 24:2

“And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.”

THIS is a solemn warning for us all. Balaam saw truly, but he perished miserably. He heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty; but because he loved the wages of unrighteousness, and taught Balak to cast the stumbling-block of licentiousness before the children of Israel, he was slain in battle by the people whom he had blessed. He wished to die the death of the righteous, but was overtaken in that of the apostate. How near we may come to the gates of salvation, and yet perish miserably without!

Distinguish between unction and union. — Hooper, the greatest of English divines, says: “We are not to confuse the grace of union with the grace of unction.” It is possible to be united to the Lord Jesus in regeneration, without receiving the enduement of the Holy Spirit for service; and it is possible, like Saul, to be anointed for high office, without being truly regenerate. Official position may be worthily filled, and yet the heart be all awry.

Distinguish between gift and grace. — We may be able to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have the gift of prayer, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and yet be without love. The most gifted souls are by no means the most gracious. Desire earnestly the greater gifts, if you will; but be very sure that your heart is established with grace.

Distinguish between vision and realization. — To see the fair land from afar, as Balaam did, is not enough; we must place our foot down on its soil, and go into it to possess. It is not enough to have an intellectual appreciation of the blessed life and the way to enter it; not enough to extol or proclaim it. We must make it ours by humility and faith.

Numbers 25:3

“And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.”

THE people were attracted by the charms of the women of Moab; but what they entered for pleasure, became clasped on them as a yoke. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (John 8:34).

Sin is slavery. — The drunkard loathes his chains, vows not to yield again; but sinks deeper into the mire with every ineffectual struggle. The libertine is bound with passions, his heart is a dungeon, his conscience a scourge. We are promised pleasure and gratification; but when once the sirens have prevailed and got us in their power, they cast off their disguise, and work their horrid will.

The only deliverance is through the anointed priest. — Phinehas interposed, and he was Aaron’s grandson, on whom the anointing oil rested. And this illustrates a remarkable expression in Isaiah 10:27, “The yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.” Is not that the anointing of the Holy Ghost? It is only through the Holy Spirit that we can be made free with the freedom of the Son of God. Where He is there is liberty. “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16,17)

We must die to the sin that enchained us. — There could be no half-measures. Phinehas took a spear. Whatever the cursed thing is which has crept in to enslave, it must be slain before the Lord. Is there some secret evil in your soul, eating out its strength? Ask the Faithful High Priest to deal with it, that your soul may cast off its bondage, and rise into the liberty of the sons of God.

Numbers 26:65

“For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.”

TWICE Moses numbered the people: on the first occasion Aaron was his colleague, at the beginning of the forty years; on the second occasion Eleazar, and this was at the end of the wanderings, on the threshold of Canaan. But only two had survived, Joshua and Caleb, because only they followed the Lord. God deals with a nation by dealing with individuals. He misses no one.

His love misses none. — The little sick child put her hand outside the coverlet before falling asleep, in the hope that the Good Shepherd would notice it, and not miss her, as He passed down the hospital ward. But there is no need to fear His missing us, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, bringing the light with which they see. He tasted death for every man; He seeks each missing sheep, each lost coin. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

His Spirit misses none. — If thou hast faith as a grain of mustard seed, it will attract His notice. If thou yieldest thyself to His Spirit, though thy lung be weak and diseased, He will fill it. If thou desirest to be endued with the gift of Pentecost, it will fall upon thy head, though thou art as obscure as the shepherd-psalmist of old.

Death and judgment miss none. — On each of these unbelieving men the Divine sentence was executed. One or two might linger, as autumn leaves on the topmost boughs of stripped trees; but ultimately they shared the fate of their companions. Unless Christ come first, our turn will come. In Adam all die. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Each was born alone, must die alone, and alone give an account to the King. Prepare, my soul, to meet Him!

Numbers 27:21

“And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.”

THE emphasis is on the word *His*. Moses had asked God to indicate a successor to lead out and bring in the people. But Jehovah drew a distinction. Joshua was to receive the Divine direction from Eleazar, the priest, who should enquire of the Lord; and at His word, i.e., God’s word through Eleazar, the people were to go out and come in.

Our goings-out should be determined by the Word of God. — We never waste time when we stand before the true Priest, who has the Urim of Divine direction, especially when we are considering some call to duty. Very often we have gone out at the instigation of pride, or emulation, or fussy activity; we have gone out because others have done so, and we were eager not to be left behind. Under these circumstances the outgoings of our mornings have not been made to rejoice; we have encountered disappointment and defeat. When we go forth at God’s bidding, He becomes absolutely responsible; otherwise we pierce ourselves through with many sorrows, and bring discredit on the cause we would fain serve.

Our comings-in must be determined by the Word of God. — When we should come in to rest, to pray, to fill again our souls with His Spirit, to suffer in secret, or to die, must be left to the determination of His will. It is easier to go out than to come in. Activity is pleasanter than passivity; the stir and rush of the world preferable to lying still to suffer. But our times are in His hand, and as soon as we recognize the decisions of the Urim in the appointments of Divine Providence, the speedier shall we be at peace. If we are fully surrendered to God, both our going-out and our coming-in shall be ordered aright by His Spirit.

Numbers 28:2

“Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.”

GOD speaks as though He fed, through the sacrificial flame, on the offerings of His people. There can be no doubt that the obedience of the blessed Lord to the death of the cross was very satisfying to the hunger of the Father’s heart (Ephesians 5:2); and there is a sense in which our prayers and praises, the offering of ourselves in consecration, the gifts we lay before Him, are, when laid upon the altar of Christ, very pleasing to God. They are His bread (Hebrews 13:15-16).

We often speak of ourselves as hungering for God. Do we sufficiently realize that He hungers for our love, our whole-hearted devotion, our fellowship with Him? May it not sometimes act as an incentive to prayer to reflect that we may be passing from our chamber in the morning leaving God’s desire unsatisfied? He was longing for the uplifting of our soul in devotion and praise which was not forthcoming. Still, as of old, in the morning the hungry Lord comes to seek fruit on His trees. Too often there is nothing but leaves. Too seldom does He have the opportunity of saying: “I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey.”

If we really loved Jesus, we should be eager to give Him bread in our prayers, and yearnings, and activities; and we should long with intense desire for Him to be satisfied, though we were not primarily concerned in spreading His banqueting table. It were enough for us to know that His hunger was feeding on the love of saints, or on the joy of new converts, though we were not the medium of the one or the other. Oh for this unselfish love for Jesus, which looks at things from His standpoint, altogether irrespective of ourselves!

Numbers 29:1, 7, 12, 35

“And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. ... And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: ... And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: ... On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein:”

THERE was a good deal of work to be done, but it was not servile work. Throughout the seventh month, the work centred around the Tabernacle and the service of God, rather than around the tents and occupations of Israel as at other times. The same distinction is clearly made by the Apostle; our faith and salvation are not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Ephesians 2:9-10).

Do not work up to the Cross, but down from it. — We must come empty-handed to the Cross, and *receive* forgiveness and eternal life; but these will immediately begin to vindicate their presence in the fruits of righteousness. None work like those who have been saved by the grace of God – but their work is not servile work; not that of slaves, but of sons. Many confuse these, trying to work *for* salvation, instead of receiving it first and then working.

Do not work up to union with Christ, but from it. — We cannot unite ourselves to the true Vine by any activity of ours; our only resort is to lay ourselves at the feet of the great Husbandman, that He may graft us into living union with Jesus. When once that union is consummated, through our yielded nature, the Root begins to pour His mighty energy. Fruit-bearing is not servile work; but easy, natural, blessed.

Do not work up to Pentecost, but out from it. — We cannot win the gift of the blessed Paraclete. No tears, prayers, agonies of soul, can purchase it. It must be received by a single act of faith. But when once He is in us in His fullness, then tears, and prayers, and strivings for the salvation of men flow out without effort. But there is no servility, no strain, no restraint, save that of love.

Numbers 30:5, 8, 12

“But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. ... But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her. ... But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her.”

IF the father or husband disallowed the vow a woman made, it would not stand, nor would she be held responsible for its fulfilment. God would not keep her to a promise which was hindered from execution by causes over which she had no control. This is a profound principle.

You may feel that a certain step is required of you by Christ; that indeed you are bound by your allegiance to Him to take it; nay, you have already promised Him that you will take it; but, suddenly and most unexpectedly, you are prevented from taking it. The express prohibition of those who have a right to determine your action, or the verdict of the physician, or the evident call of duty in another direction, makes it needful for you to relinquish your project. What then: is God grieved and angry? Not so; He understands the whole of the case perfectly, and accepts your will for the deed, and bids you go in peace. This, however, does not affect matters in which conscience is clear in demanding or prohibiting a certain line of conduct.

Sometimes God's silence is consent. You made your solemn dedication in His holy presence: there was no answering voice, or rush of emotion, or witnessing seal; He held His peace from day to day. But in that silence He established all your vows, all your bonds.

If parents capriciously forbid their children carrying out solemn resolutions and vows, the burden of blame must rest on their shoulders. They must render their account to God, and give answer for their action. It will go hard with those who put needless hindrances and obstacles in their brothers' pathway.

Numbers 31:23

“Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.”

THE great aim of this enactment was to render these articles ceremonially clean. They had been in the use of the Midianites, and required cleansing, before they could be appropriated by Israel. But the cleansing processes were to be determined by their texture. Fire for what would stand fire; water for what could not stand fire.

