



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

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Prayer

Lord, help me stick with the assignment You have given me for my life. I know that is where I am supposed to be—and I know that is what I am supposed to be doing. Forgive me for vacillating back and forth, in and out, backward and forward. I am asking You to help me become single-minded, concentrated, and focused in my determination never to move out of faith again. I want to live at the address of faith, for I know that is where I will please You the most. Holy Spirit, empower me to push aside every distraction of the devil and to remain fixed and focused on doing exactly what God has instructed me to do, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

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Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

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1 THEN JOB answered, 2 Even today is my complaint rebellious and bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. 3 Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat! 4 I would lay my cause before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. 5 I would learn what He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. 6 Would He plead against me with His great power? No, He would give heed to me. 7 There the righteous [one who is upright and in right standing with God] could reason with Him; so I should be acquitted by my Judge forever. 8 Behold, I go forward [and to the east], but He is not there; I go backward [and to the west], but I cannot perceive Him; 9 On the left hand [and to the north] where He works [I seek Him], but I cannot behold Him; He turns Himself to the right hand [and to the south], but I cannot see Him. 10 But He knows the way that I take [He has concern for it, appreciates, and pays attention to it]. When He has tried me, I shall come forth as refined gold [pure and luminous]. 11 My foot has held fast to His steps; His ways have I kept and not turned aside. 12 I have not gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed and treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. 13 But He is unchangeable, and who can turn Him? And what He wants to do, that He does. 14 For He performs [that which He has] planned for me, and of many such matters He is mindful. 15 Therefore am I troubled and terrified at His presence; when I consider, I am in dread and afraid of Him. 16 For God has made my heart faint, timid, and broken, and the Almighty has terrified me, 17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness [of these woes befell me], neither has He covered the thick darkness from my face.

Chapter 23

And so Job answers him and he says, Every day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning (Job 23:1-2).

Really, what's happened to me is even worse than I'm complaining. I'm not even really complaining a full measure for what I'm really feeling.

But oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his throne! (Job 23:3)

You tell me to find God and be at peace, but if I only knew where I could find Him.

Deep within the heart of every man there is a desire for God. There is a search for God. There is a quest for God. Dr. Henry Drummond in his book, *Natural and Supernatural*, said, "There is a within the very protoplasm of man those little tentacles that are reaching up for Father God."

"Oh, that I knew where I might find Him" is the cry on so many hearts. People who are seeking and searching for God. But so many times in our search for God, we're searching in the wrong places. Even as Job here in verse 8 and 9 says,

I go before me, I go forward, he's not there; backward, I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he's working, I cannot behold him: he hides himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him (Job 23:8-9):

"Oh, that I wish I could find God." He says in verse 6, "He wouldn't plead against me like you guys are. He would help me; He would strengthen me if I could just find him, I know that. But I look all around, I go forward, I go backward, go to the right and the left. I know He's there but I can't see Him. I can't see Him. I don't behold Him. I can't find God."

He's looking in the material things. Seeking to find God in a material form. You will never discover God or find God in the material forms. "God is a Spirit. They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And God is seeking such to worship Him.

Eliphaz earlier had said to Job, "Who by searching can find out God to perfection?" (Job 11:7) You can't. God does not exist at the end of an intellectual quest. It is interesting that so many people seek to apprehend God intellectually and it becomes a real stumbling block. But if you had to be some intellectual genius in order to find God, look at how many of us poor people would be eliminated. But because God loves all men, even a child can discover Him. While these brilliant professors and intellectuals go on saying, "Well, I'm an agnostic," a little child walks in the consciousness of God, singing of Him, talking of Him. "And out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise" (Matthew 21:16) "As Jesus took a child and set him in the midst of them and said, 'Unless you become as a little child, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 18:2-3). You see, that's a put down to our intellects. We like to think that through our intellect we can solve all problems; we can't. The enigma of God can never be solved through the intellect of man. God is discovered in the heart of a child, in the area of faith, but it's spiritual dimension. You've got to leave the material and take the step of faith into the spiritual dimension to really apprehend God. And in the understanding of God, your intellect has very little value, because God wants all men to understand Him. So He puts it down to our level where we can understand and know Him and walk with Him. How beautiful it is. So Job's cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, but I look all around." Job, look up. Look up.

Why is it that we're always looking around for God rather than looking up for God? It's because man has always sought to bring God down to his own level. They call, or they have what they call the anthropomorphic concept of God. That is, viewing God as a man. And this is extremely common because most of the time a man's god is really a projection of himself. Now you didn't know that you are as much in love with yourself as you really are. You hear a person say, "Oh, I hate myself." That's never true. They're just trying to draw attention to themselves. "I'm so terrible. I'm so awful." They just want you to say, "Oh, no you're not. You're wonderful." But we are very, very much in love with ourselves. You've heard the saying that the longer people live together, the more they look alike. You know what the psychologist's answer to that is? Actually, you're so much in love with yourself that when you are picking a mate that you usually find someone who looks like you and you marry them. And that's why the saying, "Oh, they've been living together so long, they even look alike." Well, you know, you just had foresight back a ways and you picked someone that looked like you.

If we would take a wide-angle photo of the congregation here tonight as you're sitting here and we'd have the thing blown up and put on the screen up here, who's the first one you would look for? Now, man then projects himself to immensity. "This is what I would be if I were God. This is what I would do if I were God. This is where I would live if I were God. This is how I would respond if I were God." And so his god becomes a projection of himself. He projects himself to sort of immensity and then he worships that. A projection of himself.

I oftentimes have people say, "I don't know why God allowed this to happen to me." What they are saying is, "If I were God, I surely wouldn't have made this mistake. If I were running things, I could have done it much wiser than that. I would have had a better plan. If only I were governing the universe, what a different world this would be." Well, that has to be the height of something.

"Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." Not in the intellect, not through the intellectual quest, not through the enlargement of yourself. God is found in Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen Me," Jesus said, "hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." Jesus said, "Come unto Me." And those who do have found God. From the little children to the college professor, we all have to come the same way. Setting aside our own intellectual genius and kneeling at the cross and saying, "Oh Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." And I find God.

Now Job, after speaking, "I cannot find Him." Here Job is capable of coming out with those classic statements. In the midst of his depression and agony and all, he just comes out with these jewels and then he jumps right back into the pit. It's like he comes out on the mountain for a moment and just bursts forth in glory and then jumps right back down in the hole. And so all of a sudden he comes out of the mountain and he said,

But he knoweth the way that I take (Job 23:10):

I can't find Him, I can't see Him, but He knows the way that I take.

and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold (Job 23:10).

