

Joshua

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Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Earlier Historical Books of the Old Testament.

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Table of Contents

PREFACE.....	1
LECTURES ON THE EARLIER HISTORICAL BOOKS.....	1
JOSHUA 1-4.....	1
JOSHUA 5 - 8.....	12
JOSHUA 9 - 24.....	25

PREFACE.

The volume before the reader has been long delayed through more than usual press of other work on the author. Even late as it now is (for the lectures were delivered some years ago), less has been done than is desirable in the way of developing remarks thrown out orally, which seemed to call for enlargement when correcting the report for the printer. Nevertheless, it is committed to the gracious blessing of the Lord on the Christian reader, with the earnest desire that some help may be afforded in retracing the books of Scripture from Joshua to 2 Samuel. They are books dear to every heart that values the word of God; yet do they often present difficulties to those that know not how to distinguish dispensations, or to read with precision the Old Testament, its types especially, in the light of the New. May He, who alone can make the work edifying to His own or to any souls, deign to use it to the glory of His name.

December, 1874.

LECTURES ON THE EARLIER HISTORICAL BOOKS.

JOSHUA 1-4.

The book of Joshua naturally follows the five books of Moses, and indeed is connected more manifestly with those that go before it than might appear to an ordinary reader. It opens not with a mere particle of time nor of transition but of connection. This is not expressed in the English version, but it is the fact in the Hebrew text. Undoubtedly it was the Holy Spirit writing by another servant of the Lord; but He was carrying on the same testimony, and a testimony too for which the book of Deuteronomy more particularly prepares us; for all that book was uttered by Moses when the children of Israel were upon the eve, as it were, of entering the promised land. Here, as elsewhere, it is of great importance that we should clearly apprehend the special object of the Spirit of God in the book. I shall make a few remarks therefore of a general nature in order to present it as clearly as the Lord enables me.

No spiritual person who considers the matter can doubt that what the Spirit of God has been pleased to give us in Joshua, if we take it as typical of blessing to us, is not our passing out of the world into heaven. We are all familiar with the usual way of representing the Jordan as death, and the crossing of the Jordan as the leaving the world for heaven at death. But this is not its true force, though it is a matter of immense importance practically for the soul. If you thus assign its import for heaven after death, you miss the prime object of God in giving it to us for the earth. If you put it off till the future state, present application of its meaning can evidently have no direct place. Not of course but that there may be blessing gathered from particular passages here and there. We know that even those who apply the crossing of Jordan to our departure to be with Christ do not scruple to use the deliverance of Rahab in Joshua 2: 6, as they would seek to glean moral profit from every chapter. But I am not now speaking of an application or use in which we all agree, but of what some of us, it may be, have to learn, of what we all, I am sure, have had to learn at one time or another.

On the face of the book there is one plain fact which shows us its real nature or bearing, and that is what the children of Israel did when they crossed the Jordan. Did they enjoy rest? Not so; it was still labour; nay, further, it was conflict with the enemy, and not only the patience of faith in which they had been tried as they passed through the wilderness. There was a beautiful moral order in God putting the hearts of His people to the test where there was nothing around them but the barren sands and Himself. In the desert God was there alone to teach them themselves as well as Himself. This was the great lesson for forty years of pilgrimage; but it is clear that it was, as far as the circumstances were concerned, by no means the place where direct positive blessing was displayed. God was there and then turning every circumstance into blessing by His own grace, by what He said, by what He did, and by what He was to His people. This is most true of the earlier time and scene; but in the book of Joshua we enter upon actual and distinct blessing — the bestowal of His gifts in love to Israel according to His promise to the fathers, though as yet on the tenure of their fidelity to the covenant of the law. Thus, it was not merely taking them out of what was evil, neither was it the lesson of God in the wilderness — His proving of and dealings with His people: God was giving what He had promised to give them; and now He was accomplishing it in His power; He was bringing them into the goodly land of Canaan. But all the while in the book of Joshua we hear of the wars of the people. Now this simple fact shows us its true character. Certainly when we leave the world to be actually with the Lord, we shall not have wars. Plainly therefore the crossing of the Jordan does not answer to the quitting the world for rest in the presence of God; but applies to the full change of position for Christians while they are still in the world. How can they be said to cross the Jordan? This is what one desires to bring out simply according to the light furnished by the New Testament, at least as far as God gives ability. We shall find that divine light is abundant, so that we may see the mind of God distinctly.

It is obvious to every thoughtful Christian that a strong link of connection exists between the crossing of the Red Sea and of the Jordan. It is found in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; but there are two effects sensibly different and of great importance that we should distinguish. Regarded in the type of the Red Sea it is simply setting us apart to God from the world, making us pilgrims while we are passing through it; crossing the Jordan, or the death and resurrection of Christ in this point of view, does far more. It is the power of that mighty work as bringing us into the possession of our heavenly blessings before we go there. We are made consciously of heaven; we have still to fight before the time is come to rest. In both cases it is not that merely is Christ dead and risen, but this applied to us by the Spirit.

On the one hand the passage of the Red Sea is our being dead with Christ and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord as a question of righteousness. We are thus justified from sin, and

effectually delivered from Satan's power. There is no longer a question of dread as to the judgment of God. On the other hand the crossing of the Jordan means our introduction according to the fulness of Christ's title, even now, into heavenly places. On this basis the Spirit would familiarize us with heavenly things.

Accordingly we are called to set our affection on things above, filled with that which is no doubt altogether a matter of faith, but is none the less real because it is so. There is no more grave error than to suppose that the things of sense are substantial, and that the things of faith are not. There is nothing so true as faith; nor does anything so endure as what rests on God's word. Grace has given us in Jesus Christ our Lord a kingdom which cannot be moved. I grant you we have to trust Him; we have nothing to show. Are we the poorer for that? Incomparably richer! It is a blessed thing when we learn to trust God's eyes and not our own, and this is what faith always does. Instead of faith abridging our vision, it enlarges our range infinitely. We may be feeble in seeing, according to such a measure, and undoubtedly we are; but there is such a thing as growth carried on by the Spirit, revealing more of Christ in the scriptures. Having in the word as in Christ that which is divine, there is infinite fulness to grow up into. This is what Christ introduces us to, not when we die as a literal fact, but when we know the power of His death and resurrection, not merely from Satan but from self. Such is the line of truth shadowed in the crossing of the Jordan. It is not deliverance from Egypt: the Red Sea has this import. There in type the world, the scene of Satan's slavery, is left behind; but across the Jordan is the entrance into the heavenly land.

We shall find therefore by and by another most important difference, which can be merely touched on passingly now. Here circumcision comes in, expressly contrasted with the previous state of things. Whilst they marched through the wilderness there was no such practice. Not a single person was circumcised that was born in the wilderness: no doubt some were there who had been circumcised before. But when they crossed the Jordan, they must not delay; it was imperative then to be circumcised. Clearly therefore it became a question of death to self by Christ, who is gone on high and united us to Himself there; and this is just the point that is meant by it. Thus the person is free to enter into what God gives above; and there is nothing that hinders this more than self unsubdued and unmortified. Circumcision therefore takes place directly the Jordan is passed. However I am now somewhat anticipating; nevertheless it seemed to me necessary to give these few words of a more general nature in order that there might be a simple and clear impression of the exact difference between the two.

Plainly then we have common ground in the Red Sea and the Jordan, but each has that which is special. All is found in Christ our Lord. Only it becomes us that we should not be content with the vague and general thought that we have it all. God means that we should know what we have received as His children, as it is what He has given us. Here the energy of faith comes in; that we be not content with the recognition of the truth that all things are ours, but that we diligently learn of Him what they are. God keeps back no good thing from us. We slight His love if we do not press on to learn and enjoy everything He has revealed. The Spirit that elates, and the conflicts in order to possession.

This then is one of the distinctive points of the Book of Joshua; that Israel is here seen brought into the promised inheritance, and not merely out of the house of bondage into a waste howling wilderness. What mercy to have God in that waste as their companion! It was God leading them into the land where His eyes rested, and in which He could take pleasure — He did not in the wilderness; He took pleasure in His people there. And He was surely showing them what He was, and that He would eventually bring them into the good land; but it was not then a question of entering into the given blessings of Emmanuel's land. This we shall find in the Book of Joshua.

Let us now look a little more particularly into some details of the chapters I shall glance over tonight.

Moses is dead, and Joshua takes his place; that is, Christ is represented both by him who was dead and by him who is alive. Thus it was Christ whether bringing out of the world or conducting through the wilderness, and now Christ in a new type — the captain of salvation who is at the head of Israel in the land of Canaan. But, as we know, it is the self-same Christ in another point of view who was about to lead the people of God into the better country. We must carefully remember, as indeed involved in the truth I have already shown, that here we have not the death of the body and the separation of the spirit from it: still less is it the resurrection condition. Such is not at all the point in the Book of Joshua. For the same reason it is not Christ returning in glory: Joshua does not represent Christ coming again. It is Christ now in Spirit leading the people into the land, that is, the power of the Spirit of God who thus, answering to Christ's glory, enables the Christians now to appropriate and know their place in heaven where He is. In short then Joshua represents Christ not as coming in person by and by, but acting in spirit now, and giving us therefore to receive and to realize our heavenly blessedness.

Again we shall find in this book, that there is first the reception of what God gives, and next that the people have to make the gift their own. These two distinct truths divide the Book of Joshua into two parts. The first twelve chapters are simply the question of our recognition of the grand truth that, having the heavenly land in title, we have to fight for it. The last portion of the book shows us the duty of grappling with the difficulties when we have received the truth, and puts us on our guard against the various ways by which Satan would enfeeble our sense of the blessing, and hinder its being made truly our own practically. It must not remain only an objective fact: we must make our title available and respected.

This divides the book, accordingly, into its earlier and its later parts.

In chapter 1 there is another thing to which I would call attention: Jehovah, after stating the new form in which Christ's power was to be shown in Joshua, says, "Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." The land was given of God, but had to be won; the country over Jordan was open to the people of God. The book being devoted to this as its special aim, there is given at the starting-point a general notice of the extent of the land — "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Strictly speaking, this stretched much beyond Canaan. So we find what remarkably answers to it in that Epistle of the New Testament where the proper heavenly portion of the saints is brought before us. There is nothing more evident in the Epistle to the Ephesians than the two features I am about to state.

First, God has given us heavenly blessings in and with our Lord Jesus, and this now; only without doubt, it is for this reason a matter of faith as far as we are concerned till Jesus come. We are on the earth, but "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." And secondly, the very same chapter shows us not our Canaan only, but "from the wilderness and this Lebanon to the great river, the river Euphrates." So God gives us a measure of outreaching blessing far beyond that which is proper to us. In short, inasmuch as it is not merely the type of Christ but Christ Himself, so too the blessing is equally enlarged. "All things," and no measure short of all things, must be put under Christ; and if Christ be head universally, He is given head over all to the church. He, in connection with the church, does not take anything less than the whole universe of God. Thus we see what is special — the heavenly things answering to

Canaan; but along with this a great extent of territory, stretching from Lebanon on the north to the river Euphrates which was in the east beyond. Does it not bring before us that God, if He gives at all, must give as God? He will make good His promises, but He cannot act below Himself. And how this will be verified in the day for which we wait! We shall have our own (Luke 16: 12); but we shall have Christ's own, and God keeps nothing back from the rejected but glorified man, His own Son.

Further we find for the difficulties in the way, which in truth are immense, that God gives proportionate comfort and assurance. — "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage." The last words one sees are very emphatic, and even in the first chapter repeated over and over again. Let me ask my brethren whether they have really understood that this is what they are called to, — what we are called to now. Not a few sincere Christians err greatly here. They confound good courage with presumption; that assurance in the Lord with the lowest, basest, proudest feeling of the flesh; mere thoughtless audacity without an atom of believing confidence in God. From presumption may every child of God be kept! On the other hand, God forbid that a child of His should be cheated out of the good courage and single-eyed confidence due to God by that which defames them. No, my brethren; we are called to be strong and of a good courage.

What is presumption then as distinguished from the courage of faith; and how are we to discern the difference? Is it not important to avoid mistake in so grave a matter? Presumption is man's courage founded on self — on the first man. The strength and good courage of the Christian is founded only on Christ. The difference therefore is complete. We cannot be too great-hearted if Christ be the one source of our courage: we owe it to Him. If it be a question of standing against the enemy or withstanding his wiles, we need indeed to be watchful. If it be a question of cherishing calm trust in what Christ is, and what He has given us, we cannot abate one jot of the full exhortation conveyed by these words to Joshua on that day. Was it for Joshua alone? It was for Joshua, who bound himself indissolubly with the people of God; it was to cheer the leader and those led by him. But so, beloved brethren, it should be with the children of God; for He does not, could not, complete a mere fraction of them. The best blessings we have got are those God designed for the church — for every member of Christ's body.

Alas! we find ourselves in a state and day when but few members of Christ believe in their own blessing. If God has recalled our souls to faith in His grace, let us thank Him; but when we think of the infinite mercy which has caused us to see that God is for us, and what Christ is to us, and working too by the Spirit in us, — let us adore Him that all is for all that are His. This will deepen our sense of the ruin of Christendom where their lack of faith refuses the good things God is giving, where flesh feebly judged mixes what is of self and the world without rebuke. At least we shall see what God is towards all saints, though we shall feel the more what they are towards Him in spite of all His love. First of all do we owe our freshest feelings to Himself; but also it becomes us, if we desire the blessing of others, that we should humbly — yet at the same time courageously — seek to enter in and possess the blessings ourselves. There is nothing that more conduces to the blessing of another than enjoying what His grace gives in our own souls. "Be strong then," says He, "and of a good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous." We know that He whom Joshua set forth cannot fail us. There were moments when even Joshua quailed; time was to be when Joshua would sink into the dust, when Jehovah would bid him rise with a measure of reproof too. Our Joshua never needs a check more than a stimulus; and all power is given Him in heaven and on earth. May His power rest on us in our weakness! We shall learn where the hindrances are and what.

