

Caleb's Forty Days

Numbers 13, 14.

The "Forty Days" of Scripture.

Sixteen Addresses.

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CHAPTER 5. — CALEB'S FORTY DAYS.

CANAAN AND THE WILDERNESS; OR, UNBELIEF AND ITS RESULTS.

There are two striking New Testament scriptures which I shall read to you in connection with this very interesting moment in Israel's history, while going through the wilderness, because we there get the light of the Spirit of God upon that which they did, and the lessons we are to draw therefrom. First of all turn to 1 Corinthians, where the apostle, alluding to the history of Israel, says: "But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now, these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1 Cor. 10: 5 and 6).

Observe, the things that happened to Israel were types of us. Now you must not gather from the reading of this scripture that a child of God is ever lost, or that a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ ever drops on the road; i.e., that he drops back from being a child of God to being again an unsaved soul. That is not the case, because "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11: 29). God brought Israel out of Egypt as a nation, and He carried them into Canaan as a nation. Now, I am addressing Christians. Some of you are undoubtedly Christians. But almost all of you are Christian in name. You go to church? Yes. And you profess Christ, and you very likely take the Lord's Supper; and therefore, dear friends, most of you I expect are Christians in name, but I fear that a good many of you are Christless Christians. "Well," you say, "that is a very curious expression." Be it so, but since you are a professing Christian, I ask you, Have you got Christ? That is the real question. I know to whom I am speaking. I am talking to people who bear the name of the Lord, and you will see presently how this is applied, when you look at the figure which I read to you tonight.

Now I will go to the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Spirit of God gives another very striking comment on Israel's history, which I think we ought to lay to heart. "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw

my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest). Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3: 7-12). Paul is addressing professing Christians. They were Jewish professors of the Lord Jesus Christ. And these words ought to have immense weight with any soul that has professed the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He closes the chapter by saying, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3: 19). They came out of Egypt. Did they go into the land? They did not. Caleb and Joshua got in. Why? Because they were men who really had faith in the Lord and in the truth of His word. Now then, says the apostle, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4: 1).

People might say, What has this to do with the gospel? Notice what the apostle says next, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them." You have had the gospel preached to you, perhaps once or twice this day. Whether you have believed it or received it, I do not know, but God knows. What is the gospel? It is the glad tidings that comes from the heart of God, of His desire to have you where He is, in His own blessed company. He would bring you into the rest and joy that He has on high. He calls you to that scene of endless joy, and He shows the way you can reach it, and how He can bring you into the spot where Christ now is. Like us, Israel heard the gospel. What was their gospel? I will speak of that in a minute or two. But observe first the Holy Spirit's statement, "But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4: 2).

Carefully notice this, my dear friends: to hear the gospel is not enough, I must believe it. And if I believe it, I know what I shall do. I shall join hands with Caleb and Joshua. I shall plainly say, "I will go on." If the word is mixed with faith, what will be the result? Present blessing, and eternal blessing. But remember I have to go on, not stop on the road. I must start, continue, and finish in faith. It is in this epistle that we read, "The just shall *live* by faith." Now, that word of Habakkuk's (Hab. 2: 4), which opens up the whole way of blessing, is quoted three times in the New Testament. It is in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, but it does not mean the same in each case. There is no repetition in the Word of God. There are not two blades of grass in the field exactly alike, and there are no mere repetitions in the Word of God, and yet that statement is three times found in Paul's epistles.

In Romans, where it is a question of how a man can be justified before God, the apostle says, "The *just* shall live by faith" (Rom. 1: 17). That is the way you start. The emphatic word is "*just*" in Romans. When I come to Galatians, where they were in danger of turning back to the works of the law and forgetting that we are justified by the hearing of faith, he says, "The just shall live by *faith*" (Gal. 3: 11). If you are going to be justified, it can only be by faith. That is the emphatic word in Galatians. But when I come to Hebrews, he says, "Now the just shall *live* by faith" (Heb. 10: 38). It is no good beginning and falling on the road. Hence there the emphatic word is "*live*."

