

JOSHUA

(Joshua portrays Jesus Christ,
Captain of Our Salvation)

INTRODUCTION

The book of Joshua records one of the most interesting and important portions of Israel's history. It informs of the period of their settlement as a nation, of which Genesis was prophetic and the rest of the Pentateuch immediately reparatory. The books of Moses would be imperfect without this one; as it is the capstone of them, so it is the foundation of those which follow. Omit Joshua and there is a gap left in the sacred history which nothing could supply. Without it what precedes would be incomprehensible and what follows unexplained. The sacred writer was directed to fill that gap by narrating the conquest and apportionment of the promised land. Thus this book may be contemplated from two distinct but closely related standpoints: first as the end of Israel's trials and wanderings in the wilderness, and second as the beginning of their new life in the land. It is that twofold viewpoint which supplies the clue to its spiritual interpretation, as it alone solves the problem which so many have found puzzling in this book.

As the inheritance which the Lord appointed, promised and gave to Israel, Canaan has rightly been regarded as a type (foreshadow) of Heaven, unto which the Church is journeying through this wilderness-world. But Canaan was the scene of fierce battles, and that presents a serious difficulty unto many, though it should not. They point out that Heaven will not be the place of fighting, but of eternal rest and felicity, and then ask, How could Israel's history in Canaan prefigure our experience on High? It did not, but it strikingly and accurately foreshadowed what Christians must accomplish if they are to enter and enjoy "the purchased possession". The book of Joshua not only exhibits the sovereign grace of God, His covenant-faithfulness, His mighty power put forth on behalf of His people, but it also reveals what was *required from them* in the discharge of their responsibility: formidable obstacles had to be surmounted, a protracted warfare had to be engaged in, fierce foes overcome, before they entered into the actual enjoyment of the land.

If our conception of what constitutes a Christian or the character of the Christian life be altogether lopsided, little wonder that we have difficulty in rightly applying to ourselves the contents of that book which typically contains so much important instruction for us. If we will confine our viewpoint solely unto the sovereign grace of God in connection with our salvation, and deliberately close our eyes to all that Scripture teaches upon the discharge of our responsibility in relation thereto, then it would indeed be strange if we apprehended how that on the one hand Canaan was a free gift unto Israel, which they entered by grace alone; and on the other, that they had to fight for every inch of it! But when we realize that "eternal life" is both the gift of God (Rom. 6:23) and a "crown" which has to be won by faithfulness (Rev. 2:10), that the Christian inheritance is not only purchased by the blood of the Lamb, but is also the "reward" of those who "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3: 24), then we should have no trouble in perceiving how the type (foreshadow) answers to the antitype (that which was foreshadowed).

They entered and took possession of Canaan by immediate command from God, who has an absolute right to interfere in human affairs as He pleases. Moreover, it was in the exercise of His righteousness (as well as of His sovereignty) that God now took from the Canaanites the land which they had forfeited by their sins, and by His grace gave to Israel with the distinct understanding that they, too, would be deprived of it if they proved unfaithful and disobedient stewards.

But why should God give instructions for the utter destruction of the Canaanites? Because of their horrible depravity and gross idolatry; let the reader turn to Lev. 18:3, 27, 28 and then see the verses between 3 and 27 for a description of those "abominations," and also remember God did not act in judgment upon them until "the iniquity of the Amorites" had come to the "full" (Gen. 15:16). God now glorified His justice by destroying those who refused to glorify Him by a willing obedience. Israel acted not under the impulse of a lust of conquest but as the executioners of Divine wrath—just as the flood, the pestilence, the earthquake are commissioned by Him to cut off those who provoke His holiness. When He is pleased to do so, He makes use of men as His instruments, rather than the elements. "The Assyrian" was the rod of God's anger to cut off nations, though he knew not he was being so employed (Isa. 10:5-7). Why then might He not use an elect and godly nation as the conscious instrument of His just vengeance!

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Joshua 1:1-9

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:9). This was the concluding part of the charge which Jehovah there laid upon His servant. For the third time Joshua was bidden to be courageous. The natural inference to draw from such repetition would be that he was a timid and cowardly man; but his previous record effectively disposes of such a conclusion. He was one of the twelve selected by Moses to spy out the Land. In his bold dissent from the gloomy report of ten of his fellows, and in his fighting of Amalek (Ex. 17) he had manifested himself as one possessed of valor. Yet God saw fit to press this injunction upon him repeatedly: as Matthew Henry pointed out, "Those that have grace, have need to be called upon again and again to exercise grace and improve it". Though that precept did not imply that Joshua was faint-hearted, it did import he would be faced with situations which called for the exercise of sterling qualities.

But let it be pointed out that there is a moral courage, as well as a physical, and not all possessing the latter are endowed with the former. How many who flinched not in the face of the enemy's fire, were afraid to be seen reading God's Word! There is also strength of mind and will, which refuses to be daunted by difficulties and dismayed by failures. Let it also be noted that that threefold call to act valiantly was not a mere repetition. In verse 6 Joshua was bidden to be strong and of a good courage in view of the task before him—which demanded physical prowess. In verse 7 it was an injunction unto personal and moral courage: "that thou mayest observe to do according to all the Law"—to seek not counsel from his fellows, nor fear their criticisms, but to order all his actions by "the Book". It requires more courage to keep to the old paths than it does to follow after novelties. A stout heart is indispensable in order to tread the path of God's commandments.

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage" (v. 9). It seems to us this was more distinctly a call to the exercise of spiritual courage. In proportion as the child of God becomes aware of his own weakness and insufficiency, he is very apt to be cast down; instead, it should make him look outside himself and lay hold of the strength of Another. Was it not as though the Lord said to His servant: It is indeed unto a great undertaking I have commissioned thee, but let not a sense of thine own infirmities deter thee, for "have not I commanded thee"! It would be a great help unto Joshua if he kept his eye on the Divine warrant. The same One who had issued the precept must be looked unto for enablement to the performance thereof. Christ Himself was borne up under His suffering by a regard to the Divine will: "as the Father gave Me *commandment*, even so I do; Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31).

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

What encouragement did God give Moses (Ex. 4:12), Jeremiah (Jer. 1:19) and Paul (Acts 18:9-10) before they went out on their commission?

Can we expect a similar type of encouragement? (Matt. 28:18-20)

Joshua 1:10-18

"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people" (Jos. 1:10). That was his response to the commission he had received: an immediate tackling of the duty nearest to hand. He could say with David, "I made haste, and delayed not, to keep Thy commandments" (Ps. 119:60). He resolved upon a course of instant obedience, and promptly put it into execution. He considered that the One who was vested with such sovereignty and power, and who had given him such blessed assurances, was worthy of being loved and served with all his heart and might. Is that the case with you? with me? "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23), and where there is heartiness, there will be no delay. Is it not evident then, my reader, that the readiness or tardiness of our obedience is a good index to the state of our hearts? When we stand debating instead of doing, reasoning instead of "running" (Ps. 119:32), something is seriously wrong.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Show how Paul had a similar readiness in tackling the duty at hand?

Joshua 2:1-24

How marked the contrast between Rahab and the rest of her compatriots! As her words in Joshua 2:9-11 clearly indicate, they too heard the same reports she did of the marvels performed by the Lord's might, yet they produced no faith in them. They were indeed awestruck and terrified by the accounts of the same that reached them, so that for a season there did not remain any more courage in them; but that was all. Just as under the faithful preaching of God's servants many have been temporarily affected by announcements of the Day of Judgment and the wrath to come, but never surrendered themselves to the Lord. God declared unto Israel, "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee" (Deut. 2:25). That was literally fulfilled in the case of the inhabitants of Jericho, yet it wrought no spiritual change in them, for they were children in whom was no faith, and they had no faith because no miracle of grace was wrought in their souls. Of itself the soundest preaching effects no spiritual change in those who hear it.

Mark the contrast: "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not" (Heb. 11:31). And why? Because a sovereign God had made her to differ from them (1 Cor. 4:7). She was blessed with "the faith of the operation of God" (Col. 2:12). Consequently, she "heard" of the works of the Lord not merely with the outward ear, as was the case with all her fellow-citizens, but with the ear of the heart, and therefore was she affected by those tidings in a very different manner from what they were who heard but "believed not". It is clear from her words "I know that the Lord hath given you the land" that she had both heard and believed the promises which He had made to Abraham and his seed, and perceiving He was a gracious and giving God, hope had been born in her. Behold then the distinguishing favor of God unto this vessel of mercy and realize that something more than listening to the Gospel is needed to beget faith in us. "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them" (Prov. 20:12). Only those "believe the report" to whom "the arm (power) of the Lord is revealed" (Isa. 53:1). As later with Lydia, so Rahab was one "whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken" (Acts 16:14).

Solemn indeed is the warning pointed by the unbelieving fellows of Rahab. So far as we are informed, they heard precisely the same report as she did. Nor did they treat those tidings with either skepticism or contempt: instead, they were deeply affected by them, being terror-stricken. The news of God's judgments upon the Egyptians, and their nearer neighbors, the Amorites, made their hearts melt as they feared it would be their turn next. If it be asked, Why did they not immediately and earnestly cry unto God for mercy, the answer—in part, at least—is supplied by Ecclesiastes 8:11: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil". Space was given for repentance, but they repented not. A further respite was granted during the six days that the hosts of Israel marched around Jericho, but when nothing happened and those hosts returned to their camp, its inhabitants continued to harden their hearts. Thus it is with the majority of our fellows today, even of those who are temporarily alarmed under the faithful ministry of God's servants.

There is nothing remarkable in one believing what all his associates believe, but to have faith when surrounded by skeptics, is something noteworthy. To stand alone, to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause when all others are federated unto evil, is a rare sight. Yet such was Rahab. There were none in Jericho with whom she could have fellowship, none there to encourage her heart and strengthen her hands by their godly counsel and example: all the more opportunity for her to prove the sufficiency of Divine grace! Scan slowly the list presented in Hebrews 11, and then recall the recorded circumstances of each. With whom did Abel, Enoch, Noah have spiritual communion? From what brethren did Joseph, Moses, Gideon receive any help along the way? Who were the ones who encouraged and emboldened Elijah, Daniel, Nehemiah? Then think it not strange that *you* are called to walk almost if not entirely alone, that you meet with scarcely any like-minded or any who are capable of giving you a lift along the road.

From the standpoint of natural and temporal considerations Rahab's faith cost her something. It induced her "to renounce all her interests among the devoted Canaanites (i.e., doomed to destruction), to venture her life and expose herself to the imminent danger of the most cruel tortures in expressing her love for the people of God" (T. Scott). Such is the wonder-working power of the Spirit in a human soul, producing that which is contrary to fallen human nature, causing it to act from new principles and motives, making it to prefer sufferings for Christ's sake and to endure afflictions by throwing in its lot with His people, than to pursue any longer the vanities of this world. Such was the transformation wrought in Saul of Tarsus, who not only bore with fortitude the persecutions which faith in Christ entailed, but rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for His sake.

