

Notes on Joshua

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An outline study of the book of Joshua.

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"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness . . which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus (Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers." Acts 7. 44-45.

Introduction.

Coming events, that have importance in them, are said to cast their shadow beforehand; and the arrival of persons of dignity has couriers to announce it. I see this in Joshua.

Joshua was to have a great ministry committed to him. He was to lead Israel into the land of their inheritance. He was to witness, as I may express it, the day of glory among the people of God, as Moses had witnessed the day of grace. He was to be the redeemer of the inheritance, as Moses had been the redeemer of the heir. By him God would perfect what concerned Israel, as by Moses He had begun it. He was to lead Israel into Canaan, as Moses had led them out of Egypt. Beforehand, therefore, we see him constantly with Moses. He attends him; as I may say, the inheritance attends on

the heir, or the close of a work on the beginning of it. And this constant abiding at the side of Moses, or waiting upon him, was a shadow cast beforehand, of the ministry he was to fulfil, as soon as his day came — for he was to finish, as we have said, what Moses had begun, for Israel; he was to put the inheritance and the heir together.

But further, it is not merely in this constant companionship with Moses, this abiding with him and waiting on him, that we see a foreshadowing of Joshua's future ministry, we see it also in those services which he rendered Israel, while Moses was yet with them. He fights with Amalek, just as Israel was reaching the Mount of God, and he brings out from Canaan a pledge of the fruit of that land which was their promised inheritance (Ex. 17; Num. 13 and 14). These are significant. They are samples, as I may say, of the ministry of him who by-and-by was to subdue the nations of Canaan and divide their land as an inheritance among the people of the Lord. And thus did this ministry cast its shadow beforehand. The Joshua of the wilderness may prepare us for the Joshua of the land. Peter, among the apostles, predestined to feed the sheep and the lambs of the flock of God, and Joshua, predestined soon to lead Israel, are both put through their exercises — and indeed that is good for us all, beloved.

And here let me observe that Aaron's connection with Moses was different from that of Joshua. It was co-ordinate, Joshua's was subordinate. I grant that Moses was rather principal: for the king in divine order is before the priest. Still, Aaron was independent in a great sense. He did not wait on Moses, as Joshua did. He was no reflection of Moses, no successor to him. Their offices and ministries did not admit of such things. But this only as I pass on. The time of the Book of Joshua was the time of Israel's first love in the land, as the short day of the Book of Leviticus had been their season of first love in the wilderness. In the wilderness the sin of the golden calf had been repented of, and in faith the golden sanctuary, as I may call it, had been raised up. And while that sanctuary was still open, Israel passed the time of the Book of Leviticus around it, and all is in happy, holy order, as between them and the Lord.

There is evil, it is true, as in the persons of Nadab and Abihu, and also in Shelomith's son; but with that, there is zeal in the camp to purify itself. And so now. while we are in the time of the Book of Joshua, Israel carry themselves in a very right spirit. There is evil again, I know, in the person of Achan; but there is zeal again in the people to purge themselves of it. And thus, the book presents Israel as in a season of first love. They serve the Lord all the days of Joshua.

We have a like season in the history of the Church. It is seen in Acts 2-5. Evil is again there. as in the persons of Ananias and Sapphira. But again, there is zeal to put it away; and the Church, for a moment, for a sunny, unclouded morning hour, like that of Leviticus in the wilderness, or like that of Joshua in the land, is in her first love.

Alas, we know that such seasons quickly pass. They are made to shine out for their appointed hour, like Adam's brief moment at the close of Gen. 2. They witness the hand of the Lord in its holy, beautiful workmanship, and thus they vindicate His grace and wisdom in the varied administration of His name among men — or, in the progress of the ages and dispensations. But man — whether Adam, Israel or the Church — put into stewardship, is quickly found to be faithless. God is justified; we are exposed. God is justified, whether He pipe to us, or mourn to us — but we are found to be an instrument out of tune. We have no answer to the touch of His finger, no dancing to His piping, no lamenting to His mourning, however skilled our heart and hand may be in works and inventions of our own.

Joshua set in Office.

Joshua 1.

Joshua's ordination, as we speak, had taken place in the time of Num. 27. In this chapter he receives his charge, or is set in his office, to do the work for which he had been already ordained.

David also had been ordained long before he was put into office. The oil of Samuel had been poured on his head even before his troubles under the hand of Saul had begun. And as we may consider it as belonging to this book, I would look back for a little to Joshua's ordination; for there was great moral beauty in Moses' conduct on that occasion, which it may profit the soul to consider.

To the deep grief of his heart, Moses was denied entrance into the land. He had forfeited that privilege; and a forfeited blessing is never restored. The forfeiture may make way for a better thing; but the forfeited thing itself is never restored.

Moses bows to the fixed purpose of the Lord, which denies him entrance on the land. He says no more about it; but concern for the flock of Israel which he had brought out of Egypt, and which he was now to leave in the wilderness, awakens in his heart very earnestly. He looks on them as with the eye of his divine Master in after days. Jesus saw Israel as sheep that had no shepherd, and He began to teach them, and to ordain others to go forth to the same service. Moses now sees Israel as sheep that were soon to have no shepherd, and he begins to plead for them. He asks the Lord to give them a shepherd. He turns from his own sorrow to the need of the people — and beautiful it always is, when we can think of the distresses of others in the day of our own calamity. The blessed Lord, illustrating all virtue as He did, having moral, as well as personal and official pre-eminence in all things, addressed the daughters of Jerusalem on His way to Calvary, and then His mother from the Cross. So Moses now, in his way and measure. And, let me observe, Moses was a humbled as well as a heartbroken man at that time. Canaan is denied him, and he sees the hand of another and of a younger entrusted with that service and that dignity which were taken from him. But with holy, Christ-like, largeness of heart, he forgets everything, except the need of the people.

This was beautiful — and the Lord answers it in great sweetness of grace. He at once tells Moses that He will give Israel a leader according to his desire; but more than that - and blessed it is to read of such grace — the Lord tells him that he shall ordain this leader of Israel, give him his charge in the presence of the congregation, and put some of his spirit upon him.

How exquisite in the way of grace all this is! Moses' grief shall be relieved, and the desire of his heart for the flock he loved and was about to leave, shall be satisfied — and in the stead of being humbled, he shall be honoured. It shall he seen by all the people, the whole congregation of Israel, that he is the "better," and not the "less," blessing their future leader, and putting some, though not all, of his spirit, upon him!

This was indeed an occasion full of beauty; the considerateness of the grace in which the Lord dealt with His servant, and the unselfish love which filled the heart of that servant! Intercourses between the Lord and the saints are at times wonderful, in the tone of holy, gracious intimacy that marks them, and this is an instance.

Upon this ordination, Joshua is now set in office, or at his work. His commission is then read to him, with encouragements, exhortations and promises.

The land in its length and breadth, and boundaries, is also described to him, and the people that dwelt there, that Joshua might know what business was now put upon him, and how it had now fallen upon him to put the redeemed Israel of God into possession of the inheritance promised to them as the seed and children of their fathers.

Joshua begins at once to act under his orders, and prepares the people for the passage of the Jordan; and here the recollection revives before the mind, that little things in Scripture are at times very full of meaning. "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you," is an instance of what I mean.

Such words convey the impression which was then on the mind of the apostle respecting those two companions of his — and events which quickly followed, vindicated such impressions.

It is so here, at the close of our chapter. As to the tribes generally Joshua has but to say, "Prepare your victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you." They were unencumbered, in travelling order, and had but to know the hour of departure. Like Noah, they were ready for the voyage that was to land them in another world. All that had to be done was to get into the vessel. But the Reubenites and Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh were not so free, and Joshua feels towards them as towards a heavy piece of luggage in this hour of decamping. He has to challenge them; at least he felt that he had to remind them of their pledges to Moses, for they were not, in his sight, as if they had been altogether Israel themselves. In measure, he is to them what the angel who came to Sodom was to Lot. I do not say they were Lot, but they may, in some respects remind us of him. Like him, their history begins with their eyeing the well-watered plains that were good for cattle; and because they had cattle, they had taken up with the wilderness side of the Jordan.