But there is another point also in the preliminary chapter. "This book of the law," says Jehovah,

"shall not depart out of thy mouth." Along with the entrance of the people, through the power of the Spirit of Christ, into their heavenly blessing, comes increased need of the word of God. The value of every word is not so felt when souls are content with barely receiving Jesus as a Saviour, when they want no more than to be assured that they will not come into judgment. Then a vague and general hold of the word of God suffices for the need. But when we are awakened to see the truth which sets forth Christ on high and the heavenly place of the saints of God, and for desire to have a positive and definite hold of our own proper portion in Christ before entering there in person by and by, then indeed we need, and the Spirit of God does not fail to give us, the value in principle of every word. We feel we want it all; we know that it is good for us too that we should be searched and tried, and that we should not be shut up only to that which ministers direct comfort to us. We can bear that word which makes us conquerors over Satan by making nothing of self; and indeed it is particularly this which it is the object of the book of Joshua (typically viewed at any rate) to bring before us. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Here is another point of immense importance. We have not only the word but God Himself. Granted that in principle the same thing was true while Israel were passing through the wilderness. But it is good to have the sense of the presence of God with us in the introduction of our souls into our own proper inheritance. This then is afresh assured to the people; and need I say how truly we need to be under such a safeguard even in joy, and how good it is always! The time comes when the fresh bloom of truth is apt to pass. If it be no longer a new thing, what is to sustain a soul then? God Himself in the sense that He is with us — in the sense of His will as alone wise and good and holy. Then it is that, even though there may be trial, difficulty, and a thousand things exceedingly repulsive to our nature, yet the consciousness of His presence supplies what is lacking, and outweighs every seeming drawback. What can be wanting when God is with us, and in perfect love?

It is evident then that the distinct assurance of the presence of God with His people, put as it is here with the entrance of the people into Canaan, is full of instruction as well as of consolation for our souls, which have it guaranteed in terms no less precise than full. We shall need it too, my brethren; and we do need it. Nothing else endures.

Then we have Joshua acting upon it; so do the Reubenites also, while choosing to dwell on this side of death and resurrection. It might have been thought that it was not for them to speak. They had been eager to seize the good land for their flocks and herds on the other side; but even so, remarkably enough, they cross the Jordan with the rest. There may be and are saints that stop short of their proper blessing; but God's mind is that all His people should enter in. Hence therefore there is particular care to single out these Reubenites and Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh, whom we find so impressed with the word of God, and with the task in which Joshua was just about to engage, that they themselves now take the place of exhorting him: "Only be strong and of a good courage." Such is the first chapter.

And where is the peculiar beauty of the second chapter? and why have we the story of Rahab here? Can we not at once discern? Possibly more may when a few words are added. Why did we not see a Rahab when the Red Sea was passed? Why here more than there? Is it not here that, along with the bringing of the people of God into their proper heavenly relationship, God must give a fresh sign that the distinctions of flesh and blood are worthless? that it is precisely when the saints of God are called heavenly that the fulness of the Gentiles must come in? There was nothing of the sort at the coming out of Egypt — no particular witness of grace to the Gentiles then as now. Undoubtedly all is

ordered aright; and there was no such propriety, no such special force, in that witness of a Gentile being called then. Now there is. Therefore I conceive that, as we have in the book of Joshua a general resemblance to the Ephesian epistle, so we may say that Joshua 2 answers to Ephesians 2 or the latter part of it. Indeed the same principle runs through both, the one typically, the other in plain reality. For, after the new people who are called the church are shown as put into relationship with Christ at the right hand of God, then we have the bringing in of the Gentile particularly and expressly. Of the Jew it was not so requisite to say much. It was perfectly plain that the 'dew was brought out of his Judaism; but the Gentile who had not a single religious privilege is declared to be the object of the fullest divine favour now in Christ. Without Christ, without hope, without God in the world, without promise even, a stranger to the covenants, spite of all their spiritual destitution and their actual degradation, the Gentiles are now brought nigh, and this with a wholly new kind of nearness unknown to Israel of old. Hence therefore it appears to me that we cannot doubt of the truly admirable wisdom of God in bringing in such an one as Rahab. Not merely was she a Gentile, but chosen by grace from the ranks of the fallen; she was avowedly, what is most degrading to a woman, a harlot. I know there are those who have by small points of philology endeavoured to argue that this was not necessarily the fact, and that the designation may have imported no more than that she kept a kind of public lodging. Men have thus sought to save the character not of Rahab only but of God's word. But they need not take the trouble. It is better to accept the Bible with simplicity. Flesh, *all* flesh, is grass. Indeed there is beauty in the humbling fact just as it is. For if God is going out in the might of His own grace, and showing what He is for His people, why should He not take up one that might seem to human eyes too far steeped in depravity for His blessing, more particularly at such a time? So mistake greater in truth could be made about it. When God raises up His own to the highest, it is the very time when grace goes down to the lowest. Therefore, far from finding a difficulty in that which was the character of Rahab, it appears to me that a great deal of the moral weight of divine truth, and of the beauty of the tale of grace here introduced, is lost by those who wish to make her a more respectable person than she really was. My brethren, it is not what we were, but what grace makes us, that is everything to the believer now; and so Rahab proved then.

We need not dwell upon that which would have the deepest interest for an evangelist's appeal. Nor is it my present aim to pass all in minute review, more especially such a part of the subject. Suffice it to say that Rahab shows us a faith strikingly in keeping with what God was now doing. Indeed this being always true must be more or less manifest. Faith is never a mere repetition in any case. There are hardly two souls whose conversion is exactly alike. Even though they may be converted at the same time, under the same discourse of the same preacher, still each has a speciality; and the more they are understood, the more anyone really gets into the heart of those who are converted, the more decided is the difference seen to be. But this is just what it should be; as it also gives a more living interest to those who really love souls and the ways of God with individuals. Assuredly it is worth learning what a soul is to God, and the manner of God's grace with every soul He brings to Himself. So there was distinctive character in Rahab's conversion. Who would mean to say that everything was as it should be with the object of His mercy? Far from it. The soul that is saved is not the Saviour; nor can it ever rise up to the Saviour, though we all shall be like Him. Unquestionably there is a mighty chasm which grace crosses; and the results are not small in those who believe even now. Still we may see in Rahab what appears to be connected with her old habits; for even at the very time when the truth had told powerfully on her, she lets out a little of what was, I suppose, her old character in her ways and words. There is no doubt she judged that it was all for a good cause; but can one deny that there was a spice of deceit along with the shelter she afforded the spies? Now I do not believe anybody is ever called or allowed of God to deceive in the smallest degree or for any end whatever. We sometimes meet the fact,

even in saints of the Old Testament; but never the least justification of it. In short we may find as here the drawback of flesh at the very time when God's grace is blessing in the Spirit. We find it in others who ought to have known better than the Gentile harlot of Jericho. If we hear of such a fault in Rahab, there was at least as great in an Abraham even, none less in Isaac, and yet more. in Jacob. If they after their knowledge of God could so fail, we must not wonder that, when this poor heathen was in but the transition state of coming to the Lord, she betrays what she was in herself, as truly as her faith shows what she had received from God. But this at least she was certain of, that God was with that people. This she saw clearly, — that she was in the midst of the enemies of God; and in spirit she had done with them. Faith made her turn her back on her oldest associations of nature. Her heart now was with God and with God's people; and it is a good thing, be assured, that one should have one's heart set upon being not only with Him but with them, and this more particularly considering the world through which we are passing.

To have confidence in the link that is between God and His people is of great practical moment. To many perhaps it might sound and pass muster as more spiritual to say, "I am content with God only: as for His people, I am content to be apart from them. So grave are their faults, so many ways and words that are unworthy, that I must be excused if I seek them not. Do not talk about the people of God: God Himself alone for me." This, I say, was not Rahab's feeling; nor is it God's, who loves them, as we should also. He loves them, spite of what they are; and if we are led of His Spirit, if we have communion with Him, we love them too, and their faults will not alienate our hearts from them: who would put value on the love that could be turned away by a failure? Besides, who and what are we, so ready to criticise the failings of brethren? Have we none to confess of our own? Does it never occur to us that we may be a trial and grief to others, if not a stumbling-block by this very haste to judge? Let us rather learn to judge ourselves more, and to esteem others better than ourselves. I do not say this to make light of evil: God forbid! But assuredly true love labours and loves spite of faults, and seeks to get its object free. Indeed, sometimes we may rather rivet a fault by our own foolish way of dealing with it; but if we are truly led of God, we shall love those whom He loves. Rahab understood this very simply when she identified not God only but herself with the spies she hid in the flax. And this expressed a better, stronger, more real faith, than any words could have done in the circumstances. She proved her faith by her good works, and this in loving not merely the God of Israel but the Israel of God. Was not this its character and meaning? Because of what she had heard (faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God), she connected by a true and single instinct Israel with God; and she was right.

Hence, if even the king of Jericho came before Rahab's mind with a claim that would otherwise have been paramount, faith changed everything. No doubt it had its risk. She carried her life in her hand. It is for God to see to that. He did then as He always does; He acted for His own glory, magnifying Himself whether by our life or by our death for His name's sake. She at any rate had her mind made up. She might be put to death for what the king would call an act of treason; and an act of treason undoubtedly it was after the flesh, judged by its rules. It must have seemed to the men of Jericho selling her country and her king; but she measured every thing by God. This is faith's reckoning. Not only are there cases where one must take one's side thus, but the principle extends to the most ordinary occasions. It is really incumbent on every one who is brought to God. In that most solemn change for the soul, what is every body else in the world as standing between us and God? And what is the effect of faith? That the more you are brought out simply into confidence in God's mind toward His people, the more you must love those whom God loves. Rahab in a striking and practical way apprehended this. Hence she risked her own life in giving effect to this divine conviction; for faith is most real, and can stake everything on God and His way. So she counted it no foolish speculation to

risk the loss of life and all things for the spies, because they were the spies of ,Jehovah's people, whose success to her mind was a certainty; and faith assures itself of His mercy in that day.

But she lets us know a little too of the state of feeling in Jericho. Her reasoning was sound, according to faith. It was no mere sentiment, nor sudden feeling either. There were many that shared her fears; but who shared the faith of Rahab? The warriors of the city were not without the same apprehensions. But in her case, as often in ours, God's Spirit wrought where at first there was simply dread. This God followed up, replacing it by living faith in Himself and in His love for His people. "We have heard," says she, "how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt." She at least attributed their crossing to no second cause; nor did the men of Jericho share the unbelief of moderns who feign that Moses knew and used a ford in passing the Red Sea. She understood the truth because she had faith. "I know," she said, "that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by Jehovah, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house." (Verses 9-12)

Again I do not believe that it was for her only a question of saving natural life, though of course lives were preserved according to the oath of the spies. But her faith rose above the mere outward circumstances. The comment of James supposes a higher character, as it seems to me. Hence she was not merely incorporated in the line of Israel generally; she was actually brought into the line of Messiah, and sat in the most honourable place into which a woman could be brought after the flesh. The basis is laid in the book that shows us death to flesh, but God acting according to His own grace and accomplishing salvation in the midst of judgment. Accordingly an appropriate sign was given her not only for her own sake but for her family. Salvation came to her house that day, though they were poor and guilty Gentiles. Their deliverance shines the more brightly in the destruction of all the rest. The executors of judgment on Jericho guarantee the safety of Rahab and all her house.

Then comes the new scene in Joshua 3. "And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." It is plain that in this case there are some notable points that differ from those of the passing of the Red Sea. There was no such solemnity there as here. The ark of Jehovah had no place in that scene; nor any assertion of His right to all the earth — the Lord of all the earth. There was no such order as the priests entering in with the ark first, and then the waters failing for the people to pass over. In the main substance there appears the same general truth: that is, God's power acts in grace, and His people enter into death and come victoriously out of it. But when this has been said, we have heard perhaps all that is common.

Let us now look a little at the differences which seem of chief moment. Jehovah there tells the people to sanctify themselves, "for tomorrow Jehovah will do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When

ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan." So Joshua tells them to come hither and hear the words of Jehovah their God, assuring them that "Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and, the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Jehovah of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap." Such was to be the principle: God's ark was to go before; the people would follow, yet with a space intervening. (Verses 3, 4) Even in the deepest mercy or the richest conference of privilege as God cannot lose His reverence, so His people shall not make haste.

"And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest)," etc.; that is, the difficulties were greatest at this very time. Jordan was peculiarly full. Therefore it was rather harder, if anything, to have crossed then. How then was it that God met the difficulty? "The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." When the priests' feet bearing the ark touched, the waters shrank; and in the midst the priests abode till the people crossed. Faith was thus in lively exercise.

"And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night." (Joshua 4: 1-3) Twelve stones were laid in the Jordan where the priests' feet stood, and twelve stones taken out of the Jordan; being, it is evident, the memorials one more particularly of death, as taken into the river, the other of resurrection, as taken out of the waters. They were the signs not only of Christ's death and resurrection, but of the connection of the people with Christ in it. The Adam life cannot enjoy Canaan, and must go down into death. Beyond the Jordan it must be the power of a better life. For this very reason therefore there were twelve. Wherever man is made prominent — wherever his administrative place is found in Scripture — it has been suggested that twelve is the number ordinarily employed. It is the regular number for completeness in that point of view; that is, where human agency as such is brought before us. Though a familiar truth, still it seems well to notice it by the way.

Such is the reason then why we find twelve stones on this occasion. It was the sign that the people had been there, but having passed through death they had come out of it to the other side. It was the association of the people with the risen Christ Himself. Hence in this place we have the full sign of the glory of the person of Christ as far as a type could convey it. There was none more complete than the ark. Here we do not read of a rod stretched over the waters. The rod was used at the Red Sea; for it was the sign of judicial authority, and so it appropriately appears on that occasion. Judgment fell upon Christ in order that we should be delivered. In the passing out of Egypt it was a question of God's

power grounded on His righteous judgment. His judicial authority interfered there, as we see in the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts. But was not Israel both guilty and ruined? Have not we been also? Christ bore this completely for us, being delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

But at the river Jordan there are new wants. Judicial authority has fully run its course. It is not merely a question of Christ bringing us out from the judgment of God by His own bearing it, but of what Christ going down into death entitles us to enter into according to the rights of His work and the glory of His person. Christ, dead and risen, having perfectly glorified God on the cross, could not be adequately glorified short of heavenly glory. Born the Son of David, He ever called Himself the Son of man. Undoubtedly He had therefore a title to both the kingdom of God in Israel and the still wider empire over all nations and tribes and tongues. But is this the full extent? Not so. There could be no measure. These are the boundless ways of God's glorifying Christ, not only in the highest seats of heaven but, as far as a creature could be a witness of it, in all creation put under Him. It is the same spirit we find here with the symbol of His person in death and resurrection as entering into that place which alone suits One so glorious. Where is it? Heaven alone suffices. Is there one part of the creation of God higher than another? It must be the place for Christ. If there be one sphere that could show exaltation more than another, Christ must be placed there. But Christ, if He goes there, will not be severed from us.