Deep down underneath there is a strong faith that is keeping this man. Now he's having great difficulties because he can't understand his problem, but down underneath the faith is routed. The guy is unshakable, because down deep, deep, deep inside there are certain basic things: I know that God knows the way that I take, and when He has tried me I am going to come forth like gold. God has a purpose. I'm going to come out of it. I'm going to come out of it purified.

Perhaps Peter was thinking of Job when he wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you as though some strange thing has happened unto you" (I Peter 4:12). Knowing that the trial of your faith is more precious than gold though it perisheth when it is tried in the fire" (I Peter 1:7). Peter speaks of the refining process of God whereby the impurities are removed. And so Job is looking at all of this as really just a work of the removal of the impurities and, "When I come forth, I'm going to be like gold. I'm going to be refined by this process of God in my life."

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and have not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food (Job 23:11-12).

Now this is interesting because it indicates that, number one, way back at this time there was the written Word of God. Even in the time of Job who was perhaps a contemporary to Moses or lived earlier maybe. But even at that time, they had words that were esteemed to be the Word of God. "I esteemed His Word more than my necessary food."

How much value do you put on the Word of God? You see, there is the natural man, there is the spiritual man. Those that are born again are both, and that's where the rub comes in. The spirit is lusting against the flesh, the flesh against the spirit; these two are contrary. A warfare going on. Now, I see to it that my natural man is fed regularly and fed well. Now, I will admit that I do put some junk in him, but basically I seek to watch my diet. And that is not diet in the sense...that is, the food that I eat. I don't limit it, but I just watch. I like the whole grain breads. I like a balanced meal, things of this nature. I want to make sure that I put the proper fuel in this system so that it'll keep running well.

Now, though I am extremely careful of how I feed my natural man, it's amazing how careless I am in feeding the spiritual man. And it's amazing how much junk food people cram down the spiritual man. Diets that really cannot be healthy, but bring spiritual anemia. But not Job. He said, "I consider Thy Word more than my necessary food." It's more important for me to feed on the Word of God than it is to feed on steak and potatoes. It would be important if each of us had that same attitude towards the spiritual food in the spiritual man, that we would be interested in feeding the spiritual man. Now there is only one thing that really feeds the spiritual man, and that is this Word of God. This is food to the spiritual man. You need to feed on it. And Job said, "I've esteemed Your Word more than my necessary food." But now he jumps back down into his despair.

But he is in one mind, who can turn him? what his soul desires, that he does. For he performs the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider these things, I am afraid of him. For God has made my heart soft, and the Almighty troubles me: Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face (Job 23:13-17). (Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries, 1979-1986)

"Gilgal"; C. H. Mackintosh – Index; Joshua 5

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4) These few words furnish a title, distinct and unquestionable, for the Christian to range through the wide and magnificent field of Old Testament scripture, and gather therein instruction and comfort, according to the measure of his capacity, and the character or depth of his spiritual need. And, were any further warrant needed, we have it with equal clearness in the words of another inspired epistle: "Now all these things happened unto them (Israel) for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10: 11.

No doubt, in reading the Old Testament, as in reading the New, there is constant need of watchfulness; need of self-emptiness, of dependence upon the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, by whom all scripture has been indicted. The imagination must be checked, lest it lead us into crude notions and fanciful interpretations, which tend to no profit, but rather to the weakening of the power of scripture over the soul, and hindering our growth in the divine life.

Still, we must never lose sight of the divine charter made out for us, in Romans 15: 4 — never forget for a single moment, that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." It is in the strength of these words that we invite the reader to accompany us back to the opening of the Book of Joshua, that we may together contemplate the striking and instructive scenes presented there, and seek to gather up some of the precious "learning" there unfolded. If we mistake not, we shall learn some fine lessons on the banks of the Jordan, and find the air of Gilgal most healthful and bracing for the spiritual constitution.

We have all been accustomed to look at Jordan as the figure of death — the death of the believer — his leaving this world, and going to heaven. Doubtless, the reader has often read and heard these lines —

"Could we but stand where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, or death's cold flood,
Could fright us from the shore."

But all this line of thought, feeling, and experience, is very far below the mark of true Christianity. A moment's reflection, in the true light which scripture pours upon our souls, would be sufficient to show how utterly deficient is the popular religious thought as to Jordan. For instance, when a believer dies and goes to heaven, is he called to fight? Surely not. All is rest and peace up yonder — ineffable, eternal peace. Not a ripple on that ocean. No sound of alarm throughout that pure and holy region. No conflict there. No need of armour. We shall want no girdle, because our garments may flow loosely around us. We shall not need a breastplate of righteousness, for divine righteousness shall there have its eternal abode. We shall have no want of sandals, for there will be no rough or thorny places in that fair and blissful region. No shield called for there, inasmuch as there will be no fiery darts flying; no helmet of salvation, for the divine and eternal results of God's salvation shall then be reached. No sword, inasmuch as there will be neither enemy nor evil occurrent throughout all that blissful, sunny region.

Hence, therefore, Jordan cannot mean the death of the believer and his going to heaven, for the simplest of all reasons that it was when Israel crossed the Jordan that their fighting, properly speaking, began. True they had fought with Amalek in the wilderness; but it was in Canaan that their real war commenced. A child can understand this.

But does not Jordan represent death? Most surely it does. And may not the believer have to cross it? True; but if he has, he finds it dry, because the Prince of Life has gone down into its deepest depths, and opened up a pathway for His people by the which they pass over into their eternal inheritance.

There is no such idea in the word of God — in the gospel of Christ, or in the entire range of our heavenly Christianity — as a Christian standing where Moses stood, when, from Pisgah's top, he looked forth over the promised land. Moses, in the governmental dealings of God, was prevented going over Jordan. And, looking at Moses officially, we know that the law could not possibly bring the people into Canaan.

But Christ, the true Joshua, has crossed the Jordan, and not only crossed it, but turned it into a pathway by which the ransomed host can pass over dryshod into the heavenly Canaan. The Christian is not called to stand shivering on the brink of the river of death, as one in doubt as to how it may go with him. That river is dried up for faith. Its power is gone. Our adorable Lord "has abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel."

Glorious, enfranchising fact! Let us praise Him for it. Let all our ransomed powers adore Him. Let our whole moral being be stirred up to chant the praises of Him who has taken the sting from death, and destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and conducted us into a sphere which is pervaded throughout with life, light, incorruptibility, and glory. May our entire practical career be to His glory!