This may read us a lesson. Moses, on leading out from Egypt, had said nothing of Gilead and Bashan. They were not parts of "the mountain of the inheritance," of which he and the congregation had sung in their song, nor were they in that "place," to which he had told the Midianite he and Israel were on their journey. But Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had cattle, and in the plains on the eastern side of the river, cattle might feed to advantage. They had no thought of revolting or giving up their interest in the God of Israel; but they had cattle, and Gilead and Bashan suited them.

How common a case! This is a large generation. We know ourselves too well to wonder at this.

If we read the history of that occasion, we shall find that Moses had been made uneasy by this movement on the part of the two tribes and a half, and he expresses his uneasiness (Num. 32.). He tells them that their conduct had reminded him of the spies who had gone out, years and years before, from Kadesh-barnea, and whose way had occasioned the forty years' pilgrimage in the wilderness. They explain themselves, and give pledges that they by no means purpose to separate themselves from the fellowship and interests of their brethren; and they do this with zeal and integrity, but Moses has his fears about them.

And now Joshua holds this same people in like fear and suspicion. He calls them to him, and addresses them with a special word of exhortation and warning, now that the time of action in the camp of God was beginning.

But this is all painful. It is bad when this uneasiness is produced, when the first instinctive thought of a saint walking in the power of the resurrection of Christ, is that of alarm at what he sees in a brother, in one who like Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, while holding to the hope of the people of God, is not in the suited place of that hope. The garment of "linen and woollen, to use a Levitical figure, is on such, and the eye, the priestly eye, which discloses things that differ, is pained.

Again I say, How common! But we know ourselves and our heartlessness too well to add, How wonderful!

Again, however, they answer Joshua with zeal and integrity, as they had answered Moses. "According as we hearkened to Moses." they say to him now, "So will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as He was with Moses."

The Passages of the Jordan.

Joshua 2-4.

In these chapters we read of two passages of the river Jordan, one by the spies and another by the whole camp.

The first of these was made in weakness. It was therefore the test of faith.

Rahab receives the spies, though this was done in peril of her life, in spite of their weakness, as having a title paramount to the rights of every relationship in which she then stood.

These three are among the finest qualities of the faith of God's people. Surely they are the fruit of the workmanship of the Spirit in the saint, so that all the glory is God's, but they do shine brightly, and the more so when found together as here. They greatly ennoble the soul that is illustrating them, as Rahab the harlot of Jericho did.

She set the claim of these strangers, in weakness and danger as they were, above that of her king and country, for she recognised God in them. "He that receiveth you receiveth me." This was like Abigail, or Joel, or Jonathan, who, in their several days, made more of God's witnesses, than of husband, or guest, or parent. This was faith, and she accounts for her faith, just as faith must always account for itself. A report, tidings of what the Lord had done for Israel, was her warrant. Faith comes by hearing.

Grace then shows itself ready to answer faith, as surely it always does. It pledges security to all who will use its provisions, and it gains a sure token; only requiring that there be faithfulness to them in this the day of their weakness.

If we noticed the fine qualities of faith illustrated in the way of Rahab, surely all this in the spies tells us of the excellent ways of grace.

The cross has been left in this judged world as the sure token of salvation to all who will use it and take shelter under it ere the day of judgment come. Only we must be faithful to it, have no other confidence, but hold it fast, our only refuge and plea, to the very end.

The spies may have exceeded their commission. They had been sent by Joshua from the camp in the wilderness to spy the land, and not to shelter the people. Be it so. But grace is "a sea without a shore." It is "a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall." They who know it, need no ordination to publish it, and He whose it is has never told them that they are to wait for orders, ere they pledge it, and the fruit of it in life and justification to all they meet in the highway of this world, ruined and condemned as it is. And then, the sureness and decision with which the spies, though in their day of weakness, pledge and promise salvation to Rahab, is very blessed in its grace and meaning. It reminds me of that word of the Lord Jesus, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins." There is no future to settle the great question of our souls. It is to be done here, and at

once ours is a present salvation, and so was Rahab's. "More happy, but not more secure" is the language of the believer touching himself and the glorified.

And what strength and weakness meet here! The men who were lying under stalks of flax to hide them from their pursuers, assure safety to all who will take it from them. The Son of Man, the despised One of Galilee, Jesus, the rejected, seals the forgiveness of a sinner. What gleams of Christ do we get through the chinks and openings of the Book of God from its very beginning!

The faith of this woman of Jericho, thus answered by the grace of the spies from the camp of God, is also quick to avail itself of the pledge of salvation. She hangs out the mystic line from her window as soon as the spies had departed; and this is another fine quality of faith. It runs to its refuge. It parleys not with probabilities nor does it suffer delays. It knows its safety in its refuge, but knows it nowhere else. David was afraid to stir from the threshing-floor where mercy had rejoiced over judgment, and where God had had respect to his offering. All this has character in it. And then by her faith, Rahab condemns the Canaanitish world — for all the inhabitants of that land had felt the report of what God had done by Israel, as well as herself; but she alone had acted upon it (see Joshua 2. 9 and Heb. 11. 7).

One cannot but be moved by the goodness of giving us such a narrative as this, at the opening of such a book as this. We are about to witness the doings of the God of judgment, but ere we enter upon that we are given this rich and precious sample of the ways of the God of grace. It is, as we speak, the eleventh hour — yea, and all but the last minute of that hour — but as its day is not quite spent, as its sun has not yet gone down, grace is itself still and will show itself unwearied in the greatness of its ways. Its earliest moment revives in all its strength and freshness, here at its last. The 12th of Exodus is read again in the 2nd of Joshua. The blood is sprinkled on the lintel again for the redemption of the sinner — the scarlet line preserves the household of faith in devoted Canaan as the sprinkled lintel had done in judged Egypt.

And the work of Grace is done with its own proper attributes, and in its own excellent style. All certainty marks its pledges which it gives, and they are rendered with a ready heart.

The moment also, yields an attraction to this work which no other could have done. It is, as we have said, all but the last moment of the eleventh hour of its day, and yet it serves and is active, displaying thus its divine unweariness.

Surely, we may well take up and enjoy this story of Rahab the harlot of Jericho; somewhat set forth, as the story of Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, a pattern of all long-suffering in the grace of the God of Salvation. And happy is it again, I may say, to get such a scene as this in such a book as this, that while the judgments we are now about to witness are His needful work, the grace which we here witness, is His own dear and welcome work.

"His wakened wrath but slowly moves,
His willing mercy flies apace."

The second of these passages of the Jordan is altogether of another character. It is made in strength and is full of glory. It is "the Ark of the God of all the earth," that is now crossing the river, at the head of the hosts of the Lord. The divine presence is making itself known in majesty. The Lord is about to prepare His throne for judgment and to take His Kingdom.

All is greatness. As soon as the feet of the priests who bear the Ark touch the brim of the water, it retires. "What aileth thee, O Jordan, that thou art driven back?" The presence of God was felt. In calm

undistracted majesty, in the consciousness of nothing less than divine strength and title, this passage is now made. The hills had but yesterday been a hiding place for the spies, but now the water itself shall stand up as an heap in the service of the camp.

There is, accordingly, no appeal to faith now, as there had been before, no weakness, no seeking countenance and shelter, no apparent degradation, as of one hiding himself on the roof of a house under stalks of flax laid there by the hand of a woman. All is strength, rendering rewards to them who had been faithful; delivering those who had received the word of grace; and judging those who had feared, but who had not acted on their fears. It was the day of glory redeeming the pledges which grace had already left in a judged world. It was the day of power and of the Kingdom, erecting a memorial to itself in the Place of the inheritance, which had but lately been the place of the enemy.