This is therefore what the ark represents. It is the fullest witness of the glory of Christ that could be found in Israel as a type. Hence therefore this is the way in which He is looked at. I repeat, it is not merely righteousness but glory. It is not entering into death to bring us out of what was wrong, but going into death by resurrection as a title to bring us into all that is good and glorious too. Into that connection, my brethren, we are brought now. The object of God's doing so is to deliver us from the false glory of the world, in order that all that is of man, all that occupies his heart, or that could be an object here, should be left behind us. How? By an effort? Exclusively by belief of the truth — by Christ received and known — by the attractive power of the grace and might of God which, in so giving and raising up and exalting Christ in glory, has bound us up with Him for ever, and has bound us up with Him now. This then is what I shall endeavour to bring out still more fully as we look at the book farther.

Let me only add a few words more now as to this. It is not pleasant to the flesh to die; yet in these things is the life of the Spirit. For man it is an impossibility, but with God all things are possible. "All the Israelites passed over on dry ground." "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God," says the apostle to the Colossians for all Christians. We shall see that the attention of the people is particularly called to the event: — "On that day Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For Jehovah your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as Jehovah

your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of Jehovah, that it is mighty: that ye might fear Jehovah your God for ever." (Ver. 14-24) It is not now judgment. There is no question of destroying Pharaoh or his hosts. It is not the dealing with what is evil; but the power of Christ's resurrection in bringing us into what is glorious and heavenly. And very certainly we need them both, and we need them in this order too. A person who looks at Christ simply as bringing into what is good is in danger of constantly allowing what is bad. It is not merely the gift of what is good that delivers the sinner. There must be the solemn sense in our own souls that we are evil ourselves, and are most righteously obnoxious to God's judgment, because of our sinful ways; and that nothing could deliver us, had not Christ Himself borne it, putting Himself under it and exhausting it for us, and that thus — thus only — could we be saved according to God.

Therefore, it was then a question of Israel being saved; but here it is God magnifying His own love for His people according to His counsels for His own glory. It is God giving the magnificent proof of what He is for His people in the face of Satan and his hosts. If I do not enter into this, I shall only be occupied with my personal salvation and my own blessing. This is all right at first: all else is but theory then. But having gone through, in my own soul, the sense of my guilt and ruin, and of my deliverance in Christ from both, then I am free in spirit to enter into the scene of glory before going there actually; for the blessed Saviour even now has brought me into His things, and not merely delivered me from mine of the first man.

This then is the double truth. This is what Christ has been for us and what God has given us in Him. May we value Him everywhere, delighting in all that grace has given us in the word! The same Israelite could not at the same time be a pilgrim in the wilderness and a conqueror of his Canaanitish enemies in the land. But we ought to know them both together; for in truth all things are ours, and we are now seated in heavenly places in Christ and in conflict with spiritual wickedness there, whilst we are journeying in patience through the desert.

JOSHUA 5 - 8.

The passing of the Jordan was a wondrous and significant event; but it was not everything. It sank deep into the consciences of the Canaanites on all sides; but there was more that was needed, and more that was wrought by God in Israel. At once it brought into prominence a remarkable fact — that those who had been born in the wilderness had never yet been circumcised. The Spirit of God uses this occasion to draw attention to a necessity that could be overlooked no longer. Here there is no question of any imagination of man's. We have the plain fact before us; we have the Spirit of God dwelling upon it with no little precision; but we have more. The light of inspiration in the use made of the institution in the New Testament must be taken into account. We have therefore divine certainty as to its intended meaning and its importance. The children of Israel who had been in the wilderness had no doubt been objects of the tender mercy of God; but there was altogether another measure that became necessary when they were brought into the land of Emmanuel — when His good hand conducted them into that land where He was pleased to dwell with them. If He deigned to dwell in their midst, they must at least be taught to feel what was due to the place of His habitation.

Here then circumcision becomes imperative. We may readily discover, from the Holy Spirit's doctrinal allusion to it, what spiritual truth lay under the form. There is more than one passage in the apostolic writings in reference to it. I will take two of the more prominent places where an express mention is introduced, and it is not merely therefore open to us to gather the idea intended; for in this

case the very term is so used as to preclude question, which is by no means always the case in the types of Scripture.

In the epistle to the Philippians the apostle says, "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." It is plain that he means Christians; but at the same time he means such as are conscious of, or at least been taught, what Christianity means. I do not mean by this that others are not so privileged; but it is no uncommon thing to find a Christian who walks below or even contrary to his principles; not of course dishonestly, but sometimes through ignorance, sometimes through will, unjudged in ways here and there which ignore his very calling. Now it is clear the Spirit of God does not contemplate this, but always addresses Christians according to the will of God and the glory of Christ our Lord. It could not be otherwise. If the word spoke with calmness of children of God while walking apart from His will, I need not say what an excuse for unfaithfulness it would give, if not an apparent sanction. Men are ready enough to take license to themselves when in a poor condition before the Lord, gathering some apparent allowance of their wretchedness from the slips of good men who may have fallen into bad ways. Yet habitually in Scripture nothing can be more marked than the jealous care with which God renders inexcusable all such misuse of His word. I consider then that Scripture does wisely and holily as a rule address the children of God according to His thoughts and intentions about them. This alone could suit His glory; this alone is wholesome for us. Hence the apostle has his heart tried greatly by some who, having borne the excellent name of the Lord, were seeking earthly things, as he says here, "Many of them walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

But here in the beginning of the same chapter he addresses the saints according to God's mind concerning them in Christ, and says, "We are the circumcision." Thus he predicates of them what God has made them in Christ. The meaning is that nature is judged, sentence of death being passed upon it. It is not only that the saint is brought from under condemnation because of his sins, but the nature fallen into rebelliousness against God, evil, and selfish, has now had sentence of death executed upon it in Christ; and the believer is spoken of accordingly. "We are the circumcision," therefore, says he, "which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Again, in Colossians 2, we find another plain allusion. He says not only, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power," but "in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Thus he looks at the mighty working of divine grace in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. I need not say that the text has nothing at all to do with the historical fact of circumcision as related in Luke. It is a circumcision "made without hands;" whereas the literal act of course was done by hands. This is in contrast with it. The ordinance was an obligation for the Israelite, a figure simply, and nothing more, as to truth. But here we are told of what God had wrought in Christ and His cross, where He had dealt with everything belonging to us that was contrary to His mind.

We accordingly are said to be circumcised. This is particularly laid down here. He does not say merely, "In whom we are circumcised," but "ye." He was speaking of these Gentile believers — persons to whom the apostle had been a stranger after the flesh. That they had never seen him we may, I believe, fairly infer from an earlier part of this very chapter. Here he says that they were already circumcised by a better circumcision rite than man could observe. This was more especially seasonable for such as were in danger of attaching inordinate value to ordinances. There has been a tendency also to claim special value from the fact of having been personally under the teaching of the apostle. This was an early superstition. The Holy Ghost therefore seems to have taken care that some epistles should

be sent to such as were strangers, and Gentiles also as well as to Christians who had been Jews. Every point was guarded; and amongst others the most distinct testimony to the only stable means of blessing — the solemn fact that all that is offensive to God, all that savours of the fall, of the pride of nature rising up against God, is judged, cut off, and set aside before Him.

There is no greater comfort to the soul that really values being set in perfect purity and righteousness before God. Here it is not a question of what we have to attain. There is ample scope, as we shall find presently, for the practical power of the Spirit of God; but then that power for practice is based upon what God has done already, and always flows from His work in Christ. The Holy Spirit carries on an answering work; but surely there is something to be answered to, and this is what God Himself has done already for us in Christ our Lord. So he says that they were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body [of the sins] of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ.

We return therefore to our chapter, and we see thus the proper force, as it appears to me, of the blessing foreshadowed that day in crossing the Jordan. Canaan could not be entered as a place where flesh was to be gratified, or its evil to be allowed. Not that there was no dealing with the flesh in the wilderness; but it could not be said to be done with; it was not yet treated as that which had come under the final judgment of God. From the Jordan we see this: death is treated as the only door of deliverance, and the knife of circumcision must pass over all the males of Israel before the good fight. Thus it is not only that death and resurrection with Christ makes it possible for the people of God to enjoy heavenly things and enter into their own proper position, as we were seeing in the last lecture, but there is a further effect, though all be part of the same work of God, brought out distinctly in the type.

Just as we find various offerings to set forth different parts of the work of Christ, so, whether it be the Red Sea or the Jordan, or, again, the circumcision that follows, they each represent distinct aspects of that which God has given us in and with the Lord Jesus dead and risen. Very clearly we derive from circumcision at this point the fact that fallen nature in us is judged completely, and that we are entitled to take our stand peremptorily as against flesh in ourselves. We are then also fitted to have to do with one another, being all as to this upon the same common ground. God could not sanction anything less. He has given us Christ, and with Him, to faith, the full portion of His death and resurrection. That portion necessarily supposes the work in which He has completely done with fallen nature in all its forms before Him. Not a trace of evil was in Christ. He was man as truly as the first Adam — Son of man as Adam was not, but Son of man which is in heaven — a divine person, yet none the less a man. But for these very reasons He was capable and competent according to the glory of His person, to be dealt with by God for all that was unlike Him in us. Had there been the smallest taint in Him, this could not have been done. The perfect absence of evil in this one Man furnished the requisite victim; as in Himself and all His ways the divine nature found satisfaction and delight. Would He then bear all? be willing to go down to the depth of the judgment of all men, according to God's estimate of the evil of our nature? The entire, unbroken, unmitigated judgment of God fell upon Him in order to deal with it and put it away for ever. No less, I believe, is the force of Christ's death for us.

Hence we start now, no longer viewed simply as pilgrims and strangers, but as those who are ushered into the land of God even while we are here — who take our place as heavenly persons; for this is our character now. So says the apostle, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Accordingly nothing of the old man is spared; all that is really self is seen in its hatefulness. The necessity that all this be put away is brought before us; but, wondrous to say, for us united to Christ the thing is done. What we have to do now is, first of all, to believe it — without question to take our stand before God as dead and risen with Christ, that through grace, Gentiles or not, if Christ's, we

are the true circumcision. Only such can mortify their members on the earth intelligently and thoroughly. Otherwise it is an effort either to die or to better the flesh; and both are vain. In presence of this the carnal circumcision now is a poor and pitiful thing at best, yea, a rebellious snare. The true circumcision is what God has made the Christian in Christ, and that through death and resurrection. Those that of old were content with their Jewish place rejected the truth it symbolized, proving that they understood nothing as they ought; those who in Christendom can leave the truth of Christ to occupy themselves with the mere shadows are far, far worse. The reality of the truth is given to us only in Christ our Lord. All is ours in Him.

Can we wonder then that the Spirit of God dwells upon this at considerable length, calling the place where the people are circumcised Gilgal? We shall find the importance attached to this elsewhere in looking at the book. No flesh must glory in His presence. Made heavenly by grace, consciously dead and risen with Christ, we are called to mortify, for this reason, our members in the earth. "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho." (Verse 10)

Again, another fact of interest is brought before us: the passover is kept now. Undoubtedly it had been instituted in Egypt, and kept even in the wilderness. Grace made provision, as we are aware, for the casualties of the dreary way. But all this is passed away. There is deeper communion henceforth with God's mind. The passover itself is now celebrated in Canaan with solemn Joy. It is exceedingly precious for us that advance in the knowledge of God makes foundation truths to have a profounder character to the soul. To remember Christ in the breaking of bread was sweet and strengthening from the first: how much more where the revelation of the mystery wove into that showing forth of His death our oneness with Him and with each other! I am persuaded that the man who values most the gospel is he who has the deepest acquaintance with the mystery of Christ. There can be no error more offensive, and, I think, none which shows a shallower spirit, than to suppose that the great fundamental truth of God in meeting our souls in grace loses its importance because of entering into the counsels of glory or of any other advance in the truth, no matter where or what it may be. Contrariwise, we learn to see more in all we saw before; we value Christ better everywhere; we enter more, not merely into questions of our own need, or into a retrospect of Egypt or of the wilderness, but into the mind of God. Hence, as it appears to me, the force of introducing the passover here. The less we are occupied with the circumstances, the more calm, free, and deep is faith's enjoyment of the deliverance of grace and of God Himself in it

"The children of Israel kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho."

But there is also another remarkable notice — "And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day." That is, we find the witness of Christ risen in a way that was never connected with the passover before. New food was used and supplied now. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." We too are given to eat of the old corn of the land: for this we do not wait till we reach heaven. As He is our peace on high, so is He risen our food and strength. Thus characteristically do we know Him no longer after the flesh, but glorified on high.

There is, however, a needed remark to be made along with this. In our case (for the Christian enjoys the most singular advantages) it would be a grievous mistake and a real loss to suppose that Christ as our manna has ceased. For Israel there could not be such a state of things as the eating of the

manna and eating of the corn of the land continuously going on together. The Christian has both unquestionably. And for this very simple reason: Israel could not be in the wilderness and in the land at the same time; we can be and are. Thus, as we have often seen, the Christian stands on altogether peculiar ground. It is not only the wilderness and its mercies we now have to do with, but also the heavenly land and its blessings and glory. Hence therefore we have to be on our guard in looking at such a type as this. There could scarcely be anything more dangerous than to suppose that we had passed out of the circumstances of trial, or that the gracious supply of the Spirit of Christ was no longer needed. Here below we are ever in the place of weakness and danger and sorrow. Here we are but passing through temptation. Emphatically this is the wilderness. Here the daily manna is vouchsafed to us, and we own and feel that only the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ever living and interceding Priest, could bring us safely through. I do not mean the power of resurrection alone: this we have; but the grace that brought Him down, and that enters into every daily need and want, and that sustains us in all our infirmity. But this is not Canaan; and in such pitiful and tender consideration we have nothing at all to do with the characteristic blessings of Canaan. We have then to do with power: here the manna meets us in our need and weakness.