We must be thoroughly cleansed. — If a man will *purge* himself, he shall be a vessel unto honour, meet for the Master’s use. Not cleverness, but cleanliness, is the prime condition of service. Jesus will not put throne-water into impure and polluted receptacles. What fellowship hath Christ with Belial?

We shall not be passed through fire, unless we can stand it. — Our faith is too precious to God to be exposed to risk. He will not let us be tempted beyond what we are able, lest we be discouraged, and make shipwreck. If, then, you are called at this time to pass through an unusually searching ordeal, be sure that your Heavenly Father knows that you can endure it. “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:7)

We must go through water, if not through fire. — The law provided also that “all that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go through the water.” The one is negative, the other positive; the first appertains to John the Baptist, the second to the Holy Spirit. The latter is the best; but be thankful, if you cannot endure it, that there is a discipline more tempered and gentle, which will yet render you meet for the handling of the Holy Saviour.

Numbers 32:23

“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

SIN is like the boomerang of the savage, it comes back on the hand that has launched it forth. The brethren accused Joseph of being a spy, and cast him into the pit; and on the same charge they were cast into prison. King David committed adultery and murder; so Absalom requited him. The Jews crucified the blessed Lord; and they were impaled around Jerusalem till room and wood for their crosses failed.

There is a Divine order in society. God has so constituted the world, that as man deals with his neighbour, so he is dealt with. The consequence does not always follow immediately. There is often a long interval between the lightning flash and the thunder-peal. The sentence against an evil work is not executed suddenly. But though God’s mills grind slowly, they do grind, and to powder. It is impossible to deceive God; for it is His immutable law, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal 6:7-8).

When sin comes to find you out, like a sleuth-hound on the track of the criminal, be sure that it finds you in Jesus. “That I may be found in Him.” Nothing will avail to intercept the awful execution of sin’s vengeance, except the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Put Him between you and your sins, between you and your past, between you and the penalty of a broken law. Be sure that only when the blood of Jesus speaks for you through earth and heaven, there can be a cutting off of sin’s terrible entail.

Numbers 33:9

“And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there.”

IN his enumeration of the halting places of Israel, Moses mentions Marah and Elim. In the case of the former, he does not dwell on the murmuring of the people over the bitter stream: but in the case of Elim, he loves to dilate on the twelve springs of water, and the threescore and ten palm trees, under which they pitched. Years of weary travel had not obliterated the memory of the refreshment afforded by those seventy palms.

We should remember the blessings of the past. — God has so made us that we soon forget pain; but memory is willing to keep the fresco-pictures of sunny scenes unobliterated upon the walls of her galleries. Thus we may encourage our faith and comfort our hearts, by musing on the hand of the Lord which has been upon us for good. You have had many hard tracks of desert sand to traverse; but never forget those three-score and ten palm trees. Let their gracious shade and fruit still refresh you. And remember that God will restore them, whenever needed. If not, you can always find your palm trees and wells in Himself.

God does not remember the sins of the past. — There is no word of their murmurings, either at Marah or Rephidim. It is thus that God deals with us. “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” (Isaiah 43:25) When God forgives, He forgets. He erases the record from His book, and deals with us as though no sin had been committed. When we get to heaven and study the way-book, we shall find all the deeds of love and self-denial carefully recorded, though we have forgotten them; and all the sins blotted out, though we remember them.

Numbers 34:13

“And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:”

IT is important that we should know the limits and possibilities of our lives. We must beat the bounds, first to know how far we may go; and secondly where we must stop, in our inheritance.

How far we may go. — It is our privilege to know God and the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His indwelling in our hearts, and the power of the Resurrection throbbing within us, lifting us to share the risen life of Jesus. Day by day we may be kept from yielding to known sin; day by day, though keenly conscious of temptation, we may be more than conquerors (Romans 8:37); day by day, the Holy Spirit may work in us perfect love toward God and man, to the limit of our light; day by day the Lord Jesus may be more perfectly formed within us.

Where we must stop. — We may expect to be blameless, but not faultless, till He present us to Himself: to be delivered from temptation, but not freed from its assaults: to be kept in perfect peace, but not secured from the pressure of adversity: to be dead to sin and self, but not daring to say that either is dead within us: to be delivered from this present evil world, as to spirit and temper, though still called to inhabit it as its salt and light. Take possession of every inch of God-given territory in Jesus, but beware of going beyond it.

It is a solemn question to all who have been appointed leaders in God's hosts, whether they are rightly dividing their heritage. We must hold back nothing that is profitable: nor must we shun to declare the whole counsel of God. Let our preaching and teaching include all God's provision for His children.

Numbers 35:25, 28, 32

“And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. ... Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. ... And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.”

ONE after another they passed away. They were not able to continue by reason of death. Their offices, and garments, and ministry, passed from each in turn, as from Aaron, whom Moses stripped with his own hands on Nebo. But their death only brings into greater prominence the encouraging contrast in the case of our blessed Lord, who ever liveth, and hath, therefore, an unchangeable priesthood.

Christ ever lives: what an encouragement to the penitent! — All that He ever was, He is; all that He ever did for others, He is willing to do for thee. The records of His earthly life, with His tenderness for those who were out of the way, are leaves and specimen pages of the diary of His life. Therefore, there need be no hesitation in applying to Him.

Christ ever lives: what a blessing to the saint! — “I am He that liveth.” (Revelation 1:18) He bent over His fainting apostle, and said in effect, You remember what I was when you leaned on My bosom, followed Me to the shore on which I had prepared your repast, and assured you of My never-altering affection. I am all that still; through death I have come to a life which can never decay; because I live, ye shall live also. (John 14:19) Let us rest our souls on this sweet word — from His heart there will ever stream to us rivers of incorruptible life. Let us keep all the channels of our being open toward the fountain of eternal life, that there may be no stint or restraint to our reception.

Christ ever lives: what a warning to the Church! — There is no need, therefore, of the human priest to transact matters between man and God. The Son is Priest and King in His own house, in the power of an endless life; and human mediators are no more necessary than flickering night-lights at noon.

Numbers 36:2

“And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.”

FROM the earliest, the germ-principle of the emancipation of woman, and her right to stand on an equality with man, is recognized in Scripture. These women were heiresses in their own right, and might marry as they thought best. Christianity in this respect, as in so many others, is the fulfilment of the Divine thought in the older dispensation. Ruth was the prototype of Mary of Bethany; Rahab of the Syrophenician woman; Hagar of Lydia.

The inheritance of woman in the nature of Christ. — There are certain qualities in the Son of Man peculiarly adapted for the heart of woman. Tenderness for her many tears — “Woman, why weepest thou?” (John 20:15) Sympathy in her quest for a love that will not fail — “Mary.” An answer to her many questions — “Woman, believe Me.” (John 4:21) Strength for her clinging weakness — “Forbid her not.” Hope for her despair — “If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.” (John 11:40) O woman, remember Him who is the counterpart of thy need, and offers thee Himself. “The same is my sister.”

The inheritance of woman in the work of Christ. — She is called to enrich men by bringing to them her inheritance. So the daughters of Zelophehad brought their land to their husbands, and the women bore the tidings of the risen Lord to the disciples. Thus women, receiving much from fellowship with Christ, come to men, steeped in materialism and sense, telling of a purer, fairer life, and summoning them to inherit it. Well is it for the home where this principle is recognized, and where the wife and mother is ever feeding her soul with noble ideals, to correct the false estimates that too much contact with men of the world are apt to induce in those she loves!

Deuteronomy 1:31

“And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.”

A SAFE carriage was that! In His love and in His pity God redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old. When the little lad was tired and complained of his head, his father bade a servant carry him to his mother; but God does not hand over His children to His servants, He carries them Himself. When we realize that His everlasting arms are underneath, it is safer riding than any the ingenuity of man can devise; and here we need fear no ill.

“In all the way” — There are great varieties in the way — sometimes the sleepers are badly laid, and the carriage rocks and jolts; sometimes the gradient is steep, and the progress tedious; sometimes the pilgrim has to go afoot, climbing with difficulty from ridge to ridge; sometimes the route lies through a territory infested with enemies, and haunted by miasma; but we can each rejoice in the fact that the Lord “knoweth the way that I take,” (Job 23:10) and that all the way, those gentle and unwearied arms bear us up and on.

“All the days” — Never a day without its cross, its lesson, its discipline, its peril; but never a day that God does not bear us up in His hands, as some mighty river bears up the boat of the missionary explorer. Through wilds, past villages of infuriated savages, over reefs and rocks, the patient river bears the voyager and his goods. Thus does God carry us. The Good Shepherd carries the lambs in His bosom. Why, then, should we dread the future, or quail before the faces of our foes? “The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deuteronomy 33:27) So strong: so tender! Let yourself go, and trust.

Deuteronomy 2:37

“Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us.”

THIS chapter is full of restrictions and prohibitions. There were territories which Israel was forbidden to enter at that time; though afterward, in the days of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, they were all included in the possessions of the chosen people.

There are temporary limitations in all lives. Paul was forbidden to preach the Word in Asia, when first he came on its frontiers; though two or three years after he so filled it with his teaching that the trade of the silversmiths, who made shrines for Diana, was affected.