These are the characteristics of the second passage of the Jordan recorded in these chapters. And when we look at the two passages, so different as they are, we cannot but catch the image of the two advents of the Lord into this judged world of ours; the first addressing itself in weakness, in faith, and pledging redemption, in faith — the second, in strength, asserting the rights of the God of all the earth in the judgment of a world that had filled up its measure; giving the promised deliverance to those who had received Him and trusted Him in His day of humiliation; and establishing the honour of His deeds as by a Pillar of twelve stones, the praise of all His saints, in the place of their inheritance.

How full, how clear, how simple! What a scripture do these three chapters furnish! Have we, like the harlot of Jericho, so accepted the grace of the first advent, that we are ever standing with a welcome for the glory of the second? Do we know that perfect love that is in Him now, so that we have boldness in the thought of the judgment yet to be executed?

But in closing my meditations on these chapters, I cannot refuse to add how much I admire the action of this book taking by way of introduction this deliverance of Rahab. It strikingly recalls to mind the redemption of the heir, now when we are about to enter on the great action of the redemption of the inheritance.

We have in this story of Rahab in Jericho, a vivid remembrance of Israel in Egypt; and again I say it is so beautiful that we should have this picture of the salvation of a sinner, just as we are about to enter on that scene which will so tell us of the kingdom or the glory! for, in principle, there is but a step — just as the two passages of the Jordan lay near each other. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified," As in the twinkling of an eye, the believing thief on the cross was the saint in paradise with Christ.

Gilgal

Joshua 5.

In the first moment since the days of the patriarchs, the elect of God, the children of Israel, now touch the land of promise. It was a long interval, more than two hundred years; and that interval had been occupied by them very much to their shame as well as their sorrow. A sunny hour had shone on their path in the time of Joseph; but since then, the brick kilns and taskmasters of Egypt, and then the forty years' pilgrimage in the wilderness, had told of their sorrows; and their idolatries in the land of their captivity, their unbelief when God rose up for their deliverance, and then their many provocations along the way by which they had now come to Canaan, told of their sins.

And before that course of sin and sorrow had begun, it was their iniquity that separated them from that land at the first, which now they had just regained. They had sinned against Joseph, and thence was their captivity.

In spite, however, of all this, here they now are again. Their feet do now tread the land of their father's sepulchres, the land of the promise and covenant of their God.

The nations of the land feel the power of the moment. It was like the cry which is still to be heard Behold the Bridegroom cometh." The Master of the house had now risen up. Israel had crossed the borders, and it was too late to cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." They felt the moment in spite of themselves, and their heart melted.

But the camp is made to feel another thing. The generation which had been born in the wilderness had not been circumcised, for they were in a strange condition.

But now they have, as it were, revived or reappeared in proper character, and circumcision becomes a needed thing. Canaan was theirs only as they were Jehovah's, and they must wear their token of being His. They are circumcised, and thus become a new people. All is left behind, "the reproach of Egypt" as is here said, "the shame of their youth" as Isaiah says (Isa. 54. 4). All is cancelled.* "This day," says the Lord to Joshua, when the circumcision of the people had taken place, "have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." He was beginning anew with His people. This was circumcision, as it were, the second time, as though the Lord were now beginning with the nation, as He had in early Abraham days, by the first circumcision, begun with the family (Gen. 17). And a very fine expression of grace in its rich, abounding glory, this was. Israel may now keep the Passover as in the night of their redemption from Egypt, in Ex. 12. — for the Passover belongs to a circumcised people. For, whom God sanctifies, that is, separates to Himself as by election, He redeems, and would have His redeemed know and celebrate their redemption (Ex. 12. 45).

*Mark also under what new conditions the child of Moses had to be circumcised (Ex. 4).

And the inheritance then, in due order, follows the redemption, as the redemption follows the sanctification or separation. Accordingly, the land now yields them food, since they have now kept the Passover after their circumcision. As we read here, "they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn, the self-same day; and the manna ceased." And this savours of the inheritance. It was the land which yielded them their cakes and this parched corn. Wilderness-fare, which the manna was, was not needed in the land. It is truly, too precious ever to be forgotten; and therefore an omer of it shall be kept for a memorial in the very ark of God (Ex. 16. 33), but still, wilderness-fare is not needed in the land of the inheritance. As, in like spirit, Israel shall make booths in the feast of the tabernacles to remind them of wilderness-life; but booths were not needed in the midst of Israel's cities and towns and villages in the days of the kingdom. Remembrance of past sorrow does but enhance present joy. The basket of first-fruits recognises this. That basket was the witness of present fulness, but the confession which accompanied the presentation of it, recalled to mind the day when Israel was but a perishing stranger. So we in spirit now, as the second of Ephesians shows us. We remember that we were Gentiles, as without God and without hope, though now in the liberty of a people consciously brought nigh. And so in glory by-and-by, as now in spirit or by faith. For the harps of the harpers in heaven will be telling of the past condition of sin and ruin.

Here, I might say, the kingdom or the millennium shines out for a short, mystic moment. The

Jordan has been passed, the wilderness being left, and the people of God sit down in a fruitful land of promise and of glory.

Jericho and Ai.

Joshua 6-8.

Having entered the land and assumed their circumcision, that order of sanctification which suited the inheritance, and the presence of the God of Israel, the subjugation of the land begins.

The Lord now puts Himself at the head of the army, that He may order the battles, as Israel's Captain, as through the wilderness in the cloudy pillar He had put Himself at the head of the camp, that He might order their journeys as Israel's Guide.

Here, however, I would look around me for a few minutes.

The Lord stood as a soldier under the walls of Jericho, and in the presence of Joshua. But Joshua did not discover Him. This was like Gideon afterwards in judges 6, and like Manoah in judges 13. Joshua had to enquire after Him as they had to do in their day. But it had not been thus with Abraham in Gen. 18. He discovered the Lord at once, and bowed before Him, treating Him as the Lord. But Joshua has to challenge Him and to ask Him as One who did not know who He was, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?"

But this will never do. Christ cannot go on with those who have depreciating thoughts of Him. It was thus with Martha in John 11. She said, "Whatsoever Thou askest of God, God will give it thee." This would not do. And Jesus lets her know at once that it will not do. "Thy brother shall rise again," He says to her in reply. Not in answer to His asking of God should Lazarus rise, as Martha's words suggested, but on His own personal authority, as in the exercise of His own proper rights, He pledges this, that Lazarus her brother should rise again. And so, when in the darkness of her own thoughts she spoke again and said, "I know that he shall rise at the last day," the Lord, again resenting her, says "I am the resurrection and the life." He would have Martha's mind right towards His glory. And so here with Joshua. "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" says Israel's leader. "Nay," says Christ, "but as Captain of the Lord's host am I now come." He resents Joshua's thought respecting Him, a thought which regarded Him as possibly on the side of Israel, but knew Him not as the head and in the front of Israel. He must have a right mind in Joshua as in Martha, touching His glory. Yea, in all of us, beloved. And surely we may each of us pray — "May we ever apprehend it without a cloud, and confess it without a falter."

And happy it is to see how quickly the mind of Joshua gains its right place. He worships the Stranger whom just before he had challenged. He is now the Captain of salvation in his eyes, and He is trusted as the One that would lead the sons of Israel to victory. We may need instruction in the various glories of the Son of God, and wait to have them unfolded to us, but every saint carries a mind prepared for them, and at once, or instinctively is quick to rejoice in them.

But this, as we pass on. The battle being now the Lord's, it mattered not what the weapons of war were. An ox-goad, a sling and a stone, lamps and pitchers, or jaw-bone of an ass would do. And so the shout of the soldiers and the blast of a trumpet of ram's horn shall now prove sufficient; the walls of Jericho fall, and that city, as the first-fruits of the land, is taken. Faith did it and not force (Heb. 11. 30) — faith which brings God in, and bringing God in, faith, if need be, cannot only pull down walls, but

remove mountains. But the world must be judged. The kingdom must be cleared of all that offends and does iniquity, ere it can be taken and ruled by Christ. Jericho is devoted to the sword. It stood forth as the sample of that which was to be judged, and all that were in it, or that belonged to it, except the household of faith which was under the shelter of the scarlet line, were to be cut off. That household, but that alone, was redeemed in this day of judgment in Canaan, as the house of Israel themselves had been in an earlier day of judgment in Egypt (Ex. 12).