We shall now proceed to examine, more particularly, the teaching of scripture on this great subject, and may the Holy Spirit Himself be our immediate instructor!

"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 the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Joshua 3: 1-4.

There are three deeply important points in Israel's history, which the reader would do well to ponder. There is, first, the blood-stained lintel, in the land of Egypt; secondly, the Red Sea; thirdly, the river Jordan.

Now, in each of these we have a type of the death of Christ, in some one or other of its grand aspects — for, as we know, that precious death has many and various aspects, and nothing can be more profitable for the Christian, and nothing, surely, ought to be more attractive, than the study of the profound mystery of the death of Christ. There are depths and heights in that mystery which eternity alone will unfold; and it should be our delight, now, under the powerful ministry of the Holy Ghost, and in the perfect light of holy scripture, to search into these things for the strength, comfort, and refreshment of the inward man.

Looking, then, at the death of Christ, as typified by the blood of the paschal lamb, we see in it that which screens us from the judgement of God. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement; I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." Exodus 12.

Now, we need hardly say, it is of the deepest moment for the exercised, consciously guilty, soul, to know that God has provided a shelter from wrath and judgement to come. No rightly instructed person would think, for a moment, of undervaluing such an aspect of the death of Christ. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Israel's safety rested upon God's estimate of the blood. He does not say, "When you see the blood." The Judge saw the blood — knew its value, and passed over the house. Israel was screened by the blood of the lamb — by God's estimate of that blood, not by their own. Precious fact!

How prone we are to be occupied with our thoughts about the blood of Christ, instead of with God's thoughts! We feel we do not value that precious blood as we ought — who ever did or ever could? and then we begin to question if we are safe, seeing we so sadly fail in our estimate of Christ's work, and in our love to His Person.

Now, if our safety depends, in the smallest degree, upon our estimate of Christ's work, or our love to His Person, we are in more imminent danger than if it depended upon our keeping the law. True it is — most true — who could think of denying it? — we ought to value Christ's work, and we ought to love Himself. But if all this be put upon the footing of a righteous claim, and if our safety rests upon our answering to that claim, then are we in greater danger, and more justly condemned than if we stood on the ground of a broken law. for, just in proportion as the claims of Christ are higher than the claims of Moses, and in proportion as Christianity is higher than the legal system, so are we worse off, in greater danger, further from peace, if our safety depends upon our response to those higher claims.

Mark, it is not that we ought not to answer to such claims; we most certainly ought. But we have not; and hence, so far as we are concerned, our ruin and guilt are only made more manifest, and our condemnation more righteous, if we stand upon the claims of Christ, because we have not answered to them. If we are to be saved by our estimate of Christ, by our response to His claims, by our appreciation of His love, we are worse off by far than if we were placed under the claims of the law of Moses.

But, blessed be God, it is not so. We are saved by grace — free, sovereign, divine, and eternal grace — not by our sense of grace. We are sheltered by the blood, not by our estimate of the blood. Jehovah did not say, on that awful night, "When you see the blood, and estimate it as you ought, I will pass over you." Nothing of the kind. This is not the way of our God. He wanted to shelter His people, and to let them know that they were sheltered — perfectly, because divinely sheltered — and therefore He places the matter wholly upon a divine basis; He takes it entirely out of their hands, by assuring them that their safety rested, simply and entirely, upon the blood, and upon His estimate thereof. He gives them to understand that they had nothing whatever to do with providing the shelter. It was His to provide. It was theirs to enjoy.

Thus it stood between Jehovah and His Israel, in that memorable night; and thus it stands between Him and the soul that simply trusts in Jesus now. We are not saved by our love, or our estimate, or our anything. We are saved by the blood, and by God's estimate of it. And just as Israel, within that bloodstained lintel, screened from judgement — safe from the sword of the destroyer — could feed upon the roasted lamb, so may the believer, perfectly sheltered from the wrath to come — sweetly secure from all danger — screened from judgement, feed upon Christ in all the preciousness of what He is.

But more of this by-and-by.

We are specially anxious that the reader should weigh the point on which we have been dwelling, if he be one who has not yet found peace, even as to the question of safety from judgement to come, which, as we shall see (if God permit) ere we close this paper, is but a small part, though an ineffably precious part, of what the death of Christ has procured for us. We have very little idea indeed of how much of the leaven of self-righteousness cleaves to us, even after our conversion, and how immensely it interferes with our peace, and our enjoyment of grace. It may be we fancy we have got done with self-righteousness when we have given up all

thoughts of being saved by our works; but, alas! it is not so, for the evil takes a thousand shapes, and of all these, none is more

subtle than that at which we have glanced, namely, the feeling that we do not value the blood as we ought, and the doubting our safety on that ground. All this is the fruit of self-righteousness. We have not got done with self. True, we are not, it may be, making a saviour of our doings, but we are of our feelings. We are seeking, unknown to ourselves perhaps, to find some sort of title in our love to God, or our appreciation of Christ.

Now, all this must be given up. We must rest simply on the blood of Christ, and upon God's testimony to that blood. He sees the blood. He values it as it deserves. He is satisfied. This ought to satisfy us. He did not say to Israel, When I see how you be have yourselves; when I see the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the girded loins, the shod feet, I will pass over you.

No doubt all these things had their proper place; but that proper place was not as the ground of safety, but as the secret of communion. They were called to behave themselves — called to keep the feast; but it was as being, not in order to be, a sheltered people. This made all the difference. It was because they were divinely screened from judgement that they could keep the feast. They had the authority of the word of God to assure them that there was no judgement for them; and if they believed that word they could celebrate the feast in peace and safety. "Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Heb. 11: 28.

Here lies the deep and precious secret of the whole matter. It was by faith he kept the Passover. God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," and He could not deny Himself. It would have been a denial of His very nature and character, and an ignoring of His own blessed remedy, had a single hair of an Israelite's head been touched, on that deeply solemn night. It was not, we repeat, in anywise a question of Israel's state or Israel's deservings. It was simply and entirely a question of the value of the blood in God's sight, and of the truth and authority of His own word.

What stability is here! What peace and rest! What a solid ground of confidence! The blood of Christ, and the word of God! True — divinely true; — let it never be forgotten or lost sight of; it is only by the grace of the Holy Spirit that the word of God can be received, or the blood of Christ relied upon. Still, it is the word of God and the blood of Christ, and nothing else, which give peace to the heart, as regards all question of coming judgement. There can be no judgement for the believer. And why? Because the blood is on the mercy-seat, as the perfect proof that judgement has been already executed.

"He bore on the tree the sentence for me,

And now both the Surety and sinner are free."