Explain why Rahab believed and the others in Jericho did not.

Joshua 3:1-17

"And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." That was an enforcing of their moral responsibility. It was a call for them to cleanse themselves and dedicate themselves unto the Lord their God. It was a bidding of them to prepare themselves by prayer and meditation, to recall God's gracious interventions in the past, to ponder His ineffable holiness, awful majesty, mighty power and abundant mercy, and thereby bring their hearts into a fit frame, so that with faith, reverence and admiration they might behold the great work which Jehovah was about to do for them. They must be in a suitable condition in order to witness such a manifestation of His glory: their hearts must be "perfect toward Him"—sincere and upright, honest and holy—if He was to "show Himself strong in their behalf" (2 Chron. 16:9). Have we not here the explanation why God is *not* now performing marvels in the churches?—they are too carnal and worldly! And is not this the reason why a way is not being made through our personal "jordans"? And why we receive not wondrous and blessed discoveries of His glory—we are not "sanctified" in a practical way nor sufficiently separated from the world.

"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. 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" (Josh. 3:7, 8).

Joshua had duly discharged his duty and now he was to be rewarded. He had set before the people a noble example by acting faith on God's word, had confidently expressed his assurance that God would make good His promise (Josh. 1:11, 15), and now the Lord would honor the one who had honored Him. Joshua had been faithful in a few things and he should be made ruler over many. Devotedness unto God never passes unrecognized by Him. The Lord would now put signal honor upon Joshua in the sight of Israel as He had done upon Moses at the Red Sea and at Sinai. "The Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak unto thee, and believe thee for ever" (Ex. 19:9): thus did He honor and authenticate Moses. And here at the Jordan he magnified Joshua by the authority which He conferred upon him, and attested him as His appointed leader of Israel. The result of this is stated in Joshua 4:15, "on that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they feared [revered and obeyed] him as they feared Moses, all the days of his [Joshua's] life."

But we must be careful lest we overlook something far more glorious than what has just been pointed out. Surely those words, "This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel," should at once turn our thoughts to One infinitely superior to Joshua: that what God did here for His servant was a foreshadowment of what later He did to His Son at this same Jordan. No sooner was our blessed Lord baptized in that river than, "Lo, the heavens were opened unto Him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16, 17). Then was He "made manifest to Israel" (John 1:31). Then was He authenticated for His great mission. Then did God "begin to magnify Him." Still more wonderful is the type (a shadow of what was to come) when we observe at what part of the Jordan this occurred: "These things were done in Beth-abara" (John 1:28), which signified "the place of passage" (John 1:28), so that Christ was attested by the Father at the very place where Israel passed through the river and where Joshua was magnified!

Solemn indeed was the contrast. By what took place at the Jordan Israel knew that Joshua was their Divinely appointed leader and governor, and therefore they "feared him . . . all the days of his life" (Josh. 4:15), rendering implicit and undeviating obedience unto his orders: "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua" (Josh. 24:31). But after the anti-typical (that which was foreshadowed) Jesus had been far more illustriously magnified at the Jordan, identified as the Son of God incarnate, and owned by the Father as the One in whom He delighted, what was Israel's response? Did they love and worship Him? Did they fear and obey Him? Very far otherwise: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). Their hearts were alienated and their ears closed against Him. Though He spake as never man spake, though He went about doing good, though He wrought miracles of power and mercy, they "despised and rejected Him,"

and after a brief season cried "Away with Him, crucify Him." Marvel, dear Christian reader, that the Lord of glory endured such humiliation "for us men and our salvation." Wonder and adore that He so loved us as not only to be willing to be hated of men but smitten of God that our sins might be put away.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

God requires us to sanctify ourselves in order to make our worship acceptable to Him. So how do we do this?

Gen. 35:1, 2 Ps. 24:3-4 2 Cor. 7:1 1 Tim. 2:8 2 Tim. 2:21 Heb. 10:22 Jam. 4:8 1 John 3:3

Joshua 4:1-24

"And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers, in time to come, saying, What meaneth 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" (vv. 21-23). Normal children have inquiring minds and ought not to be snubbed or even discouraged when they ask their parents questions. Rather should parents seek to improve their curiosity as an opening for instruction, directing the same into profitable channels. The very inquisitiveness of little ones affords their elders an opportunity to make known unto them the wonderful works of God, that their minds may be informed and their hearts awed by His perfections. But note well, it is the father (the "head" of the home) upon whom the main responsibility devolves, to see to it that his children are taught by him the things of God (Eph. 6:4). Let him not pass on this task to his wife, still less to "Sunday-school teachers."

"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 forever" (v. 24). God's miraculous deliverances of His own people have a message for all the world, and when He is pleased to sanctify the same unto the unregenerate, they are deeply impressed thereby (Dan. 3:29; 6:25-27). The effects produced by the Jordan miracle are recorded in Josh. 5:1, which properly ends chapter 4: "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." The Canaanites were completely dispirited and cowered, realizing their utter incompetence to successfully oppose a people who had the Almighty for their Friend and Benefactor. But we must now seek to formulate the various lessons which we should learn from the memorial erected at Gilgal to mark the miraculous passage of the Jordan.

First, the wonderful works of God are worthy of treasuring in our memories, and He requires that pains be taken by us to see that they are so. It should be carefully noted that Joshua, even in the midst of a most exacting business, was not permitted to neglect the promotion of the Lord's honor. While superintending the passage through the river's bed of that vast concourse of people, with all their baggage (tents, etc.) and cattle, God bade him see to it that he took a man from each tribe and bid them select the twelve stones which were to be carried to Gilgal (Josh. 4:2, 3). Nor did he demur or ask for a more convenient season.

Second, God's ordering of this memorial is a solemn reminder of how prone our hearts are to forget His past interpositions on our behalf. Of Israel we are told they "forgot His works and His wonders that He showed them"; and again, that "they soon forgot His works" (Ps. 78:11; 106:13). Alas, is not the same true of us? Even of the apostles Christ asked, "Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves ye took up?" (Matthew 16:9).

Third, because of our proneness to forget, suitable means are to be used in assisting us. We are to make conscience of the fact that God has bidden us to "remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee" (Deut. 8:2), and that precept should be turned into earnest prayer that we may not be negligent therein. We should frequently call to mind our previous experiences of God's faithfulness and tender care of us. This will strengthen the spirit of thanksgiving and cause us to praise God anew. It will deepen our confidence in Him to count upon Him in present emergencies and trust Him for future deliverances. The more we do so, the less shall we fear the experience of death, assured that God will undertake for us as we are called upon to pass

through the valley of the shadows, as certainly as He conducted Israel safely through the Jordan (see 2 Corinthians 1:10)!

Fourth, not only God's past deliverances of us are to be treasured up in our memories, but also His mercies unto His people in times gone by. Faith is to look back to what the arm of the Lord hath done "in the ancient days, in the generations of old," and say, "Art not Thou He which hath dried the sea . . . that made the depths of the sea, a way for the ransomed to pass over." And what will be the consequence of such exercise of believing memories? This: "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion" (Isa. 51:9-11). Why has God recorded the deliverance of Noah from the flood and of Lot from Sodom but to assure us that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation" (2 Pet. 2:5-9). Not only is "what was written aforetime written for our learning and comfort" (Rom. 15:4), but what God did aforetime is to teach us what He can and will now do for His own. "I remembered Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself" (Ps. 119:52).

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

God gives the Israelites instructions for their keeping a memorial of their passing over the Jordan into Canaan proper, in order that they would not forget his great mercies nor their obedience to Him. **Using the content of the following verses, state in your words the godly message that they contain: Isaiah 51:9-11; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 2:4-9.**

Joshua 5:1-12

"And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole. 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 [or "rolling "] unto this day" (vv. 8, 9). The commentators are strangely "at sea" concerning the significance of that expression "the reproach of Egypt," most of them regarding it as a reference to the stigma incurred by Israel when they were the slaves of the Egyptians. But surely that reproach was for ever rolled away when Jehovah delivered His people from Egypt by a high arm, brought them safely through the Red Sea and there destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts. No, rather is it an allusion to Egypt's taunt of Exodus 32:12. During the thirty-eight years when Israel was rejected by God there appeared ground for Egypt's sneer that they would perish in the wilderness; but all occasion for such a reproach had now been removed by the Lord's return unto Israel, and by restoring the token of the covenant He gave intimation that He had resumed His mighty works on their behalf, that they were His people and He their God.

But we must turn now and consider the application of this unto ourselves, for like all the ceremonial rites and institutions of the Old Testament times, circumcision is, anti-typically (that which was foreshadowed), a real and substantial thing unto New Testament saints. Stating it first in a brief sentence, circumcision respected the mortification of sin, the putting off of the filth of the flesh. But that statement calls for explanation and amplification, for the great majority of Christians have very low and defective thoughts on this subject—inherited as they have been from the errors of Rome. Far too many of God's children today suppose that "mortification" signifies a dying to some specific acts of sin, the overcoming of this or that particular corruption. But that is a serious mistake. Watching against, offering stern resistance unto, and obtaining the victory over some particular acts of sin, falls far short of real mortification. That is evident from the fact that none of that is beyond what persons in a state of nature may do, and not a few have actually done. Men and women whose hearts know nothing whatever of the power of Divine grace have, nevertheless, succeeded in gaining the mastery over an unruly temper, and of denying their craving for strong drink.

Again, let it be granted that, as the result of a course of strict self-discipline, a Christian has overcome some besetting sin; or, putting it on a higher ground, that by Divine enablement in answer to prayer, he has become dead to some particular lust; nevertheless, the evil nature, the root, the filthy fountain from which such foul streams proceed, the whole body of sin, still remains within! No, Christian mortification consists of something much better, something far greater and grander than anything poor Papists are acquainted with. To be mortified unto sin is a higher and holier mystery than to be delivered from any mere acts of sin. It consists of having union and communion with Christ in His death unto sin (Rom. 6:10, 11). It is the effect and fruit of Christ's death for us, and of Christ's death in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we live upon and

enjoy fellowship with Him in His death, and are made partakers of "the power of His resurrection." As faith is exercised upon Him as our Head, we experience the virtue and efficacy of His death and resurrection in our hearts and lives.

That which was shadowed forth by circumcision, namely the putting off of the filth of the flesh, all believers find the substance of in Christ, and the same is made good in their souls—in measure here, but perfectly, so at death. In order to obtain a complete view of the Christian's circumcision, we need to consider it federally and judicially, then spiritually and experimentally, and then practically and manifestatively. First, then, all believers are legally circumcised in Christ. That which circumcision prefigured was the removal of the pollution of sin, and that was accomplished for believers judicially in the death of their Head. Circumcision symbolized the entire mortification of sin, and that is the effect and fruit of Christ's death for His people. "Ye are complete in Him [Christ], which is the Head of all principality and power. In whom 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" (Col. 2:10, 11). There we have the blessed fact stated, that in Christ their federal Head His redeemed are already, truly legally circumcised. It is said to be "without hands" to distinguish it from the physical circumcision of the type, and to show that it is the result of no attainment of ours. Colossians 2:11, is a statement which is addressed to our faith, for it refers to something outside of our actual experience, to something which we have in Christ.