Limitations in our Usefulness. — Provinces of holy endeavour seem shut against you, as the Gentile world from the public ministry of Jesus. Nevertheless, do your best in what is open, as He did for the Jews, and the rest will be unbarred; but if not, in God’s good time, the field will be cultivated by hands specially instructed and prepared.

Limitations in Knowledge. — There are mysteries which, in the earlier stages of their experience, are not made known to the saints; but which we come to know, as we follow on to know the Lord. And while there may be much in God’s providence that is difficult to understand, yet our knowledge of Himself may increase as the years go by, until we glory in this, that we understand and know Him (Jeremiah 9:23,24).

Limitations in Experience. — Not to every one is it given to feel Christ’s love as Rutherford did. Some are excluded from the sunny realms, as Cowper was. Such is the choice of God for them, and it must be best; but they shall all attain one day to the stature of the perfect man, and possess the blessedness from which they are now restrained.

Deuteronomy 3:26

“But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.”

WE are to pray without ceasing; always praying, never fainting; asking, seeking, knocking. But there are some subjects concerning which God says, “Speak no more unto Me of this.” In some cases these topics have to do with others, but more often with ourselves, as in the case of the Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is an awful thing when God says of certain individuals, Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone; and when the conviction is wrought within us that the sin unto death is being committed, concerning which even the Apostle John said, “I do not say that he should pray for it.” Such times come comparatively rarely; and so long as you feel able to pray for another, so long as no negative has been spoken, you may be sure that God waits to be entreated, and that your prayer will assuredly be answered.

But have you not realized at times that God has said about some earthly boon you were craving? — “Child, do not ask Me more, leave it with Me. I know what you want, and what is best for you. Seek first My kingdom, and all these things, literally or in their equivalent, shall be added.” (Matthew 6:33) It is well when we have been praying eagerly, to allow God’s winnowing-fan to pass over our petitions, to winnow away all that is not in His mind to give; so that only those desires may remain which His Spirit has indicted, and which He is therefore pledged to bestow. If He does not give the exact thing you ask, He will give the Pisgah view and more grace. He will say to you, as to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Deuteronomy 4:20

“But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.”

THE Apostle prays that we may know the riches of the glory of God’s inheritance in His saints. God is our inheritance, and we are His. We are called to possess Him; He desires to possess us. His nature will yield crops of holy helpfulness to those who diligently seek Him; and He demands crops of holy love and devotion from ours.

What Sovereign Grace is here! — There was nothing in us to distinguish us from others. We were but part of the great moor land waste, when He fenced us in, and placed us under His tillage and husbandry. It is by the grace of God that we are what we are. “To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:6,7)

What responsibility! — Three times over in this chapter we are bidden to take heed to ourselves. It is no small thing to have been the subjects of God’s special workmanship; because He is a jealous God, very quick to mark the least symptom of declension, and very searching in His dealing and discipline. As we learn here, our God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

What Hope! — We cannot derive much from ourselves, however we toil and strive. Self cannot discipline self to any advantage. The field is worked out. The Divine Husbandman must put into us what He would take out of us; He needs therefore to have almost infinite resources. But these are God’s, and if we yield ourselves to Him, He can make all grace abound toward us, that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work.

Deuteronomy 5:29

“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!”

HERE is a sigh from the Divine heart. It recalls the tears of the Lord Jesus over Jerusalem. The people insisted on their willingness to do all that was required of them, but they were destined to learn and teach that the will may be present, without the power; just as a sick man may have the will to walk across his bedroom, and will fall to the floor because he has no strength.

God's commandments are for our Welfare. — We find men shrinking from consecration to complete obedience because they fear that it will mean loss and pain. There may be loss and pain; but only in the excision of things which they would be the first to put away, if they understood their nature and outworking as God does. Those who obey God most literally find the most blessedness in life, whether now or hereafter.

We approve them with our Will. — More than once the people insisted that they would do as God commanded. We are not so destitute of moral perception as not to see the beauty of a life wholly yielded to God; but let us not rest content with this, or we may have yet to cry with the Apostle, The law is holy, just, and good; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

God wants the Heart. — He will not trust Himself to us, so long as the heart is a stranger to the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. “Oh, that there were such a *heart* in them!” We need to cry to Him to create in us a clean heart, to ask that He would exchange the heart of stone for one of flesh, to entreat that His love may be shed abroad in our heart, that we may perfectly love Him. “My son, give Me thy heart!”

Deuteronomy 6:5

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

“LOVEST thou Me?”

“Who art Thou, Lord, that I should love Thee?”

“I am He that liveth, but I died; I loved thee, and gave Myself for thee; I have made thee mine forever in a bond that even death cannot break; I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I shall never be at rest till thou art with Me where I am.”

“Indeed I would love Thee; but how?”

“Thou shalt love Me with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

“This were impossible unless Thou give me the love Thou requirest.”

“This I will do for thee, since love is of God. Only obey these simple directions:

“1. Abstain from all wrath, anger, malice, evil speaking, and all else that would grieve my Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:31)

“2. Yield thyself to the Spirit, that He may produce in thee His choice fruit — Love. ‘The fruit of the Spirit is love.’ ‘He sheds love abroad in the heart.’ (Galatians 5:22; Romans 5:5)

“3. Consider my love to thee, especially that I died for thee when thou wert yet in thy sins. Meditate much upon the sacrifice I made for thee, that thou mightest have thy sins blotted out, and enjoy the peace which passeth all understanding. (Romans 5:8; Philippians 4:7)

“4. Believing that thou hast received the love of the Spirit, begin to let it work through thy life to all around thee.

“5. If thy heart is unwilling to love any, put thy will on My side, and confidently believe that I am able to work in thee to will and to do of My own good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)

Deuteronomy 7:4

“For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”

THE question of marriage is repeatedly considered in these chapters, and never once is it supposed that the Israelites might bring a heathen partner to the faith of God’s elect; but it is always insisted that the heathen husband or wife will subvert the faith of the child of Abraham. “Thou shalt not make marriages with them; for they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods...For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God.”

The same law holds still. You may suppose that by marrying the ungodly and irreligious you will be able to convert them to your way of thinking; but you must remember that regeneration is the work of the Holy Ghost, and He is not likely to lend His aid in regeneration whilst you are acting in defiance of His distinct prohibitions. The command of Christ is so clear and positive against His followers entering into an unequal yoke with unbelievers, that it simply leaves no option for the obedient. With the child of God, marriage must be “only in the Lord.”

In order to make these marriages impossible, Israel was bidden to destroy the nations of Canaan. Separation from their society and practices was thus enforced. The slaughter seemed ruthless; but there was no other way of preserving intact the chosen race, as a peculiar people unto the Lord. Our separation also must be strict even to the extreme. If we would keep our young people from worldly alliances, we must begin with their amusements and companionships. There should be every endeavour to promote their happiness and interests; but we must very carefully guard the young plants from the blight of worldliness.

Deuteronomy 8:3

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”

THERE was a Divine intention, then, in the hunger and thirst and weariness of the desert march. God suffered these hardships to come to the chosen people, in order to teach them dependence on Himself. The daily gift of manna was a perpetual evidence of His loving thought and care for the pilgrim host; they came to learn that sin and backsliding could not alienate His compassions; they found that the Word of God was life. But none of these lessons could have been acquired if the supplies of food had been as regular and plentiful as in Egypt. They were suffered to hunger that God might make them know.

You are suffered to hunger for human love, that you may know what the love of Jesus can be to His own. Open your heart to it, until it flood you as the sunshine does the south windows of a house.

You are suffered to hunger for recognition and gratitude, that you may know what the “Well done!” of Jesus is, and to lead you to look for that only. What do the words of men amount to unless He smile?

You are suffered to hunger for easier circumstances, for money, that you may know the tender provision which Jesus can make for those who are wholly dependent on Him. In the absence of all human help, you will learn the sweet taste of His manna.

Glory to God, to God, he saith,
Knowledge by suffering entereth,
And life is perfected in death.

These seasons of hunger are necessary for the discipline of life. But, thank God, He is able to satisfy us; and out of His riches in glory in Christ Jesus He can and will supply every need of ours (Philippians 4:19).

Deuteronomy 9:5

“Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

IT is well to be reminded that we have no claim on God. All He does for us and gives us is of His own free grace. By grace have we been saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves — it is the gift of God. There certainly was nothing in us to merit eternal life, before our conversion; and it is equally sure that there has been nothing since to merit the continuance of His favour. Indeed, as we remember and review the past, to us belong shame and confusion of face for our repeated acts of disobedience. Oh the depth of the riches of His grace!

If we were not saved for our goodness, we shall not be lost for the lack of it. — When we have been betrayed into sin, in the keenness of our remorse, the fear is suggested lest God should put us utterly away. And there would be ground for the fear if we had been chosen because of our righteousness.

But since our original acceptance with God did not depend on works of righteousness which we had done, but on His mercy in Jesus Christ, it will not be undone by our failures. This thought does not lead to carelessness and indifference, but to a holy fear of sinning.

If our justification was apart from our merit, our sanctification will be. — The one was a gift, so must the other be; the hand of faith must receive each from Christ, and her voice must render thanks for each, as the unmerited gift of Divine Love. Where is boasting, then? It is shut out. We can claim nothing but emptiness and need. Handfuls of withered leaves! The Lord Jesus is our only hope, pleading for us in heaven, and living within our hearts. Of ourselves we are nothing: only in Him are we complete.