Yes, all praise to His name, thus it stands as to every soul that simply takes God at His word, and rests in the precious blood of Christ. It is as impossible that such an one can come into judgement, as that Christ Himself can. All who are sheltered by the blood are as safe as God can make them — as safe as Christ Himself. It seems perfectly wonderful, for any poor sinful mortal to be able to pen such words; but the blessed fact is, it is either this or nothing. If there is any question as to the believer's safety, then the blood of Christ is not on the mercy-seat, or it is of no account in the judgement of God. If it be a question of the believer's state, of his worthiness, of his feelings, of his experience, of his walk, of his love, of his devotedness, of his appreciation of Christ, then would there be no force, no value, no truth in that glorious sentence, "When I see the blood, I will pass over ;" for, in that case, the form of speech should be entirely changed, and a dark and chilling shade be cast over its heavenly lustre. It should then be, "When I see the blood, and . . ."

But no, beloved anxious reader, it is not, and it never can be, thus. Nothing must ever be added — not the weight of a feather, the breadth of a hair, or the movement of an eyelash — to that precious blood which has perfectly satisfied God as a Judge, and which perfectly shelters every soul that simply believes what God says because He says it. If the righteous Judge has declared Himself satisfied, surely the guilty culprit may well be satisfied also. God is satisfied with the blood of Jesus; and when the soul is satisfied likewise, all is settled, and there is peace, as regards the question of judgement. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." How can there be, seeing He has borne the condemnation in their stead? To doubt the believer's exemption from judgement is to make God a liar, and to make the blood of Christ of none effect.

The reader will note that, thus far, we have been occupied only with the question of deliverance from judgement — a most weighty question surely. But, as we shall see in the course of this series of papers, there is far more secured for us by the death of Christ than freedom from judgement and wrath, blessed as that is. That peerless sacrifice does a great deal more for us than keep God out as a Judge.

But, for the present, we pause, and shall close this paper with a solemn and earnest question to the reader — Art thou sheltered by the blood of Jesus? Do not rest, beloved, until you can answer with a clear and unhesitating "Yes." Remember, you are either sheltered by the blood, or exposed to the horrors of eternal judgement.

PART 2.

In our last paper we had before us Israel under the shelter of the blood. A grand reality, most surely; who could duly estimate it? What human language could suitably unfold the deep blessedness of being screened from the judgement of God by the blood of the Lamb — of being within that hallowed circle where wrath and judgement can never come? Who can speak aright of the privilege of feeding, in perfect safety, on the Lamb, whose precious blood has for ever averted from us the wrath of a sin-hating God?

But, blessed as all this is, there is much more than this. There is far more comprehended in the salvation of God than deliverance from judgement and wrath. We may have the fullest assurance that our sins are forgiven, that God will never enter into judgement with us on account of our sins; and yet be very far indeed from the enjoyment of the true Christian position. We may be filled with all manner of fears about ourselves — fears occasioned by the consciousness of indwelling sin — the power of Satan — the influence of the world. All these things may crop up before us, and fill us with the gravest apprehensions.

Thus, for example, when we turn to Exodus 14, we find Israel in the deepest distress, and almost overwhelmed with fear. It would seem as if they had, for the moment, lost sight of the fact that they had been under the cover of the blood.

Let us look at the passage.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them: and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" — mark these words: — "And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them, encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord."

Now, we may feel disposed to ask, "Are these the people whom we have seen so recently feeding, in perfect Safety, under the cover of the blood?" The very same. Whence, then, these fears, this intense alarm, this agonising cry? Did they really think that Jehovah was going to judge and destroy them, after all? Not exactly. Of what, then, were they afraid? Of perishing in the wilderness after all. "And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

All this was most gloomy and depressing. Their poor hearts seem to fluctuate between "graves in Egypt" and death in the wilderness. There is no sense of deliverance; no adequate knowledge either of God's purposes or of God's salvation. All seems utter darkness, almost bordering upon hopeless despair. They are thoroughly hemmed in and "shut up." They seem in a worse plight than ever. They heartily wish themselves back again amid the brick-kilns and stubble fields of Egypt. The mountains on either side of them; the sea in front; Pharaoh and all his terrific hosts behind.

The case seemed perfectly hopeless; and hopeless it was, so far as they were concerned. They were utterly powerless, and they were being made to realize it, and this is a very painful process to go through; but very wholesome and valuable, yea, most necessary for all. We must all, in one way or another, learn the force, meaning, and depth of that phrase, "without strength"! It is exactly in proportion as we find out what it is to be without strength, that we are prepared to appreciate God's "due time."

But, we may here inquire, "is there aught in the history of God's people now answering to Israel's experience at the Red Sea?" Doubtless there is; for we are told that the things which happened unto Israel are our ensamples, or types. And, most surely, the scene at the Red Sea is full of instruction for us. How often do we find the children of God plunged in the very depths of distress and darkness as to their state and prospects! It is not that they question the love of God, or the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, nor yet that God will reckon their sins to them, or enter into judgement with them. But still, they have no sense of full deliverance. They do not see the application of the death of Christ to their evil nature. They do not realize the glorious truth that by that death they are completely delivered from this present evil world, from the dominion of sin, and from the power of Satan. They, to a certain extent, see that the blood of Jesus screens them from the judgement of God; but there is no bright, happy, emancipating sense of full and everlasting salvation. They are, to speak according to our type, at Egypt's side of the Red Sea, and in danger of falling into the hands of the prince of this world. They do not see "all their enemies dead on the seashore." They cannot sing the song of redemption. No one can sing it, until he stands by faith on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, or, in other words, until he sees his complete deliverance from sin, the world, and Satan.

Thus, in contemplating the facts of Israel's history, as recorded in the first fifteen chapters of Exodus, we observe that they did not raise a single note of praise until they had passed through the Red Sea. We hear the cry of sore distress, under the cruel lash of Pharaoh's task-masters, and amid the grievous toil of Egypt's brick-kilns. And we hear the cry of terror when they stood "between Migdol and the sea." All this we hear; but not one note of praise, not a single accent of triumph, until the waters of the Red Sea rolled between them and the land of death and darkness, and they saw all the power of the enemy broken and gone. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord and his servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Isr Now, what is the simple application of all this to us as Christians? What grand lesson are we to learn from the scenes on the shores of the Red Sea? In a word, of what is the Red Sea a type?

And what is the difference between the blood-stained lintel and the divided sea?ael."