The apostle was moved by the Holy Spirit to employ quite a variety of terms to express the same fact. In Romans 6:2, he said of all believers "we died unto sin." In 1 Corinthians 6:9, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." In Galatians 2:20, he declared—as the representative of all saints—"I am crucified with Christ." Here in Colossians 2:11, he affirms, "In whom also ye are circumcised," which signifies that in the sight of God's Law and justice the total pollution and defilement of sin (as well as its guilt and criminality) has been for ever removed. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions" (Isa. 44:22). "Thou art all fair My love, there is no spot in thee" (Song 4:7). "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight" (Col. 1:21, 22). These scriptures bear witness that Christ and the Church are federally and legally one: that God the Father accepts them and views them in the Beloved as both righteous and holy; that He now sees them as without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; that He pronounces them eternally cleansed and blessed.

The faith of many of God's people apprehends the blessed fact that the guilt and condemnation of their actual transgressions was perfectly atoned for by Christ, but the faith of very few apprehends that their evil nature itself and all their corruptions have been made a legal end of by the sacrifice of Christ. They recognize by faith that God views them as cleansed from the curse of the Law, that there is "no condemnation" resting upon them; but they fail to perceive that the justice of God regards them as purged from the very presence and defilement of sin in their natures, that there is no filth within them. Yet the latter is just as true of them as is the former. Their "old man was crucified with Christ" (Rom. 6:6). They were circumcised in Christ, which is described as a "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Indwelling sin is called a "body" because it consists of various parts and members, and that "body of sin" has been "put off," yea, "destroyed" or "annulled" as the word used in Romans 6:6 signifies. Not only so, but the holiness of Christ has been imputed or placed to the account of their souls, so that God Himself declares, "the King's daughter is all glorious within" (Ps. 45:13), and not merely "without"—as covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness.

We say again that Colossians 2:11, is a Divine declaration (as is Song of Solomon 4:7, and Psalm 45:13, quoted above) which is addressed to faith and is not a description of Christian experience; though in proportion as faith really appropriates it, we experience the comfort and joy of it. Alas that some of our readers are likely to refuse that comfort and joy through suspicion and fear that a belief of the same might lead to carelessness and low views of sin. When God bids His children to "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" (Rom. 6:11)—which means exactly the same as "Reckon ye also yourselves to be circumcised indeed in Christ, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh"—He certainly is not bidding them do anything which has a dangerous tendency. He exhorts them to so regard themselves because they have good and solid ground for doing so. They had a representative being and existence in their Head when He suffered and died to remove both the guilt and the defilement of their sins. Unless we were one with Christ in His death, there could be no pardon or cleansing for us. The saints then are to regard their state before God to be what Christ's is: delivered from sin's dominion, accepted in the Father's unclouded favor.

We pointed out that the circumcising of all the male Israelites at Gilgal was a type of the circumcision of the Church. First, that all believers were legally circumcised in Christ: that at the cross the "body [or totality] of the

sins of the flesh" was put off, completely and forever removed from the sight of God's law and justice; for such is the blessed, meaning and teaching of Colossians 2:11. God's elect had a federal being, a representative existence in their Head, so that when He died unto sin, they died unto sin; and it is both the duty and privilege of faith to appropriate that truth, and rest upon that fact. Therein we have revealed the Gospel method of mortifying sin—in blessed contrast from the fleshly devices of the Papists. It must flow from our union and communion with the Lord Jesus in His death, and faith's receiving of the virtue and efficacy of it. The fountain of all true and spiritual mortification was opened at the Cross and God is very jealous of the honor of the person and work of His beloved Son, and every departure from Him and it, every attempt of the carnal mind to devise some other remedy for any of the wounds which sin has inflicted upon and within us, is doomed to certain failure. Christ alone must be looked to for deliverance, not only from the guilt of sin but from its power and pollution; yes, and from its presence too.

But it must now be pointed out that as Christ is the federal Head of His people, so also is He their vital or life-giving Head. As the natural head of the physical body influences all its members, imparting life and motion to them (for when one side of the brain becomes paralyzed, one whole side of the body does too), so Christ imparts life unto and influences the members of His mystical body, the Church. This He does by sending down His Spirit into their hearts, who communicates to them what Christ did and purchased for them. Thereby they are circumcised spiritually and experimentally. That brings us to the second branch of our subject. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28, 29).

Now at regeneration something is *removed*, as well as something imparted: "I will *take away* the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26). Though that be metaphorical language, yet is the figure easily understood. The affections are divorced from evil and united to that which is good. By the miracle of grace, God takes away the love of sin and implants a love of holiness. And how is fallen man's radical and inveterate love of sin removed from him? By the Holy Spirit's illumination, revealing to him the exceeding sinfulness of sin; by His convicting him of the enormity and heinousness of sin, striking his conscience with terror and horror at having waged war against the Almighty; by bringing him to realize that it was his sins which caused the Lord of glory to bleed and die. Then it is that the love of sin receives its death-wound in his soul. Then it is he that is "pricked in his heart" and cries out in anguish and despair "what shall I do?" (Acts 2:37). Which is only another way of saying, Then it is that his soul is spiritually and experimentally *circumcised*; when so far as his love of it is concerned, he puts off "the body of the sins of the flesh" (Col. 2:11).

The work of the Holy Spirit within the saint is many-sided, but its grand design and accomplishment is to make good unto him what Christ did for him: or to state it in other words, the Spirit imparts to the soul an actual acquaintance and effects with it a spiritual experience of what he has in Christ federally and legally. Christ died unto sin, for He was "made sin [judicially] for us," and His death was the penal death of our sin. Consequently, when the Holy Spirit is given to us He first works death in our hearts: that is, He both slays our self-righteousness, and gives a death-wound to sin in our affections. As the apostle tells us when relating one aspect of his own conversion, "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). That is, when those words "thou shalt not covet," thou shalt not even lust after or desire any unlawful object, was applied in Divine power to his soul, the awful nature and extent of his sin became a living reality in his conscience, and he died to all good opinions of himself. By the spiritual slaying of our self-righteousness and making us loathe sin, the soul is experimentally "made conformable unto Christ's death" (Phil. 3:10).

"The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed [which is to be taken generally as "all" and "the world" in the New Testament] to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (Deut. 30:6). There we have the two principal aspects of regeneration or the miracle of grace brought together: the privative side, the circumcising of the heart, when it is made willing to part with its cherished sins, when its affections are severed from all evil. That is in order to the positive side, namely, the heart's being brought to love the Lord with all its faculties and strength. That love to God, John Gill rightly pointed out is "the duty of every man," and thus of the unregenerate: so, contrary to his followers, Gill not only taught "duty faith," but "duty love"! Nevertheless, none performs this duty until God Himself circumcises the heart. Then it is that the soul of the elect is transformed from a natural man into "a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). That moral change of "putting off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9) was prefigured by the fact that literal circumcision was required to be

performed on the "eighth day" (Lev. 12:3)—the numeral which always signifies a new beginning, and thus of "the new creature."

There is yet another aspect of this subject which calls for careful attention, namely, that circumcision of the Christian which is practical and manifestative. What Christ accomplished for His people, His Spirit effects within them, and they are required to make the same apparent in their daily lives and actions. Our federal and legal circumcision in Christ was in order to our vital and experimental circumcision, for by His meritorious work on their behalf the Lord Jesus procured the gift and grace of the Spirit unto His people (Gal. 3:13, 14). Our inward circumcision by the operations of the Spirit unto His people was in order to the better qualifying us for the discharge of our responsibility and the glorifying of our God. While at regeneration the Spirit gives a death-wound unto sin in the affection of its favored subject, and while at the same time He implants in his heart an imperishable love of and longing for holiness, yet He does not then remove from him the evil principle—"the flesh" remains in his soul unto the end of his earthly pilgrimage. Consequently, there is now a ceaseless conflict within him (Gal. 5:17), and therefore he is henceforth called upon to fight the good fight of faith: to swim against the stream of his corruptions, deny self, mortify his members which are upon the earth.

The foes against which the Christian is called to wage conflict are mighty and powerful. That evil trinity, the flesh, the world, and the Devil, are relentlessly determined to destroy him. How then is he to successfully engage them in mortal contest? A great variety of answers have been returned to that question, all sort of rules and regulations prescribed; but most of them proceeded from "physicians of no value." It is too generally overlooked that this is "the fight of faith." The Devil can only be successfully resisted as we remain "steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:9). "This is the victory, that over-cometh the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). And there can be no victory over indwelling sin except by the actings of faith. And faith, my reader, always has to do with Christ: He is its grand Object (Heb. 12:2), its Sustainer (Phil. 1:21), its Strengtheners (Phil. 4:13). That is according to the appointment of the Father, who has determined that His people should be beholden to His beloved Son for everything, that they may ascribe their all unto Him, that they may place the crown of honor and glory upon His Head. Christ is the only Savior not only from the guilt and pollution of sin, but likewise from its power and ragings within us.

In this matter of practical circumcision, our mortifying of sin, man's thoughts and ways are as far below God's as in everything else—as far as the earth is below the heavens. Man supposes he must do this in order to obtain that, avoid this in order to enjoy that, abstain from evil so as to enter into good. But he knows not where to obtain strength for the doing! Contrastively, God's way is to furnish that which equips for the performance of duty: to bestow freely, that gratitude will respond gladly; to lavish love upon us, that we cannot but love Him in return; to make known what He has made Christ to be unto us, and then bids us walk worthily of such a Savior. He first makes us "light in the Lord," and then bids us "walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). He first makes us saints, then bids us act "as becometh saints" (Eph. 5:3). He makes us holy, then calls us "to be in behavior as becometh holiness" (Titus 2:3).

Immediately after Christians are bidden to likewise reckon ye also to have died indeed unto sin, but live unto God in Christ our Lord, they are exhorted "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:11, 12). Though they have died unto sin legally, sin is far from being dead within them. Though they are no longer "in the flesh" (Rom. 8:9) so far as their standing before God is concerned, yet "the flesh" is still in them. Though Christ has put away the whole of the guilt and pollution of their sins, He has not yet fully delivered them from its power—that they might prove the sufficiency of His grace, the marvels of His forbearance, and the reality of His keeping power; and that there might be opportunity for the trial, exercise, and development of their graces. But though the evil principle (or "nature") be not eradicated, the Christian is exhorted "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." In that "therefore" we have an example of the apostle's evangelical method when urging Christians to perform their duty: not in order to obtain some further blessing, but because of what they already have in Christ.