Deuteronomy 10:18

“He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.”

IN the gate of the Eastern town, at early morn, the judge sits, and any suppliant has a right to appeal to him. The word *Porte*, or *Gate*, as applied to the Turkish Government, alludes to this. So to the thought of the inspired writers, behind the flimsy veil of sense, God sat within the shadow, “keeping watch upon His own,” waiting to answer every plea, and to avenge the innocent and oppressed against high-handed wrong.

Individuals may appeal to that tribunal. — David, Jeremiah, and other sufferers, lodged their complaints there. Their cry was not for revenge, but for avengement. There is a great difference between the two. The one is vindictive and retaliatory; the other is magisterial and passionless.

Whenever an affront or wrong is inflicted on thee, avoid vindicating, or answering for thyself. Be still toward man, unless it be to induce thy brother to repent; but turn instantly to thy righteous Judge, asking Him to right the wrong and vindicate the right. He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. When Christians go to law, and seek to maintain their cause against wrongdoing, they miss this. The weaker you are, the more certainly will the Lord judge for you.

The Church may appeal. — Our Lord depicted her as a widow pleading to be avenged of her adversary. Her martyrs cry from under the altar, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?” (Revelation 6:10) To us the delay is long; but we know that He has no complicity with evil, and that He is faithful. Give us the white robe that we may wait!

Deuteronomy 11:22–23

“For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.”

WE wonder why the Lord does not drive out and subdue our besetting sins. We do not possess them, but they us. The explanation is to be found in our lack of consecration. We do not keep all His commandments, or walk in all His ways.

God cannot deliver us from besetting sin unless we yield ourselves to Him entirely. — It is only when He is Judge, Lawgiver, and King, that He can save us. The great surgeon will not undertake a case unless he has its entire management. The general cannot protect a town until it has passed over its government entirely into his hands. If you would give yourself utterly and unreservedly to God, you would find how strong He is for those whose heart is perfect toward Him.

Unless we obey all His commandments; because they contain His precise direction as to what we should, or should not do. If you want your medical man to heal you, you must abstain from things he forbids, and do those he prescribes. You cannot expect God to save you unless you utterly and reverently obey all His commandments; that, for instance of not having fellowship with the world and its ways.

Unless we cleave unto Him. — There must be the daily walk with God, the abiding in Him, the holy and unbroken communion. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” (1 John 2:4-5) “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.” (1 John 3:6) The anointing of the Holy Spirit will teach us this sacred habit (1 John 2:27). But entire consecration must precede entire deliverance.

Deuteronomy 12:7, 12, 18

“And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. ... And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. ... But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.”

THE presence of God is an incentive to true joy. We rejoice before Him. There is some mistake in our religious life when it is not a joy to us to stand in the presence of God. He that feareth, and rejoiceth not, is not made perfect in love. Note the elements of true joy.

First: *The putting away of all known evil.* — “Ye shall surely destroy.” The permission of evil habits, books, companionships, and unlawful methods of obtaining money, are destructive of peace and joy. The prodigal son went away for merriment; but he only found real joy when he had given up his evil ways and returned to his father, a true penitent, and resolving upon a better life.

Second: *The sense of acceptance with God through Jesus Christ.* — “Unto the place which the Lord shall choose shall ye come.” This refers, of course, to the brazen altar and the altar of incense. We have a better heritage in the finished work of Jesus, whose blood is more precious than that of bulls and goats and lambs, and in whom we are accepted and beloved.

Third: *Feeding on Christ* — “Ye shall eat and rejoice.” A part of the meal-offerings and other sacrifices was reserved for the worshippers. We have an altar of which we, too, eat. His flesh is meat indeed; His blood drink indeed.

Fourth: *Entrance on the rest of our Inheritance.* — We which believe do enter into rest; not the rest of heaven, but the heavenly places which those enjoy who have learned to cast every load of anxious care on the great Burden-bearer. “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest” (Hebrews 4:9,11).

Deuteronomy 13:3

“Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

HOW much happens to us for this reason! God proves us — not that He may learn aught of us which He did not know before, but that He may reveal us to ourselves. We need to know ourselves, that we may be prompted to know and use His infinite resources, and that, in the great consciousness of our frailty and weakness, we may be led to avail ourselves of His grace.

God proves us by opportunities of Christian service. — We think we are fitted for some great sphere, and chafe because it is withheld: but the reason is not far to seek. We have been tested in some very little service, as a class in the Sunday-school, and have been found careless and unpunctual; is it likely that we shall be entrusted with the greater?

God proves us by the money with which He entrusts us. — Money resembles the counters with which children play. It greatly tests us. It is described as the unrighteous mammon, and as not being our true riches; but it is entrusted to us that we may be proved, before God entrusts us with the real treasures of His Kingdom. Be wary how you use money; on this may turn the responsibilities of the eternal world of which we now know nothing.

God proves us by our actions with regard to doubtful things. — Not in the things which are clearly right or wrong, but in those which lie in the debatable ground of the twilight, is our true character tested. What you are in matters which must be viewed in relation to others is all-important, as the true gauge of character. By currents of opinion, by winds of doctrine, and by the many voices that are speaking in the world, the Lord your God proveth you.

Deuteronomy 14:24

“And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:”

GOD’S pitifulness is very manifest here. If the pious Jew found it impossible to transport all his tithes in kind, he might change them into money, and bind it in his hand. It was far from God’s thought that His service should become irksome, or the soul faint in performing it. An alleviation was suggested, of which the worshipper might take advantage, if he would. This principle may be applied in several directions. We are not to make God’s service a toil, but esteem it a delight. “Thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household.” (Deuteronomy 14:26)

The Lord’s Day should be the gladdest of the week; full of love and joy and holy song. We should carefully guard against anything approaching to slavish observance: and be very careful that our children and servants should look forward to it with delight.

Christian work should not be carried to the point of exhaustion. There is a mistake somewhere if it so breaks down the health and spirits that the worker is not able to carry it. At such a time, we need to avail ourselves of any assistance or alleviation that may be possible.

Acts of devotion, also, should be for our enjoyment and refreshment. It seems sometimes as though God’s children relied more on length than strength, in their prayers. They are not at ease or natural in the Father’s presence. The forms of their devotion are so numerous and prolonged that they are not able to carry them. By all means maintain the salutary form, but not for form’s sake. Let the joy of the Lord, taking pleasure in His presence and in communion with Him, be always the first thought.

Deuteronomy 15:17

“Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.”

THIS is what we desire to be to Christ. We have forfeited our own natural inheritance, and have taken refuge in His house. For six years we have enjoyed all that Jesus could do to make us happy; has not the time come when we should say to Him, “We do not want to go out from Thee again, but to remain with Thee forever”? Paul delighted to call himself “a servant of Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1, etc.).

There are two stages, so to speak, in our dealings with Him. First, we come driven by fear; the produce of our own efforts has failed; we have no other resort. Like the bird fleeing from the hawk, we have made for His breast; like the sailor driven by the tempest, we have taken the first harbour that offered. But when we have tested the blessed Master, and found Him so sweet and strong, we elect to remain with Him, not for His gifts or even His salvation, but for Himself. We do not wish to go out free; we love Him so dearly that we would rather go anywhere with Him than remain without Him.

This resolve of ours is ratified by Him. He nails our ear to His cross. Through the blood of self-sacrifice, and self-surrender; through our deeper appreciation of the meaning of His cross, as separating us from the old selfish life; through our identification with Him in death and resurrection; through our sacrifice of all that would hinder us — we come into deeper and closer oneness with Himself. As the Father bored through His ear, in accepting His glad delight to do His will, so does Jesus make real and permanent the consecration we lay at His feet (See Psalm 40:6-7).

Deuteronomy 16:12

*“And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt:
and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.”*

THIS gave the touch of gentle tenderness to Israel’s treatment of the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. They knew what loneliness and desperate suffering were; and from their own experience could speak to the heart. Without tenderness and sympathy, what are our gifts to the poor worth? It is as important to give graciously and kindly as to give at all. None are so sensitive as sufferers, whether in mind, body, or circumstance; they are quick to notice the slightest roughness or harshness in our manner of bestowing relief; they would prefer a pittance given with tender sympathy to a larger gift flung at them grudgingly. But what can give this thoughtful sympathetic manner like the memory of our own sufferings, when we were bondmen in Egypt!

It may be that God is passing thee through some fiery ordeal, to teach thee and fit thee to be His almoner, touching and soothing as His outstretched hand of pity. Soon thy present sorrow shall be but a memory; but thou wilt be called to minister to the fatherless, the widow, the stranger. Always say in thine heart, God is passing me through this sorrow, and comforting me, and delivering me, that I may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the very accent, caress, and tender word which He hath spoken to me. “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

In heaven itself we shall never quite forget that we were bondmen once, but were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. This will give a new meaning to the song of adoring gladness.

Deuteronomy 17:20

“That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.”

BEWARE of pride! By that sin the angels fell. If they fell by it, how much more may we! When a man is raised from some lowly sphere to a position of commanding influence, he is greatly tempted to arrogance and pride. The adulation which he receives on every hand makes it all the harder to live humbly and unassumingly. But when once pride enters, it seems to close the heart to God. The proud man multiplies to himself chariots and horses, with the intention of making his position more secure; but he shuts out the help of the Most High. How necessary, therefore, that our hearts should not be lifted up!