Now I have read tonight the point where Israel turned back. Well, where did they start? I will show you, and also what led them to draw back. Because a man has started on the heavenly road, he has not got to the end of the pathway. I wonder what we shall say about you when your

finish comes, and when you have passed away. If we stand over your grave shall we be able to say, "Thank God, we have put in here the body of a downright, real, back-bone Christian, who for many — perhaps forty-years has followed Christ simply and faithfully"? That is you have left such a testimony behind you that everybody is clear about it. Do you know what Caleb said? "I *wholly followed* the Lord my God" (Joshua 14: 8). Oh, you say, he was conceited. No, no, he was consecrated, not conceited. Hear what the Lord says about him, "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath *followed me fully*, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14: 24). Further, Moses says to him, "Thou hast *wholly followed* the Lord my God" (Joshua 14: 9). And then his comrade Joshua writes that he "blessed him . . . because that he *wholly followed* the Lord God of Israel" (Joshua 14: 14). My friend, if you get three witnesses like the Lord, Moses, and Joshua, to testify to your devotedness, you will do. But Caleb said it himself, for it was true. There are moments when a man can thus speak of himself before God. He had had forty years of probation, or testing, and got through them with God. He did not say it till he got into Canaan, and then he claimed the land which Moses promised to him, and he got it. (See Joshua 14: 6-15.) May you and I walk in his footsteps.

Now I want you to go back in the history of Israel, because, here, in the chapters we have read, we have Israel presented to us in the wilderness, and in a short time they could have been in the land had they really been set for it. You know how they started; and I will take you over their history to show what God had done. There are two things in Scripture which we should carefully notice, viz., the purpose of God, and the ways of God. What is the purpose of God? What He has determined; and if God has called you by His sovereign grace, I shall find you in glory by-and-by. And by the grace of God you will find me in glory too. But we shall both have to go on. We cannot fold our arms and settle down. We have to go on. Israel's history is a beacon light to warn us not to do as they did.

Now turn to another scripture and see what God's purpose in relation to them was. He is speaking to Moses in the burning bush. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows" (Ex. 3: 7). Similarly, troubled sinner, He knows your burden. The taskmaster has got hold of you, and you are wishing you could get away, but you find he is drawing the chains tighter round you. The devil brings all his power to hold you. He does not want you to escape to the Lord. But the Lord has seen all. He knows all about you, my friend. And now listen. "And I am come down *to deliver them* out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to *bring them up out* of that land *unto a good land* and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3: 8). That is the very word we read just now. Caleb and Joshua declared that to be the character of the land that they had travelled over for "forty days." There is nothing that wins sinners like the joy of the Christian, like the testimony of a person who has known the blessedness of God's salvation. Because I know it, I want you to know it. I know the blessedness and the sweetness of it too, and I have so much joy in the knowledge of the Lord myself, that I want you to share the goodness of His love. It makes me desire that you might know and taste what the love of God has given me to know. I know I am a child of God, and I want you to know it. You get the knowledge of it by simple faith in God's blessed Son.

God's purpose then was to bring them *out* and to bring them *in*. Then He brought them over the Red Sea, and they had to go the journey through the wilderness. Their sad forty years' aimless wandering in the wilderness was no part of God's purpose. Wilderness exercises come in, in the ways of God, and the dealings of God with us, that we may learn ourselves on the one hand, and His grace and goodness on the other. The poor thief on the cross did not get a bit of the wilderness after his conversion. He was translated from the Saviour's side on earth to the Saviour's side in paradise that very same day. Now, it is not so with every soul. We have, most of us, after our conversion, a good long spell of the pathway here. I learn therein my own weakness and good-for-nothingness, and I also learn that God is good-for-everything. We learn the heart of God, the patience of God, and the grace of God in a wonderful way. But His purpose for Israel was to bring them out of Egypt and bring them into Canaan, for He had set His heart upon them. Little more than an eleven days' journey would have sufficed for this, had they been really set on going in. (See Deut. 1: 2.)