That "therefore" looks back generally over the whole preceding section (from Joshua 5:1), but has a more particular reference to Joshua 6:10, 11. The "Let not therefore sin reign" is far more than an appeal for us to exercise our wills: it is a call for faith to make one's own all that standing and state which is ours by virtue of our legal and vital union with Christ. Faith is urged to apprehend and appropriate our sinlessness in Christ by our death and resurrection in Him. That is the only right way of approach unto gaining the victory over sin in our daily lives. God will set no premium upon unbelief, but He will honor faith. Faith is called upon to recognize and reckon that sin was vanquished by Christ, and therefore it has no right to lord it over us. We are to refuse obedience to its desires and commands. We are to yield no subserviency unto the dethroned adversary of

Christ, but strive constantly against every effort it makes to gain the ascendancy over us. And in order unto strength *for* such striving, we are to draw motives and encouragement from the love of Christ, who suffered and died for us. Strength to resist sin comes from faith's eyeing Christ and love's drawing from Him incentives to mortify that which slew Him.

It is "the love of Christ" which is ever to constrain the Christian in all things. But I must first be assured of His love for me, before my affections will flow out to Him in grateful submission and service. Any service which issues from fear or is prompted by reward, is either legal or mercenary, and unacceptable to Him. Without a realization of pardoning mercy in the soul, we can gain no victory over indwelling sin. In Christ we are not only dead to sin legally, but victors over it. As faith beholds sin perfectly conquered by Christ judicially, it seeks to have fellowship with Him therein in a practical way. To repudiate long cherished sins, relinquish beloved idols, is a cutting and painful experience to nature, and therefore is it designated a circumcision and mortifying of our members; yea, so distressing is such work, our Lord likened it unto plucking out a right eye and cutting off a right hand (Matthew 5:29, 30). Yet such is not only a needful and profitable duty, but it becomes a desirable and *longed-for* one by those who truly love the Lord. The more their minds be spiritually occupied with Christ's love, the more are their affections drawn forth unto Him, and the more are their hearts brought to hate sin; and the more we hate sin, the more are we dying to it in our affections!

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Give an explanation of God's statement to Joshua in verses 8 and 9 of Joshua 5 (see Ex. 32:12), and what was the place of Gilgal called because of it?

A. W. Pink states: "To be mortified unto sin is a higher and holier mystery than to be delivered from any mere acts of sin." **What does it mean "to be mortified unto sin"?**

Reply to the following statements by marking each either True (T) or False (F):

- O.T. circumcision is a type (foreshadow) of union and communion with Christ in His death.
- Not all believers are *legally* circumcised in Christ.
- Circumcision prefigured the removal of the Christian's sin, which would be accomplished for them by the *death* of their Head.
- The N.T. "circumcision" would be made by the laying on of hands, just as in the O.T.
- Colossians 1:21, 22 is Paul's way of teaching the same truths as were given to Joshua for the Israelites.
- As yet, we who are one in Jesus Christ, cannot claim full pardon or cleansing until we have done a certain amount of good works in this life.

Take time to memorize Ezekiel 36:26. Consider the quote from A. W. Pink: "The affections are divorced from evil and united to that which is good."

Give three of the actions by the Holy Spirit that must take place before the newly regenerated (circumcised) individual can realize the fullness of "the body of the sins of the flesh" as being removed from him.

Rom. 6:6, 11 Rom. 7:9 Gal. 2:20 Phil. 3:10 Col. 2:11

Comment on the lesson text: "When the Holy Spirit is given to us He first works death in our hearts; that is, He both slays our self-righteousness, and gives a death-wound to sin in our affections."

Rom. 7:9

Comment on the lesson text: "And there can be no victory over indwelling sin except by the actings of faith. And faith, my reader, always has to do with Christ: He is its grand Object (Heb. 12:2), its Sustainer (Phil. 1:21), its Strengtheners (Phil. 4:13). That is according to the appointment of the Father, who has determined that His people should be beholden to His beloved Son for everything, that they may ascribe their all unto Him, that they may place the crown of honor and glory upon His Head. Christ is the alone Savior not only from the guilt and pollution of sin, but likewise from its power and ragings within us."

Phil. 8:3-10 Rev. 4:7-11

How is the soul made conformable to Christ’s death?

Phil. 3:8-10

Consider the following from the lesson: When our heart is truly circumcised, then we are willing to part with our cherished sins, and let our affections be severed from all evil. Then (and only then) are we able to go to the positive side of loving the Lord with all our faculties and strength. Is this the duty of every man?

Suggested memorization: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Show how faith always has to do with Christ.

Phil.1:21 Phil. 4:13 Heb 12:2

Regarding the Christian walk of faith, carefully study the following two columns of truth (reading across):

The Christian is daily to walk in newness in life	Because our old nature of sin was crucified so we should no longer be slaves of sin
We are no longer in the flesh regarding our standing before God	Yet the “flesh” is still within us
Though Christ has put away all the guilt of our sins	Yet He has not delivered us from its power; in order that-
We might prove the sufficiency of His grace, realize His forbearance & His keeping power.	It is not by an exercise of our wills only—
But a call to faith of our sinlessness in Christ.	By our death and resurrection in Him.
God WILL HONOR OUR FAITH! Therefore it has no right to lord it over us. Strength to resist sin comes from faith’s eye always on Christ	Sin was vanquished by Christ—
It is the love of Christ which is ever to	constrain the Christian in all things.

(Above derived from Romans chapter 6)

Joshua 5:13-15

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand: and Joshua went unto Him and said to Him, Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries?" (v. 13). Though this verse begins a new section of the book yet it opens with the word "And"—not simply to preserve the continuity of the narrative, but especially to link this incident with what immediately precedes. God has promised to honor those who honor Him, and Joshua had done so in the circumcising of the people and in the strict observance of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread; and now the Lord bestows a signal favor upon His servant. How much we lose by failing to render unto our God that full and implicit obedience which is His due! "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21) declares the Savior. That is exactly what He was here doing unto obedient Joshua! It is of His spiritual manifestations to the soul we deprive ourselves by disobedience.

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked." Probably he was here engaged in reconnoitering the walled city with a view to determining his best plan of campaign against it, for as Israel's leader that was his obvious duty; nor would the firm expectation that the Lord should show Himself strong on behalf of His people discharge him from the performing of it. Even when we are fully assured that God is for us and will undertake for us, it is required that we act as rational creatures, use all proper means and precautions, and put forth our best efforts. To refuse doing so on the pretext of relying wholly on God to do all for us is not faith but presumption. Though Christ was about to supply a miraculous draught of fishes, yet He bade Peter "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets" (Luke 5:4). True, we must not lean unto our own understanding nor rely on our own strength, yet both the one and the other are to be exercised by us. It was, then, while Joshua was in the path of duty discharging his responsibility, that the Lord met with him! Only while similarly engaged are we warranted in expecting His help.

"And it came to pass, that when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked." The doubling of the verb seems to intimate a twofold significance about Joshua's action—a natural and a spiritual: that after viewing the enemy's citadel, he supplicated the Lord. The usage of the verbs confirms this. The "lifted up" his eyes in a natural way, taking a comprehensive survey of things, occurs in Genesis 13:10, 14; while it is found in a spiritual sense in "unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul" (Ps. 25:1); for "looked" see Genesis 8:13 and Exodus 2:25. "And behold, a Man over against him, with His sword drawn in His hand." This represented a real test to Joshua's valor. God had bidden him "Be strong and of a good courage" (Josh. 1:6), and now he is put to the proof. There is nothing whatever here to intimate that Joshua beheld this Man in a vision, but rather that He appeared before him objectively and tangibly. Even though He had a "drawn sword in His hand," Israel's leader did not panic and flee, but boldly advanced "unto Him." We should harbor no fear while in the path of duty, but count upon the Divine promise "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

On the other hand Joshua did not rashly draw his own sword and engage this Man in conflict. Instead, he inquired, "Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries?" which challenge intimates Joshua recognized that this Stranger was no Israelite. A moment later he was to discover this Person was more than "a Man." Previously the Lord had spoken unto Joshua (Josh. 1:1; 3:7; 4:1, 15), but had made no visible manifestation of Himself unto His servant until now. Observe well how God suits the revelation of Himself unto His saints according to their circumstances and needs: to Abraham in his tent He appeared as a Traveler (Gen. 18:1, 2, 13), to Moses at the backside of the desert in a bush (Ex. 3:1, 2), to Joshua at the beginning of his campaign as "a Man of war" (cf. Exodus 15:3). In the celebrating of the Passover, Christ had been prefigured as the Lamb, slain (v. 11); here in verse 13, with drawn sword in hand, He appeared as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5). It was one of the pre-incarnate (pre-existence) appearances of the Son of God in human form, which brings before us a most blessed yet profoundly-mysterious subject, concerning which the reader will probably welcome a few details.

In respect to Their Godhead, each of the three Divine Persons is equally invisible: the Triune God is seen alone in Christ. The invisibility of the Divine Being to mortal eyes is clearly taught in Old and New Testament alike. "There shall no man see Me, and live" (Ex. 33:20), "no man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18), "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). That raises the question, How are we to understand those passages in the Old Testament where it is said "Jacob called the place Peniel [the face of God]: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:20), "and they saw the God of Israel" (Ex. 24:10). In many passages it was not only that God was seen in vision or symbol, but corporately and actually. As, for example, by Moses: "If there be a prophet

among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude ["form" or "likeness"] of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. 12:6-8). Those are what infidels term "contradictions."

The New Testament makes it known that another Person of the same essence as the Father has had for His office the making known of God unto His people: "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18), "he that hath seen Me," said Christ, "hath seen the Father" (John 14:9), "Who is the Image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15 and cf. Hebrews 1:3). The intimate communion between the two Persons appears in Exodus 23:20, 21: "Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in thy way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey Him, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in Him." Observe how such language is used there by one Person about another Person as precludes our identifying Him as a single Person; yet both are certainly Divine. Thus, we must not exclude Jehovah the Father wholly from these communications to the Old Testament saints and attribute all the messages unto the Son immediately. We are to admit the presence of the first Person per se (by Himself), as well as the second: two Persons with Divine attributes, employing the name of Jehovah in common, the one the Sender, the other the Sent—the latter communicating directly with men.

In each instance the theophanic manifestation was made by God the Son, sometimes in the form of an angel, at others in the form of man. It is the same person, whether called "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," "the God of Israel" or "the Angel of the covenant." Those mysterious appearances were so many intimations that the Son even then personated the character of the Mediator, under which He would yet reveal Himself openly. It was God the Son who thus appeared to Hagar (Gen. 16:7), Abraham (Gen. 18:1), Jacob (Gen. 32:24-30), Israel (Judg. 2:1), Gideon (Judg. 6:12-18), Manoah (Judg. 13:21). In Malachi 3:1, "the Messenger" or "Angel of the covenant" is called "The Lord of His temple." Those theophanies not only disclosed a personal distinction in the Godhead, but show the pre-existence and Deity of our Redeemer. That the Jehovah who manifested Himself again and again unto Israel in the wilderness was none other than the Mediator, is unequivocally established by 1 Corinthians 10: "for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ. . . . Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents" (vv. 4, 9). See also Hebrews 11:26.