The corrective suggested here is meditation on the Word of God. The king was to write out a copy with his own hand, and meditate on it all the days of his life; this would keep him in the lowlands of humility. The Bible is so true in its analysis of the heart; like a mirror it reveals a man to himself. It gives such exalted views of the greatness and holiness of God, compared with which the greatest human state is like the royalties of an ant-heap. It assures us that we must receive everything as the gift of God's grace. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law — of works?” No, but by the grace of God which bringeth salvation, apart from merit.

May God make us humble, with a transparent humility, which is not conscious that it is humble, like the utter unconsciousness of the little child, who does not bend back on herself. Still and quiet your soul, dear child of God, as a child weaned from his / her mother; and be sure to feed humility on the sincere milk of the Word.

Deuteronomy 18:6

“And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose;”

HERE is the inspiration of a noble purpose taking a man out from his quiet life in some distant village, far removed from the great sacred city, and plunging him suddenly into the very midst of its holy engagements and services. Other men were happy there. What more did they want than the quiet routine of buying and selling cattle, tending vines, and cultivating their fields? But for this man these could not suffice. There was a light that excelled beckoning him on; a voice, which only he could hear, calling to him. He was not asked to come; his name did not appear on the roster of the Temple servitors; the great Temple might seem perfectly able to dispense with him; yet because with all the desire of his soul he longed to be one of the Temple Levites, he might minister in the name of the Lord, as the others did; and be supported, as they, from the Temple funds.

It is a blessed thing to feel an impulse like this. It may prompt to home or foreign missions, to some enterprise of self-denying ministry to the helpless and sad, to service for God or man. It may come on you like a strong current, fresh from the ocean, sweeping up into some quiet river or harbour basin, and lifting the ponderous barges. But when it comes, be true to it, nurse it, reverence it, thank God for it, trust and follow it where it leads. You will find a niche awaiting you, and the portions by which life will be nourished and maintained; and the Holy Spirit will not fail to be your Guide and Teacher, leading you into all the truth. Until it come, wait upon God in prayer; commune with Him in the Holy of Holies; and spend much time in reading and meditating upon His Holy Word.

Deuteronomy 19:19

“Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.”

THERE is a Nemesis in wrongdoing; evil comes home to roost; what we meditate against others returns on ourselves. They that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The publican who sells drink to debauch sons and fathers, lives to see the drink curse his own family. The man who is treacherous to women lives to see his own sons fall beneath their wiles. Haman erects a gallows for Mordecai, but is hanged upon it himself. Adoni-bezek cut off the toes and thumbs of captive princes, and confessed the rightness of the fate which overtook himself. England imposes opium on China, but presently discovers that it is eating out the heart of her own subjects in India and Burma. “Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit. ...” (Proverbs 28:10)

And why is all this? Because God sits behind the slight curtain of the present, judging the acts of men. It is not necessary to wait for the conclusion of the present age to see the sentence inflicted. Now the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, and before Him the nations are gathered. Nineveh, Babylon, Capernaum, Tyre, Pompeii, the power of Spain, the Empire of Napoleon, have already been condemned to Hades. Now the judgment is set, now the books are opened, now the “Come, ye blessed,” and “Depart, ye cursed,” are being uttered. God has so made the moral world that the seed of punishment lies hid in each unkind word, each unChristian act; and it is only necessary to give time enough to show that the man who has sown to his neighbour’s hurt will reap that hurt in his own life. To every man will be rendered according to his deeds, even in this life.

Deuteronomy 20:2

“And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,”

WHEN Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, the priest of the Most High appeared to welcome him, and to prepare him for the still more subtle encounter which awaited him with the king of Sodom. As Abraham drew nigh to that battle the priest approached.

Whenever a battle is imminent, look out for the Priest. — Do not go to the war at your own charges, you cannot stand against the mighty power of your arch-adversary. Look around, and see the Priest stand. What Priest? The Apostle and High Priest of your confession. He will offer prayer for you, and anoint your shield with the precious oil, and put His hand upon your hand as you feebly draw the bow.

“What makes you so bold, my lad?” the captain asked of a stripling as he went into the fight. And the answer came quickly, “My mother put her hands on my head and blessed me ere I left our home.”

Whenever the Priest has been near, anticipate a battle. — The best hours come to prepare us for the worst. The dove descends that we may be able to stand for forty days against the devil. Do not be surprised at this. And whenever some experience of unusual radiance and helpfulness has visited you, say to yourself, “This is God’s sweet way of preparing me against coming trial. Let me walk warily, for danger is near. The Priest has been with me; I am drawing nigh to the battle. I know not what lies before me: but He is acquainted with the difficulties I have to face and the fierceness of the adversary I have to encounter. He alone can equip me for the fight.”

Deuteronomy 21:23

“His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”

THIS law on the Jewish statute-book hastened the awful tragedy of Calvary. No body must be left to rot on the cross on which it had been impaled. The corpse of the malefactor must be taken down at nightfall. But how little did the Pharisees and Scribes realize that the remainder of this verse had so pertinent a reference, and was having so remarkable a fulfilment. The Apostle quotes this verse as giving the inner rationale or meaning of the death of the blessed Lord (Galatians 3:13). “... Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” On Jesus fell the reduplicated curses, that were deserved by the race, and by each.

The curse of the broken law. — “... Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” (Galatians 3:10) None had kept that law, all had broken it. None was righteous, no, not one. Man’s lot was cast under Mount Ebal. The race was guilty and silent before the bar of infinite justice. But Jesus, by virtue of His relationship with the entire human family, was able to stand before God charged with that sin, bearing that curse, and put them away forever. There is no barrier, therefore, now to the outflow of God’s free grace.

The curse due to individual transgression. — The whole race had broken away from God, and was under the curse; so that each of us shared in the solemn accountability to God, for the whole and for our part. But He became sin for us; cursed, that we might be blessed; cast out, that we might be forever welcomed; naked, that we might be clothed; hungry, that we might feed on His flesh; poor, that we might be enriched; dying, that we might live beyond the range of the curse forevermore.

Deuteronomy 22:8

“When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.”

THE householder was not to be content with what would be safe for himself; he must see to it that the undefended roof of his house should not be a source of danger to little children, the weak, or the careless. He might be able to walk on the roof of his house with so sure a foot as not to need the parapet or trellis-work, warning him from the edge; but what he could do might be impossible for feet less sure than his. Hence the need of the battlement! Each new house must have its battlement around the margin of its roof.

This should be the law for each new home. — Wherever a household is constituted, battlements should be built to protect, as far as possible, the weak and tempted. The pace of the household should be that of the feeblest of its members. You are careful to have the balustrade and the little swing gate, not that the grown-up require them, but for the protection and safety of young and feeble life. Similarly build the battlement of total abstinence, of the discountenance of worldly amusement, of the habit of family worship. Guard against exposure to needless temptation, and occasions for falling.

This should be the law in older households. — It becomes the master of the home sometimes to go around his household, to study his own character, to inspect the condition of the battlement. Is there laxity, inconsistency, need of precaution? Let us search our hearts and lives, our habits, and the ordering of our homes, that the battlement may be strengthened where they are weak, or erected where they are wanting. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” (Philippians 2:4)

Deuteronomy 23:14

“For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.”

AT all times Israel needed to keep from evil, but especially when her embattled hosts went forth to war; for in the conception of her prophets and saints her battles were not to be fought or won by herself. The Lord God of hosts was there. It was a joint campaign. This was specially revealed to Joshua, when he beheld the captain of the Lord’s host, with a drawn sword, beside him. So, Christian soul, remember, in thy war against the evil of the world, and the solicitations of thine own wicked heart, that the battle is not yours, but God’s. He is in the midst of thee; thou needest not be moved! He has sworn to deliver thee by His own right hand, and by His holy arm, and to give up thine enemies before thee.

There was one condition, however, on which the presence of God amongst His people was possible — the camp must be holy. No unclean thing might be seen in any of its borders. The veil of mother-earth must cover all impurity. Thus, as God went up and down the long avenues of the tents, He would see nothing to offend His gaze and make Him turn away. How deep a lesson! God is ever patrolling the avenues of our life. The most secret processes of our daily existence, our innermost relationships, the thoughts and intents of our heart, are all manifest to Him. There must be nothing to make Him turn away in holy abhorrence, else we cannot count on Him to deliver us, to give up our enemies before us.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart:

try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if there be any wicked way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

Deuteronomy 24:11

“Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee.”

WHAT courtesy and respect for the feelings of another prompted this injunction! The poor man needs a loan, and for this purpose goes to his rich neighbour. It would be possible for the latter, in the pride of his purse and position, to go ruthlessly across the threshold of the poor man's house, look contemptuously around its penury, and lay his hand with indelicate haste on the treasures of the poor man's family life. This, which had been dear to his father! That, associated with happier, better days! Such conduct must not be, said the divine precept. If the poor man asked a loan, he must choose his own pledge, and fetch it from his house with his own hand; it must be his act.

God respects the nature with which He has endowed us. — He will not force an entrance on any man. Though He made us, He waits for us to give Him right of entrance. He stands at the door and knocks. He asks for our consecration, that we should give Him our whole being in pledge, and in return for the loan of infinite grace; but He will not take till we give, or count on aught belonging to us as His property, until we have surrendered spirit, soul, and body, at His invitation.