But further. All the gold and silver was to be the Lord's, the vessels of brass and iron. Does this surprise us.) One wedge of gold was enough to defile a whole tent, and bring the judgment of God in awful, mighty ruin upon it and all that were of it, while the Lord Himself could take and put into His treasury all the gold that might be found in the city. Again, I ask, does this surprise us? Well, God is God and not man. Christ can touch a leper; no Israelite, let him be who he may, priest or king, or even Nazarite could. The wrath of man shall praise God. God can use it, but we are not to exercise it. Even those who preach Him in contention and ill-will, Christ can use, but we are to cleanse ourselves when we take His Name upon us to publish it.

Jericho is now the representative of the world to the camp of Israel, of that thing which was to be judged; let every man of the camp keep himself apart from it, and all that belongs to it. And therefore, further, as we read here, the people are warned not to touch anything that was of that place, even, as I may say, though it was as "a thread or a shoe-latchet." It was to be as Sodom in the sight of Abraham. And further still, as marking it, like Sodom again, for perpetual burning, Joshua adjured the camp at that time, and said, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho." For that indeed would be a Nimrod-act, a defiance of the God of judgment, an Amelek-act. It would be acting again the part of the Cam of Gen. 4, returning to the earth which God had cursed, reviving what God had sentenced and doomed to destruction. The cursed thing, however, in defiance of all these solemn words, is taken. It was, of a truth, a presumptuous sin. No sacrifice could stand in atonement for it. "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that you shall pray for it." A wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment are coveted and taken, and hid in the midst of Israel; and Israel, the camp, becomes, in the sight of God, for a time, a Jericho. The curse which had of late rested on that city of the uncircumcised, now rests on the camp of the people of God. The leprosy of Naaman is put upon Gehazi — and by righteous reason of all this, Israel is defeated in their second battle at Ai.*

*What a character of ripened iniquity Jericho had reached by having the ware of Babylon in her. Surely she was ready for the judgment.

And here, let me say, this has been done under every trial of man — the cursed thing has been again and again and ever taken. God's creature, His responsible creature, has linked himself with pollution, that is, with the very thing he ought to have judged. Such an one was Adam in Gen. 3 — such is Israel now. and such again in Judges 1 — such was Solomon in Judah, and such Jeroboam in Israel — and such is the Church or Christendom as in 2 Tim. 2.

This occasion tells us of this. Joshua ought to have known the secret of Israel's defeat. He ought to have known the mischief to be lurking within, and that Israel was not straightened in God but in themselves. "For this cause," as an apostle speaks, for the cause of something within-doors, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." And also from Joshua 6. 18 he ought to have known where the occasion of this disaster was to be found. But he seems to charge and challenge the Lord, and, like David in the day of his bad temper because of the breach upon Uzziah, Joshua has to learn that the fault was all his own. Instead therefore, of the victories of Israel, the purification of Israel must take place. Instead of going on from strength to strength, first works are to be done again. If we do not

judge ourselves, the Lord will, that we may not be condemned with the world. The camp of Israel shall not be as a Canaanitish nation, though for a moment it may be as Jericho. The sin and judgment of Miriam had once delayed the progress of Israel through the wilderness, the sin and judgment of Achan must now delay the progress of Israel through the land. But it is only delay. Discipline does not revoke grace; it only maintains holiness. The valley of Achor is a door of hope (Hosea 2. 15).*

*So now, judgment upon Israel, all through this present parenthetic age, has again delayed or interrupted the orderly history of the earth and of Israel. But the age of judgment will end and Israel be Israel again.

And happy to know, a restored soul is always a blest soul. So is it here. The camp go a second time against Ai, and Ai is taken, not indeed with the ease and honour by which Jericho had been reduced; but still it is taken, as in the experience of our own souls, for though pardoned and restored, and put on the way even to richer, higher blessings, still the soul finds some new elements in its history. It has exercises to go through which might have been spared it had it walked more evenly. But in the end, most surely, Israel is blest. Ai falls and its cattle and spoil are the property of the people, as the gold and the silver, the brass and the iron of Jericho had already been the property of the Lord.

The altar is then erected. God is at once owned, as He had been by Noah, when he stepped out from the ark upon the new world — and as Abram had owned Him, when he reached the place which the God of glory had told him of — as Israel had owned Him as soon as they had got beyond Egypt and the Red Sea — and as Solomon owned Him when he took the kingdom. Whatever the mercy, the pillar and the altar are to follow — the mercy is to be the occasion of testimony and of praise.

At the end of these chapters the covenant which put Israel under law is inscribed on its proper pillar, and read in the audience of the people; for the law was the condition on which the inheritance which had now been entered was to be secured and enjoyed, as we may see. by-and-by, in Joshua 23.

And in glancing back at these chapters for another moment, let me say, if the Lord judge this in the world, He will surely not pass it by in His saints. If the cursed thing of Jericho be found in Israel, the hand of God shall rest on Israel as on Jericho. A difference there is, while the controversy of holiness is alike judged in both, for in the saint, sin is judged as by discipline for purifying; in the world it is judged for destruction. And all this is exhibited here. Jericho is destroyed, the camp is purified. Jericho is no more, the camp is on its way to fresh conquests. In the case of the saint, the valley of Achor is always a door of hope. Tribulation works hope through patience and experience. The Lord does not leave His people in that valley. We are judged of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world.

But here, I would suggest a truth which I hold to be morally of great importance, and which we ought always to have in remembrance when following the course of Joshua's victories, viz., that those victories were the judgment of God upon a people who had been borne with for centuries, and who had now, ere the sword of Joshua was unsheathed, filled up the measure of their sins (see Gen. 15). The iniquity of the Amorite was full, and judgment was executed. The sword of Joshua was one of judgment, rather than of victory. He is to appear before us as a judge, not as a conqueror; and it relieves the heart. when surveying the slaughters of this solemn history, to have this in remembrance, that the wars of this Leader of Israel are never to be regarded as the mere invasions of a weaker country, by the unprincipled and unbridled strength of a superior army. Joshua was God's minister, and "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

The Gibeonites.

Joshua 9.

In this book of Joshua, fruitful in various moral illustrations, we are now introduced to the Gibeonites, and through them to a very serious and important lesson.

It was faith which led Rahab of Jericho into alliance with Israel, as we saw in our meditation on Joshua 2, and as we learn both from James and the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For she accepted the people of God in their day of weakness, while they were yet in the wilderness — like Ruth afterwards who would fain go with Naomi still in exile and poverty, or like Abigail who owned David in the day when he needed a loaf of bread.

This is faith. This is accepting the Son of Man under the sign of the prophet Jonah. But this is not the way of the Gibeonites. During the interval from Rahab to them, Israel crossed the Jordan. In words of Scripture, "the Master of the house had risen up and had shut to the door." judgment had begun to take its course. It was too late for faith to exercise itself.* Israel was no longer distant, but arrived; no longer unseen, but in the midst. Their day of strength had come. It was, therefore, fear for themselves, and not faith, which moved the Gibeonites to seek a league with Israel. It was like the cry, Lord, Lord, open unto us" — and we are told that such is a vain cry.

*What is said of the Gibeonites in Joshua 11. 19, 20, may lead to a qualified acceptance of this interpretation. Contrast with that of Rahab. It does not represent faith, as hers does. Fear because of the presence of a strong, victorious one, was their spring of action.

The Gibeonites had heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai; that is, they heard of judgment in the land, after Israel had crossed the Jordan, or as we said, when the Master of the house had risen up. Rahab had heard what the Lord had done at the Red Sea and in the wilderness (see Joshua 2. 10; Joshua 9. 3). But this makes a great difference. It is easy to be gracious when pangs come upon us: but such graciousness is not of faith, but of fear. It is natural, nay, necessary. The Gibeonites pretend that they were moved by the same report as that which had moved Rahab (vv. 9, 10), but this was false, as verse 3 has already shown us. They were like the multitude who followed the Lord, not because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled. They sought Joshua for what they could secure, or get, or make, by him; they sought him for themselves, for the deliverance which they now found they needed, since judgment had overtaken them.