The appearing of the Son of God to men in human form—sometimes in vision (Ezek. 1:26; Daniel 10:5, 6), sometimes in prophecy (Ps. 89:17; Daniel 7:13), sometimes tangibly (Gen. 32:24; Joshua 5:13)—were so many anticipations of the Word becoming flesh, and were in order to acquaint the Church with the Person of her Head by providing a blessed communication between them. They were endearing manifestations of Christ to His saints (and to none other!) of His love, that "His delights [even then] were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:31). It is most blessed to observe how many and varied ways the Lord Jesus took to display His personal love unto His people by vision and open revelation, by type (foreshadow) and tangible similitude, in the early ages of the world, until the time that He became incarnate and tabernacled among men. They were all designed to prepare the minds of His people for His becoming the Son of man and furnishing the supreme proof of His love for them in New Testament times. He graciously adopted such methods to indicate how much He longed for the fullness of time when He should put away their sins and bring in an everlasting righteousness for them.

"And He said, Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship and said unto Him, What saith my Lord unto His servant?" (v. 14). Joshua now discovered it was far more than "a Man" who stood before him, and therefore did he prostrate himself before Him and humbly sought His will. Had this Visitor been only an angel, he had rebuked Joshua for worshipping him (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9); but this Person accepted it, thereby evincing His Deity! This faithful servant of His now had a special visit from his Lord to inaugurate the great enterprise on which he was about to engage, namely, the putting of the inhabitants of Canaan to the sword. It was the sign and token that complete victory should be Israel's, a guarantee that success should be granted their warfare. This "Man over against him, with drawn sword in His hand" had come as no idle Spectator of the conflict, but to command and direct every movement of their battles. "As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come": at the head of the angelic hierarchy stands the Angel of the Lord, "the Captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10).

"And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so" (v. 13). Here was further proof that the One speaking to

Joshua was infinitely above the highest celestial creature, for the arch-angel's presence had not rendered the very ground whereon he stood sacred. It was in fact none other than the august Person before whom the seraphim veil their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Isa. 6:3 and cf., John 12:41). It will be noted that the token of reverence required from Joshua was identical with that demanded of Moses by "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" at the burning bush (Ex. 3:5, 6). That order for the removing of his shoes not only linked together the two incidents, but supplied a further assurance of God's promise to His servant "as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1:5). What an encouragement for faith was that! Who could stand before the Captain of the Lord's host? What was there for Israel to fear under such a Leader! Note how the Spirit again registers Joshua's obedience to the command to remove his shoes: "And Joshua did so." Nothing is too small for God's notice. Our every act is recorded by Him—how solemn! how blessed!

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Following are statements from A. W. Pink's teachings declaring several pertinent truths found in this section. After each one of these statements you are to write the reference of a Bible verse that verifies that particular truth. Example: God has promised to honor those who honor Him. John 14:21

Joshua, as an obedient servant of his Lord, had no fear when the Man with a drawn sword appeared unto him. _____

The Lord presented Himself to Joshua at the beginning of his campaign as a "Man of war." _____

The invisibility of the Divine Being (God) to mortal eyes is clearly taught in Old and New Testament alike. _____

What is the meaning of theophanic manifestation, and which person of the Godhead made these manifestations? _____

Give at least one illustration (Scripture reference) from the O.T. that begins to show us the coming Son of God as the Mediator. _____

Find two verses, one in 1 Corinthians and one in Hebrews, that show Jehovah, who manifested Himself again and again unto Israel in the wilderness was none other than the Mediator. _____

There were many appearances of the Son of God in anticipation of the Word becoming flesh, and they were given to acquaint the Church with the Person of her Head, in the knowledge of His many blessed characteristics, and in particular His love. **Give a reference (or more) that clearly demonstrates that this "Man" who stood before Joshua was more than an angel—in fact He was Deity!**

The Captain of the Lord's host told Joshua to taken off his shoe, because of the place where he stood. **Compare Isaiah 6:1-3 and John 12:41 to tell us why that place was sacred.**

God gave a tremendous statement of promise to Joshua in Joshua 1:5. Have you found that same encouragement of faith in your understanding of all His promises for you?

Joshua 6:1-2

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (Josh. 6:2). Very blessed is that. The Lord graciously made free with His servant, and before the campaign opened assured him of the complete success of the same. But let us not fail to call to

mind that which had immediately preceded this favor, for there is an inseparable moral connection between them, which it behooves us to note. Joshua himself, the priests, and the whole nation had exercised an exemplary obedience to the Divine will and had manifested a real concern for the Divine glory—in circumcising the men and in celebrating the Passover feast. It is ever God's way to make free with us when everything is right between Him and our souls. Thus we have illustrated and exemplified here yet another effect that always follows when there is an ungrieved Spirit in the midst of a company of saints. Not only does He awe those who are without, but Divine communications are freely vouchsafed unto those who are within! That ought to be a normal and regular experience, and not an occasional and extraordinary one. As the Lord Jesus declared, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21).

We have said that this confronting of Jericho "securely shut up" (Josh. 6:1) was a challenge to faith, and that God acts "according to" our faith. But faith must ever have a foundation to rest upon, and here one was afforded the same. That word "See, I have given unto thine hand Jericho," was instructive and emphatic. "See" was a definite call to view things with the eye of the spirit rather than that of the body: contemplate this obstacle by faith and not by carnal reason. Just as at the Red Sea the word was, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you today . . . the Lord shall fight for you" (Ex. 14:13, 14). Yet they saw not that "salvation" or deliverance outwardly until they had, in faith and obedience, complied with the Divine order, "speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward" (v. 15). They were required to "see" God's promised deliverance by faith before it was accomplished unto outward sight! It was the same thing here: "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho." Have you, my reader, thus "seen" that blessed One of whom previously you had only "heard" (Job 42:5)? Have you thus "seen Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27)? Have you thus "seen your final and complete victory over sin and death"? Have you thus seen that place which your Redeemer has gone to prepare for you? That is what faith is: "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1)!

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (Josh. 6:2). That gracious declaration was not only a challenge unto the exercise of faith, and an evidence of God's bounty, but it was also designed to subdue all the workings of self-sufficiency. The proud flesh remains in all God's people, and the best of them are prone to take unto themselves that credit and praise which belong alone unto God. But that "See [take note of, keep steadily in mind, that] I have given into thine hand Jericho" was meant to exclude all boasting. It was not only a word to encourage and animate, but also one to humble, signifying that the success of this venture must be ascribed unto the Lord Himself, apart from whom "we can do nothing" (John 15:5). Victory over our enemies must never be ascribed to our own prowess: rather are we to declare, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, for Thy truth's sake" (Ps. 115:1). Jericho was Israel's by Divine donation, and therefore its capture was to be attributed wholly unto the God of all grace. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7). What need there is for that truth to be pressed today upon a boastful and vainglorious Christendom!

When the people of Lystra saw the healing of the cripple, they sought to render Divine homage unto Barnabas and Paul, which, when they beheld, "rent their clothes and ran in among the people crying and saying, Sirs why do ye this thing? we also are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14:14, 15). O for more of that self-effacing spirit. How dishonoring it is unto God to have so many professing Christians eulogizing worms of the dust and using such expressions as "He is a great man," "a remarkable preacher," "a wonderful Bible teacher." What glory doth the Lord get therefrom? None. No wonder the unction of the Spirit is now so generally withheld! Moreover, nothing is so apt to destroy a preacher's usefulness as to puff him up with flattery; certainly nothing is so insulting to the Spirit and more calculated to cause Him to withdraw His blessing than such idolatrous man-worship. How much better to say, "Such a preacher is highly favored of the Lord in being so gifted by Him." "The pastor was much helped by God in his sermon this morning." "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17), and therefore it behooves us to thankfully acknowledge the Giver and freely render unto Him undivided praise for every blessing which He vouchsafes us through His servants, whether it comes in an oral or written form.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Quoting A. W. Pink: "It is ever God's way to make free (i.e., "bless" or "deliver") with us when everything is right between Him and our souls." **From the text of the lesson (and God's dealings in your own life), give the explanation of this statement. Please memorize John 14:21.**

In the wonderful Vine Chapter, John 15, Jesus says to us: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (v. 5). **How strong is the tendency in all of us to attempt to take credit when something good is accomplished? Think of the vine in the garden, as Jesus taught—can the fruit of that vine claim credit for its being – apart from the nourishment and protective strength of the vine?**

What makes us so prone to take credit for what the Lord has done?

Prov. 3:5-7

Joshua 6:3-5

"And ye shall compass the city: all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 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. And it shall come to pass, that when they have made a long blast with the rams' horns, 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" (vv. 3-5). In view of the preceding verse, that may strike some of our readers as a very strange requirement. If the Lord had definitely given Jericho into the hands of Joshua, why were such elaborate preparations as these necessary for its overthrow? Let those who feel the force of any such difficulty weigh attentively what we are about to say. In reality, those verses exemplify and illustrate a principle which it is most important for us to apprehend. That principle may be stated thus: the disclosure of God's gracious purpose and the absolute certainty of its accomplishment in no wise renders needless the discharge of our responsibilities. God's assuring us of the sureness of the end does not set aside the indispensability of the use of means. Thus, here again, as everywhere, we see preserved the balance of Truth.

So far from the Divine promises being designed to promote inactivity on our part, they are given as a spur unto the same, to assure us that if our efforts square with the Divine Rule, they will not be in vain. The gracious declaration that God had given Jericho into the hand of Israel did not discharge them from the performance of their duty, but was to assure them of certain success in the same. That principle operates throughout in the accomplishment of the Divine purpose. The truth of election is not revealed in order to license a spirit of fatalism, but to rejoice our hearts by the knowledge that the whole of Adam's race is not doomed to destruction. Nor are the elect mechanically delivered from destruction apart from any action of theirs, for though they be "chosen to salvation," yet it is "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth" (2 Thess. 2:13)—unless the Truth be embraced by them no salvation would be theirs, for "he that believeth not shall be damned." Likewise the revealed truth that Christ will yet "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Isa. 53), that "all that the Father giveth Him shall come to Him" (John 6:37), does not render needless the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, for that preaching is the very means which God has appointed and which the Holy Spirit makes effectual in drawing unto Christ those for whom He died. We must not divide what God has joined together.