God expects us to respect the nature of others. — Let us reverence that wonderful soul-life which is the perquisite of each individual. We have no right to break in with the mailed foot of the politician, or the furtive tread of the priest. The father-confessor has no right to stand within the sacred precincts of conscience. No man has a claim on his brother save that which love supplies. If we have partaken of the grace of God, we must be gracious to our fellows.

Deuteronomy 25:4

“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”

“**D**OOTH God take care for oxen?” is Paul’s comment on this text; and so God did. These pages are filled with tokens of His thought — for the ass that might not be overtaxed by being set to plough with an ox; for the ass or ox which were to be helped up if they had sunk on the road overpowered with their burdens; or for the bird sitting on her nest. Here the ox, as it went around the monotonous tread of the mill, was to be allowed to take a chance mouthful of corn.

The care for dumb creatures is part of our religious duty. It is one of the elements of religion to think for the dumb creatures, who are not able to speak for themselves, but suffer so patiently the accumulated wrongs heaped on them by man. “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” (Proverbs 12:10) Oh, when will the travail of creation cease! Man’s sin has indeed worked woe for the lower orders of creation.

The Apostle used this injunction to remind his converts of the necessity of caring for their spiritual teachers. Some are called to plough, others to thresh; but “... he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope” (1 Corinthians 9:10). They that serve the altar should live by the altar; and those who proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

But there is sweet encouragement here for those who are anxious about their daily bread. God takes care for oxen; will He not for you? Shall the oxen browse on the wolds and pasture-lands, and be nourished to fatness, whilst He leaves to starve the soul that really trusts and serves Him?

Deuteronomy 26:11

“And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.”

DO not be afraid of joy! There are some who only sip of the sweet draughts which God puts to their lips, afraid of drinking long and deeply. When good things come into their lives, they are always thinking of some bitter make — weight, possibly some impending trouble. This is a mistake. We must be prepared to learn the lessons of dark hours when God sends them; but we need not hesitate to learn those of bright and happy ones, when they, too, are meted out to us. As we give ourselves up to sorrow, we should give ourselves up to joy! As the soul descends into the grave, it should have great joy in its resurrection and ascension! If the soul-planet must travel to a wintry distance, let us hail those halcyon hours when it returns to stand in the summer spheres of joy! In the life of consecration our joy is considerably enhanced by sharing it with our Lord. Just as our burden of care is lightened by rolling it upon Him, in the same proportion our joy will be increased when He is permitted to partake of it.

We cannot always be on the strain. It is not possible to live on one side of our nature without impairing the health of all. David must bring his harp, and play in the presence of the soul, when its fits of depression return. There is necessity that we should cultivate tracks of our soul that lie toward a southern aspect, filling them with flowers, and fruits, and beehives, and things that children love.

Open your heart to joy, when it comes in the morning with jocund voice; by the back-door weeping will steal away. She only came to sojourn for a night.

Deuteronomy 27:6

“Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God:”

THE obvious intention of this precept was to prevent idolatry, lest the people should think more of the altar than of Jehovah who was worshipped there. Beware of anything that would divert men's thoughts from God.

Build your Addresses of unhewn stones. — When speaking to men, Paul determined to erect structures of unhewn stones, eschewing worldly wisdom, that the power of God might burn more conspicuously on the altar of his words. He knew that his speech and his preaching could never be in persuasive words of human wisdom, and it was his fixed determination to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If you spend too much time in cutting the stones of your address, your hearers will probably be more occupied with their artistic grace than with the Divine fire that should burn upon them.

Build your Prayers of unhewn stones. — The expressions of some men in prayer are so exquisitely chiselled that you keep wondering what they will say next, and how. Their prayers stand as beautiful altars on which there is no fire. Oh for the strong cryings and tears of a Spirit-taught man, expressing the real need of his nature, rather than the exquisite beauty of an oration to God!

Build your Inner life of unhewn stones. — Do not keep looking to see how you are performing the acts of consecration, confession and devotion. The least you think of these the better, that your entire thought may be concentrated on the great God and His Presence. There must be sincerity in our acts of consecration. One inch of rising flame is better than yards of chiselled stone!

Deuteronomy 28:47–48

“Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.”

WE must serve. It is our nature. Our Lord never suggested a third course as an alternative to the service of God or mammon, as though it were possible to escape all service whatsoever. We either yield ourselves servants of righteousness unto holiness, or of iniquity unto iniquity; and to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, His we are.

It is a solemn thought: if we are not serving God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, we are serving things which are our worst enemies. A man has no worse foe than himself when he lives to serve his own whims and desires. These habits, and appetites, and fashions, are luxurious and pleasant just now; but their silken cords will become iron bands.

On the other hand, if we would be secure from the service which hurts us, let us give ourselves to the Lord to serve Him with joyfulness and gladness. Do you ask the source of these? Remember, He will put gladness into thy heart; joy is the fruit of His Spirit. When thou art in a healthy state, joyfulness and gladness rise spontaneously in the soul, as music from song-birds. When the sacrifice begins, then will the song of the Lord begin.

The heart finds the well-spring of perennial blessedness when it has yielded itself absolutely and unconditionally to the Lord Jesus Christ. If He is Alpha and Omega; if our faith, however feebly, looks up to Him; if we press on to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings; if we count all things but loss for the excellency of His knowledge — we may possess ourselves in peace amid the mysteries of life, and we shall have learned the blessed secret of serving the Lord “with joyfulness and with gladness of heart.”

Deuteronomy 29:19

“And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:”

So man’s foolish heart reasons. He hears the curse pronounced against sin; he knows that the man who turns from God is threatened with gall and wormwood, and yet he persists in his evil ways, secretly blessing himself, and laying the flattering unction to his heart that he at least will come off scot free. Such a person is an abomination to the Lord, and shall not escape: “The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man. ...” (Deuteronomy 29:20) It is still true of the wicked, “... that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5)

The only way to peace is by abjuring the stubbornness which sets up its own will and way against God’s. Is not this the secret of the unrest of your soul — that you have never perfectly yielded to God? You know that if others did as you do, and cherished the dispositions that you permit, you would instantly condemn them, and assure them of the incompatibility of soul-rest and such things as these; but you bless yourself, and say, “I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart.”

Ask God to take the stubbornness out of you, to rid you of your hard heart, to bring you into loving, gentle subordination to Himself; to fulfil His promise in your experience, “... I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 11:19) Return and submit. Take His yoke and learn of Him. Bow down at His feet. Let every step of your daily walk be taken in the track of His holy will. So shall you find rest unto your soul; “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

Deuteronomy 30:6

“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

CIRCUMCISION is the sign of separation. It was enjoined on Abraham and his children that they might be God’s peculiar people, chosen from all the nations of the earth. Similarly, the circumcision of Christ, which is made without hands, of which the Apostle speaks, is a putting off, a separation from the sins of the flesh, a participation in the grave and burial of Christ (Colossians 2:12).

We must be separated from the spirit and temper of the world. Between us and its sins, ambitions, methods, there must be not only an outward, but a heart severance. We were separated in the purpose of God when Jesus was cast without the camp to die. But we must be separate in our personal behaviour. Wouldst thou have this? Then claim that this promise should be fulfilled, and ask that God would circumcise thine heart — the seat of thine affections, the hearth of thy soul-life.

Then thou wilt love the Lord with all thine heart. This is why we love God so little. The force of our love is spread over too wide a surface — it is like the river Orinoco, which is lost in swamps as it approaches the sea. If only we were really separated from all that is alien to God, and given up to Him wholly, we should find all the capacity of our hearts becoming filled with His love. We should love all things and people with a tenderness and glow which were steeped in colours obtained from His.

You will never succeed in overthrowing the strongholds of Satan, Christian worker, till God has taken away your self-reliance, and has brought you down into the dust of death: then, when the sentence of death is in yourself you will begin to experience the energy of the Divine life, the glory of the Divine victory.

Deuteronomy 31:7

“And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.”

JOSHUA is ever the type of our blessed Jesus. Joshua not only won Canaan for his people by his faith in the gift of God, coupled with his strenuous efforts, but he caused them to inherit it. Jesus not only won the wealth of the heavenlies for His Church by His death and resurrection, but He waits to cause us to inherit it through the Holy Spirit which He gives.

How great is our heritage! Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! All things that pertain to life and godliness await our appropriation! All spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! There is no conceivable grace or virtue, no fabric of the Divine looms for the soul's dress, no ornament of heavenly jewellery for the soul's adorning, no weapon of celestial temper for the soul's equipment, no salve or balm of Divine comfort for the soul's healing, which is not ours in Jesus. The Father has given Him to have life in Himself that He might give us life more abundantly. He is full of grace and truth, that out of His fullness we all may receive. He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, that He might pour Him forth in Pentecostal fullness. But we do not possess our possessions. We are like people who have sent all their valuables to the strong-room of a bank, and never by any chance make use of them.

This is a lack which Jesus can also supply. He can cause us to inherit: first, by His Spirit He reveals the lavishness of the Divine possession; next He excites an appetite of desire; next, He begets the expectant faith that claims; and, lastly, He becomes to us each one of these things, so that we are enriched in Him, and possessing Him, find that all things are really ours.

Deuteronomy 32:11

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:”

THREE references are made to the eagle in this passage.