This was the moral standing of the Gibeonites. It was not in them, faith acknowledging the God of Israel. Joshua should have been alive to all this, but he slept, and tares are now sown in the field. The princes make a league with these men of Gibeon, and the uncircumcised get a place in the midst of Israel. Israel may now do the best they can, under the conditions and results of their own carelessness, but the tares cannot now be rooted up, and there, in the fields of Israel they are, destined by-and-by to give trouble enough to those who let them in (see 2 Sam. 21).

Surely we read in all this a serious lesson. We learn the difference between faith which forms such present alliance with Christ, as He will own in the future day of His glory — and fear which seeks Him after the day of judgment has set in. It is in this age of His weakness that faith owns Him, and then the hour of judgment, and the eternity of glory in their different ways, are both ours.

We learn also, the danger as well as the evil, of being careless in the service of the house of God. "While men slept, the enemy sowed tares." Our carelessness works mischief, the bitter fruits of which

may be gathered after many years.

The Conquest of the Land.

Joshua 10-12.

The land, as we have seen, has now been entered in the name of the God of all the earth. Rahab, who had faith, has been delivered. The camp has been purified from the curse which made it for a moment a Jericho or a Babylon. Jericho and Ai have fallen. The Gibeonites have got entrance or a settlement, like tares among the wheat, in judgment upon the men that slept, and now, the sword of the Lord and of Joshua is about to complete the conquest of the land.

It is a day of judgment. The vengeance of righteousness is to be executed on the Amorites, who had now filled up the measure of their sins. The long suffering of God had now no longer to wait (Gen. 15. 16).

It is a day of judgment on these nations, as the day of Noah had been on the world before the flood, or the day of Lot on the cities of the plain, or the day of Moses on the land of Egypt. Joshua's sword, as we have already said, is to be interpreted as that of a judge, rather than that of a conqueror. The giving of their inheritance to the children of Abraham may appear to be the principal cause of this great action, but it is really grounded on the fact that the iniquity of the Amorites was now full. The sword of conquest for Israel is the sword of judgment on the Canaanites — and the people of the Lord had to wait on the ripening of the nation's sin and the judgment of the Lord, ere they could attain their inheritance (see Gen. 15. 16).

This is exactly what is known at this very moment. The Millennial kingdom, which is the inheritance of Christ and the Saints, will not be reached till the world has filled up its measure and the sword of judgment has visited it. That which judges the world, clears the way for the kingdom and the inheritance, as once the sword of Joshua did. Listen to the different voices in the early verses of Rev. 14.

But further. This being so, the sword of Joshua being really the sword of the Lord, the victories of the great Captain of Israel, being really the judgment of God, we see the Lord God Himself directly interfering. Hail-stones are cast down from heaven in the battle of Gibeon, and the sun and moon are stayed in their course till Joshua has avenged the Lord upon His enemies and has won the victory for His people. It had been thus in the day of other and earlier judgments, for "vengeance belongeth unto God." God is the Judge; as was signalised at the very beginning. For it was the Lord Himself who took in hand the punishment of Cain (Gen. 4. 15). It was the Lord Himself who let out the waters of Noah. It was the Lord Himself who rained fire and brimstone on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was the Lord Himself who sent plague upon plague on the land of Egypt, and at last looked through the pillar of the cloud, and overwhelmed the hosts of Egypt in the Red Sea.

And so, if we read the Apocalypse which writes for our learning the judgment of the world just before the glory or the kingdom comes, we shall find that it will be the Lord Himself who will open the seals, and let out the visitations of wrath; and at the last, as the Rider on the white horse, overthrow all the confederate, apostate strength of the world. That Rider, coming forth from heaven in judgment upon the Beast and his army is like the Lord looking through the cloud on the host of Egypt.

Very strikingly indeed, does Joshua appear to have caught the character of the moment. The

hailstones, I grant, may have told him that the Lord in heaven was making the battle his own. But the history of other days of judgment, such as those I have referred to, as of Cain, Noah, Lot and Moses, was abundant to let him further know that He was the executor of judgment Himself, and Joshua would, therefore, now put the weapons of warfare and the instruments of vengeance into His hands. He beautifully caught, again, I say, the character of the moment. He reminds us of the John of the gospels. John represents that spiritual taste and sympathy which made quick, and all but instinctive, discoveries of his Lord. And Joshua now utters his celebrated oracle, as in the hearing, and for the observance of the great ordinances in the heavens, without any reserve or check in his spirit, as with all freedom and authority. "Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon." He knew that judgment was God's work, and he would put it into His hands. He knew that God fought for Israel, and he would put the battle upon Him. This tone of decision, because of distinctness in the light and knowledge of the mind of Christ, is something very fine. The spies, in the second chapter, were not reserved or doubtful in pledging safety to Rahab. They did not first re-cross the Jordan to get Joshua's warrant. They knew their title to pledge salvation to her, sinner though she was, and Canaanite though she was. They had the spirit of faith, and were vessels of the light of God. They "judged in themselves." They knew what was the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, at such a moment; and so here, in the tenth chapter, Joshua does not tarry or hesitate, but acts promptly and with decision, and that, too, somewhat beyond what might be deemed the highest prerogatives of a creature, even in grace. He spoke to the heavens, commanding the sun and the moon. Wonderful! The Spirit, recording such a moment, pauses to admire it. "And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man."

A great occasion indeed; but there are kindred days afterwards, and yet no wonder is made of them. Jesus commands the winds and the waves. He stays the forces of nature. whether they belong to the heavens or to the earth, but the Spirit, who records those deeds also, makes no wonder of them, for indeed it was no wonder. Joshua's was but "the voice of a man, as we read, Christ was "God over all, blessed for ever." But this moment may be full of admiration for us. Joshua knew the battle was the Lord's in behalf of His people, and that judgment or vengeance also belonged to Him, and he would have the sun and the moon to wait and give space to the Lord till He should finish His works, His mighty and His strange works, His works of mercy and of judgment.

And as we further read in these chapters, the Lord hardens the hearts of the Canaanites now in this their day of judgment, as He had before hardened Pharaoh's heart in his day of judgment, and as He will, by-and-by, dement the world ere He judge it, sending out strong delusions. The heart of these nations of the Amorites was now hardened to come against Israel to battle, and rush upon the thick bosses of the Almighty's shield, as we read; or as we read again, to kick against the pricks in the infatuated spirit of self-destruction.

And we likewise learn from these chapters that the conquering army of Israel returned to Gilgal, where the camp lay. Gilgal had been the place of their circumcision, and circumcision was the sign of their new condition. *It had rolled away the reproach of Egypt. All that is past, is past to a circumcised or baptized people. Such have renounced themselves. Circumcision bespoke Israel's laying down of all that was their own, and their taking up of the Lord as their spring of confidence and strength, and the secret of all virtues in them. "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." It gainsays and discloses flesh, and glories in the Lord. And when can such a thing be more fittingly called to mind, when can Gilgal be more seasonably revisited, than after the victory? Victory may puff up. It is hard to use a flattering day with modesty. Harder to use a victory than to gain it, as it has been said. Abraham used it well. In spirit he returned to

Gilgal after it, And so the host of Israel here. "When ye have done all, say that ye are unprofitable servants." The honours they had won were laid on the altar of God, or at the feet of the Lord. Their circumcision was remembered, themselves were renounced, they were now a host of circumcised conquerors. Their victory was His. "And Joshua returned and all Israel with him to the camp at Gilgal (see Joshua 5. 9; Joshua 9. 6; Joshua 10. 6, 43). Shiloh will be the place of the tabernacle presently (Joshua 18); Gilgal is now the place of the camp, and also of the army after their victories.