It is the sundering of those things which God has connected—wherein He has made the one dependent upon another—which has wrought so much evil and caused so many useless divisions among His people. For example, in the twin truths of Divine preservation and Christian perseverance. Our assurance of glorification in no wise sets aside the need for care and caution, self-denial and striving against sin on our part. There is a narrow way to be trodden if Life is to be reached (Matthew 7:14), a race to be run if the prize is to be secured (Heb. 12:1; Philippians 3:14). We are indeed "kept by the power of God, yet "through faith" (1 Pet. 1:5) and not irrespective of its exercise; and faith eyes and makes use of the Divine precepts equally with the Divine promises, and heeds God's admonitions and warnings as well as appropriates His comforts and encouragements. God has nowhere declared that He will preserve the reckless and presumptuous. He preserves in faith and holiness, and not in carnality and worldliness. Christ has guaranteed the eternal security of a certain company, but He was careful to first describe the marks of those who belong to it: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27, 28), but no such

assurance is given unto any who disregard His voice and follow a course of self-will and self-pleasing. God's promise of Heaven to the believer is far from signifying that he will not have to fight his way there.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

We know that the Lord had promised to give Jericho into Joshua's hands; why then were such specific and unusual preparations required before this would come to pass? Explain what A. W. Pink was trying to say when he used the following phrases: "discharge of our responsibilities", "use of means", "balance of Truth."

Joshua 6:6-11

When assured that the Lord is not only for us but with us, fear gives place to holy confidence. Deeply important is it for the servant of Christ not only to adhere strictly to the terms of His commission, but also to rest upon His blessed promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Equally necessary for the rank and file of God's people to lay hold of that word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Joshua had received personal assurance of this by the appearing to him of the "Captain of the Lord's host" (Josh. 5:13-15), and by the prominence accorded the ark: the whole congregation were given a visible reminder of the same fact. All were to move with their eyes fixed upon the Captain of their salvation, for none could stand before Him.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

A word of assurance: "God's purpose will never lead us where His grace cannot keep us." **When our faith has grown to pure confidence in our Lord, what "negative" emotion must leave us?**

Joshua 6:12-27

This incident of the capture of Jericho is one which should be carefully pondered and taken to heart by all the people of God today, especially so by His servants, for if it be so it will supply a grand tonic to faith, and effectually counteract that spirit of gloom which now so widely obtains. Alas, the majority of professing Christians are far more occupied with what are called "the signs of the times" than they are with the One in whose hand all "times and seasons" are (Acts 1:7). They are walking by sight, rather than by faith; engaged with the things seen, rather than with those which are unseen. The consequence is that many of them are cast down and dispirited over present conditions, and only too often the preacher is apt to regard the situation as hopeless. But that is to be of the same temper as the unbelieving spies, who said "We be not able to go up against the people: for they are stronger than we" (Num. 13:31), magnifying the difficulties which confronted them and yielding to a spirit of defeatism.

If the minister of the Gospel be occupied with the smallness of his congregation, and their unresponsiveness to his preaching; if he dwell unduly upon the lack of interest on the part of the young people, and listens to the prophets of gloom, who ever give the darkest possible interpretation to things, then he may well be dejected. But if his thoughts be formed by and his own soul fed upon the Word of God, then he will discover that there is no cause whatever for dismay. Scripture nowhere teaches that God is seeking to convert the world, rather does it declare that He is visiting the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). When giving instructions to His servants, Christ bade them "take no anxious thought," for He would have their hearts at rest, trusting, in the living God to supply their every need; and also said "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:22, 32). He ever sought to strengthen their confidence in the invincibility of God's purpose, declaring "all that the Father giveth Me, shall come unto Me" (John 6:37).

Instead of perplexing his mind with useless speculations about the ten toes of Daniel's colossus, the business of the minister of the Gospel is to faithfully carry out the commission which he has received from his Master (Matthew 28:19, 20). Instead of wasting time upon the newspapers and listening in to the wireless in order to ascertain the latest threats of the Kremlin or menaces of the Vatican, let him give more earnest heed to that injunction "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,

rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Instead of being so absorbed with the activities of Satan's emissaries, let him mix faith with that heartening assurance of the Most High, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10, 11).

The Word of God is not outdated: "heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Then preach that Word in its purity, in its fullness, with implicit confidence in its sufficiency. The Gospel of Christ is not obsolete, but is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Then proclaim it, realizing that the curse of God rests on all who preach any other (Gal. 1:8). Do you reply, I have, in my poor way, sought to preach the Gospel as faithfully and earnestly as I know how: but so far as I can see, it has been fruitless, and I am thoroughly discouraged. Then take heed, we beg you, to the incident which is here before us. Get down on your knees right now and beg God to bless this article unto you. Fervently implore Him to open your heart to receive the same. Ponder afresh those words "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30). Surely then "all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23)!

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

For your encouragement in Christ, and faith that cannot be shaken, prayerfully read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18, leaving all your burdens with Him. Memorize verse 7 of that passage.

Joshua 7:1-26

The seventh chapter of Joshua presents to us a drastically different scene from those which have engaged our attention in the previous chapters, yea, so startling is the contrast that we are reminded of that old adage, "Truth is stranger than fiction." Up to this point everything had gone smoothly and blessedly for Israel, but now their progress is suddenly halted. Hitherto we have witnessed them, under God, going from strength to strength and glory to glory. Strict obedience to the Divine commands had marked their every movement; here, the very reverse obtained. They had duly attended to the essential matter of circumcision and had kept the appointed Passover feast. On His part, the Lord had wrought wondrously for them, bringing them through the Jordan dry-shod and overthrowing the principal fortress of the enemy without a blow having to be struck by Israel. But a startling contrast now confronts us: immediately following the memorable victory at the formidable Jericho, Israel suffering humiliating defeat at the much weaker town of Ai. A member of the tribe of Judah had committed a grievous crime, and the whole nation suffering in consequence. As there was a serpent in Eden and a Judas among the apostles, so there was an Achan in the midst of an obedient Israel.

A series of sad failures are set before us in the passage we are about to consider. The whole nation is thus depicted, "The hearts of the people melted and became as water" (Josh. 7:5). That dejection of God's people was occasioned by the cowardice shown by three thousand of their armed men, who had "fled before the men of Ai," thirty-six of them being slain as the enemy chased them (v. 5). That had been preceded by the remiss conduct of Joshua himself, who, instead of seeking counsel from the Lord, had acted upon the carnal advice of his spies (v. 4). The men whom Joshua had sent out to reconnoiter Ai so far forgot their place that, upon their return, instead of making a simple report, they presumed to inform their commander-in-chief of the policy which they deemed it best for Israel to follow on this occasion (v. 3). But before all this, the anger of the Lord had been kindled against Israel by the sin of Achan at Jericho (v. 1). *That* was what explained all which followed: the cause of which they were the consequences. One decayed apple will soon infect a whole box of sound ones; or, to change the figure for a more Scriptural one, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5:6).

In the light of history there is nothing at all unusual in the sad failures mentioned above, for poor human nature is "as unstable as water" (Gen. 49:4). Yet in view of the fact that this generation was far and away the best which Israel ever had, and that Jehovah Himself was their Captain (Josh. 5:15) in the conquest of Canaan, it does seem strange that such a deplorable lapse now occurred. How are we to account for the Divine permission, yea, fore-ordination of the same? From the general teaching of Scripture, may we not say that the Lord suffered this grievous defection for such reasons as these? First, to teach all succeeding

generations of His people that they are never in greater danger of yielding to the pride of their hearts than when the Lord's power has been most signally displayed on their behalf. Second, to exemplify the basic truth that, if we are to enjoy a continuation of God's governmental blessing, we must remain steadfast in our subjection to His holy will. Third, to set before His saints a lasting warning that the Holy One is jealous of His glory, and will not condone sin in His own people. Fourth, to emphasize that nothing can be concealed from Him: that the most secret actions of an individual fall beneath His observation (Prov. 15:3).

How ominous is the initial "But" of Joshua 7:1—the first chapter of our book opening thus: sad intimation of what follows, and well suited to point the contrast with the closing verse of chapter 6. There we read, "So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame was noised throughout all the country"; now we are told, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass . . . for Achan . . . took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel." The contrast is a double one: the Lord was with Joshua, but here His anger was kindled against Israel. The consequence of the former was that Joshua's fame was proclaimed abroad; the sequel of the latter is that he was humiliated and lies on his face before the ark (Josh. 7:5). How often are the brightest prospects dimmed and the most promising projects hindered by sin! It was so with king Saul, and later with Solomon. Thus with Israel's progress in the conquest of Canaan: victory at Jericho gives place to defeat before Ai. How this shows us that a time of success is when we most need to be on our guard, and "rejoice with trembling" (Ps. 2:11). The moon never suffers an eclipse except at a time when it is at the full! Grace is needed by us to use the grace God gives us and to save us from turning His blessings into curses.

Here, then, is another most important practical lesson for us to lay to heart in connection with the possessing of our possessions and the present enjoyment of our spiritual heritage. When God has vouchsafed light from His Word and opened up to us some passage, beware lest we become conceited and attribute the same to our own perspicuity. When victory is granted over some lust or deliverance from a powerful temptation, boast not, but rather endeavor to become more watchful. When God gives the pastor souls for his hire and prospers his labors, humbling grace must be diligently sought that he may not cherish the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar and say, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power!" (Dan. 4:30). Remember that solemn warning, "But Jeshurun [Israel] waxed fat and wicked: thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness: then he forsook God" (Deut. 32:15). We need to be much on our guard and fight against the Laodicean self-sufficiency and self-glorying of this evil day. Unless we be kept "little in our own sight" (1 Sam. 15:17) and "poor in spirit," the overthrow of some Jericho in our experience will be followed by an ignominious defeat before an Ai!

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Human nature is always the same—Satan is always ready to tempt us to pride, after the Lord has shown His power in our lives, whereby we experienced victory. **Read the following verses, and memorize at least one of them that is pertinent to your understanding: Psalm 2:11, 12; Proverbs 16:18 and Proverbs 29:23.**

Joshua 8:1-35

"So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose out thirty thousand men of valor, 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" (vv. 3, 4). To how much trouble had Israel now put themselves in order to overthrow Ai! Ah, my reader, it requires no little pains in order to return to the path of blessing once we have departed from the same! In various ways God makes us feel the folly of leaning unto our own understanding or acting in self-will, and shows us something of what we bring upon ourselves by missing His best. Observe too how precisely the Lord corrected Israel's failures, making them reverse their former policy. When the spies returned from the reconnoitering of Ai, they said unto Joshua, "Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai." That was in direct variance with the pattern which God gave to Israel in Joshua 6:3, and to which He now required them to return—"take all the people of war with thee" (Josh. 8:1). The closing words of the spies "for they be few" in Joshua 7:3 showed they regarded Ai with contempt, as an easy prey, and the proposal that a single battalion of their fighting men would suffice was manifestly the language of conceit.

The Lord countered their pride by appointing a much more humbling method for capturing Ai than the one used in the overthrow of Jericho. There, Israel's army had marched openly around the walls of that fortress; here, where a smaller and weaker city was involved, the humiliating strategy of a secret ambush was assigned in order for an attack from the rear. In the latter case, Joshua had failed to spread before the Lord the suggestion of the spies and seek counsel of Him, and disastrous was the consequence. The result was that he had to spend many hours "on his face" before the ark ere an explanation of Israel's repulse was vouchsafed him; and later, he had to bow again before the Lord ere instructions were given for the new plan of campaign (Josh. 8:1). The servant of God must not follow his own devices, but rather act according to the Word of his Master, for only then is he justified in counting upon His blessing. It is blessed to observe that however humbling the means which God now required to be used, both Joshua and those under him complied with the instructions God gave them. Having received an answer of peace from the Lord and an intimation of His will for them, they acted promptly in carrying out of the same.