The Red Sea is the type of the death of Christ, in its application to all our spiritual enemies, sin, the world, and Satan. By the death of Christ the believer is completely and for ever delivered from the power of sin. He is, alas! conscious of the presence of sin; but its power is gone. He has died to sin, in the death of Christ; and what power has sin over a dead man? It is the privilege of the Christian to reckon himself as much delivered from the dominion of sin as a man lying dead on the floor. What power has sin over such an one? None whatever. No more has it over the Christian. Sin dwells in the believer, and will do so to the end of the chapter; but its rule is gone. Christ has wrested the sceptre from the grasp of our old master, and shivered it to atoms. It is not merely that His blood has purged our sins; but His death has broken the power of sin.

It is one thing to know that our sins are forgiven, and another thing altogether to know that "the body of sin is destroyed" — its rule ended — its dominion gone. Many will tell you that they do not question the forgiveness of their past sins, but they do not know what to say as to indwelling sin. They fear lest, after all, that may come against them, and bring them into judgement. Such persons are, to use the figure, "between Migdol and the sea." They have not learnt the doctrine of Romans 6. They have not as yet, in their Spiritual intelligence and apprehension, reached the resurrection side of the Red Sea. They do not know what it is to be dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And let the reader particularly note the force of the apostle's word, "reckon." How very different it is, in every way, from our word, "realise!" This latter word may do very well where natural or human things are concerned. We can realize physical or material facts; but where a spiritual truth is involved, it is not a question of realising, but of reckoning. How can I realize that I am dead to sin? All my own experience, my own feelings, my inward self-consciousness seems to offer a flat contradiction to the truth. I cannot realise that I am dead; but God tells me I am. He assures me that He counts me to have died to sin when Christ died. I believe it; not because I feel it, but because God says it. Reckon myself to be what God tells me I am. If I were sinless; if I had no sin in me, I should never be told to reckon myself dead to sin; neither should I ever be called to listen to such words as, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body." But it is just because I have sin dwelling in me, and in order to give me full practical deliverance from its reigning I power, that I am taught the grand enfranchising truth, that the dominion of sin is broken by the death of Christ.

How do I know this? Is it because I feel it? Certainly not. How could I feel it? How could I realise it? How could I ever have the self-consciousness of it, while in the body? Impossible. But God tells me I am dead to sin. I believe it. I do not reason about it. I do not stagger at it because I cannot find any evidence of its truth in myself. I take God at His word. I reckon myself to be what He tells me I am. I do not endeavour to struggle, and strive, and work myself into a sinless state which is impossible. Neither do I imagine myself to be in it, which were a deceit and a delusion; but by a simple, childlike faith, I take the blessed ground which faith assigns me, in association with a dead and risen Christ. I look at Christ, and see in Him, according to God's word, the true expression of what I am, in the Divine Presence. I do not reason from myself upwards, but I reason from God downwards. This makes all the difference. It is just the difference between unbelief and faith — between law and grace — between human religion and divine Christianity. If I reason from self, my process of reasoning is carried on in the dark, and all my conclusions must be utterly false. But if, on the other hand, I reason from God, my process of reasoning is carried on in the light, even the light of His eternal truth, and all my conclusions are divinely sound.

It is an unspeakable mercy to get done with self, in all its phases and in all its workings, and to be brought to rest, in all simplicity, on the written word, and on the Christ which that written word presents to our souls. Self-occupation is the death-blow to fellowship, and a complete barrier to the soul's rest. It is absolutely impossible for any one to enjoy peace so long as he is occupied with himself. He must cease from self, and hearken to God's word, and rest, without a single question, on its pure, precious, and everlasting record. God's word never changes. I change; my frames, my feelings, my experience, my circumstances, change continually; but God's word is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

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Furthermore, it is a grand and essential point for the soul to apprehend that Christ is the only definition of the believer's place before God. This gives immense power, liberty, and blessing. "As he is, so are we, in this world." (1 John 4: 17) This is something perfectly wonderful; only let us ponder it. Let us think of a poor, wretched, guilty, slave of sin, a bondsman of Satan, a votary of the world, exposed to eternal judgement — the flames of an everlasting hell — such an one taken up by sovereign grace, delivered completely

from the grasp of Satan, the dominion of sin, the power of this present evil world — pardoned, washed, justified, brought nigh to God, accepted in Christ, and perfectly and for ever identified with Him, so that the Holy Ghost can say, as Christ is, so is he in this world.

All this seems too good to be true; and, most assuredly, it is too good for us to get; but, blessed be the God of all grace, and blessed be the Christ of God it is not too good for Him to give. God gives like Himself. He will be God, spite of our unworthiness and Satan's opposition. He will act in a way worthy of Himself, and worthy of the Son of His love. Were it a question of our deservings, we could only think of the deepest and darkest pit of hell. But seeing it is a question of what is worthy of God to give, and that He gives according to His estimate of the worthiness of Christ, then, verily, we can think of the very highest place in heaven. The glory of God, and the worthiness of His Son, are involved in His dealings with us; and hence everything that could possibly stand in the way of our eternal blessedness, has been disposed of in such a manner as to secure the divine glory, and furnish a triumphant answer to every plea of the enemy. Is it a question of trespass? "He has forgiven us all trespasses." Is it a question of sin? He has condemned sin. Is it a question of guilt? It is cancelled by the blood of the cross. Is it a question of death? He has taken away its sting, and actually made it part of our property. Is it a question of Satan? He has destroyed him. Is it a question of the world? He has delivered us from it, and snapped every link which connected us with it.

Thus, beloved Christian reader, it stands with us, if we are to be taught by scripture — if we are to take God at His word — if we are to believe what He says. And, we may add, if it be not thus, we are in our sins; under the power of sin; in the grasp of Satan; obnoxious to death; part and parcel of an evil, Christless, Godless, world, and exposed to the unmitigated wrath of God — the vengeance of eternal fire.

Oh! that the blessed Spirit may open the eyes of God's people, and give them to see their proper place, their proper portion, on resurrection ground, in association with a risen and glorified Christ.

PART 3.

Having glanced at two of the leading points in our subject, namely, Israel under the shelter of the blood; and Israel on the shores of the Red Sea; we have, now, to contemplate for a few moments, Israel crossing the Jordan, and celebrating the paschal feast at Gilgal, in which they represent the true position of Christians now.