Then He sent Moses to Pharaoh to get His people out, and if you will read the chapters that intervene from the third of Exodus onwards, you will see all the difficulties that Pharaoh put in the way. Pharaoh gives us the illustration of Satan's power. "I will not let them go," he boldly says. And do you think the devil is going to let you go? Not if he can help it. You try and get away from him, and you will find he has a firm grip of you. You may tell me you do not believe in his power. Very likely not. But you try to get to heaven, you start for the Lord, you make up your mind to be His, and then you will find whether he has a firm hold of you or not.

"Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness," says God (Ex. 5: 1). At first, "Neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. 5: 2) is Pharaoh's reply, and then he heaps burdens on the people. When at length God's judgments begin to move him, he says, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God *in the land*" (Ex. 8: 25). Here Pharaoh begins to offer a series of compromises. The first is, "They may sacrifice *in the land*." What is that? Stop in the world and be a Christian. Make no mistake, you cannot be a worshipper in the world; you must get outside its boundaries morally to enjoy God. When the judgments of God began to fall yet heavier upon Pharaoh, he says, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go *very far* away" (ver. 28). This is compromise number two. You can be a Christian, he says, to an awakened soul, but do not be too earnest, or too decided. Moses' answer at this point is grand. "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us" (Ex. 8: 27). Well done, Moses! A three days' journey away from the world gives a young Christian a good start.

More judgments follow, and then the voice of God rings out again, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Ex. 10: 3). What is the third compromise? "Who are they that shall go?" says the wily foe, thinking thus, "I will let the parents go, but I will keep their children." But Moses said, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord" (Ex. 10: 9). The whole family for God is Moses' fixed demand; while Pharaoh says, "Go now, ye that are men." If Satan cannot prevent parents from being decided Christians, he will claim the children for the world — alas! often far too successfully! Parents, be on the alert.

When yet further pressed, Pharaoh says, "Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you" (Ex. 10: 24). That is to say: You may have the children, but leave me the business. To us it would suggest this: — You and your family may go to heaven, but meantime run your business on worldly lines. This is compromise number four. What does Moses say? "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind" (Ex. 10: 26). We are to be for God all round, family and business included, and it is well to notice that when they eventually go, Pharaoh cedes this part too, and says, "Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said" (Ex. 12: 32). The point is this, the devil is determined to contest every inch of ground, and to use any and every means to hinder the work of God in the soul.

If there be persons here in doubt and fear, thinking that Satan can eventually hinder their salvation, notice what the Lord next says to Moses. "And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant." And now you mark the seven "I wills" which follow this. My troubled, anxious friend, if you get hold of these wonderful seven "I wills," your soul will enter into liberty and peace, and you will pass from "Doubting Castle" into "Salvation Square." Now listen. "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will *bring you out* from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and *I will rid you out of their bondage*, and *I will redeem you* with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and *I will take you to me* for a people, and *I will be to you a God*: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And *I will bring you in* unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and *I will give it you* for an heritage: I am the Lord" (Ex. 6: 5-8). Look, these blessed promises begin with "I am the Lord," and close with "I am the Lord."

If our eventual salvation depended upon ourselves, there is not one of us that would reach the regions of heavenly glory, to which we are called. But since all depends on the Lord, the purpose of the Lord, and the grace of the Lord, your heart may be quite happy about the issue. What He has commenced, He will continue. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified," says Paul (Rom. 8: 30), and then adds: "What shall we then say to these things? If *God be for us*, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8: 31). You get that in your soul, and you will find that you will pass into the liberty and the joy of the Lord's salvation.

Now notice *how* God brought Israel out. Before they came out of Egypt they were under the shelter of the blood of the lamb. They were on redemption ground. You must get under the shelter of the blood. There is no salvation for you, my friend, apart from the blood of Christ, but, if under that blood, eternal salvation is an assured fact. Before God brought Israel out of the land of Egypt the lamb was slain, and the blood sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts of the door. There I get the striking figure of the death of Christ, the cross of Christ, where He, as the holy, sin-atonning Lamb, offered Himself without spot to God. He gave Himself a willing victim for the sins of His people, The type finds its perfect answer in Jesus. Of Him John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). Then, again, when He died, it says, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19: 36) — a quotation from Exodus 12: 46. Again, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5: 7). And last of all the apostle Peter says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible

things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19). So that I find four witnesses, the Baptist, the evangelist John, and the apostles Paul and Peter, all telling me that Christ was the Antitype of this striking figure in Exodus 12.