The Lord Jesus then ministers to His saints in both ways. Everywhere we have Christ. Take the same epistle to the Philippians already used for the present force of circumcision. We have not only Christ according to Philippians 3, but according to Philippians 2; for the second of Philippians shows us the very trait that I have been referring to — the grace of the Lord coming down where we are; whereas chapter 3 would fix our eyes and hearts on Himself where He is now. Surely we need both, and we have both. So here we find not that which takes away the manna, but the new condition and place of Israel, and the due provision of God for it. The old corn of the land points to Christ risen from the dead; and so the apostle Paul loved to present Him, though never to the disparagement of the Lord in His grace and mercy toward us in all our circumstances of exposure as His saints. We are more indebted to the same apostle for this than to any other of the twelve; but then Paul does associate us truly and distinctly with Christ risen from the dead and in heaven, as no one else does. This he was specially called to make known. Not that he exclusively gives us the heavenly place of Christ, but that he, above all, brings us into it, while he magnifies the grace that watches over us here below.

This then is the eating of the corn of the land. It is what spiritually answers to the apostle's word in 2 Corinthians 5 — "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." This is our form of relationship to Christ the Lord in what is peculiar to us now as Christians. What distinguishes us is that we have Christ risen and glorified; we are entitled to take all the comfort of knowing old things passed away, all things become new; we are brought triumphantly into it ourselves, and have Him in all His heavenly glory as an object before us; nay, more, as One to feed upon. The Spirit of God brings out the Lord Jesus particularly in the epistle to the Ephesians, where His first introduction is as One dead, risen, and exalted in heaven. In Colossians, in a similar way, we have our Lord there. All this then is the old corn of the land. But then if we take the Gospels, and, further, if we look at John's epistles, it is not thus we see Him. We behold our Lord here below particularly thus indeed as the object of the Spirit. It is clear then that all is brought out to us. We have Christ everywhere, and cannot afford to do without Him anywhere. What saint would have a part only of our blessing? God gives us a whole Christ, and in every way.

There is another point too in the chapter which may well claim a word. When God enters on a fresh action, or calls His people to a new kind of activity, He reveals Himself accordingly. The same God that made Himself known to Moses displays Himself afresh to Joshua, always, it need scarce be

said, (for could it be otherwise?) manifesting Himself in the way which establishes His glory, and binds it up with the new circumstances of His people. There is no repetition of Himself — the very same One, unchanged of course, but withal real in His ways, and occupied with us in order to identify us with His glory. Hence therefore there is now no burning bush. Nothing was more admirably suited to the wilderness; but what had this to do with Canaan? What was wanted there? A witness not of One judging, but of one that would preserve, spite of appearances, the emblem of utter weakness yet of all that weakness sustained. Was not this suited to the wilderness? But how or what in Canaan? As the captain of Jehovah's host. Here it is a question of conquering the foe, the power or wiles of Satan. God forbid that we should have any other foe! Others may be foes to us; but these emissaries of Satan only we have to count foes, and to deal with as such. It is not so with men. These may become our enemies, but never we theirs; while we have nothing to do with Satan, save to treat him, when discovered, as an enemy. We are entitled, steadfast in the faith, to resist him who only seeks in his workings and ways to dishonour the glory of God in Christ our Lord, and so ruin all that are blinded by him.

This then is the revelation that Jehovah makes of Himself for the new work to which His people are called — a man of war to lead those who have henceforth to fight.

But there is another remark to connect with a previous part of the chapter. Joshua was not given to see a sword in the hand even of the captain of the host, till the knife was put in the hand of each Israelite to deal with himself. The call to circumcision had done its work before there was a moral fitness to have to wield the sword against others.

Further now, just as much as in the wilderness — more, I think, we shall see as we go on — the solemn word, even to Joshua, is this — "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." There was the more need to insist upon this, because the task in Canaan was one of putting down the enemy. This necessarily calls for severe blows, continual watchfulness, incessant opposition. So much the louder call to begin and go on with reverence and godly fear. (Verse 15)

And now they are before the doomed city; and "Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in." (Joshua 6) In Joshua it is the standing type of the power of Satan in the world. "And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days." But let it be remembered that it is the power of Satan put forth by the world to hinder our entering into our heavenly blessings. It is not simply the world as a means of dragging us back to Egypt; this is not the point here. But Satan adopts fresh snares according to the blessing that God gives. Whatever would arrest the progress of the saints altogether; whatever might hinder their setting their moral mind, their affection, on things above — to further this now Satan bends all his force.

Jericho then gives us a lively image of Satan's power as that which stood right in the way of the people entering the Holy Land. Jericho was the key of entrance into Canaan, and must, be taken: God would have it wholly destroyed. Hence Jehovah takes the whole case under His direction of His people. Not that He enters upon the work single-handed. It is not as was once done with the host of Pharaoh. Here the people must fight; they must have each their portion; they must take expressly and personally an active part in the war with the Canaanites. "Ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once." It was a well-walled and strong city, and Israel had but poor appliances for siege or storming; yet never did city fall so easily since the world began.

But then there is striking instruction in the manner of it: "And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the

priests shall blow with the trumpets." There is the greatest care to insist upon the word of Jehovah. The city was to be taken, and would surely be taken; but this could only be in God's way. There is no book in Scripture which demands obedience more rigidly than the Book of Joshua, which exhibits the people entering on their heavenly portion now by faith. "And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." So Joshua and the people do. He directs the priests and people accordingly, and they are found carrying out the instructions of Jehovah, whatever they might appear to the eyes of others, with the most careful obedience. All is persevered in exactly during the full term of waiting. (Joshua 6: 1-7)

Not only were their means seemingly inadequate, and really so if God had not been in them, but His ark is again prominent. "And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before Jehovah, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. So the ark of Jehovah compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp." (8-14)

At length comes the crisis when faith had its answer: "And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." Can anything be more remarkable than the way in which Joshua calls the people, in the use of means wholly and evidently insufficient on human grounds, to the settled and thorough assurance of what is going to befall Jericho before it takes place? There is communion with the mind of God. It is as fully set out before Joshua and all the people as if the city already lay in ruins. And so it should be with us. We are intended of God to know what He predicts before the event. (2 Peter 3) The world itself cannot but own when His word is fulfilled. Hence we are told that "we have the mind (or intelligence) of Christ;" and this goes far beyond prophecy. But then there may be hindrances to this as a practical fact. Thus, where the saints are mixed up with the world, there can be no full enjoyment of nearness to the Lord. His glory is in this denied, and so the Spirit of God is grieved. The allowance of fleshly arrangement in the church, or of anything that is a departure from His word, hinders the genuine simplicity of God's light from shining upon the soul.

But here all was sufficiently clear, as far as man could see, though we shall soon find how, as everywhere, the first man fails. "And ye, in any wise," says he, "keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down fiat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her." (18-22)

And so it was done: grace exempted before judgment. "And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the

treasury of the house of Jehovah." Nor was the word of mercy forgotten in the hour of victory: "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." But a curse also is pronounced: "And Joshua adjured them at the time, saying, Cursed be the man before Jehovah, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates" — a word fulfilled in its due season. "So Jehovah was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country." (24-26)

There is not a blessing that God gives to man which does not furnish an occasion to Satan; and so it was at this moment of the capture of Jericho. The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing, and God called His people to such a close and comprehensive clearance of the evil by the judgment of the wrongdoers as never was heard of in the wilderness. The more magnificent the display of the gracious power of God to His people, the more tenacious He is and must be of that which belongs to His own character and nature. Had there been the allowance on God's part of hidden evil, where were the testimony to His presence with the children of Israel? It had been irreparably ruined. This could not be. God must prove Himself there in their midst. And have we less now? Is He gone because of our ruined state? Did the Holy Ghost come down to be in us for a brief season, or for ever?

We shall find that God took a way to secure His glory not more effectual than humbling. And this is the more striking too, because it was at the very time when God had drawn the attention, we may say, of all the world to that which He was doing for His people. It had been confessed that their hearts were melting. The report of Israel had spread far and wide. But can it be supposed that men heard of the triumphant passage of the Jordan, or of the divinely directed overthrow of Jericho, and that Israel's shameful defeat before the little city of Ai was kept a secret? Is that which does honour to God and His people spread abroad, and their disgrace concealed or unknown? Far from it. There is one who sees to it that anything which lowers God in His people shall quickly circulate through such a world as this! Nor is it well that evil should be hidden; for grace makes it morally good for God's people to bear the burden and approve themselves clear, besides the fact of discipline in the individuals concerned. Whatever the pain and shame of the case itself, it is good for those exercised thereby, not for such as make an evil use of it.

But God will have His people walking in the truth of what affects His glory; and this comes out more now than ever. He manifests His watchful care, and insists on what is suited to Himself, for no less than this is the standard. It was not merely with reference to the people, but God measures everything henceforth by His own presence, who had brought them into His own land. He had particularly set aside the silver and the gold of this city, pronouncing a curse upon any one who should alienate it for himself; and now no Canaanite but a man of Israel dared to trifle with the mighty power of Jehovah — to act as if Joshua were but the crafty master, yet slave, of an idol that had neither eyes nor ears. To pass over such an act would have been fatal. "Achan, the son of Carmi the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of Jehovah was kindled." (Joshua 7) Against whom? Achan? Nay, more, "against the children of Israel." The same principle applies yet more strikingly to the Church. If "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."

But to proceed: — "Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country." We do not read at this time of any seeking the Lord; we do not hear of prayer to ask from the Lord counsel as to that which they were to do. I assuredly gather from all the facts that here the children of Israel failed in this. A little

place seemed not to need God's power, wisdom, and guidance as a great. It is not merely a question of the most guilty party. There may be fidelity in much, but withal the need in God's eyes to deal with His people as a whole when He thus puts them to shame before the world. When we shrink from this, we only defraud our souls of the blessing; and, further, we induce a distrust of the Lord instead of cherishing perfect confidence, spite of what seems perhaps outwardly hard. Many an one, I dare say, may have thought it strange that Jehovah's anger should be kindled against Israel, all because of one individual who, unknown to them, had been thus guilty. But He is always wise and good; and our wisdom lies in unwavering trust in Him. Joshua then, instead of enquiring of the Lord how the matter stood, and whether His holy eyes had discerned that which offended Him, is all for action. Now, where there is activity before men, there is especial need of previously drawing near to God. For one step taken is apt to involve many more, and there is danger. Here too we may well learn a lesson. We have the Lord's anger kindled against them, and Joshua quite unconscious that there was anything amiss. Those sent go; "and they returned to Joshua, and said to him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people labour thither; for they are but few." (Joshua 7: 3)

There is self-confidence instead of dependence on the Lord. There was a looking at the comparative strength of the town; there was a fleshly judgment, reasoning after appearances, which for the believer is never safe, that it would call for no such serious action as in the taking of Jericho. There indeed that city with its high walls made them feel, and compelled them to own, that nothing but the power of God could bring it down; and there they found His strength made perfect in their weakness. God was their implicit trust; but now it was in their eyes a mere question of comparing the resources of Ai with their own. Thus the easy victory with which God had crowned them at Jericho became a snare. To those that had gained at once a city like Jericho, the capture of Ai seemed a matter of course. The inhabitants were but few. There was no reason therefore for the host of Jehovah to go up in force against such a place. "So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai." And not only so, but "the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water."

It was no longer the hearts of the Canaanites melting; no longer their kings who became as water; but Israel. What are we without God, my brethren? It is wholesome that we should feel it. Our only boast is in what He is not only *to us*, but *with us*. They had not God with them; they were utter weakness. And Joshua now is filled with chagrin and humiliation before God. "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord Jehovah, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?" They had failed in not seeking direction from God. "Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan!" There was repining, if not a reproach, cast on Him who had thus failed them. (6, 7)

I do not mean to say that there was not the working of real sorrow and shame of heart before God but certainly patience had not yet attained its perfect work in the soul. "O Jehovah, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" There at least he was right, and there it is that God answers — "And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the

accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff." (8-11)

But mark, it is not Achan, it is not the ill-doer only but Israel. There was no such identification before the crossing of the Jordan. There was the principle, no doubt, of an evil thing affecting the camp. This was always true; but now it is made far more precise and definite. The greater the blessing of God to His people, so much the more their responsibility. So now, they being all identified with God, there was done in their midst a daring sin against God, who will make them feel it for the express purpose of their purging themselves from it. "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed." "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed." (13) Whatever may be the rich grace of God in dealing with all our evil and putting it away, that which dishonours Him when God has so blessed us makes us nothing before the enemy. The worst evil disappears before the power of redemption; but what man would count a very little evil, if cherished or overlooked, becomes afterwards a source of incalculable weakness in the presence of Satan. Is this a reason for distrust? Not the least. It is the greatest possible reason for watchfulness and care. And more than that, beloved brethren — for who are we, and what are our eyes worth, and where has been our watchfulness? — our strength lies in this, that we have God to watch over us and for us. Here was precisely that in which Joshua had been lacking. He had not sought the Lord about it; he had not enquired. God accordingly makes the shame of it to appear, and Joshua now painfully learns it, and the people.

"Up," says Jehovah to His servant, "sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith Jehovah God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which Jehovah taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which Jehovah shall take shall come by households; and the household which Jehovah shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire." Thus, although God would make them all feel that they were involved, there is careful provision in His own goodness that the particular offender shall be brought out, now that they are really waiting upon God, and humbling themselves because of it. Thus, when unwatchful and unprayerful, all are involved in the sorrow; but when His people draw near to God the sorrow is traced home to the one who is guilty. There is a clearing of themselves by the fact that they all humbled themselves before God. This very act shows that they have no wilful connivance at evil; and, God therefore taking the matter into His own hands, the offender is soon brought out.

"And Joshua rose up early." He was as much in earnest about this as he was about the fall of Jericho. "So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: and he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarahites: and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: and he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken." God was faithful; but Joshua would have man vindicate Him, that others also might fear, not to speak of his own soul. Hence more follows.

"And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to Jehovah God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against Jehovah God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are

hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before Jehovah. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? Jehovah shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." They all took their part in it. God insists that there should be thus the clearing of themselves before His own name. "And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So Jehovah turned from the fierceness of his anger." But notice how "all Israel" have their part, as in the consequences of the sin, so now in every step of its judgment from God.

And now we have the Lord's full restitution of the people. They had gone forth in self-confidence; they had received the most serious check; but, now that the sin was judged, Jehovah was free to act on their behalf. Even then He had His own way. And now it was not a question of great things, it was no season to show the resources of the all-overcoming power of God, which, before a blow was struck, brought down the towering walls of the city. I am persuaded that there is quite as practical and deep a lesson to learn hence as from the fall of Jericho; but it is a different lesson. And this is a very important thing, brethren; because, we being so ready to contract the ways of God into one single groove, it is a very good thing for us to leave room for His wisdom to shape its own course suitably to the new circumstances, in view surely of His own glory, but also in His goodness, always taking account of the condition of His people. Hence He says to Joshua, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land."