The Christian is one who is not only sheltered from judgement by the blood of the Lamb, but delivered from this present evil world, by the death of Christ, and associated with Him where He now is, at the right hand of God. He is blessed with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies in Christ. He is, thus, a heavenly man, and, as such, is called to walk — in this world, in all the varied relationships and responsibilities in which the good hand of God has placed him. He is not a monk, or an ascetic, or a man living in the clouds — fit neither for earth or heaven. He is not one who lives in a dreamy, misty, unpractical region; but, on the contrary, one whose happy privilege it is, from day to day, to reflect, amid the scenes and circumstances of earth, the graces and virtues of a heavenly Christ with whom, through infinite grace, and on the solid ground of accomplished redemption, he is linked by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Such is the Christian, according to the teaching of the New Testament. Let the reader see that he understands it. It is very real, very definite, very positive, very practical. a child may know it, and realise it, and exhibit it. A Christian is one whose sins are forgiven — who possesses eternal life and knows it — in whom the Holy Ghost dwells — He is accepted in, and associated with a risen and glorified Christ — He has broken with the world, is dead to sin and the law, and finds His object, and His delight, and His spiritual sustenance in the Christ who loved him and gave Himself for him, and for whose coming he waits every day of his life.

This, we repeat, is the New Testament idea of a Christian. How immensely it differs from the ordinary type of Christian profession around us, we need not say. But let the reader measure himself by the divine standard, and see wherein he comes short; for of this he may rest assured, that there is no reason whatsoever, so far as the love of God, or the work of Christ, or the testimony of the Holy Ghost is concerned, why he should not be in the full enjoyment of all the rich and rare spiritual blessings which appertain to the true Christian position. Dark unbelief, fed by legality, bad theology and spurious religiousness, robs many of God's dear children of their proper place and portion. And not only so, but from want of a thorough break with the world, many are sadly hindered from the clear perception and full realisation of their position and privileges as heavenly men.

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But we are rather anticipating the instruction unfolded to us in the typical history of Israel, in Joshua 3-5 to which we shall now turn. "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 the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Joshua 3: 1-4.

It is most desirable that the reader should, with all simplicity and clearness, seize the true spiritual import of the river Jordan. It typifies the death of Christ in one of its grand aspects, just as the Red Sea typifies it in another. When the children of Israel stood on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, they sang the song of redemption. They were a delivered people — delivered from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. They saw all their enemies dead on the sea shore. They could even anticipate, in glowing accents, their triumphal entrance into the promised land. "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

All this was perfectly magnificent, and divinely true. But they were not yet in Canaan. Jordan — of which, most surely, there is no mention in their glorious song of victory — lay between them and the promised land. True, in the purpose of God, and in the judgement of faith, the land was theirs; but they had to traverse the wilderness, cross the Jordan, and take possession.

How constantly we see all this exemplified in the history of souls. When first converted, there is nothing but joy and victory and praise. They know their sins forgiven; they are filled with wonder, love and praise. Being justified by faith, they have peace with God, and they can rejoice in hope of His glory, yea and joy in Himself through Jesus Christ our Lord. They are in Romans 5: 1-11; and, in one sense, there can be nothing higher. Even in heaven itself, we shall have nothing higher or better than "joy in God." Persons sometimes speak of Romans 8 being higher than Romans 5. But what can be higher than "joy in God?" If we are brought to God, we have reached the most exalted point to which any soul can come. To know Him as our portion, our rest, our stay, our object, our all; to have all our springs in Him, and know Him as a perfect covering for our eyes, at all times and in all places, and under all circumstances. This is heaven itself to the believer.

But there is this difference between Romans 5 and Romans 8 that 6 and 7 lie between; and when the soul has travelled practically through these latter, and learnt how to apply their profound and precious teaching to the great questions of indwelling sin and the law, then is it in a better state, though, most assuredly, not in a higher standing.

We repeat, and with emphasis, the words, "travelled practically." For it must be even so, if we would really enter into these holy mysteries, according to God. It is easy to talk about being "dead to sin" and "dead to the law" — easy to see these things written in Romans 6 and Romans 7 easy to grasp, in the intellect, the mere theory of these things. But the question is, have we made our own of them? — Have they been applied practically to our souls, by the power of the Holy Ghost? And are they livingly exhibited in our ways, to the glory of Him who, at such a cost to Himself, has brought us into such a marvellous place of blessing and privilege?

It is much to be feared that there is a vast amount of merely intellectual traffic in these deep and precious mysteries of our most holy faith which — were they only laid hold of in spiritual power — are calculated to produce the most marked results in practice.

But, we must return to our theme; and, in doing so, we would ask the reader if he really understands the true spiritual import of the river Jordan? What does it really mean? We have said that it typifies the death of Christ. But in what aspect? — For that precious death has many and various aspects. We believe the Jordan sets forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, not so much in its application to that from which we are delivered, as to that into which we are introduced. The Red Sea delivered Israel from Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. Jordan brought them into the land of Canaan.

We find both in the death of Christ. He, blessed be His Name, has by His death on the cross — His death for us, delivered us from our sins — from guilt and condemnation — from Satan's power, and from this present evil world.

But, more than this, He has by the same infinitely precious work, brought us, now, into an entirely new position, in living union and

association with Himself, where He is at God's right hand. Such is the distinct teaching of Ephesians 2. "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." Verses 4-6.

Note the little word "Hath." He is not speaking of what God will do; but of what He hath done — done for us and with us in Christ Jesus. The believer is not one who is waiting to go to heaven when he dies. He is there already in the Person of His living and glorified Head — there, too, in spirit and by faith.

Is all this real and true? As real and true as that Christ hung on the cross and lay in the grave. As real and true as that we were dead in trespasses and sins. As real and true as the eternal truth of God can make it. As real and true as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the body of every true believer.

Mark, reader, we are not, now, speaking of the practical working out of all this glorious truth in the life of Christians, from day to day. This is another thing altogether. Alas! alas! if our only idea of true Christian position were to be drawn from the practical career of professing Christians, we might give up Christianity as a myth, a sham and a fable.

But thank God, it is not so. We must learn what true Christianity is from the pages of the New Testament; and, having learnt it there judge ourselves, our ways, our surroundings, by its heavenly light. In this way, while we shall ever have to confess and mourn over our shortcomings, our hearts shall, ever more and more, be filled with praise to Him whose infinite grace has brought us into such a glorious position in union and fellowship with His own Son — a position, blessed be God, in nowise dependent upon our personal state; but which, if really apprehended, must exert a powerful influence upon our entire course, conduct and character.

PART 4.

The more deeply we ponder the typical instruction presented in the river Jordan, the more clearly we must see that the whole Christian position is involved in the standpoint from which we contemplate it. If Jordan means death, and we have to meet it, then, verily, our prospect is a gloomy one. death is the wages of sin, and sin is death's sting; and most surely, if we have to encounter death, there can be but the one terrible issue.