Now if you see that, you will surely be anxious to learn what the figure means. In order to keep God's judgment out, I must have the blood of the Lamb between my guilty soul and Him. Each head of a house had to sprinkle it. It was not enough to have the lamb slain and the blood in the basin, they must sprinkle it. What is the difference between the blood in the basin, and the blood on the lintel? Salvation, or the reverse. There is a person sitting in this hall tonight who knows that Christ died, and that the blood of Christ can atone for sins. Is that person saved? He is not. He knows the truth of redemption objectively, but he has not yet applied it to himself subjectively. This latter is absolutely necessary, and when it has taken place, should I ask, "Are you forgiven?" "Thank God I am," is the reply. "I know that Christ died for sinners, and that He died for *me*. I have believed in Him, and I have put the blood of the Lamb between my guilty soul and God, and God cannot forswear His word, 'And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you'" (Ex. 12: 13). That man has sprinkled the blood. What has the other man got? He has merely the knowledge that the blood is shed. That is the difference. He knows the fact that Christ has died and risen, but he has never made application of that glorious truth to his own soul, and therefore he has no real shelter from the judgment of God.

Now I ask, which case are you in? Understand this, friend, the blood shed brings no blessing, and no salvation is found where it is not sprinkled. When is the soul divinely blessed? When you are brought to know in simple faith, that Christ not only died, but that He died for you.

Well, God brought Israel out of Egypt and took them through the Red Sea. That is a striking type of Christ's death and resurrection. While God brought Israel through the Red Sea, all their foes followed. And what was the result? The next morning they saw all their enemies dead upon the sea-shore. I know that Christ has risen from the dead; He has risen out of the scene of my death; He has taken away my sins in his death, and all of them are gone. The devil is a beaten foe, and the person who knows that is able to sing the beautiful redemption song of Exodus 15. Probably nearly two million souls sang that day — and then, delivered by God, they went on their Canaan-ward journey till they reached Kadesh-barnea, a spot really within sight of the land. Then, alas! unbelief came in, and they despised the pleasant land and lost it — save two faithful men, Joshua and Caleb.

The thirteenth of Numbers tells us how this came about. There we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel" (Num. 13: 1, 2). Do you think God suggested that? Oh, no. He allowed, He did not suggest it. The Bible is a very wonderful Book. It does not give you everything in one passage. But if you will take the trouble to turn over your Bible till you come to Deuteronomy 1, there you will see how Caleb's "forty days" came to pass. Moses is rehearsing the story of Israel's journeyings, after the forty years of wilderness wandering are over. He says: "And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness,

which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us: and we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, *Ye are come* unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God *doth give unto* us. Behold, the Lord thy God *hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it*, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not, neither be discouraged" (Deut. 1: 19-21). At this point the dark cloud of unbelief appeared. Whether God was to be really relied on, was the question. "And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come" (Deut. 1: 22). Whenever people begin to reason, it is not faith. Neither is caution faith. The suggestion looked prudent, but it was really unbelief. But Moses, beguiled by their unbelief, records: "And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: and they turned and went up into the mountain, and came into the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us" (Deut. 1: 23-25). What are we to learn from this? That there is many a thing in our hearts that we would like, and God permits us to have our own way, and then we think we have a good reason for it. The end, however, is always sad. I do not know whether you ever noticed that when King Arad, the Canaanite, came out against Israel forty years later, he took "the way of the spies" (Num. 21: 1). Their pathway told him how Israel would come. What seems like caution, is usually lack of faith in God, and leads to discomfiture. They did not believe the gospel. They had heard the lovely gospel, "I will bring them out, and I will bring them in," but they did not believe it, and desired to know if the land was as good as God said it was. Again they heard a lovely gospel, from the lips of Caleb and Joshua, that ought to have rallied them, and set them forward, but it did not. The truth was, "They despised the pleasant land; they believed not his word, but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord" (Ps. 106: 24, 25). The Lord let them have their own way. "And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" (Ps. 106: 15). Someone else has said, "We might write across the Book of Numbers this word, According to your faith, be it unto you." "We would rather die in the wilderness," say the people. God replies, "You shall die." "We can well go in," says Caleb. "You shall go in, Caleb," says God; and he did.