So Jehovah adds at this juncture, and such injunctions might surprise some. First He summons Joshua to take all the people of war; then He promises to give all into Joshua's hand. He next lays down a plan, not the one that brought in the ark and the priests, where it was pre-eminently a question of following His own word and the power of Jehovah's holy presence. But here he says, "Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it. So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, (for they will come out after us,) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for Jehovah your God will deliver it into your hand. And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of Jehovah shall ye do." That is, even more care and implicit obedience in every particular are insisted on as to the preparations against the little Ai than had been employed in the capture of Jericho. All this is set out with the utmost minuteness for our instruction.

"Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people. And Joshua rose up early in the morning." He himself "numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and

Ai. And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city. And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley." The all-importance of heeding the Lord and His word was felt now; and recovery after haste must be humbling, however sure.

The enemy, as we shall see, is never so self-confident as when his hour is come. So men shall cry, Peace and safety, when sudden destruction cometh upon them. "And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hastened and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. And there was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel. And the Lord said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city. And the ambush arose quickly." They were on the other side. This is the more remarkable, because it might appear as if it were merely a signal but it seems evident, as it has also struck others, from the disposition of the forces, that such was not the thought, but a far deeper intimation than a simple sign. It is rather a lively witness of God causing all things to conspire, where we do not trust in our manoeuvring, but cherish subjection of heart to His word, after the evil was seen and judged which made it impossible for God's presence to be with His people in power. You will always find this the case.

Where Christians bring their own plans into the difficulty, they defeat themselves instead of the foe; and even though they may be thoroughly upright in the main, the Lord has a controversy with the self-sufficiency which trusts to plans instead of being subject to His will. The Lord is surely with His own. Dependence and trust in Him is the wisdom of those who are engaged in conflict with the enemy. And, beloved brethren, we (Christians) are all engaged in it. We are called to this now, if ever men were — called to it doubly, because it is not only that God has; brought us into the consciousness of heavenly blessing through His grace, but He has recalled us to it when long let slip. Surely this ought to be the conflict of all saints' though in fact it is scarcely understood save by such as know the mystery of Christ and the church. Sorrow to think that it should be so! But thanks be to God that there are any! Thanks surely we owe that we have been favoured by infinite mercy so entirely above and apart from any question of ourselves at all. But have we not known this — and do we not always find it so — that where we are' on the ground of the Lord, and know ourselves so much the more called to obedience, as we have to face the subtlest wiles of the foe, so the most unexpected conjuncture of circumstances is ordered of Him in our favour) He knows how precisely to time everything for us.

In the case before us the mere sight of the eyes could hardly have availed for men so distant and also hiding: was it not of God Himself? Did not He cause Joshua to stretch out his spear? What serves to make it plain enough that more is meant than the human notion that ordinarily supplants the truth here is that we are told a little afterwards (verse 20) that "Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out his spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai" Had it been merely a signal for man, where would have been the reason for keeping his hand thus stretched out? To stretch out the spear, if he had drawn it back soon, would have been quite enough. The work was done, had it been a mere preconcerted act. But no; it appears to be a sign on God's part, a significant token, that called them to the taking of the city. It was seemingly and strikingly intended to give them the certainty

that Jehovah was with them now, Jehovah undertaking the lead, Jehovah prospering all in the very place where they had been put to shame; Jehovah would retrieve the glory of His own name. Let us always trust to Him so. No doubt it may be by no means a question here of that which would strike the mind of man with the same wonder as the capture of Jericho; but still it was no small cheer to Israel after their grievous check.

If God puts the sentence of death on us now, it is to help us the more really in result by leading us to trust only in Him that raises the dead. If we submit, He can use us. So here; it was the place of previous defeat, where the Lord, having purged out that which was the hidden cause of the mischief, and brought to light the failure of all in dependence, can lead them to victory. At the same time, while recalling to their mind every part of their fault, He impresses upon them more than ever the all-importance of subjection to His word, and, further, of dependence upon *Himself*. The word of God, blessed as it is, is not everything. We need the God of the word as well as the word of God. What weakness if God Himself be not with us! What assured victory when He is, as we find in this twofold history! It is true that only God knew Achan's trespass in their midst. But God would have brought it all out if they had waited on Him for light; for He had no pleasure in the shame that haste entailed on Joshua and His people. He will be enquired of, and must rouse His people to learn from Him, sooner or later, that which they knew not, but which He knew and would make known, for it concerned His honour as dwelling with them.

Thus then the taking of this little city is turned into weighty and most needed instruction for the people of God, we being such as we are here below. The men of Ai we have in all their distress when they looked behind and saw the snare in which they had been taken, the ambush rushing in on one side, and those that seemed to flee from them advancing to attack them on the other. The case was soon decided now, whatever the pains and trouble He demanded for it. "And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of Jehovah which he commanded Joshua." They are allowed the prey now, having been tested at Jericho.

Observe this other fact too: "And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day." God caused the word He had laid down as to these very matters to be brought to mind. Is not this an intentional instruction for us here? The conscience of Israel was roused by Joshua to the nicest care for the will of Jehovah. It was not a command that had been just then given, but one that had been laid down on the other side of Jordan. It was remembered now; as the circumstances indeed first called for it at this time. It was God's land, and must not be defiled, but be regarded according to the rights of divine holiness. He had forbidden them to leave one hanged on a tree till the sun went down. They must never forget what was due to Him, and to His land.

"Then Joshua," as we are told — and this too is in evident connection with the same principle — "built an altar unto Jehovah, God of Israel, in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto Jehovah,

and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses." All shows the exercise of conscience and sense of the glory of God according to His revelation. It was the expression of thanksgiving offered: to the Lord, but we see care for the law under which. they were. "And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded before." It is a fresh proof of the jealousy which Israel felt for the word of Jehovah, and the Christian may learn from their reverent attitude before it. "And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." Every word was read, and read to every man, woman, and child, yea, to the strangers among the Israelites. As His authority extended over all, so each and every word was caused to fall on their ears thus solemnly, and the stranger that sojourned in their midst must hear the law, though there were privileges which none but Abraham's seed could share.

I shall not proceed farther now, desiring to dwell more particularly on these chapters where the moral principles of the book are apparent to me. We have seen, first, the secret of victory; next, that of defeat; then we had, thirdly, the means and process of restoration; and, fourthly, the great practical lessons that resulted from all. May the Lord grant us, beloved brethren, to read every word as the revelation of the living ways of the living God with our souls! Those of the children of God will feel its application seasonable who have been brought in some little measure to appreciate the place given to all, but which all alas! have not taken. If we have, let us rejoice and fear not, though God will surely deal with us according to that which He has given us in His grace, not as on ground which our faith has left behind as none of His, whatever be His considerate care for such as have never learnt better.

JOSHUA 9 - 24.

In the wars of Jehovah it was not always a question of hostile power. Indeed this is not the most serious evil which the people of God have to encounter in this world. The very same principle which was true of Israel then applies to the Christian now. The wiles of the evil one are much more to be dreaded than his power; and Satan as a serpent acts far more grievously to the injury of the Lord's name among His people than as a roaring lion. Undoubtedly it is an afflicting thought, how far the adversary can, and does, employ the world to the hurt of God's people and God's dishonour; but grace is ever above evil, and through its full revelation in Christ we have now a new standard to judge of good and evil, more particularly for the Christian. He can thus say that all that is wrought by the mere enmity of the world, set on by Satan, cannot harm; for he is not like a Jew, called to the preservation of life in this world, or to any circumstances of ease and quietness; but, on the contrary, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

The rejection of Christ has to Christian faith changed everything to us here below, and the possession of Christ for heaven has made all plain to us, supposing there were the loss of anything here, of life itself; for what is aught now in presence of eternal life? And Christ is that life in resurrection power. Having Him as our life therefore, we have to do with a hostile world which Satan turns against us; but, in exciting the world against the saints, we only learn the strength of our blessing; for supposing the world, filled with hatred, inflicts its stripes or contumely, and deprives us of this or that necessary (it might seem) for subsistence, certainly for anything like a measure of comfort in this

world, what then? If the effect of all that Satan can do is that we give God thanks, what does he gain? Praise to the Lord. Suppose, again, he put forth the world's hatred to imprison or to kill, we shall not give the Lord less thanks then, but rather praise Him that He counts us worthy of suffering these things for His name's sake.

So it is only a question of going forward at the will of the Lord. Just in proportion to the malicious keenness of Satan's strokes does the Lord give more grace. Thus are sufferings in the world, trials, persecutions, all invariably turned to the good of the souls that accept all; and we are entitled to do so, as Christ always did. It mattered not who the person or what the thing was; it might be Herod or Pilate as instruments. The Lord, viewed now as the blessed witness for God here below, always took them from God. "The cup which my Father giveth me," He says, "shall I not drink it?"

No doubt there lay behind what was, if possible, deeper than the outward fact of rejection. For the expiation of sin God must act according to His immutable nature in righteousness, and not merely as Father. But whatever might come, the effect on our Lord Jesus was that He justified God, even when in atoning for sin there could be no sensible enjoyment nor expression of communion. It is impossible that the eternal Son, the perfect Servant, could welcome or be indifferent to divine judgment, when He for us became its object, which He necessarily must be, if we were to be cleared from guilt and ruin by His bearing sin away. Hence we find the Lord Jesus then, but in the expression of abandonment, not of fellowship, not in doubts or fears, as some have said blasphemously, but realising what it was when God made Him sin for us. Anything else would have been morally impossible and unsuitable at such a moment; but even then did He cherish unwavering confidence in God, reckoning upon Him, feeling the reality of His own position, entering in all the depths of His soul — and those depths were unfathomable — into all that God's moral nature must demand when the question was of sin, even though with Christ Himself, His only begotten, suffering for us in atonement.

We speak here of the cross of Christ in view of atonement. This doubtless is the one solitary exception. It belongs to Christ in atonement, and to none else but Christ there and then; and out of Him came, not only His praises for ever, but ours with His, His in our midst. Apart from that which thus stands necessarily alone, where thanksgiving would have been wholly unseasonable and unsuited, not to say a mockery — apart from this one stupendous fact which refuses comparison with all others, because of its nature, and where failure could not be, because He was then as always absolutely perfect, ever do we hear Him blessing His Father. Jesus in all things glorified His Father; and in the final suffering His perfection shone most of all; not because He was one whit more perfect then than at any other time, but because never before had it been His so to suffer, and it never could be again.

Take the Lord at any other moment than His suffering for sins, and no matter what came upon Him, the effect was thanksgiving. Take Him gradually, yea, utterly rejected; take Him most despised, where He was most known, where He had done such works, where He had spoken such words, as never were before. Thoroughly He felt all, and He could say "Woe" upon these places. It could not be otherwise; for they had refused the gracious and rich testimony of the Messiah. But He turns to God with "I thank thee Father," at the same time. So we see victory in Him always. We too are entitled to look for it. Only remembering that to stand in presence of the wiles of the devil, as we are called to do now, is a harder thing than before his power already broken for us.

So it turns out here. We have seen that, when the full strength of the enemy presented itself after Jordan was crossed, Jehovah gave His people the most magnificent victory that this book affords. Alas, that it should be so! that the first occasion should be brighter than the last! Ought it so to be? It was far otherwise with Jesus. His way was a shining one; but the brightest of all was the light that shone forth

when it seemed to go out in death, only to rise again, to be enjoyed now by faith, then to be displayed in the kingdom and throughout eternity.

In this case we find Israel more than checked. There had been a severe repulse from Satan's power, and this because the people ventured to act without the guidance and protection of Jehovah. Having already proved the Lord's presence with them, they did what we are apt to do. They assumed that Jehovah must follow them, instead of their waiting on and following Him. It was human inference, and this is never safe in divine things. They took for granted that, Jehovah having brought them into that land, there was nothing for them but to go forward. What was that? A forgetfulness of the enemy and themselves? More than that — a forgetfulness of God. Would it become men of faith to do without the Lord in the wilderness, not to speak of contending against the enemy in Canaan? Certainly not, if our souls had the sense of having to do with One that loves us; with One without whom we are nothing; with One who! having been glorified, has called us and saved us for the purpose of being glorified in us. Absolutely do we need Him; but besides it is our heart's earnest desire, though we are apt sometimes to forget it.

It was so with Israel, and even Joshua, upon this occasion. After having been victorious at Jericho, one can well understand the sad mistake in the matter of Ai. But was the profit now lost when, by the intervention of the Lord's gracious power, the mischief was retrieved? The Lord had put Israel in their proper place, disciplined them, broken down confidence in their own power. He had made them feel that there was nothing for Israel but to be subject to Him. They must not think, like the Gentiles, that it is a question of marshalling strength against strength. Such thoughts leave out God, and are utterly unbecoming to those who are called to walk in the consciousness of His presence.

This was a most wholesome lesson. But there was more to learn; and now they must be tried after a new sort. "It came to pass when all the kings that were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard thereof; that they gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord." In all probability these tribes were encouraged by the check before Ai. The fall of Jericho had struck them with dismay; but they learnt through what took place at Ai that Israel were not necessarily invincible. So far they were right. They had learnt that Israel might be beaten, and disgracefully beaten. They had learnt that a much smaller force sufficed there to arrest that wonderful host of Israel, which before had filled them with consternation, and made their hearts melt at the very thought of their approach. They seem, however, to have consulted together, and judged that with a union of their forces the people whom Ai had stayed for awhile might be defeated. Even that little town, with its feeble resources, had contrived unaided to delay the advance of Israel, and was only afterwards, when too confident and off their guard, taken by stratagem.

Evidently the Canaanites had no notion of the lesson God was teaching His people. Nor need we wonder; for the people of God themselves had not learnt it thoroughly. They had profited, yet it had not so convinced their souls of the need of God's guidance, the one thing which ensured victory, but that now, in presence of all this muster of nations against them — Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, Canaanites, and so on, when the inhabitants of Gibeon came forward and offered an alliance with them, this seemed to many a desirable and welcome aid. Israel then had some friends who would succour them against the enemy. It is true that a certain uneasiness was felt. "They went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country." This naturally threw the children of Israel and Joshua off their guard. They knew perfectly — and it is important to see how well understood it was that God had called His people to no peace with the Canaanites — that

they were a doomed nation. It is hundreds of years before God had given that land to Abraham. The Canaanites were then in the land, but they had gone on undisturbed for centuries, and until lately had allowed themselves to think their settlement there not so dangerous. But, when the passage of the Red Sea was heard of, terror struck their hearts. Then when the people, after their long pause in the wilderness, crossed the Jordan, fresh pangs warned them of approaching destruction if they defied the God of Israel. No doubt they might have fled. It was open to them to leave Canaan. What title could they pretend to seize the land of God? Had God no sovereignty? Is He the only one who possesses in this world no right? What a thought of God prevails in this world!