"So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai." That was not only an act of obedience, but, we doubt not, should also be regarded as one of faith—in response to Jehovah's "See! I have given into thy hand the King of Ai." Should any one be disposed to ask, "But since the Lord had made such an announcement, why was it necessary for Joshua and the whole of his army to go to so much trouble?" he would betray his ignorance both of God's sovereignty and of man's accountability. God's predestination of the end does not render needless our use of means: rather does the former include the latter, and is realized by the same. When the Lord informed Hezekiah through one of His prophets that He would "add unto his days fifteen years" (Isa. 38:5), that certainly did not imply that the king might henceforth dispense with food, drink and sleep; any more than God's assurance to Paul that there should be "no loss of life" of the ship's contingent rendered it the less imperative to abstain from recklessness and to use means for their preservation (Acts 27:22-24, 31). God's gracious assurances unto His people are not designed to promote indolence, but instead to stimulate and to encourage diligence, knowing that "our labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

While it be true that unless God gives the victory no efforts of ours can possibly achieve it, nevertheless it is our bounden duty to make every effort. Though the fall of Ai was certain, yet Israel were called upon to discharge their responsibility. God's promises to us are not given to induce slothfulness, but to be a spur unto obedience to His precepts. Faith is no substitute for diligent and zealous work, but is to act as the director of the same. Hope is not to absolve us from the discharge of our obligations, but is to inspire unto the performing of the same. It is because victory is sure in the end that the soldiers of Christ are called upon to fight: that assurance is to be their incentive, from which they are to draw their energy. The genuine exercise of faith has a powerful influence both upon the Christian's efforts to mortify the old man and to vivify the new. This is clear from Romans 6:11, and what follows: we must by the reckoning of faith account ourselves legally one with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection before we can expect any success in subduing our lusts or developing our graces (v. 13). Faith is indeed the victory "that overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4), yet as the previous verse clearly shows, it is a faith which is operative in the keeping of God's commandments.

Thus, while Israel were called upon to exercise faith in the Divine assurance of success, yet they were also required to adhere strictly to the strategy which God appointed. Very definite were the orders Joshua gave unto the thirty thousand men who were to fall upon the city from the rear: "Ye shall lie in wait against the city, behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready" (Josh. 8:4): they were told where to go, what to do, and how to comport themselves. Equally explicit are the instructions of the Christian in connection with the waging of his spiritual warfare, and the measure of his success will very largely be determined by how closely he sticks to them. Thus, after bidding believers "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (which can only be by the exercise of faith upon Him), the apostle bade them "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil" (Eph. 6:10, 11), which plainly imports that unless they heeded his injunction they would fall before the enemy's artifices. This is the more noticeable, because after enforcing his exhortation by informing us of the formidable forces which are under Satan's control (Eph. 5:12), he repeats, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having overcome all [margin] to stand" (Eph. 5:13). God has provided the armor, but we have to take unto us and "put on" the same; and not merely a part of it, but "the whole."

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Do you agree that trusting God for His power and direction to subdue our enemies—also calls for us to diligently pursue the accompanying work to which He has called us to be obedient? Can you think of an illustration?

Joshua 9:1-17

We often point out in these pages that God does not work according to a stereotyped plan, but that infinite variety marks His operations. The same is true, in a lesser degree, of the Devil—who is ever a marked imitator. He too acts not uniformly. If one plan or method fails he always has another in reserve, as the whole history of Christendom has repeatedly demonstrated. He altered his tactics with Christ: first seeking to slay Him while a babe, then almost posing as an angel of light when tempting Him, and then as the dragon of darkness (Luke 22:53) he bruised His heel. So too with the followers of the Lord Jesus: first openly and directly persecuting, then flattering and fawning upon, and then corrupting by unholy alliances. The opposition and cruelty of Nero and other Roman emperors failing, the patronage of Constantine and the making of Christianity the state religion succeeded in accomplishing Satan's design; just as centuries later the spirituality and power of the great Reformation under Luther was curtailed when the German princes gave support to it because of the political liberty which it promised them. No wonder the apostle declares that—with the Word of Truth in our hands—"we are not ignorant of Satan's devices" (2 Cor. 2:11), and with the records of the last nineteen centuries before us there is still less excuse for our being unacquainted with his strategy.

That which is narrated in Joshua 9:3-6, of the dishonest Gibeonites gives us a typical picture of graceless professors seeking to "join" the people of God. They knew there was no likelihood of their desire being realized if they presented themselves before Israel in their true character, so they resorted to guile in order to deceive them. "They did work craftily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors" (v. 4). It must not be overlooked that while Satan is very subtle the flesh also is exceedingly artful, fully capable of playing many parts in order to gain its own ends. Behold how it moved Jacob to cover himself with a hairy skin and masquerade as Esau, king Saul to disguise himself when he went to the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28:8), the wife of Jeroboam feigning herself to be another when she visited the prophet Ahijah, whose eyes were set by reason of age (1 Kings 14:1-6), and the wolves in sheeps' clothing of Christ's day. In his second epistle Paul warned the Corinthians against "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13), and Jude complained that ungodly men had "crept in unawares" into the assemblies of the saints (Jude 1:4). The churches are full of such today.

The twofold reaction of the Canaanites to the notable victories which the Lord gave Israel at Jericho and Ai, namely the determination of the kings to employ massed force (Josh. 9:1, 2), and the deception which the Gibeonites practiced upon them (Josh. 9:3-6), which illustrates the dual character in which Satan opposes the people of God and the methods he employs therein—as the roaring lion seeking to devour, as the subtle serpent using guile. Both Scriptural and ecclesiastical history demonstrate that the latter is far more dangerous and successful than the former. When open persecution fails either to exterminate or intimidate the faithful, Satan resorts to his secret wiles, which only too often corrupt their testimony. Nor is the reason for this hard to discover. Not only is the former method much more easily detected, but fierce opposition casts believers upon the Lord for enabling strength and fortitude, and thus proves a blessing in disguise to them, whereas they are very apt to be less on their guard against Satan's sly artifices, and if pride persuades them that they are too well established in the Truth to be misled by error or taken in by hypocrites, they more easily fall victims of his snares.

What has just been pointed out receives forceful exemplification in the incident we are pondering. By God's enablement Joshua and his men made short work of the combined efforts of the kings and their vast armies (Josh. 11:1-12), but, as 2 Samuel 21:1 shows, the descendants of these Gibeonites were long a thorn in Israel's side. But the fault was entirely their own: due (as we shall see) to their unwatchfulness and self-sufficiency. It was a solemn example of that which our Lord had in mind when He said, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat" (Matthew 13:24, 25). In His interpretation, Christ stated that "the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one" (v. 38). That is precisely what happened here. Let it be carefully noted that the enemy did not introduce among the wheat darnel or thistles, but "tares," which are a spurious imitation of the wheat, and so closely alike in appearance that the one cannot

be distinguished from the other until the time of harvest. So these Gibeonites came not in their true characters, but posed as those who had come from a far country.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

What are the two pronounced methods by which Satan opposes and deceives the people of God?

What are the two creatures of the animal kingdom that the Bible uses to describe him?

When the Devil (Satan) is mentioned in the Bible, is he ever an initiator of anything? Was he quite active in attempting to hinder and/or destroy Christ? Name some of the ways. How can we make sure that we are not ignorant of his devices and traps?

Joshua 9:18-27

"And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel" (v. 18). Here is further evidence that the rulers in Israel were back again on resurrection ground—in communion with the Lord, conducting themselves as regenerated men. The fear of God was upon them, and they acted accordingly! Had they now been walking according to the flesh, they had argued that "circumstances alter cases," that because the Gibeonites had lied to them they were now automatically released from keeping their part of the compact. The carnal mind would reason that a covenant was surely not binding when one of the parties entering into it had acted under false pretences. But no such corrupt principles regulated these princes. Their word was their bond. "Though we have been imposed upon, we must not think ourselves at liberty to retaliate: solemn engagements made, even to our own hurt, must be conscientiously adhered to" (Thomas Scott). Two wrongs never make one right, and for a child of God to descend unto the sinful level of worldlings is doubly heinous. The deception practiced by these Canaanites did not excuse Israel's hasty action: they had been foolish in so rashly committing the nation, and now they must suffer the consequences of the same.

"And the congregation murmured at the princes" (v. 18). The fault was entirely their own that Israel's leaders had been ensnared by such a piece of trickery, and though by grace they had respect unto the Lord's honor and refused to perjure themselves, yet they were made to feel the evil results of failing to "ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord" (v. 14). There is no previous mention of "murmuring" on the part of any of the Israelites; but now their unity was disturbed! This was no casual incident, but a Divine providence, designed to speak loudly unto those who had ears to hear. It was a Divine chastisement, an outward mark of the Lord's displeasure—yet how mild a one! The immediate reason for this "murmuring" is fairly obvious: the soldiers were chagrined at being withheld from seizing and plundering these cities; nevertheless, had not Joshua and the princes offended against the Lord in acting on their own judgment instead of waiting upon Him for directions, His restraining hand had prevented such an exercise of the carnal cupidity of the rank and file of the people, and no spirit of discontent and division would have been shown. Though God judicially pardons our failures, in His governmental ways He often makes us to eat the fruits of our folly.

"But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them" (v. 19). It is blessed to behold the harmony and unanimity of the princes, that none of them were weakened by the opposition which was encountered. It was not only their own word which was involved, but their word under Divine oath, and to violate that would both perjure themselves and grossly discredit their God in the estimation of the heathen. It can hardly be doubted that the congregation itself must have known of their oath, but charity (Christian love) requires us to believe that they had temporarily forgotten it. By way of illustration we may see in this murmuring of the congregation against these princes that, when either religious or political leaders are actuated and regulated by holy and lofty principles, it must not be expected that those under them will appreciate and seek to further their motives, but rather will criticize and oppose. Blessed it is to see how these princes stood their ground, fearing God and not the people. And the Lord honored them therein, for no further murmurings against them are mentioned—the Lord subduing the people's lusts!

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

When the people of Gibeon were discovered for who they really were, did that shame the leaders for their lack of consulting the Lord when these people first came to them in their guile? What strong lesson does this teach us?

Note: Joshua actually made a covenant with the Gibeonites (they were sworn to before God Himself), and had Joshua broken it, it would have been tantamount to breaking a promise to God, and would eventually bring God's wrath upon them (see Ezekiel 17:12-19).