But look, the land is searched for forty days only to testify to the truth of God's word as regards it. It was unbelief really that sent out these spies. Do I need to search and see whether God be true? Certainly not. Have I any reason to doubt Him? Not at all. If He tells you He will pardon and forgive you where you are, should you have any doubt as to whether He means what He says? Not a bit. God had made promise to Israel. "We should like to be sure of it," they say, and out go the spies. It was rank unbelief.

Now see what the effect is. The spies go up, and what do they find? Fertility and beauty, truly a land flowing with milk and honey. Nobody touched them, and they picked a cluster of grapes which it took two men to carry. They brought also with them figs and pomegranates — the evidence and testimony of the land. Now, that is just what the gospel does. It tells me now of a heavenly Christ who forgives all my sins, and gives me pardon, peace, and joy. If you only *believe* God, you will get the same blessings. There is many a person who can truly say, I have had the witness of the Spirit; I have believed God; I have taken Him at His word, and I have tasted that the Lord is gracious. I do not doubt that what the spies brought back is a figure of

what the Spirit of God brings to us here, the love of the Lord, the grace of the Lord, and heavenly joys made good in our hearts as we pass through this scene.

For forty days these spies searched the land. That was a perfect testing of the land. Some of them bring back a good report, as they show the fruit of the land, saying, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it" (Num. 13: 27). What had God said? I will bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. We would like to be quite sure about it, says unbelief, and the spies are sent. Back come these men, and they say, "It floweth with milk and honey." Another scripture says it was a land which they did not need to water with the foot. Water abounded. The land of Egypt had to be watered with very hard toil (Deut. 11: 9-12). And it is hard work for sinners to make themselves happy without Christ. Whereas a simple Christian occupied with Christ is happy from 1st January to 31st December. That is what I have been, and I have been converted for forty-three years now. The first year was good, and the second was better, and the latest is better than all that went before. I am ever learning the love of the Lord, and how He can sustain, keep, and carry me on, filling me every day with the sense of His love. I tell you of a truth, God is worth believing, worth knowing, worth following. I hear a man saying, I would like a little pleasure. My dear sir, that will not do for me, I want perennial pleasure. And do you get it? Yes, thank God, and I hope I look what I am, a saved man, downright happy in the love of Christ, and I want you to know what I know.

Friend, you had better believe the gospel. I counsel you strongly not to put it off. Let me tell you this, the depths of hell and the lake of fire for eternity will give you no joy. If you die in your sins and unbelief, you will wake up there. You beware. Mark, God will judge sin and unreality whether in you or me. We all have to be tested.

The next thing in our story is, that Caleb says, "Let us go up at once, and possess the land; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13: 30). He is like an evangelist who commends the gospel by the joy that fills his own heart. But the next thing is that ten men assert, "We be not able to go up" (Num. 13: 31). For one man who will commend Christ, I find ten men who will give you a reason for doubting. These men bring an evil report. Ah, if a man comes and tells you that you cannot appropriate Christ, he is like one of the ten evil spies. They slander the land, while Joshua and Caleb say, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an *exceeding good land*" (Num. 14: 7). Yes, beloved friend, Christ is worth having. He is worth knowing and serving. If you want to have Christ as your own Saviour, you believe the gospel. They did not believe the gospel, alas, that day.