But, thanks be to God, it is not so. The great Antitype of the ark has passed over before us into Jordan, to stem its torrent for us, and make it a dry path for our feet, so that we might pass clean over into our heavenly inheritance. The Prince of life has destroyed, on our behalf, him that had the power of death. He has taken the sting from death; yea, He has made death itself the very means by which we reach, even now, in spirit and by faith, the true heavenly Canaan.

Let us see how all this is unfolded in our type. Mark particularly the commandment given by the officers of the host. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." The ark must go first. They dared not to move one inch along that mysterious way, until the symbol of the divine presence had gone before.

"Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." It was an unknown, an untrodden way. No mortal could tread it with impunity. Death and destruction are linked together. "It is appointed unto men" — not to all men, thank God — "once to die; but after this the judgement." (Heb. 9) Who can stand before the king of terrors? Who can face that grim and terrible foe? Who can encounter the swellings of Jordan? Poor Peter thought he could; but he was sadly mistaken. He said unto Jesus, "Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

How fully these words explain the import of that mystic "space" between Israel and the ark. Peter did not understand that space. He had not studied aright Joshua 3: 4. He knew nothing of that terrible pathway which his blessed Master was about to enter upon. "Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

Poor dear Peter! How little he knew of himself, or of that which he was — sincerely, no doubt, though ignorantly — undertaking to do! How little did he imagine that the very sound of death's dark river, heard even in the distance, would be sufficient so to terrify him, as to make him curse and swear that he did not know his Master! "Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."

"Yet there shall be a space between you and it." How needful! How absolutely essential! Truly there was a space between Peter and his Lord. Jesus had to go before. He had to meet death in its most terrific form. He had to tread that rough path in profound solitude — for who could accompany Him? "There shall be a space between you and it: come not near to it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have — not passed this way heretofore."

"Thou canst not follow me now': but thou shalt follow me afterwards." Blessed Master! He would not suffer His poor feeble servant to enter upon that terrible path, until He Himself had gone before, and so entirely changed its character, that the pathway of death should be lighted up with the beams of life and immortality. Our Jesus has "abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel."

Thus death is no longer death to the believer. It was death to Jesus, in all its intensity, in all its horrors, in all its reality. He met it as the power which Satan wields over the soul of man. He met it as the penalty due to sin. He met it as the just judgement of God against sin — against us. There was not a single feature, not a single ingredient, not a single circumstance, which could possibly

render death formidable which did not enter into the death of Christ. He met all; and, blessed be God, we are accounted as having gone through all in and by Him. We died in Him, so that a death has no further claim upon us, or power over us. Its claims are disposed of, its power broken and gone for all believers. The whole scene is cleared completely of death, and filled with life and incorruptibility.

And hence, in Peter's case, we find our Lord, in the last chapter of John, most graciously meeting the desire of His servant's heart — a desire in which he was perfectly sincere — the desire to follow his beloved Lord. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God." Thus death, instead of being the judgement of God to overwhelm Peter, was turned into a means by which Peter could glorify God.

What a glorious fact! What a stupendous mystery! How it magnifies the cross, or rather the One who hung thereon! What a mighty revelation, when a poor sinful man can, in death, glorify God! So completely has death been robbed of its sting — so thoroughly has its character been changed — that, instead of shrinking from it with terror, we can meet it — if it does come — and go through it with songs of victory; and instead of its being to us the heavy wages of sin, it is a means by which we can glorify God.

All praise to Him who has so wrought for us — to Him who has gone down into Jordan's deepest depths for us, and made there a highway by which His ransomed people can pass over into their heavenly inheritance! May our hearts adore Him! May all our powers be stirred up to magnify His holy name May our whole life be devoted to His praise.

But we must proceed with our type.

"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 the Lord 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." Joshua stands before us as a type of the risen Christ, leading His people, in the power of the Holy Ghost, into their heavenly inheritance. The priests bearing the ark into the midst of Jordan typify Christ going down into death for us, and destroying completely its power. "He passed through death's dark raging flood, to make our rest secure;" and not only to make it secure, but to lead us into it, in association with Himself, now, in spirit and by faith; by-and-by, in actual fact. "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." The passage of the ark into Jordan proved two things, namely, the presence of the living God in the midst of His people; and that He would most surely drive out all their enemies from before them. The death of Christ is the basis and the guarantee of everything to faith. Grant us but this, that Christ has gone down into death for us, and we argue, with all possible confidence, that, in this one great fact, all is secured. God is with us, and God is for us. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The difficulty of unbelief is, "How shall he?" The difficulty of faith is, "How shall he not?"

Israel might wonder how all the hosts of Canaan could ever be expelled from before them; let them gaze on the ark in the midst of Jordan, and cease to wonder, cease to doubt. The less is included in the greater. And hence we can say, What may we not expect, seeing that Christ has died for us? There is nothing too good, nothing too great, nothing too glorious, for God to do for us, and in us, and with us, seeing He has not spared His only-begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Everything is secured for us by the precious death of Christ. It has opened up the everlasting floodgates of the love of God, so that the rich streams thereof might flow down into the very depths of our souls. It fills us with the sweetest assurance that the One who could bruise His only begotten Son, on the cursed tree, for us, will meet our every need, carry us through all our difficulties, and lead us into the full possession and enjoyment of all that His eternal purpose of grace has in store for us. Having given us such a proof of His love, even when we were yet sinners, what may we not expect at His hands now that He views us in association with that blessed One who glorified Him in death — the death that He died for us? When Israel saw the ark in the midst of Jordan, they were entitled to consider that all was secured. True they had, as we know, to take possession: they had to plant their feet upon the inheritance; but the power that could stem death's dark waters, could also drive out every foe from before them. and put them in peaceful possession of all that God had promised.

PART 5.

In closing this series of brief papers on Gilgal, we must turn our thoughts to the practical application of that which has been engaging our attention. If it be true — and it is true — that Jesus died for us, it is equally true that we have died in Him, as one of our own poets has sweetly put it:

"For me, Lord Jesus, thou hast died And I have died in thee;

Thou' t risen; my bands are all untied; And now Thou livest in me.

The Fathers face of radiant grace Shines, now in light on me."

Now this is a great practical truth — none more so. It lies at the very foundation of all true Christianity. If Christ has died for us, then, in very deed, He has taken us completely out of our old condition, with all that appertained to it, and placed us upon an entirely new footing. We can look back, from resurrection ground into the dark river of death, and see there, in its deepest depths, the memorial of the victory gained for us by the Prince of Life. We do not look forward to death; we look back at it. We can truly say, "The bitterness of death is past."