She stirs up her nest. — When her fledglings are old enough to fly, but linger around the few bits of stick, dignified as a nest, the mother-bird breaks it up, and scatters them. How much better this, than that they should miss the luxury of flight on outspread pinions in the blue vault, and of basking in the eye of the sun. So when the Father sees His children clinging to earth’s bare rocks, captured and held by the poor sticks they have gathered, and missing the ascension-glory, He breaks up the nest. The fortune is dispersed, the home broken up, the aspect of the life changed. We are then able to enjoy the bliss of life in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus.

She flutters over her young. — They stand scared and wretched on the edge of the rock, but she careers gently above them, now edging around, now mounting, then dropping far below to rise again. So would she allure them to follow her example. Here again we have an emblem of God’s efforts to make us imitators of Himself, to teach us the possibilities that await us in Jesus.

She spreads forth her wings and takes them. — Incited by the mother’s endeavours, the eaglet may venture on the untried air, and lo! The unaccustomed wings fail beneath its weight. It falls, but not far, for the mother swoops beneath, and bears it up and away. Trembling soul, God is beneath thee. If thy faith fails, and thou art falling, like another Peter, into a bottomless abyss, He will catch thee, and bear thee up, and teach thee the mystery of the more abundant life.

Deuteronomy 33:8

“And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;”

WHAT a contrast between the blessings of Jacob and of Moses! In Jacob’s farewell charge, we find the ominous words, “Cursed be Levi”; and he foretells that this tribe should be divided and scattered in Israel. But here the curse is turned into a blessing; and the scattering is transformed into a holy ministry for the whole of Israel, “They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law. ...” (Deuteronomy 33:10) See to what a place of privilege they are exalted! “... They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.” (Deuteronomy 33:10)

If ever there was an illustration of the power we have to turn a curse into a blessing, it is here. Step by step the results of that awful sin, for which Jacob cursed his sons, are changed into benedictions. Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; indeed, it has reigned, it has broken out into radiant and royal glory. Do not sit down hopeless, because of the consequences of an early sin that threaten to follow thee to thy grave. Thou mayest yet get honey out of the lion’s carcass.

The way to this was by entire devotion to the call of God. After the sin of the golden calf, Levi said of his father and of his mother, “... I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.” (Deuteronomy 33:9) The cause of God, which Aaron had so ruthlessly betrayed, was dearer to him than the tenderest ties of blood. So he came into God’s secret counsels of love, and knew the Urim and Thummim answers of the One whom he loved. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. ...” (Psalm 25:14) It is only to those with whom He dwells that He can communicate His blessed will and purposes. Oh, may such bliss be mine!

Deuteronomy 34:7

“And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.”

THIS was true of Moses as a man. He had seen plenty of sorrow and toil; but such was the simple power of his faith, in casting his burden on the Lord, that they had not worn him out in premature decay. There had been no undue strain on his energy. All that he wrought on earth was the outcome of the secret abiding of his soul in God. God was his home, his help, his stay. He was nothing: God was all. Therefore his youth was renewed.

But there is a deeper thought than this. Moses stood for the law. It came by him, and was incarnated in his stern, grave aspect. He brought the people to the frontier of the land, but would not bring them over it: and so the Law of God, even when honoured and obeyed, cannot bring us into the Land of Promise. We stand on the Pisgah-height of effort, and view it afar in all its fair expanse; but if we have never got further than “Thou shalt do this and live,” we can never pass into the blessed life of rest and victory symbolized by Canaan.

But though the law fails, it is through no intrinsic feebleness. It is always holy, just, and good. Though the ages vanish, and heaven and earth pass away, its jots and tittles remain in unimpaired majesty. It must be fulfilled, first by the Son, then by His Spirit in our hearts. Let us ever remember the searching eye of that holy Law detecting evil, and its mighty force avenging wrong. Its eye will never wax dim, nor its natural force abate. Let us, therefore, shelter in Him, who, as our Representative, magnified the law and met its claims, and made it honourable.

Joshua 1:3

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”

ALL the land was given, but every inch of it had to be claimed. Israel had to put her foot down upon the land, whether wilderness or Lebanon, plain or hill, and say, “This is mine by the gift of God.” And as the right was asserted, God made it good. The land had been covenanted to them through Abraham, but it awaited conquest and appropriation by the Israelites. No man was able to stand with them in the lot of their inheritance.

The settler who has purchased a plot of land in the Far West claims it to its furthest borders; and, if need be, invokes the aid of the Government to make good his purchase. So with our possessions in Christ. All spiritual gifts are ours in the Risen Saviour. From the wilderness of the earth, even to the river that makes glad the city of God, and unto the glassy sea on which the sun never goes down, is our border. But we must put the foot of faith down and say, “All things are ours; we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. He hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.”

Let this be the beginning of a new life for thee. Reckon that thou art on the resurrection side of death. Do not look at temptation or difficulty, but claim by steadfast faith whatever God has taught thee to feel the need of. Dost thou ask how that strong courage may be thine? The answer is at hand. Meditate on the Word of God day and night, and depart not from it to the right or left. The strength of the inner life finds nourishment in the Word of God. Only in this way can we behold the broad expanse to territory that is ours by right, and obtain strength to go up and possess it.

Joshua 2:18

“Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father’s household, home unto thee.”

IT speaks of the precious blood of Christ. Scarlet is the colour of Calvary. Twine it round the window through which thou lookest out on thy foes, and away to the river of death. Nothing can hurt the soul which has put the precious blood of Christ between it and condemnation or alarm. Let every outlook to the future be associated with a remembrance that His blood was shed for thee, and be thou thankful.

Rahab is the type of Gentile sinner who is permitted to share in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to sit with Him in the heavenlies. That scarlet thread had been the means of salvation to the spies. By it they had been let down to the ground and saved from death. It must have been strong. So the blood of Christ avails, not only for us, but for all who shelter with us in the household of faith, and for others who find it the means of life as they receive it from our hands.

Let us see to it that, like Rahab, we gather father and mother, brethren and friends, to share with us the shelter and safeguard of the precious blood.

But, after all, it was not the cord that saved — that was only the emblem and type. Behind it on the one hand was God’s oath, spoken through the spies, and on the other was Rahab’s faith. The true safety of that house on the wall stood in the moral attitude of one woman in it. Rahab believed God who had dried up the water of the Red Sea, and who was God in heaven above and in earth beneath. This faith raised her afterward from her life of shame to become the ancestress of Christ. Such wonders does the blood of Christ work in outcasts from the commonwealth of Israel, bringing them nigh.

Joshua 3:13

“And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.”

THE floods of the Jordan were high: so may be the floods of trial and sorrow that sometimes overflow their banks; so the floods of conviction of sin; and so, to some at least, the waters of death. Possibly this overflowing is needed for the time of harvest; the width of golden grain in the Jordan valley was no doubt to a large extent dependent on the far-spreading of those waters. How the heart trembles, as we hear the gurgling and rushing of the floods. Hark, how they lift up their voice!

But when the priest's foot touches them, they shrink away. Jesus has stepped down into these floods as our High Priest. In Gethsemane their overflowing tide washed around Him. At Calvary the water-spouts went over His head. In the grave He seemed momentarily to have succumbed. But since then they have been cut off. Through the ages He has stood, bearing the ark of propitiation, and arresting the tumultuous floods. “Thus far, and no further.”

Sinful soul, deeply convicted, “Look for the Priest,” on whose person the storm broke, and by whom it has been checked and stayed! Tried believer, be sure that the water-floods cannot pass Jesus, to reach or drown thee! His promise to thee is: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” (Isaiah 43:2). And when death approaches thee, O fearful and trembling one, thou wilt find Jesus standing between thee and its might, making a path by which thou shalt pass over dry-shod.

Joshua 4:20

“And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.”

NOT content with pitching a cairn of stones on the river's bank, Joshua, at God's command, set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant stood. And often, as he came back to Gilgal, he must have gone out by himself to walk and muse beside the river, turning the outward and the inner gaze to the spot where beneath the flow of the current those stones lay hidden. They were a perpetual memorial of where the people had been, of the grace which had brought them forth, and of the position to which God had conducted them. Children in after days would gather round those mighty boulders and be instructed, and it is a great matter that the deliverances of God should be graven as with a pen of iron on the soft and yielding surface of the child's heart; thus the coming generation shall revere and love the name of Jehovah.

The story of these stones is told again by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2. We were dead in trespasses and sins, and lay hopelessly in the grave, like stones in the heart of the river of death. But we were brought forth by God's mighty hand and outstretched arm. We were raised up together with Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is the memorial stone of our position in the sight of God; from this we should never recede. How those old stones would have cried out, if Israel had gone back over the Jordan! And does not Christ's empty grave protest against our living amid the pleasures and cares of the world from which He has gone, and going, has taken us also? This is not our rest; let us make good our standing in the risen Christ.

Joshua 5:13

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”

WHEN Jericho, its fortifications looming dark through the night, must be assailed, then the Divine Man may be looked for. Only let circumcision do its keen work of separation, so that there be nothing of the flesh with its energy and pride to vaunt itself before God; then, as we stand face to face with some imminent peril, God will be revealed as our very present help. Not weeks before our need, not before the Jordan has been crossed in faith, not before circumcision has been performed; but when all God's demands have been met, and tomorrow calls for action, then behold there will stand the Man Christ Jesus, not by Himself, but as Captain of the Lord's host, awaiting with mighty legions on the wing for His least word.