The catalogue of the kings and their countries now reduced, closes this section of our book — "And," as we read, "the land rested from war."

The Division of the Land.

Joshua 13-21.

The division of the land follows the conquest of it. It becomes the inheritance of Israel, as soon as it is taken out of the hand of the Amorites. The time of the judgment of the people of the land had come, and together with that, the time for the putting of the children of Abraham into possession of it. If the Amorites had now filled up the measure of their sins, Israel had now filled up the measure of their bondage and their pilgrimage.

The vessel is cleansed, and then the treasure is put into it. This is ever so. It must be so. These are the demands of holiness and of grace, and such demands must surely be answered. This is the image of God's way, necessarily so, from first to last. Why, the work of the Creator at the very beginning, if the rest of the Creator were not to follow? And why, the judgments which at the very last are to clear the earth of its oppressions and corruptions, if the kingdom and glory be not to follow? A millennial day is to come after the judgments, as the rest of the Creator succeeded His work, or, as the new world came forth from under the judgment of the old by the flood; or as the lot in the day of Joshua succeeded the sword, the division of the land, the conquest of the land; or as the victories of David made way for the sceptre, the peaceful sceptre of Solomon (see Num. 33. 50-56). This is all sure and simple — holiness and grace, as we said, make these demands, and such demands must be answered in God's most perfect ways.

But there is more. The land, now taken out of the hand of the wicked, and made the portion of the elect of God, must have certain new and suited characters engraved upon it. This must be so likewise. If the Lord work, it is to conduct Him to rest; if He judge and clear away iniquity, it is to lead to the kingdom; and then, as soon as He has entered His rest, or taken His kingdom, His rest and His kingdom will have characters stamped upon them, such as are worthy of His hand and presence. The new world after the flood witnessed His worship, and His government, Noah's altar and sword telling us this. They gave character to that new world. The days of Solomon bore their suited marks in like manner. Under their vines and fig-trees, Israel were eating and drinking and making merry then, as many as the sands on the sea-shore; the temple was built; peace flowed as a river; and the distant kings of the earth waited on the King in Jerusalem; and so, as we know, the millennial world will have the traces of the presence of the glories of Christ everywhere. It will bear its own characters deeply and brightly upon it. It will be a world redeemed from man and Satan and made the Lord's; and as the Lord's, it will have its own new fruits and features, thick and full and blushing and blooming upon it, that shall tell whose it is and what it is.

And thus is it seen In the progress of these chapters. The land of Canaan being now in the

possession of the people of God, wears many and many a badge to bespeak its new conditions, such as the Amorites never did and never could have put upon it. Thus it becomes a sanctuary, the scene and witness of the worship of God. The tabernacle is set up at Shiloh. Through the length and breadth of it, it is made, as we speak, a religious world, the seat of a religious establishment, the ministers of God being endowed and settled in all parts of the country, waiting continually on the service of God. Through the length and breadth of it also, provision is made for the maintaining of righteousness between man and man. The institution of the cities of refuge tells of this, for there the innocent was to find shelter till a doubtful question between him and his neighbour might be settled, according to truth and righteousness.

Such were among the great and suited characters engraved on the land now rescued from the uncircumcised and made the portion of the people of God. They constitute the full expression of a religious world, of the earth brought back to God. Canaan was now purified by judgments, given among the tribes of the Lord, made the scene of divine worship, the church and state united, and the ends of the holiness of God, and the ends likewise of justice as between man and man are secured. It was a little world, made God's — a sample of the earth restored, or brought back to Him — a shadow of good days to come, when the whole world, the earth in its length and breadth, taken up by the Lord, shall have the tokens of its sanctification, the knowledge of His glory covering it as the waters do the sea, the name of Jesus rising with every morning and evening sacrifice, and the sceptre of righteousness keeping all in holy order throughout all conditions and relationships of men.

We get, however, something of another kind in the actual condition of things. The land was not yet fully conquered, though it was fully divided; and this was so, because Israel was to be tested. They were put into possession of the land by the grace of the God of their fathers, but they were to keep it as a people bound to obedience, under the law which they themselves had challenged, or at least undertaken, at Mount Sinai. In one sense accordingly they were now in possession of their inheritance, in another they were not. And, therefore, In the progress of these chapters, we read such different language as the following. It may sound discordant and convey the sense of inconsistencies, but all is morally and beautifully correct, when we, in due way, acquaint ourselves with the conditions of the people now in the land.

The language I refer to is in these two passages. "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers, and they possessed it, and dwelt therein, and the Lord gave them rest round about according to all that He swore to their fathers — and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand." And again — "Now Joshua was old and stricken in years, and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old, and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

Now these passages, and others which might be cited, sound as discordant, and would seem to be historically inconsistent; but morally. or according to the conditions under which Israel were now in their inheritance, all is right and intelligible. They were not straightened in God, who was now ready to establish them fully, but they might be straightened in themselves and lose the land. Some of the land was left unconquered, but all was divided, in order that Israel might be tested. So that the whole state of things is simple and easy to be understood. God was faithful, and would manifest the fulfilment of all His gracious undertakings. Israel had still to prove their faithfulness.*

*We learn how they failed at once. The Bochim of Judges 2 tells us that.

The land wholly divided may tell us how the Lord was true and gave them all that was promised,

as we read here — the inhabitants only partially subdued, may tell us how Israel had still to be proved, and that they were not yet in full possession, as we also read here.

Caleb.

Have we paid as much respect to Caleb, or attention to his history, as we ought to have done? We lose sight of him in the broader lines and brighter light of Joshua. But this is not as it should be, for he shines in his own sphere in the heaven of Scripture, and leaves traces of himself behind him, which we may well desire to have reproduced or retraced in ourselves.

We see him in Num. 13. 14, and find him there, rather the more earnest of the two. At any rate, he there earns as good a degree as Joshua.

Surely grace will be sovereign; and a very blessed thing it is, when we can bow to its sovereignty, though in its high-prerogative arrangements it may treat us in ways which nature would resent, and give us only a Manasseh or left-hand blessing. Therefore, Caleb dare not complain for a moment that Joshua is put nearer to Moses than he; but for the relief of his heart (if it suffered under such a trial as this) he might have remembered that before the day of Num. 13. 14, even in the time of (Ex. 17, Joshua had stood by Moses, and that on that occasion he himself had not been with him.

Still we can understand full well that nature might have felt a sting, when, after Moses, Joshua becomes principal in the camp, and he becomes subordinate, as we see in our fourteenth chapter. But he bears it beautifully, and I ask myself is it not as beautiful to rejoice in the fruitfulness of another, as to be fruitful ourselves?

Without envy or grudging soiling his spirit, Caleb seeks the patronage of the man of whom. in early life, he had been the associate and fellow-workman. He uses him instead of envying him. He cares not to have this word addressed to him, "Give this man place." The song, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands," found him prepared. It did not move him.

Such a thing has great moral beauty in it. We have another sample of it in Peter, in John 13. Peter sees John lying on the bosom of the Lord; but instead of grudging him that ,nearer place, he uses him in it, asking him to get the secret of that bosom, where he, though the elder of the two, was not lying. And so Caleb here in Joshua 14. He uses Joshua instead of envying him.

Indeed I might have noticed the like grace in Moses, when Moses heard that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, he at once goes to the camp that he might hear them himself. He rebuked the resentment that would have envied them for his sake.

Strange, I grant, that we should have to stop and admire such things, but we know we may do so. Corruptions are of a deep and hateful character in the soul, as we all right well know, and these samples of extrication or of victory cannot but be our admiration.

But again, Caleb was great in another characteristic. He was faithful among the faithless. He had been so in the wilderness, and he is so now in the land. He seems to have been the only one of all the tribes of Israel who refused to form alliance with the native Canaanites. Just as he had stood with Joshua faithful among the spies in the wilderness, so is he still faithful among the tribes in the land. He goes on, sword in hand, till he had expelled all whom he found there, from his possessions in Hebron (Joshua 15.).