But there is more to consider. We may have noticed, and it is important to bear it in mind, that it was under the fullest title on God's part that the Jordan was crossed. His was the ark of "the Lord of all the earth." He would not abate His claims; He would not deny His rights. It was on this very ground, and with that banner as it were, that they entered the Holy Land. It was at the peril therefore of any who, knowing that God destined that land (and it was well known) for Israel, and who, having the warning voice of all that had befallen Pharaoh, and Amalek, and Og, and Sihon, and Midian, still dared to brave His host. Assuredly then they must take the consequences.

But the Gibeonites set to work after their fashion. If the mass of the nations trusted to force, the Gibeonites betook themselves to crafty counsel. There we may see typified the wiles of the devil. This represents some of them at least. The epistle to the Ephesians gives us divine authority for the solemn fact, that we need the whole armour of God in order to resist the two things — the power of Satan on the one hand, and the wiles of the devil on the other, and this with pointed reference to this very book of Joshua. Chapter 6 teaches us in contrast with Israel that, as they wrestled with flesh and blood, we, on the other hand, have to contend with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

Thus the nature of the case comes before us very plainly. The Gibeonites denote those that are energized with Satan's craft to deceive the people of God into a false step, and how far this succeeded we have now to learn.

"They went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country. Now therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us." To my mind this is painfully instructive. It was not Joshua that suspected the trick, nor yet the elders or princes of the congregation, but the men of Israel. How often simplicity is right where the best wisdom fails: God makes us feel the need of Himself. And if this was true of Israel, it is still more needful in the church of God. We cannot be independent of a single member of the body of Christ; where the simple-minded man has a suspicion roused that is given of God, it were well that the wise should heed what the Lord would use to bring all to a right conclusion. But it was not heeded at this time. It is not often, and it seems not natural, that men accustomed to guide and rule should listen to those who are used to obey and follow. But in divine things those who despise the least must pay the penalty; and so it certainly was now.

"The men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you?" Feeling, no doubt, that it was dangerous to talk more on so delicate a subject, they said, "We are thy servants." This again seemed fair-spoken; but when Joshua put the question, "Who are you, and from whence come ye?" they said unto him, "From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of Jehovah thy God." Here the unscrupulous deceit of the enemy comes out thoroughly. It was extraordinary to hear from the lips of a Canaanite the confession of the name of Jehovah; and this they knew well would tell more particularly with such an one as Joshua. He who most values the name of Jehovah would be apt to welcome it most where he least expected it.

Accordingly, this weighed powerfully with him, when they added, "We have heard the fame of him and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you, but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy. And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of God."

The bait had taken, the mischief was done, and its effects wrought long. The men of Israel, who were not without fears at the beginning, allowed themselves to be ensnared. If Joshua led, we must not wonder that the rest followed. They "took of their victuals" — the sign of fellowship in its measure — "they took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of Jehovah."

The enemy had defeated Israel. It was a fatal act, though the consequences did not yet appear. How much may be involved in what might be called the simple act of taking victuals! So another day, when it is rather the converse of this, we find in the New Testament. Thus to Paul's mind, who ordinarily made so light of meats or herbs, the truth of the gospel might be staked on eating or not eating I do not even speak of the Lord's Supper, but of a common meal, when it was a question between the Jew and the Gentile, and this tried before no less a person than the great apostle of the circumcision. For a time was Barnabas carried away, and Peter too, by the old traditional feeling of the Jew. The good man and the fearless withdrew from the uncircumcision, ashamed or afraid of thwarting the feelings of the brethren at Jerusalem. Thus Satan gained a great point for the moment; but there was one at hand to vindicate grace promptly. Thank God, it was not yet that Satan had drawn away the whole church, or even those that best represented it. If there were together Peter and Barnabas, there was a Paul who resists, and Paul promptly decides, at cost (you may be assured) of every feeling. On the other side stood the man who had once shown him generous love, on the other side Peter, chief among the twelve, honoured of God most signally among Jews and Samaritans, and even Gentiles (Acts 2-10), most to be honoured of man therefore, and very justly so.

But who is to be honoured if the Lord is to be put to shame in His grace? And so it was that Paul rose up in the might of his faith and in the simplicity of his jealous vindication of the truth of the gospel; for this was the question, this was what he saw involved in it. Who would have seen it but himself? But so it was; for there, and on that very occasion, the whole point of the gospel would have been surrendered, if Paul had consented to withdraw like the rest from the uncircumcision. Thank God, Satan did not succeed altogether in his wiles, though he did to a considerable extent.

But here it was God who was not consulted; and it is a more serious thing, beloved brethren, when it is not merely the men of Israel, but the elders, the princes, the chiefs of the congregation, yea, Joshua himself who thus left Him out of a matter which He only knew. And so it was on this occasion. They "asked not counsel at the mouth of Jehovah. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live, and the princes of the congregation sware unto them." There they bound themselves by the name of Jehovah, and it is a very striking thing for us also to see that at this time there was no trifling with the honour of that name. They felt that they had been beguiled. This was true; but they did not therefore consider that it was open to them to break the oath of Jehovah because they had been deceived into it. We too must take care how, where we have committed ourselves to that which is wrong, we lightly deal with that name. No; the thing was done: it could not be undone. They could have asked counsel of the Lord again; we are not told that they did so. They had made a double

error: they entered into it without the Lord, and when the thing was done, we do not find that they spread the difficulty before Him. Thus it is most manifest the enemy gained an immense advantage over the host of Jehovah on that day.

And may we be watchful in our day, beloved; for "these things are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." Nor is there a more important thing in difficulty, trial, or anything that may involve the feelings, and perhaps drag us into practical obligations, than that, before we venture on an opinion, before we take a measure, before we allow ourselves to be engrossed on this side or that, we should ask counsel of the Lord. This would spare us from many a sorrow, and it would hinder much shame and defeat before our enemies, and more particularly, I must say, in men that have wisdom, that are accustomed to guide; for there are few things harder than for such to retrace their steps, and the more so, the higher the character, the greater the experience, in the ways of God. If Satan gains such an advantage, the difficulty is enormous. We have only to apply it to ourselves. It is very easy to speak about what another should do; but let us only consider for a moment it to be publicly our case. It is easy to say what ought to be, and there is no doubt of it; but those who in any measure approach to it, and know the seriousness of such a position, cannot ignore, whatever others may theorise, that this mischief is incalculable. Therefore let us pray for one another; let us pray for those that most of all need counsel from God, that they may be ever kept from hasty words and measures either for themselves or for others, especially where the name of the Lord is involved with the adversary.

This then is, as I judge, the grave teaching that is brought before us in the account of the men of Gibeon. It is true that God permitted that they should bear a certain stamp of degradation in consequence. They were enslaved as the only course left open righteously. There was wisdom given so far to those who led the host of the Lord that the Gibeonites should be hewers of wood and drawers of water. After the treaty it would have been fresh sin, a crime, to have put them to death. The name of the Lord had been solemnly passed, and that can never be trilled with; but on the other hand, the Gibeonites were reduced to the most menial services for the sanctuary of Jehovah. Thus it was made plain that nothing preserved them but His name. Hence they were attached to the sanctuary, but this with the brand of slavery on them.

Nevertheless the wrong in the matter of the Gibeonites was of the most serious kind. It was not even like what had occurred before, where they sustained a temporary defeat, for there God looked to and brought them out of their humiliation; but here was a permanent difficulty that rose up witheringly for Israel at a later day, as we find elsewhere in Scripture. So grave and injurious were the consequences of the wrong step now taken through want of seeking the counsel of Jehovah.

In the next chapter (Joshua 10) we find the threatened coalition of the Canaanite nations consummated, not checked, by what had just taken place, and directed against Gibeon. "Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty." Accordingly the king of Jerusalem turns to the kings of Hebron, and Jarmuth, and Lachish, and Eglon, saying, "Come up unto me and help me, that we may smite Gibeon." This is the shape that it takes. Gibeon becomes an object of attack; but Jehovah accomplishes His designs. This is a great and gracious consolation. There is never ground to distrust the Lord, no matter what the circumstances may be. We may have been foolish, hasty, and drawn into a snare, but we are never justified in distrusting Him. When we justify Him, which in such cases necessarily supposes our

taking the fault to ourselves, there is a moral victory gained over our souls; and victory over self is the direct road to victory over Satan.

So it was on this occasion. The Canaanites joined together: "The men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us; for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. So Joshua ascended from Gilgal;" that is, from the place where circumcision took place. Such was the earliest result of peace with Gibeon. Joshua had to help them, not they Israel, as was expected. As this was never repeated, it is a fair question suggested by the Book of Joshua, what we are to gather from Israel's constant return to encamp there. We have seen the force of circumcision to be the judgment of our fallen nature in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, once done, cannot in itself be repeated. But if so, what is the force of Gilgal always recurring? Why was the camp pitched there rather than anywhere else? We might have supposed that the camp would be naturally pushed forward. The victories of Israel gained, why do they always take the trouble of going back to that point? Why there rather than anywhere else in the land? The reason is most important, and it is this, that, founded upon the fact that the old man has been judged in the cross, we are always to rest as it were on that fact, and always to dwell upon what has been done there.

In short; then, it will have been seen that practical mortification is the answer to Gilgal, as the judgment of the flesh is the answer to circumcision. Thus the constant encamping in Gilgal is the continual recurrence to mortify self before God. Self-mortification would be useless unless the judgment had taken place in the cross of Christ. So far from being from God without the cross, it could only puff up the flesh. A man without Christ crucified as the expression of his own total ruin, judgment, and means of deliverance by grace, always thinks himself so much the better for his efforts in this way. There is no more insidious snare sometimes than even a man confessing a fault; he really seems greater in his own eyes when he has done so than before. He arrogates a certain credit of lowliness to himself because he has owned himself wrong. Now it is plain that the reason of that is, because the cross of Christ is so little, self so great, in his eyes. There then the importance of the encamping at Gilgal is felt, because Gilgal is not merely a man striving to mortify himself, but self-mortified on the ground of what God has done in Christ our Lord. This only is of grace, and hence by faith; that is something humiliating in appearance, but exalting self because it is self-occupation, not God's judgment in the cross.

There is another thing to be observed. It is an important thing that we should, according to the language of this book, encamp at Gilgal. I have not the slightest sympathy with one who says that it is enough for him to find all his nature already judged in Christ. Yes, my brother; but what about returning to encamp at Gilgal? What about your mortifying yourself? Remember this always; for one is just as true as the other, though no doubt God's great act of judgment in the cross takes due precedence as the ground of our habitual self-judgment. It is granted cordially that our mortifying self is nothing without the work of grace in the Lord Jesus; but when we have known it, are we to allow the thought that we are not to judge ourselves? that we are not to be ashamed of our inconsistency with the cross and with the glory of Christ? that we are not to use both as the best of reasons for not sparing ourselves?

Of course nature at once rises to argue stoutly, and defend itself if it can, for the last thing a man fairly and fully gives up is himself. But the moment the heart turns to Christ, and considers that all my blessedness is bound up with the solemn truth that all flesh has been made nothing of, and a new man brought in, and that God has done both in One who, having no evil, nevertheless suffered all for it, there only is the soul brought back to its true starting-point. When we fail in our souls to judge

ourselves, God sends some painful circumstances to help us. Were we always walking in the power of divine truth before God, and judging ourselves, we should not come into so many sorrows of our making, nor require so much chastening from our Father. But supposing we fail in self-judgment, God is faithful; He takes good care of us, and makes us feel what cuts us every now and then, just because we have not returned, as it were, to the camp at Gilgal.

We have been going forward, desirous, it may be, to add victory to victory, or perhaps settling down without identifying ourselves as we should with God's people and testimony and conflicts as a whole. For I am not now supposing our rest on the other side of Jordan; still less do I put the case of going back into Egypt; but it is easy in Canaan to forget the need of returning to Gilgal, yet there is Gilgal, and we need it in the scene of our blessing. Not only was Christ crucified for me, but I am crucified with Him. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" and therefore, if we fail to walk consistently with the cross, snares from the enemy, and from God grief and bitter humiliation, come to us, it may be, exactly where we are most sensitive. He will have us back to Gilgal. Thus I think it is not hard to see the practical moment of the type. It is not only that Gilgal saw Israel circumcised. There it was done; but there is also the keeping up of the place of circumcision as being the only proper place for the host of Jehovah to encamp in. They must always start from Gilgal, and always return there.

"So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Fear them not." Why should they? yea, why should they not? "Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. And Jehovah discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that Jehovah cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died; they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."

"Then spake Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel." How truly the intervention of that day is all felt to be Jehovah's doing! He uses His people, and it was a gracious thing in a certain sense that He should; for He could now, as at the Red Sea, have done all without them; but He would employ the people of God according to the dispensation. Thank God, we have a better calling than this, even an heavenly; but still, in its own place it is short-sighted and irreverent folly to overlook the honour of being employed in doing the then work of the Lord — clearing the land of what was an ulcer and plague-spot, not merely for that locality, but for the whole earth; and such the Canaanites were. If there was to be a people of God at all, what other way was open than sweeping the land clean from the world-polluting Canaanites? And so Jehovah then "delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel."

But mark the beauty of the truth. It was *to Jehovah* Joshua spoke, not to the creature, for Him only did he honour. How admirably clear of all creature worship even when creation was to be used marvellously! "And he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." A memorable day it was in every point of view — the cavil no doubt of the infidel, but the joy of every believer. I grant you that the men of science have their difficulties, as they usually have in what is above them; and I am afraid that we shall not be able to help them much. The truth is that the main, yea, only thing which lifts out of every difficulty, is confidence in God and in His word. Let us not essay to measure God by difficulties, but measure difficulties by God. Alas! it

is the last thing that man thinks of doing.