Their gospel, rung out by Caleb and Joshua, was very simple: "It is an exceeding good land." That was glad tidings, surely. But what was working in Israel's heart? Unbelief. Does it work in yours? Joshua says, "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us: a land which floweth with milk and honey" (Num. 14: 8). Unbelief ever says, "We be not able." My dear friend, don't think about yourself. Do you think you are able for anything? Not at all. What is not possible with man is possible with God. You could not be saved by anything of yourself. Impossible. How could you fit yourself for God? Again, impossible, but by the work of His Son, and the testimony of His Spirit, God opens up regions of glory which faith apprehends, and the heart then deeply enjoys. The whole twelve, observe, had to own that it was

a land that flowed with milk and honey. Milk is most satisfying, there is nothing more sustaining than milk. And there is nothing sweeter than honey. And all you have to do is to appropriate and taste that which God presents to and presses on you.

Notice one word of Joshua's, "Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land" (Num. 14: 9). Do not mind the hindrances. There is a young man here who says, "I am afraid if I were to confess Christ tonight, I should fall and give all up tomorrow." Stay a moment, if you were to trust Christ, what would happen? He would save you tonight. Could He not keep you tomorrow? I never thought of that, say you, I will trust Him. The devil often puts the thought of falling tomorrow in the road to hinder you believing just now. Do not think of the difficulties, they are food for faith, as Joshua very strikingly says, "For they are bread for us" (14: 9). Faith delights in difficulties. Why? God will take me through them. But all the world is against me, you reply. Never mind. Do you know what was once said to Luther? "Luther, all the world is against you." "God and I are a match for them," was his happy and simple answer; imitate him. The soul that trusts the Lord can say that in the same way. What about the giants and the high city walls if God was with them? Nothing. "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8: 31).

You will not fall in the wilderness if you are like Caleb and Joshua. They believed, and could say of their foes, "Their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" (Num. 14: 9). But, alas! the men did not believe, and perished in the wilderness. Then we have here another lovely prayer of Moses. Israel's unbelief led God to say to Moses, "I will disinherit them, and I will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they" (Num. 14: 12). I do not want that, Lord, I do not want you to lose your character, is really Moses' reply. He knew that the Egyptians would hear it, and say, "Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness" (Num. 14: 16). Look at the love he has for Israel on the one hand, and the care for God's character on the other. He says, Lord, I do not want to be made much of, but I do want something for others. "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word" (Num. 14: 19 and 20). The mercy of God is a changeless deep, infinitely precious. "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14: 21). That is what is going to be by-and-by in the millennial reign of Christ. That is to say, the sin of man never interferes with the purpose of God. If you are a real believer, you too will land in the glory where Christ is.

The end of this story is very very solemn. God says to Israel, I will let you have your own way, you would not believe me. You say, "Let us die in the wilderness," and you shall die. And "after the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise" (Num. 14: 34). Caleb and Joshua went in, however. The real believers went in. That is the whole point. And now permit me to ask, Are you a downright real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, I will meet you by-and-by in glory. Have you never made up your mind for Christ? If not, surely you will tonight. Could you ever get a better moment? "Tonight, where you sit, you may get God's blessing and God's salvation, and you may have in your soul the sense, I am Christ's and Christ is mine.

Listen not to these ten spies, nor their present-day representatives. See what their end is. "And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord" (Num. 14: 36, 37). God will always judge an evil testimony. But he who believes gets blessing. And if you have never really committed your soul to Christ, if you have never believed Him, do it tonight. There is no reason why you should not turn to the Lord and receive the Lord. You do not need to go very far to do it. I wish you would be like a man I met lately. He was a Christian. "How long is it Since you were converted?" said I. "Twenty-three years ago, and it was through you." "How did it come about? was it through the preaching?" "Oh, no. I was a farm servant in Perthshire, and one day while tending the cows in the byre the postman brought a letter to me, and inside the letter was a little book, called 'God says I'm saved.' Well, I read it, and when I came to the bit, 'I'm only a poor sinner, but Jesus died for me, and I believe in Him, and God says I'm saved, and so I know I am,' I said to myself, I know that I am saved too, and I have never had a doubt for three-and-twenty years." You just be as simple, and then you will be able to sing —

"O happy day, O happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away."