It is sometimes thought that the Divine Warrior had come to supersede Joshua; this is not so. He was Prince of another host than Israel. His host was the celestial armies, which were going forth to war against Canaan. As long as Israel was true to God, these were its allies. Look up, Christian soul! Thou thinkest thyself alone; or countest sorrowfully thy poor array; but in very deed the Man of Calvary and of the throne is beside thee. All heaven owns His authority, and will supplement thine efforts. Be reverent, obedient, full of faith and prayer. Keep step with the goings forth of God. Thou shalt have light work to do. Before the impact of His might, thy Jericho shall fall. The battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift; but each to those who are living lives separate from the world, and dedicated to God. The vessels which are meet for the Master's use are pure ones. Cleanness, rather than cleverness, is the prime condition of successful service.

Joshua 6:20

“So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.”

GOD required of the Israelites only to wait, obey, and trust, whilst the Divine Captain led His celestial hosts to the assault, and achieved the victory. “And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.” (Joshua 6:2-3) We must be sure that our way lies through and beyond Jericho, and that God has called us to take it. When that is ascertained, we may be perfectly certain that the frowning walls of difficulty, which rise between us and the further land of promise, will fall down flat.

There must be times of *Waiting*. Israel waited a whole week. We may have to wait still longer. Let patience have her perfect work. There is no such teacher as she is; her pupils become perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

There must be times of *Obedience*. The people could not understand the meaning of these repeated marchings around the walls. They were not, however, asked to understand, but simply to obey. First the priests and ark, then the warriors. We must subordinate our armed activities to the slow and reverent pace of faith, hope and love.

There must be times of *exultant Faith*. There was no quaver or hesitation in that cry. The Word of God, as communicated by Joshua, hushed every doubt and misgiving. In confident assurance the people shouted, and according to their faith, so it was to them. “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.” (Hebrews 11:30) There are no walls of superstition and sin strong enough to resist Faith’s shout, when God says that her shouting time is come.

Joshua 7:10

“And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?”

THERE was something very beautiful and impressive in that prostrate form. And as the awed people gathered around in silence to contemplate their leader thus prone upon his face, it must have greatly touched them.

There was cause for soul-anguish. Joshua had counted on unbroken victory through the might of his covenant-keeping God; but here it appeared, either that God had deserted His people, or that He could not cope with the gods on which the Canaanites depended. In either case, Israel was in awful peril; obviously she had not strength sufficient to cope with the seven nations of Canaan. If left to herself, she must inevitably be cut off. But even this prospect alarmed Joshua less than the discredit that would attach to the name of Jehovah.

There are hours in our life when we are called from the exercises of devotion, good and God-honouring though they may be, to deal with the sin of our people, or to cut out some source of failure and defeat. Our place then is no longer before the ark; but arraignment the people by their tribes, casting lots for the offender, or consigning the accursed thing to fire. Child of God, do not be content with weeping and praying before God; diligently ascertain and put away the accursed thing which has hidden His face from you. When defeat befalls you at the hands of Satan, you may always be sure that there is some flaw in your consecration. You have taken some of the devoted thing back from God. The course of the Christian warrior should be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength, and in regular gradients drives his chariot from the eastern wane up the steep of heaven.

Joshua 8:32

“And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.”

IF we view this act typically, it is very significant. These things happened to Israel as a type and foreshadowing of great spiritual realities. Canaan is an emblem of the heavenlies, that blessed condition of joy and peace and spiritual power which is ours in Jesus, and becomes ours to enjoy, when we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It might have been supposed that in the land of promise there would have been no need for the holy law of God, as given at Sinai, and repeated in Deuteronomy. But it was not so. So, even in the heavenlies, the law must be written again.

Jesus said, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Matthew 5:17). — Not to abrogate, or set aside, or supersede the holy law, but to re-enact it after a more spiritual sort, and to secure, not an outward, but an inward compliance with its precepts. Our Lord complied, not only with the moral, but with the ceremonial law; and His great aim and purpose was to honour and magnify it in the hearts of His people.

The Apostle Paul says that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:4). — It is holy, just and good; and they who are carnal and sold under sin cannot by their own resolutions and efforts comply with its demands; but when the soul is yielded to the Holy Spirit, He works in us the will and the power.

The Epistle to the Hebrews says that it will be written on our hearts (Hebrews 8:10). — This is the provision of the new covenant; God’s law written, not on stone, whence it might be obliterated; not on metal, whence it might be melted; not on the memory, whence it might fade: but on the tablets of the heart, where we shall love it.

Joshua 9:14

“And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.”

WHAT an ominous sound there is in those words! They portend disaster — and it befell. Up to this moment the initiative had always been taken by the Lord. Now for the first time it is taken by Joshua and the people. It was a bad business! Certainly the Gibeonites did their work with guile, and were more than a match for the chosen race. Probably they would not have dared to attempt such a piece of imposition on men of their own sort; but the Israelites seemed a likely prey. They had so recently come into the land, that they might be supposed to be unfamiliar with the guile of Canaan. Yet how astute they fancied themselves!

So the children of God are imposed upon still! Women get married to unconverted husbands, supposing all the while that they are converted. Ministers of churches admit ravening wolves into their midst, deceived by the device of the sheepskin. Young converts get seduced from the simplicity and purity of the faith by lying spirits, that seem as lovely as God’s angels. This is due to their relying on their own judgment, and not asking counsel of God. We must try the spirits, whether they be of God, for many false spirits are gone out into the world.

Yet God held Israel to the covenant that their leaders had struck, and in after years their breach of this promise was awfully avenged (2 Samuel 21:1-2). When we have taken a false step we may be forgiven, but we shall be held to its results. O souls, be sure to call in the Priest, with the Urim and Thummim, that He may give you counsel. Seek the purged eye and the pure heart, to be able to see people and things as they really are.

INFORMATION ON THE SCRIPTURE TEXTS USED IN THIS DEVOTIONAL

NUMBERS: Journey to the Promised Land

Writer: Moses

Key Passage: “Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it” (Numbers 14:22-23)

Remarks: It describes God’s discipline of the people of Israel for 40 years before entering the Promised Land, because they had responded to His redemption of them from slavery with unbelief, ingratitude and repeated acts of rebellion, which came to extreme expression in their refusal to undertake the conquest of Canaan.

Outline:

1. Israel’s Preparations at Mount Sinai (ch. 1-9)
2. Israel’s Journey to Kadesh Barnea (ch. 10-12)
3. Israel’s Wanderings in The Wilderness (ch. 13-19)
4. Israel’s Journey to the Jordan River (ch. 20-36)

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DEUTERONOMY: Book of Remembrance

Writer: Moses

Key Passage: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

Remarks: It consists of the Law of the nation of Israel restated and confirmed by Moses in his farewell addresses at the eastern border of the Promised Land for the purpose of instructing a new generation of Israelites, preparing them for their entrance into Canaan, and encouraging them to keep trusting in the Lord.

Outline:

1. Remembering God's Faithfulness in the Past (ch. 1-3)
2. Restating God's Commandments for the Present (ch. 4-11)
3. Receiving God's Stipulations for the Future (ch. 12-30)
4. Recognising God's Lordship for Ever (ch. 31-34)

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JOSHUA: Book of Conquest

Writer: Joshua

Key Passage: "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:6)

Remarks: It describes the conquest and division of the land of Canaan by the tribes of Israel under Joshua's leadership.

Outline:

1. Entering the Land (ch. 1-5)
2. Conquering the Land (ch. 6-12)
3. Dividing the Land (ch. 13-24)

Scripture Memory Programme 2009

The Fruit-Bearing Christian

One sure sign of spiritual health is fruitfulness. Just as a farmer rejoices at the appearance of good fruit on his plants, our heavenly Father rejoices when our lives bear fruits for His glory. The fruits we should bear include disciple-making, godly living, victorious living and our close walk with Him. May you experience the blessedness of bearing these fruits in your life as you memorise and meditate on the passages of Scripture found below.

January 4 & 11 – Fruit-bearing

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

January 18 & 25 – Teaching

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

February 1 & 8 – Making Disciples

Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

February 15 & 22 – Learning

Proverbs 23:26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

March 1 & 8 – Commitment

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

March 15 & 22 – Life in Christ

Colossians 2:6-7 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

March 29 – Gospel

1 John 5:11-12 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

April 5 & 12 – Our Mediator

1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

April 19 & 26 – Christian Living

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

May 3 & 10 – Honouring Parents

Ephesians 6:2-3 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth..

May 17 & 24 – Godliness & Contentment

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

May 31 – Gospel

Hebrews 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

June 7 & 14 – Bearing Reproach

1 Peter 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

June 21 & 28 – Parenting

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

July 5 & 12 – The Word of God

Psalm 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

July 19 & 26 – The Spirit-Filled Life

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

August 2 & 9 – Faith for Victory

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

August 16 & 23 – Spiritual Renewal

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

August 30 – Gospel

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

September 6 & 13 – Victorious Living

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

September 20 & 27 – Persevering in Faith

Hebrews 12:1 - Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

October 4 & 11 – Faith in God

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

October 18 & 25 – Guidance from God

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

November 1 & 8 – Wisdom from God

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

November 15 & 22 – Help for Prayer

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

November 29 – Gospel

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

December 6 & 13 – Hindrance to Prayer

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

December 20 & 27 – Christ's Birth

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