And still further, he valued his inheritance. His heart was set on what God had promised him. He was strong and courageous to take it, and then he was earnest and happy in enjoying it.

These are fine qualities of "an Israelite indeed." Caleb humbles himself to God's way and appointments to get title to his portion; he sets his heart upon that portion; he is earnest and valiant to hold it in the face of all that withstood him. Fine tokens indeed of a saint of God! And surely, I may say again, good and profitable, and withal pleasant it is, to pay a little more attention to this distinguished Israelite, than has been commonly done among us. He is the very contradiction of his faithless brethren. Instead of forming alliance with the Canaanites, giving sons or daughters in marriage, he publishes this noble proclamation — "He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife." He kept "the way of the Lord" as purely as ever Abraham had. No husband for his daughter save one of the Lord's appointments. He would not build up his house as with wood and stubble.

The Two Tribes and a Half.

Joshua 22.

The army may now be disbanded. It had been enlisted in chapter 1. It had served faithfully in the wars of Canaan, but the country being now conquered, and the land divided, there is no further occasion for the army which had been hired for this service. The Reubenites, Gadites and men of Manasseh, may now re-cross the Jordan and feed their flocks in peace in the mountains of Gilead and Bashan. They may turn their sword into a shepherd's crook.

This is as though the sword of an earlier David had sheathed itself in the presence of the peaceful throne of Solomon, or as though David's armour had been hung up in the temple of God (see 2 Chr. 23. 9).

It savours, too, of that still future day when the host that is to accompany the Rider on the white horse in the day of the judgment of the Beast and his confederates, having done their service as the armies of heaven, were laying aside their weapons of war to take their place of peaceful, glorious sovereignty in the world to come (Rev. 19 and 20).

The army of the two tribes and a half now became the cultivators of their fields and their flocks on the eastern side of the Jordan, but there, in their own portion, they continue one with their brethren in the land of Canaan, the witnesses and the worshippers of the God of Israel.

And in meditating on the scene connected with this, I would linger a little; for if I mistake it not, it has a word for our souls. The ark had gone over, conducting and sheltering the Israel of God, and Israel and the ark had remained there, but the men of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had re-crossed the Jordan, returning to settle where their brethren had but wandered. Ere they had set out, Joshua had again, as we saw in Joshua 1, been uneasy about them, and as soon as they make the passage, and touch the place which they had chosen, they begin, evidently, to be uneasy also; and under pressure of this uneasiness they raise an altar.

This is full of language in our ears. An Israelite in the land of Gilead at this living day of ours understands it. Jehoshaphat understood it when he saw himself on the throne with Ahab; he was, after this manner, disquieted, and under pressure of his soul, he asks for a prophet of the Lord. And all this was the language of the renewed mind in a foreign land, or in the place of the uncircumcised. So the two tribes and a half now raise an altar, and call it "Ed." It was a witness as they purposed of this, that Israel's God was their God.

But why all this? Had they taken up their portion In Canaan they would not have needed this. They would have had the original and not a mere copy; but they were in Gilead and not in Canaan; Shiloh was not in view, and they had, therefore, to give themselves some artificial, some secondary help to sustain their confidence, that they and the Israel of God were really one.

All this is full of meaning, and is much experienced to this day. Some witness of what we are and who we are is craved by the soul and called for by others, when we get into a position in the world with which the call of God does not combine. Some extraordinary testimony is felt to be desirable — the countenance or acceptance of others, the examination of our own personal condition, reasonings with ourselves or restless action in the soul, remembrances of better days; something of all this has to be invoked or gone through, where there is not consistent singleness and fidelity; and this is the altar called "Ed"; this is the writing on that pillar in the land of Gilead. Lot's wife, the pillar in the plains of Sodom. has a writing upon it, and the divine Master has deciphered it for us; and I doubt not, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, would have us under His anointing, read the writing on this pillar in the land of Gilead. It may warn us if we love quietness and assurance of heart, not to return and find a settlement where the Church of God only finds a pilgrim age.

An Israelite in Gilead does not make his calling and election sure.

Does my soul read this lesson? Every heart knows its own humiliation. These disturbances of spirit, this demand of Jehoshaphat for a prophet, this altar of Ed raised by the Reubenites and their companions, bespeak such exercises as a more single-eyed attachment to Christ would surely spare us.

But grace aboundeth as ever; so here, for in spite of all this I feel that I can say that I know not that the people of Israel ever present themselves in more moral beauty and healthfulness than just at this time. It was happy to hear their song on the banks of the Red Sea, and happy to observe their good order while crossing the Jordan, and well, as I have already noticed, to see them and their ways reflected in the Book of Leviticus; and generally all through this book of Joshua. But of the times of Israel under Joshua, this was still the brightest, palmiest hour. The heart, perhaps, takes more delight in surveying them in the twenty-second chapter of Joshua, than at any moment whatever.

The jealousy and fear of the tribes on the western side of the river, as soon as they heard of the altar set up by their brethren in the east, has every expression about it that can satisfy us; and the answer which the Reubenites and their companions give to this jealousy is equally perfect in its way. Jordan. which threatened to be a partition-wall, becomes, rather, by such exercises as these, a link between them. If it be a veil, it is a rent veil. In heart, and in the sympathies of their common faith, all must have been more firmly and happily bound together than if nothing had happened. Each must have valued the other the more, because of the witness they had liberally borne to their common Lord. The fears and jealousy of the one must have been welcome to the other, though they themselves had awakened them — the earnestness and simplicity of the eastern tribes must have been most refreshing to their brethren in the west, though it rebuked the groundlessness and unworthiness of their fears. "To the Lord," they, each of them, did what they did — and that is the strength, as well as the title, of fellowship.

It reminds me of Rom. 14. New Testament brethren are there as on either side of certain partition walls. The eating and the not eating of meats, the observing and the not observing of days, is like a Jordan rolling between them. But when they make enquiry under the light and conduct of the Holy Ghost, they discover that these partitions are really links, that the veil. is a rent one, and that as the one observes the day to the Lord, and as the other observes not the day to the Lord, as the one eats to the Lord, and the other eats not to the Lord; since the Lord, His name, His glory, and His Pleasure is

everything to each of them, they are only the more closely knit together. The longer the cord that binds them, by its very length proves its strength.

Happy thus to speak, whether of Old Testament or New Testament brethren; and I have not the slightest misgiving but that we may speak thus.

There is, however, I grant, another light in which to read the conduct and the character of the two tribes and a half; and it is a warning, as this view of them is a consolation. I have referred to this already; and here I would add that nothing is more common than this, that many and many a saint of God looked at personally in his own spirit and behaviour, may well be the joy of one's heart; looked at in his position, may as easily grieve and surprise us.

In our own day, this is proved abundantly. It is illustrated here in the story of the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh; and precious indeed are these divine unities, which are traced everywhere throughout the Book of God, and which may be traced between His words in the Book and His work in the saints. I am in Rom. 14, when reading Joshua 22, and I am in the midst of brethren in the Lord Jesus all around me at this living moment, when reading either the one or the other of these chapters.

Joshua's Last Words.

Joshua 23, 24.

Things under the hand of Joshua are now closing. The land has been partly conquered and wholly divided. A strange condition, as I have already noticed. But so it is. The unconquered parts are left that Israel might be tested, whether indeed they would be obedient or not; the Lord being pledged by His servant to prove Himself able and ready to conquer what remained still in possession of the Canaanites, and make it actually His people's, if they did but stand in their allegiance to Him. But Joshua warned them that if they went back from following the Lord, then the unconquered people should be plagues to them, scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes, until they themselves were destroyed from off that land which had now been given them.

This is now recognised by Joshua as being the condition and standing of Israel in the land of Canaan. It is like Adam's condition in the land of Eden. Adam was there, surrounded by the witnesses of God's goodness to him, and by the perfection of his own estate; but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was in the midst of the garden, was there, to be the occasion of testing his obedience — and a warning and a threat were pronounced, and the penalty of death, if the injunction not to eat of that tree, were despised.