Another thing not a little remarkable is that on this occasion Joshua addresses not merely the sun (a bold enough thing to do, to bid the sun stand still), but the moon also. It was not that the moon could give any appreciable increase of light when the sun thus ruled the prolonged day. There must therefore have been some other and worthy motive why the moon should be joined along with the sun in Joshua's command, if, as I have not the slightest doubt, Joshua was guided by God in so singular an appeal to the sun and moon, when divine power was exerted to arrest the apparent course of the sun. We all know, of course, that it is the earth that moves; but Scripture does not speak in the technical language of science, which not only would have been unintelligible to those for whom it was intended, but unnatural in the ordinary language of the greatest philosophers. Sir Isaac Newton talked about the sun's rising and setting just as much as the simplest countryman, and quite right. The man who does otherwise has no common sense. Here then Joshua employed so far the only language proper to his purpose. But this does not explain his call to the moon. Not only was no knowledge then possessed by Jews or Gentiles, but one may doubt whether our men of science would have thought of it even now: at any rate one has never heard it from them. Yet, if there had not been an action of the power of God with regard to the moon as well as the sun, the whole course of nature must have been deranged. How could Joshua, or any Jew who wrote Scripture, have known this? There was no astronomic science for two thousand years afterwards adequate to put the two things together; and mere observation of phenomena would certainly have been content with the light of the sun alone. But so it was. He whose power wrought in answer to the call guided his voice and the pen of the writer of the book. If there could have been an interference with the sun without the moon; if the moon's course had not been arrested as well as the earth's, so as to give this appearance to the sun, there would have been confusion in the system. It seems to me therefore that, so far from the sentence affording a just ground of cavil against God's word, it is none of the least striking instances of a wisdom and power incomparably above science. So faith will always find in Scripture.

But there is one remark more to be made. Whenever you hear men talking about science against Scripture, fear them not. There is not a man of them that will stand before you if you only cleave to the word of God. Do not dispute with them: there is no moral profit, in it, and seldom anything of value to be gained by it: on the contrary, one may have the spirit ruffled if we do not try others by it. But God's word is sharper than any two-edged sword, and can only be wielded aright by the Holy Ghost. And God will be with you if you trust in the perfectness of His word, and will deign to guide you if dependent on Him. Look the adversaries full in the face, and hear all they have to say to you; but confront them only with the written word of God. Cleave to the word in simplicity, and you will find that the difficulties urged against revelation are almost all due to wresting a passage out of its context. When they take this passage, they try to ridicule the voice of man telling the sun to stand still; whereas the moral truth is strikingly grand and beautiful. These scoffers never think of his including the moon in his command, still less of its force, as already hinted.

I merely use the instance that comes before us in this passage; but you will find that the principle applies to every part of the word of God. Read it as a believer; read it not as one that doubts or that distrusts God; for you have known it, you have fed upon it, you have lived upon it, you have been blessed by it, you have been cheered in every sorrow by it, you have been brought into peace and joy by it, you have been delivered from all your fears by it, you have been set free from follies and sins by it, you have gazed on the glory of God in the face of Jesus by it. All this and more you have enjoyed thereby, and you have thus learnt by it, what science never teaches, because it never knows, the reality of God's grace and love in Christ; yea, you thus know God Himself. Am I not then entitled to say,

beloved brethren, confide in that word in the smallest detail, in every difficulty, whatever arises? Take it, looking up to God, and He will be with you in all your need.

But what is the main purport of the wonder of that day? For there surely is no miracle without a divine or moral reason attached to it. I doubt that there is a mere display of power in the Bible. And here let me add a needed observation on the usual notion of a miracle. Men constantly lay it down that it means a suspension of the laws of nature. This is really defective and misleading. The laws of nature are never suspended as a rule; but God withdraws from the action of those laws either a thing or a person as to whom He wishes to show His special interest. For instance, to give an application of this by examples taken anywhere from the word of God, when Peter was sustained upon the water, or when the iron was caused to swim, the laws of nature were not really suspended; they went on all the same. Everywhere else iron sunk, and had any other ventured to follow Peter, he must have failed to walk on the water. Thus it was no question at all of suspending the laws of nature. But Peter, by the direct power of God, was sustained, spite of those general laws. That is, he was exempted from their application; but the laws themselves were not suspended. Just so in the case of one raised from the dead before the day of Jehovah. There is no change in the reign of death as a law; but unequivocally the power of God interferes for the particular person that is exempted from the operation of those laws — nothing more; so that it is all a mistake to speak of the suspension of the laws themselves. This observation will be found to be of some use in meeting not a little sophistry that prevails on the subject.

But to what end was it that God interposed on this occasion? Why this singular intervention? It was the most wonderful sign of a manifest kind up to that moment of the direct interest of a God, who was not only the God of Israel, but evidently the Lord of the heavens as well as of all the earth; and this was exhibited on that day particularly for man here below, but more especially in behalf of Israel. And what makes it so much the more surprising was this: it was not wrought when Israel had walked without mistake. Grace was much more apparent than when they were crossing the Jordan. It was in an hour of need, after they had erred and been defeated before the little city of Ai; and it was done after they had been thoroughly deceived by the great city of Gibeon. It was evident therefore that the people of God had no great might or depth of wisdom to boast of. They had been more than once at fault, but only so because they had not sought counsel of Jehovah. There is no enemy that can stand, and there is no defeat that can succeed, where the people of God wait in dependence on the Lord. But it is better to be defeated when we depart from the Lord, than it would be under such circumstances to gain a victory. If there could be victories gained at the expense of dependence on the Lord, I do not know that it is possible to conceive a greater snare. No, beloved brethren; far, far better to be broken, to suffer and be put in the dust, than to be allowed to triumph where we are really far from God and without His direction. The moral import of the wonder is thus plain; and God's part in it appears to me most wholesome, needed, and weighty instruction for the children of God now.

We are approaching the end of the chief lessons of the book as to the wars of Jehovah. The latter part of Joshua does not so much consist in that. The middle and end of this chapter (Joshua 10) lets us see the dealing of Joshua with the kings that were taken in the land, by which Joshua caused it to be felt that the victory was in Jehovah's name, who would completely put down the power of the world before His people. They might combine; but they must be broken if Israel looked to Jehovah. Stronghold, city, army, people, all fell before Joshua. "And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Jehovah God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal."

In the next chapter (Joshua 11) are some further matters on which a few words may suffice before noticing the latter portion of the book. "And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had

heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west, and to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time — "How gracious is Jehovah! He speaks to Joshua now, not merely Joshua to Him, and we have both. Do not overlook either; we have both. It is not only that we need to pray, but we have His word. And we need both.

Let none in his ignorance slight the word, nor think that, because His word is written, it is not Himself speaking to us. What difference does the writing make? What there is is in our favour. If we could have the Lord speaking directly to us, without His written word in a permanent shape, would we be gainers? No; but losers, unquestionably. And therefore it is that our Lord (in John 5) puts the Scripture, as a weapon to use with others, above His own words: this we all know familiarly. The Old Testament may not by any means enter so profoundly into the truth as the words of the Lord and His apostles; but the Old is just as much God's word as the New; one writer is just as much inspired as the other; still, though God made the heavens and the earth, it will be allowed, I presume, there is a great difference between them. And so it is, that though the words of the Old Testament are as truly divine as those of the New, it has pleased God in His later revelation to bring out deeper and more glorious things according to His own perfection, as declared in His Son, not merely in the measure in which man could bear it, as He was doing of old. Still the Lord Jesus, spite of all that difference, tells the incredulous, as must be well known to most of you, that He did not expect His words to convince where the Scripture was slighted. If they did not believe Moses' writings, how should they believe His words? Such is the way in which He treats unbelief as to Scripture.

I therefore use this fact the more readily, because many a simple soul might think what a delightful thing it would be to have the Lord saying now, "Go up tomorrow, and I will give thee the victory." But, beloved brethren, do not forget that although it may not come home to feeling, to nature, in so direct and explicit a manner, the possession of God's word, which we can weigh and consider, and pray over, and take up again and again before God, not only gives His mind and will with assurance, but with permanency to those who are apt, through carelessness, to lose its force. Who does not know that a word or letter may make a most important difference, easily let slip by negligent eyes and thoughts? God has provided against this in His written word. Whether it be prayer, in which they are encouraged to ask counsel of the Lord, or whether it be the Lord Himself anticipating their wants, both are true; but they are not true of them merely, but of us, and, as we have seen, even more fully and definitely true of us. Let us not complain, as if we had not a God to count on to direct us by His word; and the less as He has given us His Spirit whereby we search all things, even His depths.

Here then He says to Joshua, "Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt trounce their horses, and burn their chariots with fire. So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them. And Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining. And Joshua did unto them as Jehovah bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire."

It is well known that not a few have found a difficulty in these extreme measures of Joshua, as expressing Jehovah's will. The exterminating severity with which the work was pursued in the land of Canaan shocks them. But they forget, or do not know, that these Canaanites were the most daring enemies against God, the most openly depraved and shameless on the face of the earth; not only morally the grossest, but this bound up most of all with idolatry of the most corrupt kind. They were the chief originators and patrons of unnatural crimes, which were as common as possible in their midst. If then God meant that the seed of Abraham should be His people in the land, how possibly could those who must be in evils moral and idolatrous the most infectious to Israel be tolerated there? I repeat, they might have fled elsewhere if they did not repent of their iniquities. It had been long revealed that God meant to bring His people to Canaan. It was therefore their rebellious unbelief if they did not look for it; for God had long ago said it plainly. But then, as we are told in the book of Genesis, the cup of the Amorites was not yet full. If God was waiting for His people to go through the necessary discipline in bondage and sorrow, all that time Satan was working up the Amorites to their abominable excesses of evil. The cup of their iniquity was full when the divine dealings with Israel were sufficiently ripe for bringing His people in.

Again, it is evident that God has been pleased at various times to judge the world, as notably and on the largest scale at the time of the flood. If it was consistent with God Himself to deal with a corrupt earth, then surely He was equally free to employ the Israelites later as His instruments for the land He gave them.

Besides, it was accustoming Israel to feel, by that flagrant example, what iniquity, corruption, idolatry, rebellion were against God. Their having to do it was of moral importance for their souls and ways: sharp discipline; but what of the cause? If God so judged the Canaanites, would He spare Israel? There was the reflection it was intended to produce on their consciences. And God, as we know, was far more unhesitating in dealing with His own people when they yielded to any of these enormities. In point of fact their own ruin was largely due to the fact that the children of Israel failed to carry out the will of Jehovah as to the Canaanites, perhaps yielding to sloth and cowardice, to amiability in some cases, though, I have no doubt, far more frequently because they were not really up to His mind in the matter. Thus they spared themselves far more than they spared the Amorites, and God was forgotten by them.

The moment you know the will of the Lord, leave all appearances with Him, who will take care of you. Do not you be afraid to do His will. You may be charged with harshness; you may be accounted as having no love. Do not you trouble about that; go on with what you know to be the will of God. He will vindicate your doing His will, though it may not be all at once. Faith has to be tested, and patience must have its perfect work.

Thus we find the Lord strengthening Joshua at this time to do His will to a very considerable extent. The chief cities were dealt with, and every creature that breathed was destroyed. "As Jehovah commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that Jehovah commanded Moses. So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them. Joshua made war a long time with all those kings."

They may plot and fight awhile, but cannot hinder; for they have to do with Jehovah, and not with Joshua only. "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the

inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle." Not that Jehovah made them that they should be wicked, but it was of Jehovah that they, being wicked and indifferent to His will and warnings, should not now believe their danger — that they should be blindly daring at last to their own destruction. God never makes a person a sinner; but when men are wicked, and are following their own lusts or passions, He may close and seal their eyes to the folly of what they are doing and the danger they are incurring, and till their extermination becomes a moral necessity. But these races deserved to be an example before the Israelites arrived; it was no hardship, boldly as they disputed God's will, if they suffered in this new way. They deserved to suffer before they were led in this path in which they were devoted to death.

Justly therefore, "It was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza) in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Jehovah said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war." So it will be in the day that is coming: there will be war and resistance then, but war in order to rest — the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

Then in Joshua 12 we have a catalogue of the various kings that they conquered, with their kingdoms, all given in detail. It is a retrospective glance at the victories which the people had won, and the natural close of this portion of the book. The rest of the book does not consist of the wars of Jehovah so much as of the details of plotting the several portions of the land which had been already gained. They had defeated some of the Canaanites, but still there were many of the accursed that were not yet dispossessed of the inheritance given by God to Israel. On this I do not dwell, but merely refer to it. The important principles which lie beyond can only be brought out now in a cursory view.

Thus Joshua 12 is a summary of the conquests of Israel: first, those of Moses on the other side of Jordan (verses 2-6); next, those of Joshua on this side (verses 7-24). It will be noticed, however, that the kings are made prominent here. These were smitten if their people were not quite subdued, and their possessions became Israel's; nevertheless we must distinguish between title and actual entrance on it, as we shall see in the half of the book that follows.

To the believer it ought not to be a question whether Israel was justified in the conquest of Canaan; and the endeavours to soften the matter, whether by Jews or by Christians, are vain. It was righteous vengeance on earth, not wrath from heaven, still less grace reigning by righteousness as in the gospel. It is not well founded, if Scripture be our authority, that Joshua proposed flight or peace, with war as the unwilling alternative; nor is there any ground to suppose that the Canaanites would have been spared in case of surrender, whatever the mercy to individuals exceptionally. The Canaanites were devoted, in the most stringent and solemn manner, to utter destruction. It was not vengeance on the part of Israel, but of God, who was pleased to make His people executors of judgment.

On the other hand, Deut. 32: 8 should be weighed: "when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." God might have justly claimed all the world, but He was pleased to claim only the land of Canaan for the seed of Abraham. This is no Jewish fable, but the revealed will of God; and from the very call of Abraham it was certain that a land was to be distinctly given him — a

land soon understood to be Canaan, however long the chosen people might have to wait for it. (See Gen. 15) Scripture therefore is very far from being silent on God's resolve to take that land for Israel, though it was a part of His ways that their fathers should be pilgrims and strangers, while the Canaanite was then in the land.

Along with this would coalesce the moral necessity of judgment on its actual inhabitants. (Gen. 15: 16) Natural right of course it was not, but a divine gift, to be made good by the extermination of the enemy. But for this very reason it is absurd to argue that the God of the Old Testament is the same in character and working as the God of the New, unless earthly righteousness be the same as heavenly grace. It is to play into the hands of infidels if theology countenance such an illusion as the denial of the difference of dispensation, on the pretence that the difference is in form only with an essential agreement: only we must bear in mind that the former is excellent in its season, the latter perfect for eternity.