Jesus met death for us, in its most terrible form. Just as the river of Jordan was divided when it presented its most formidable appearance — "For Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest" — so our Jesus encountered our last great enemy, vanquished him in his most terrific form, and left behind, in the very centre of death's dark and dreary domain, the imperishable record of His glorious victory. All praise, homage, and adoration to His peerless name! It is our privilege, by faith and in spirit, to stand on Canaan's side of Jordan, and erect our memorial of what the Saviour, the true Joshua, has done for us.

"And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord 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. Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God, into the midst of Jordan, and take you up everyman of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel. That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." Joshua 4: 1-7.

The great fact was to be seized, and practically carried out, by the whole assembly — "of every tribe a man" — "Every man of you a stone upon his shoulder" — a stone taken from the very spot where the priests' feet stood firm. All were to be brought into living personal contact with the great mysterious fact that the waters of Jordan were cut off. All were to engage in erecting such a memorial of this fact as should elicit inquiry from their children as to what it meant. It was never to be forgotten.

What a lesson is here for us! Are we erecting our memorial? Are we giving evidence — such evidence as may strike even the mind of a child — of the fact that our Jesus has vanquished the power of death for us? Are we affording any practical proof in daily life that Christ has died for us, and that we have died in Him? Is there aught in our actual history, from day to day, answering to the figure set forth in the passage just quoted — "Every man of you a stone upon his shoulder?" Are we declaring plainly that we have passed clean over Jordan — that we belong to heaven — that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? Do our children see aught in our habits and ways, in our spirit and deportment, in our whole character and manner of life, leading them to inquire, "What mean ye by these things?" Are we living as those who are dead with Christ — dead to sin — dead to the world? Are we practically sitting loose to the world — letting go our hold of present things, in the power of communion with a risen Christ?

These are searching questions for the soul, beloved Christian reader. Let us seek to meet them honestly as in the divine presence. We profess these things, we hold them in theory. We say we believe that Jesus died for us, and that we died in Him. Where is the proof? Where the abiding memorial? Where the stone on the shoulder? Let us judge ourselves honestly before God. Let us no longer rest satisfied with anything short of the thorough, practical, habitual, carrying out of the great truth, that "We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God." Mere profession is worthless. We want the living power — the true result — the proper fruit.

"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" — stones of peculiar import — no other stones could tell such a tale, teach such a lesson, or symbolise such a stupendous fact — no other stones like them — "those twelve stones 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 the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord 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 the Lord that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever."

Here, then, we see Israel at Gilgal. "Everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua." Every member of the host had passed clean over Jordan, not one had been suffered to feel the slightest touch of the river of death. Grace had brought them all safely over into the inheritance promised to their fathers. They were not only separated from Egypt by the Red Sea, but actually brought into Canaan across the dry bed of the Jordan, and encamped in Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho.

And now mark what follows. "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites which were on — the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of — the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. At that time" — note the words! when all the nations were paralysed with terror at the very thought of this people — "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time."

How deeply significant is this! How suggestive are these "sharp knives!" How needful! If Israel are about to bring the sword upon the Canaanites, Israel must have the sharp knife applied to themselves. They had never been circumcised in the wilderness. The reproach of Egypt had never been rolled away from them. And ere they could celebrate the Passover, and eat of the old corn of the land of Canaan, they must have the sentence of death written upon them. No doubt this was aught but agreeable to nature, but it must be done. How could they take possession of Canaan with the reproach of Egypt resting upon them? How could uncircumcised people dispossess the Canaanites! Impossible. The sharp knives had to do their work throughout the camp of Israel ere they could eat of Canaan's food, or prosecute its warfare.

"And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise. All the people that came out of Egypt that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.....And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal ("rolling") unto this day. 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. 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. 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."

Here, then, we have a type of the full Christian position. The Christian is a heavenly man, dead to the world, crucified with Christ, associated with Him where He now is: and, while waiting for His appearing, occupied in heart with Him, feeding, by faith, upon Him as the proper nourishment of the new man.

Such is the Christian's position — such his portion; but in order to enter fully into the enjoyment thereof, there must be the application of the "sharp knife" to all that belongs to mere nature. There must be the sentence of death written upon that which scripture designates "the old man."

All this must be really and practically entered into, if we would maintain our position, or enjoy our proper portion as heavenly men. If we are indulging nature, if we are living in a low, worldly atmosphere, if we are going in for this world's pursuits, its pleasures, its politics, its riches, its honours, its fashions, and its distinctions, then, verily, it is impossible that we can be enjoying fellowship with our risen Head and Lord. [The reader may here remark that "the old corn of the land of Canaan" is a type of Christ risen and glorified. The manna is a type of Christ in His humiliation. The remembrance of Him in the latter is ineffably precious to the soul. It is sweet to look back and trace His way, as the lowly, humble, self-emptied man. This is to feed upon the hidden manna — "Christ once humbled here." Nevertheless, a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ is the true object for the heart of the Christian; but to enjoy this object, the reproach of this present evil world must be rolled away from us by the spiritual application of the circumcision of Christ.] Christ is in heaven, and to enjoy Him we must be living, in spirit and by faith, where He is. He is not of this world; and if we are of it, we cannot be enjoying fellowship with Him. "If we say that we have fellow ship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." 1 John 1: 6.

This is most solemn. If I am living in and of the world, I am walking in darkness, and I can have no fellowship with a heavenly Christ. "Wherefore," says the blessed apostle, "if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" Do we really understand these words? Have we weighed the full force of the expression, "living in the world?" Is the Christian not to be as one living in the world? Clearly not. He is to live in spirit where Christ is. As to fact, He is obviously on this earth, moving up and down, and in and out, in the varied relations of life, and in the varied spheres of action in which the hand of God has set him. But his home is in heaven. His life is there. His object, his rest, his proper all, is in heaven. He does not belong to earth. His citizenship is in heaven; and in order to make this good in actual practice, from day to day, there must be the denial of self, the mortification of our members.

All this comes vividly out in Colossians 3. Indeed, it would be impossible to give a more striking exposition of the entire subject of "Gilgal" than that presented in the following lines: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." And now comes the true spiritual import and application of "Gilgal" and its "sharp knives."

"Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." May the Holy Spirit lead us into a deeper and fuller understanding of our place, portion, and practice, as Christians! Would to God that we better knew what it is to feed upon the old corn of the land, at the true spiritual Gilgal, that thus we might be better fitted for the conflict and service to which we are called?

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 782-784)

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