The resemblance, the moral resemblance. between these two conditions. Adam in Eden and Israel in Canaan, is perfect; and we might have expected that it would be so, because we know from the teaching of Rom 5. that Adam was put under law in the Garden of Eden, and that Israel were put under law in the land of Canaan.

Grace had conducted them hitherto. It was the God of their fathers. the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob Who had brought them out of Egypt, and had carried them through one wilderness after another. till, having crossed the Jordan, they are now planted in the Canaan promised to the fathers; but grace having thus set them in the land, as God of old in goodness had set Adam in the Garden, they must now hold it upon terms of their own covenant, or on condition of obedience. It is thus, I may add,

with the throne of David afterwards. In grace God chose and exalted David. He sustained him and gave him victory upon victory, till there was no evil or enemy occurrent. He set his throne in peaceful glory, in the person of his son Solomon, but then the family of David had to keep the throne of David on terms of obedience; and we know they lost the throne, as the tribes of Israel lost the land, and Adam the Garden.

Being set upon these terms, Joshua exhorts them. He would fain have them faithful, and obedient, and happy. He repeats his exhortation. He is concerned for them. He was not merely officially over them, but personally of them and with them. He was not an hireling, whose own the sheep were not — he felt his own deep interest in them. He exhorts them, first, in an assembly of the people, with their elders and rulers and judges, after the Lord had given them rest, and when he himself was now well-stricken in years, and about to go, the way of all the earth, and again, in a still fuller assembly, the people all solemnly presenting themselves before God. And here he rehearses too, in the name of the Lord, all the Lord's doings for them, from the day of the call of Abraham down to that hour.

It is blessed to mark all this — the fervency of spirit, with which this aged servant of God and this full-hearted friend of Israel, thus closes his ministry. It may remind us of Moses speaking to Israel on the edge of the wilderness, in the words of the book of Deuteronomy — or of David counselling his son, his nobles, and his people, as he was about to leave them, in 1 Chronicles — or of Paul exhorting and warning the elders of Ephesus, when seeing them, and as it were, his ministry, for the last time in Acts 20.

True affection, the love that makes the interest of others our own, dictated all these occasions, the Spirit of God using them, whether in Moses, in Joshua, in David, or in Paul. In distant, separated parts of the word, are these occasions found, but how does one Spirit fill His vessels with like treasure, and quicken them, and the same gracious, serving affections!

The people accept the exhortation and pledge obedience. Joshua warns them not to be confident. They persist in giving their pledges, and that too, again and again. For they are the same self-trusting, and boastful generation, which they had been in the day of Exodus 14; the same when now they had ended their journey and experienced what they were by the failures of 40 years, as they had been on their starting. They are still confident in their own sufficiency, and desirous still to stand upon a title made out by themselves. They had said, under Mount Sinai, "all that the Lord hath spoken, we will do," and now it is, "the Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." Literally one generation had passed and another had come, but morally they are the same generation. And the same generation has not passed away even to this day (Matt. 24. 34).

After all this, the Covenant is settled between the Lord and the people in this conditional character; their confidence in themselves in their early day under Mount Sinai having led to this, and their renewed pledges here at Shechem binding them afresh, and reminding them of their responsibilities.

Now, after all this, I ask, can they wonder at the judgment which has now overtaken them. or complain of the desolations and captivities which they are enduring? They must be speechless, like the man in the parable of the marriage of the King's son; or like the Jews after listening to that of the wicked husbandmen — they must pronounce sentence upon themselves. They are without excuse. They undertook to answer for themselves and they have ruined themselves. They left God's hand and got into their own, and their own hand has betrayed them — and as always, so in the judgment of Israel, we may say with David and with Paul, to God, "that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Ps. 51. 4; Rom. 3. 4).

A stone is then raised, not as on the banks of Jordan, in the beginning of the book, in witness that the God of salvation had brought His people through all that intervened and hindered, to the land of promise, but as a witness that the people had now taken these covenants and obligations upon them — "O foolish people and unwise!"

Joshua then dies, and is buried in his own portion in Mount Ephraim. Moses had died in the wilderness, and the Lord had buried him, Joshua dies in the land, and his brethren bury him. But Moses passed from his grave in the wilderness to Heaven, Joshua rests in the land in the hope of a resurrection-inheritance of it. I speak of mysteries, of Moses as signifying the heavenly destiny of the church. of Joshua as pledging the earthly promises of God to Israel; and together giving samples of that dispensation, when, in the fulness of times, all things both in Heaven and on earth shall be gathered together in Christ (Eph. 1. 10); and this is the same as was exhibited long before these times in Enoch and in Noah. and long after these times in Elijah and Elisha, so that all times, the times of the patriarchs, of Moses, and of the prophets, might in their several ways, rehearse beforehand the glories of the world to come. According to all this, it is Moses and Elijah that reappear there in the heavens. They are seen in glory with Christ on the holy mount, while Peter, James and John, occupying mystically the place of Noah, Joshua and Elisha, are still as citizens of the earth in their own persons or in their unglorified bodies, gazing on the heavens that are shining in their excellency before them and above them.

Conclusion.

In taking leave of this Book of Joshua, I would say that I read it as occupying morally very much the same place in the Old Testament which the Apocalypse occupies in the New. This may sound harsh and strange, but it is not so. Joshua is the book that reads to us the judgments of the Lord upon the land of the Amorites. The Apocalypse reads to us the judgments of the Lord upon the apostate nations of the last days. Joshua, likewise, is the book of the inheritance, telling us of the division of the promised land among the children of Abraham and the setting of God's name and worship there, as a land brought back to God out of ruin and pollution. The Apocalypse in a New Testament or heavenly character is the same. The seven-sealed book is there opened and the judgments which follow, clear the scene for the glorified Bride of the Lamb to descend and take her connection with the earth beneath.

As Joshua brought in the tabernacle of God into the possession of the Gentiles, so the city of glory, the holy Jerusalem, is seen, in Rev. 21. 10, to descend, having "the glory of God" in the midst of her, that the lordship of the world to come may be taken, and the throne of God and the Lamb set up over the redeemed creation.

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A solemn thought it is, that in the history of this world, God is displaying righteousness, as well as manifesting and dispensing grace. In the Scriptures we have samples of this, as in His dealings with the world before the flood, with the cities of the plains, with Egypt, with the Amorites, with Israel and with Christendom.

God makes His power known and shows His wrath on the vessels which have fitted themselves for destruction, as He displays the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He has Himself prepared for glory.

But it is solemn, though needed. When His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness, learn that there is righteousness with Him (Ex. 7. 1-5; Isa. 26. 9; Rev. 15. 4).

Grace has been already proposed, the purposes and provisions of it are brought forth and revealed; but grace being despised, judgment enters, and righteousness is taught by judgment. Then grace having gathered its own, and judgment having cleared the scene, glory will be revealed and set up, and the kingdom will be the place of living, practical righteousness. The sceptre of it will maintain righteousness — and beautiful, let me say, will this be. Grace will be celebrated in a scene of righteousness; redemption will be had in everlasting remembrance in the place where all will be truth and holiness. The grace of redemption will have been introduced to a region of cloudless, unspotted purity.

What a bright and perfect combination! Grace is known; entire debtors are we to it for what we are and where we are; but it is not taken advantage of, as we speak. It will not be wronged. It shall be known and gloried in when all around is righteous and pure, and where nothing will enter that can defile.

Such will be the coming kingdom in the moral realities of it, and such in spirit is now our place in the Gospel. The grace of God has brought salvation, but it has also taught us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly.

It is a simple further reflection upon this book that now the covenant was made good which gave the land wherein the fathers had been strangers. the land of their pilgrimage, as an inheritance to their children (Ex. 6. 5). We are not to forget this. The place that once witnessed pilgrimage and strangership is now the scene of citizenship and inheritance. Significant indeed this is — a child may read the story, and as he reads the story, interpret the parable or draw the moral.