Undoubtedly, ever since sin came into the world, God is its righteous judge and avenger. In this very land the destruction of the cities of the plain was a standing witness to it; so did Israel prove in the wilderness, as well as in the land, and this up to the destruction of their city by the Romans. But New Testament time is not necessarily New Testament principle; nor is providential government in the world to be confounded with the principles of Christianity; nor temporal judgment with that of the secrets of the heart, the issue of which is the lake of fire.

But every Christian must feel that Jehovah was thoroughly justified in visiting their iniquity upon the Canaanites; for indeed the land, according to the energetic language of Scripture, could not but vomit out its inhabitants because of their abominable idolatries and their unnatural crimes almost unspeakable. They had many warnings also, both in the judgment executed on the most notorious in the land at the beginning of God's ways with the fathers, and then again at the end when the children were brought out of Egypt and through the wilderness, with such wonders as did speak to their consciences, however they might brave all at the last.

But it is ridiculous to contend that the practical principle of the gospel, suffering for righteousness and for Christ's sake, is not in direct contrast with the calling of the Israelite, the appointed executor of divine wrath. The Christian ought to know better than either to question the propriety of the past, or to assimilate it with the present. He ought to know also that the Lord Jesus is Himself coming again, and this not more surely in grace to take us to be with Himself in the Father's house, than to appear in judgment of His adversaries, let them be Jews or heathen, or falsely professing Christians; for God is about to judge the habitable world by that man whom He has raised from the dead, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is the confusion of the two distinct principles which does the mischief: for Christians in making them worldly-minded; for unbelievers in affording material for their unseemly scoffs. He who holds both without confusion alone adheres to the truth intelligently, and affords no countenance to the infidel, while he maintains his own proper separation from the world unto Christ. There are judgments yet to be inflicted, but upon apostate Christendom, and even apostate Judaism. Never will the church have in her hand a two-edged sword to execute vengeance on the heathen. This is an honour reserved for all Jewish saints (Psalm 149: 6), not for Christians. We shall be at that time glorified. The only vengeance which the church can rightly execute is of a spiritual kind. (2 Cor. 7; Eph. 6) It is the sheerest confusion to pervert such intimations as these into the work of the gospel, and to interpret them of destroying men's condition as heathen by the sword of the Spirit, and turning their antagonistic into a friendly position. God has made it as clear as light in His word that there is to be an outpouring,

first of providential judgments, ending with the ruin of Babylon, next of the Lord's own intervention in vengeance at the close of the present dispensation and the introduction of His reign of peace for a thousand years. But all this is as distinct from the ways of the gospel as from the state of things in eternity.

It is curious also to notice how modern Rabbinism approaches in this to modern theology. They do not hold the execution of divine vengeance in its plain and natural sense at the end of this age. They both soften down, the one for the Jew, the other for Christendom, the solemn threats of God into a sort of moral suasion — a conquest to be effected not by external violence, but by the exhibition of truth and righteousness putting to shame the adherents of falsehood and corruption. Alas! it is not only with sneering infidels we have to do, but with real but half-hearted and wholly unintelligent believers who have ceased to be, or even understand, a true witness in the church for Christ, rejected in the world, but glorified on high. Hence they court and value worldly influence themselves, instead of maintaining our true place as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, above the world through which we pass, and cast out by it, till we are caught up to meet the Lord, and He appears for its judgment.

In Joshua 13 Jehovah says to Joshua, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." He was jealous for His servant, and rouses him to the fulfilment of his commission. For the Israelites had been slothful; they were slow to act upon the full grant of Jehovah. They would have rested when they had acquired enough to sustain themselves; but not such is the mind of God for us any more than for them. He will have us care for the things of others, yea, for the things which are Jesus Christ's; for indeed all things are ours, and the more we make them our own in the power of the faith, the more is He glorified and the church blessed. For there is no better way to help on another saint than to win upon Satan and make progress ourselves.

Hence the land that remained is set out in detail: "All the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, from Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites: from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: and the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath. All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee. Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh." Thus Joshua is commanded to divide by lot even what was not yet wrested from the hands of the inhabitants. What an encouragement to advance without fear! Is not Jehovah worthy of trust? Nevertheless He will have His people to fight for Canaan; not for redemption from Egypt, but for their inheritance in the promised land — to fight as those who are dead and risen with Christ, blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Him. And most minutely does Jehovah point out the borders of what He was giving them, and the enemies who must be-dispossessed of their present hold, even as He deigns to mark out precisely what the two tribes and a half had already acquired under Moses, though it was short of the proper inheritance of His people.

We may note also how repeatedly, even in this chapter, attention is drawn to the tribe of Levi as without any such portion by the will of God. (Verses 14-33) To the Levites was given no inheritance in the land. The sacrifices of Jehovah God of Israel made by fire, yea, Jehovah Himself, was their inheritance, as He said unto them. The workmen of the Lord stood on a different footing from the rest of His people, and were called to special confidence in His provision for them and His word about

them. If they failed in this, could they wonder that their words had little power?

In Joshua 14 we find Eleazar and Joshua, with the heads and the fathers of the tribes, distributing the lands by lot in the land of Canaan. The first who comes before us is Caleb with the children of Judah, who reminds Joshua of what Jehovah had said unto Moses concerning both in Kadesh-barnea. According to his faith so was his strength now, though forty-five years were added to the forty; and in his confidence, still as simple-hearted as ever, he asks for the mountain to be given him of which Jehovah spoke in that day. "For thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be Jehovah will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as Jehovah said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance." Caleb is the striking witness to us of one who was strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, here for conflict (compare Eph. 6: 10-12), as before for patient endurance in the wilderness. (Col. 1: 12) Nor do the words, "if so be Jehovah will be with me," etc., imply the least doubt of His presence and succour in making God his hope, but a pious and becoming expression of his own distrust of self. Again, there was no covetousness in this, but confidence in the Lord, which made him the more value what He had promised. We cannot too much have our mind on the things above: to this Caleb's request answers for us. And this becomes the more evident, when we remember that the dreaded sons of Anak were there with their great fenced cities, in the face of which Caleb had to wrest it out of their hands, as, on the other hand, the city itself was afterwards assigned to the Levites. Caleb indeed was a lowly, or, rather, faithful man; and, though fearless, it was for peace he fought, not for love of war. "And the land had rest from war," says the Spirit at this point. Indeed it was the lack of faith that prolonged the need of fighting so long; otherwise the people had soon taken possession of what God gave them, and the enemy had vanished away before the people leaning on Him.

In chapter 15 we have not the tribe of Reuben, but that of the children of Judah's lot for themselves, a very considerable one indeed, independent of the special portion of Caleb, as traced in the last chapter, from the Dead Sea to the river of Egypt, to Jerusalem on the north, and the Mediterranean on the west. This, however, was modified by the introduction of Simeon afterwards, as we shall see. But here again Caleb is introduced, as he had a part among the children of Judah, with details of his generosity to his daughter Achsah, whom he gave to Othniel. Thus early does the lot of Jehovah give the first place to the royal tribe, according to divine purpose and the prediction of Jacob. Grace makes a difference.

In Joshua 16 we have the lot of the children of Joseph, that is, of Ephraim, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (compare Gen. 48 end). They receive, in consonance with the fruitfulness of their father, the centre of Canaan from Jordan to the Mediterranean. But here we find even greater failure than at the close of chapter 15. For as it is said, the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day, as was said of the Jebusites or inhabitants of Jerusalem. There was this great difference, however, that the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day, and serve under tribute. Josephus is wrong in his way of putting the case; for he says the Benjamites, to whom belonged Jerusalem, permitted its inhabitants to pay tribute, and that the rest of the tribes, imitating Benjamin, did the same. Scripture discriminates. The men of Judah could not drive out all, the men of Ephraim did not; and these latter turned their remissness into a source of gain.

So following up this naturally, in Joshua 17 we have a lot for Manasseh, the first-born son of Joseph, and once more the case of the daughters of Zelophehad among the rest. Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of their cities, but the Canaanites willed to dwell in that land. (Ver. 12) Had Manasseh looked to God the obstinacy of the Canaanites would have proved a slight defence. "And it came to pass, when the Israelites were waxing strong, they put the Canaanites to

tribute; but did not utterly drive them out." They suited their own convenience, without care for the word of the Lord. The unfaithful are apt to complain, as the children of Joseph did to Joshua, as we learn from verse 14: "Why hast thou given me one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as Jehovah hath blessed me hitherto?" Joshua answered them on their own ground. If a great people, why not get up to the wood, and cut down for themselves? On their rejoicing that the hill was not enough, and all the Canaanites of the valleys had chariots of iron, Joshua repeats his word to Ephraim and Manasseh: "Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only: but the mountain shall be thine." He does not swerve from nor add to his former decision; still less would he humour their vaunting pusillanimity or their sluggishness.

Joshua 18 shows us the whole congregation assembled together at Shiloh, and the tabernacle set up there. Now that five of the tribes had entered on their portions, seven remained to receive their inheritance. What a picture of lack of energy, in spite of the visible tokens of God's presence, to go forward against the Canaanites, according to His word, yea, command! The very fact that the land was subdued became a snare. It was not otherwise even with the apostles, not to speak of the church in apostolic days. "O faithless generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" said the Lord, aggrieved with their unbelief, not their mere weakness or the power of the adversary. He is superior to every need, to every demand; but what can, what must, be the result, if His own people avail themselves not of His presence and love and power?

His servant makes a fresh appeal, and takes measures suitable to the occasion. "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Jehovah God of your fathers hath given you? Give out from among you three men for each tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me. And they shall divide into seven parts; Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before Jehovah our God. But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of Jehovah is their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of Jehovah gave them." He would both rouse the people to feel what they ought to possess, and keep up before them in the way best adapted to their state that the whole disposing of the lot is of Jehovah. The separate position of those who served the sanctuary is carefully maintained: a striking testimony in the midst of the earthly people.

And so it was done. This Domesday-book was made according to their survey and description (ver. 8, 9): "And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before Jehovah: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions."

Benjamin's lot is next described, borders and land and cities, to the end of the chapter. (Verses 11-28)

The second lot came forth to Simeon; and this is described similarly in the beginning of Joshua 19: 1-8, with the added statement that it was out of the portion of Judah Simeon's inheritance was taken, the part of the former being too much for them: and therefore the latter had their portion within their part. (Ver. 9)

The third lot fell to the children of Zebulun, according to their families; their landmarks are laid down in verses 10-16.

In the fourth place comes Issachar's allotment, described in verses 17-23; in the fifth, Asher's, in verses 24-31; in the sixth, that of Naphtali, in verses 32-39; and in the seventh; Dan's, in verses 40-48.

Beautifully is it shown (ver. 49-50) that "when they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them." Nor is this all: "According to the word of Jehovah they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein." Self-seeking was not in Joshua more than in Moses. Each had his part in what was given to their leader — Jehovah's word, Joshua's petition, and Israel's gift: but not till they had ended their dividing of the land.

In Joshua 20 we have for the last time the cities of refuge, of which we heard repeatedly in the books of Moses; and my mind has no doubt that the introduction of their appointment here connects itself with the scope of Joshua. It is the shadow of God's provision for His people after they shall have lost the land of their inheritance through blood-guiltiness, unwittingly and without hatred as grace will make good account in the godly remnant by and by, when apostates and rebels perish in their sin. "And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled." It is at the end of the age that the return of the slayer takes place — at "the death of the high priest that shall be in those days." The dew returns, when Christ closes that intercessional priesthood which He is now carrying on within the veil for us. As long as He is now in heaven, pleading as the true "great priest" over the house of God, the manslayer abides outside his possession; but when it comes to an end, Israel, the "all Israel" of that day, will be restored as well as saved.

Joshua 21 gives the list of the forty-eight Levitical cities, with their suburbs, including the six cities of refuge just spoken of. "And Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And Jehovah gave them rest round about; according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; Jehovah delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which Jehovah had spoken, unto the house of Israel; all had come to pass." (Verses 43-45)

The two tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh are then called and blessed and sent away by Joshua in Joshua 22. On their return to their possessions beyond Jordan they built an altar by Jordan, "a great altar to see to." The report of this altar at once roused the whole congregation of the children of Israel, who gathered together at Shiloh. Before proceeding to war however, they sent Phinehas, and with him ten princes representing the other tribes, who taxed them with their trespass against the God of Israel in rebelling against Jehovah. As yet they realized the solidarity of Israel and the honour of Him who dwelt in their midst, and urged on their brethren's consciences the iniquity of Peor and the sin of Achan, offering them room on this side of Jordan, if their land were unclean. To this the two and a half tribes called the God of Israel to witness how far from iniquity or rebellion it was that they had built the altar, for it was with no thought of offering upon it in independence of God's altar, but lest their children should cease from fearing Jehovah: "A witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of Jehovah before him with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in Jehovah." This appeased the rising wrath of their brethren, who owned themselves delivered from the hand of Jehovah for the trespass they had dreaded. Whether it was not an invention of man — in divine things always dangerous, as being a substitute for faith in God

and His memorials — is another question.

In Joshua 23 Joshua calls for all Israel, their elders, heads, judges, and officers, and lays before them what Jehovah had done and would do for them if faithful, warning them against affinity or religious fellowship with the Canaanite: else Israel must perish — not their enemies — from off the good land He had given them.

The final charge of Joshua follows in Joshua 24, where we learn the striking fact, never told us before, that their fathers were idolaters, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, on the other side of the river (i.e. the Euphrates) when Jehovah took Abraham as the root of promise, and began that line whence they were born. His deliverance of the people from Egypt, care through the wilderness, and gift of the land, are next recounted, all of His grace; on which Joshua challenges them and their allegiance, to which the people answer, owning His mercy, and repudiating all other gods. But Joshua lets them know their insufficiency (ver. 19, 20) and danger, which draws out their resolve to serve Jehovah repeated again and again in various forms. A covenant was made that day, and Joshua wrote the words in the book of the law, and set up a great stone in witness, lest they should deny their God. Then the people departed, and Joshua died; but the people served all the days of the elders that prolonged their days after Joshua.

Joseph's bones too were buried in Shechem, in the ground bought by Jacob of the son of Hamor, the father of Shechem, naturally mentioned with the death of Joshua in mount Ephraim as well as that of Eleazar, Aaron's son, buried in a hill of Phinehas his son, which was given him in the same mountain. Joshua brought the people into the land, as Moses led them out of Egypt, in accordance with the faith of Joseph. But a greater than all will give a deeper meaning in His day.