Joshua 10:1-7

As its opening verse shows, the tenth of Joshua is closely connected with chapters 6, 8, and 9, and this needs to be duly heeded by us if we are to discover and appropriate the spiritual lessons which it has for the Lord's people today—which should ever be one of our principal quests when reading God's Word. In chapters 6 and 8, we have an account of Israel's conquest of the cities of Jericho and Ai, but in the ninth something quite different is presented. Following the fighting at Ai there came a lull, and the capitulation of the Gibeonites unto Israel without any strenuous efforts on the part of the latter. It is often thus in the experience of Christians. When they have been particularly active in engaging the enemy and a notable victory has been obtained, the Lord grants a brief season of rest and comparative quietness. Yet they are not to conclude therefrom that the hardest part of their conflict is now over, so that it is safe for them to relax a little. What we are about to ponder indicates the contrary, and warns us that Satan does not readily admit defeat. Not only was Israel's warfare far from being ended, but a more determined and concerted resistance was to be encountered. Instead of having to meet the force of a single king, the massed armies of five of them had now to be defeated. The same thing appears in the history of our Savior: the farther His gracious ministry proceeded, the greater and fiercer the opposition met with. Sufficient for the disciple to be as his Master.

"Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek 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" (Josh. 10:1, 2). Once more we would note the very varied effects upon different ones of what they had "heard" of Israel's exploits, and how some of them attributed their successes unto Jehovah, while others did not so. Rahab (Josh. 2:9-11) and the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:9) were examples of the former, and the kings of Joshua 9:1, and this Adonizedek of the latter. The king of Jerusalem, despite his high-sounding name, gave God no place in his thoughts; yet he was thoroughly alarmed at Israel's progress. His fear was cumulative. He was rendered uneasy at the tidings of Jericho's overthrow, still more so at the news of the destruction of Ai; but when he and his subjects learned of the Gibeonites having concluded a league of peace with Joshua, "they feared greatly"—most probably because he had counted on *their* considerable support in resisting these aggressors.

We would also attentively heed the Spirit's emphasis here on the time-mark: "It came to pass, *when* Adonizedek . . . heard." There is nothing meaningless or superfluous in the Scriptures, and it is by noting such a detail as this that we often obtain the key which opens to us the spiritual significance of what follows. In this instance the immediate sequel was the banding together of four others with the king of Jerusalem against Gibeon, and in the light of the closing verses of chapter 9, the typical force of this is not difficult to perceive. It is when sinners renounce the service of their former master, and the friendship of the world, in order to make their peace with God and join interests with His people, that they must be prepared to encounter persecution from the ungodly. That is why the Saviour bade all would-be disciples of His to sit down first and "count the cost" (Luke 14:28-33), and His servant warned believers, "*Marvel* not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). In Adonizedek's determination to slay the Gibeonites we have adumbrated the inveterate enmity of the serpent against the Redeemer's "seed." Previously, while Satan keepeth his palace, "his goods are in peace" (Luke 11:21), but when he *loses* any of his captives, his rage against them knows no bounds.

Ere passing on let us ponder one other detail in our opening verse, namely Israel's "utter destruction" of Jericho and Ai, for a most important lesson is inculcated by that adjective. In its application to the spiritual warfare of the Christian it tells us that we must be ruthlessly thorough in the work of mortification. No half measures are to be taken against the things which hinder the present possession of our heritage. There must be no compromising with our lusts, no trifling with temptation, no flirting with the world. True, inward corruptions will strongly resist our onslaughts upon them, as the men of Ai did when Israel came against it. For a time the king of Ai had the better of the contest, so that Israel were dismayed; but they did not abandon the

fight, instead they humbled themselves before the Lord, and He graciously undertook for them. Not that they were released from the discharge of their responsibilities, so that they could *passively witness* His operations on their behalf. No, indeed. They were required to perform their duty and employ different tactics. Accordingly, as they implicitly followed His instruction, the Lord prospered them and Ai was utterly destroyed": in other words, complete victory was theirs.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

In reading this lesson in the book of Joshua, and in looking at the attacks on our Lord while He was on earth, what should our attitude be when a new form of trial comes into our lives? From where do we draw our spiritual strength and our peace?

Quoting from the lesson: "No half measures are to be taken against the things which hinder the present possession of our heritage. There must be no compromising with" Please fill in this sentence with what you have experienced in your own spiritual battles.

Joshua 10:8-11

"And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord 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" (Josh. 10:11). It will be recalled that when the Gibeonites made their peace with Joshua and entered into a league with him, five kings of the Amorites gathered their armies together and made war upon their capital. They sent to Joshua an urgent appeal for help, which he answered at once by marching at the head of his men through the night. Coming upon the Canaanites unexpectedly, and probably before they had made their dispositions and appointed sentries, they threw them into consternation. Moreover, "the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter," thereby signifying His approval of Israel's sparing the lives of the Gibeonites by now giving them the most glorious victory in all their wars. As the remaining Amorites fled the Lord employed against them the artillery of heaven, which demonstrates how hopeless is the case of those who have Him for their enemy.

In casting down the great stones of hail upon the Amorites we may observe what a *variety of means* God uses in executing His will. In overwhelming the antediluvian (before the flood) world He employed a deluge of rain; in the destruction of Sodom, fire from heaven; in the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts at the Red Sea, by removing the wheels of their chariots and drowning them. Therein we behold His sovereignty exemplified, as it is too in ministering unto His people. This was not the first time God made the hail a messenger of judgment, for He did so in the seventh plague upon Egypt (Ex. 9:22-26). Many of the premillenarians (those that believe that Christ's second coming ushers in the millennium) believe that "hail" will be one of the weapons again used by God in His judgments on the earth (Rev. 16:21). This awful visitation on the Canaanites had been foretold: "Hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved . . . against the day of battle and war?" (Job 38:22, 23)—Job was probably written before Joseph's birth.

There are three things which were singular and striking about the hail in Joshua 10. First, its great size: second, its force and efficacy—being like bullets from a machine gun, slaying men outright. Occasionally, we have read of hail of unusual dimensions, which did great damage to crops and cattle, but not of it effecting such wholesale slaughter of human beings as on this occasion. Third, its *discrimination*—*none* of the Israelites being killed! This is the feature which most evidently evinced the miraculous nature of this hail. Though Joshua's men must have been in close combat with the Canaanites and more or less mixed up with them as they pursued them, none of the deadly missiles fell on God's people. This was even more remarkable than what occurred under the seventh plague, for whereas the Lord then sent it throughout all the land of Egypt, none fell in Goshen (Ex. 9:26); but here it fell all round the Israelites, yet without one of them being harmed—illustrating that word, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (Ps. 91:7).

There is probably an allusion to this miracle and others of a similar nature in Psalm 18:13, 14, both passages speaking of "The Lord vanquished them . . . and chased them," and mentioning the hail. There was no escaping His wrath. Hopeless is the plight of all who provoke Him. When the appointed hour of His

vengeance arrives, none can deliver himself. Thus will it be with everyone who mocks Him and persecutes His people. They shall discover, to their eternal undoing, that it is "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." That more died from the hailstones than Israel slew with the sword made good God's word unto Joshua, "Thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God He shall fight for you" (Deut. 3:21, 22). And to Him may the Christian look in his spiritual warfare, and "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

"More died from the hailstones than Israel slew with the sword." Also, note from v. 9 that Joshua had marched all night, having come from Gilgal. **Do you suppose that God, seeing his weariness, decided to do the fighting for him?** Indeed, our God is so powerful and wondrous in all His ways, and He will honor those who fully trust Him and obey Him. **Read Revelation 16:21 to see the place of hail in God's battles of the Tribulation. Does this teaching give you courage to say, "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" (Romans 8:33-39)**

Joshua 10:12-14

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies" (v. 13). This is one of the favorite passages which infidels scoff at. Wise in their own conceits, they affirm that for such a thing to happen as is here recorded is contrary to science and philosophy. We do not propose to waste any time in replying to them. It was long ago pointed out by Bishop Watson, "The machine of the universe is in the hand of God, and He can stay the motion of any part, or of the whole, with less trouble than any of us can stop a watch." If a human engineer can slow the speed of an express train by putting on the brake, and bring it to a complete standstill by cutting off the steam, what cannot the Divine engineer do with any ponderous body which He has Himself set in motion. The sun is but an instrument, made by God to perform His good pleasure. That He is in no wise dependent upon or limited by it is clear from the fact that light existed and the earth was clothed with vegetation *before* the sun was made (Gen. 1)! By the miracles of Joshua 10:13, and Isaiah 38:8, the Most High demonstrated that the daily rising and setting of the sun is *not* from a blind instinct of nature, and that He controls its course: "which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not" (Job 9:7).

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies" (Josh. 10:13). Therein demonstration was made of the absolute supremacy and invincible might of Jehovah. Three great miracles were wrought that day by the Lord on behalf of his people, for they are explainable by naught but Divine causation. First, there had been the great hailstones that God had cast down from heaven, and which were remarkable for their magnitude, their efficacy and their discrimination—more of the Amorites dying from them than by the sword of Israel, and so directed that none of the latter were even injured by them. Second, the sun standing still in mid heaven, and remaining so for "almost a whole day." Third, the staying of the moon in her course, for it is to be noted that Joshua (as the type of Christ) had addressed her *directly*: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (v. 12)—evidently he did not believe that the two bodies acted so automatically in conjunction that it was unnecessary to give distinct command unto the latter, for in such case he would have spoken only to the sun. It was therefore a different and additional miracle that the moon also "stayed," as is further evident by the Holy Spirit's separate mention of each in verse 13.

It is exceedingly solemn to observe that these extraordinary displays of God's power were *judgments* upon the Canaanites, and that like the great deluge in the days of Noah, the destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven, and the fearful plagues upon Egypt, the miracles of Joshua 10 were interpositions of Jehovah for the express purpose of destroying the wicked. This presents to us an aspect of the Divine character which, in the vast majority of pulpits, has been deliberately ignored and suppressed for the past fifty years (written in the mid 1900's), until the Deity of Holy Writ is now, even in Christendom, "the unknown God." Those miracles make it clearly evident that God's holiness is as real as His grace, His justice as His mercy, His wrath as His love; and they require to be given equal prominence in the preaching of those who profess to be His ministers. They *were* so by the Divine Preacher: neither prophet nor apostle spoke so plainly or so frequently as did

Christ upon the fearful portion awaiting the lost: such expressions as "the wrath of God," the "damnation of hell," "the furnace of fire [where] there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," the "worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched," were upon His lips much oftener than "the love of God."

It is the lamentable and patent dishonesty of so many pulpits during the past two or three generations that is so largely responsible for the moral corruption of our nation today. Of old the Lord complained of those in Israel "whose lips should keep knowledge," that "ye have not kept My ways, but have been *partial* in the Law" (Mal. 2:9), and thus has history repeated itself. Instead of declaring "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), unfaithful men dwelt only on those portions of the Truth which made for their own popularity, deliberately omitting whatever would be unpalatable to their unregenerate hearers. Such a one-sided portrayal was made of the Divine character that the Most High was not held in awe; the moral law was relegated unto the Jews, so that sin became to be regarded lightly; and the soothing opiate that God loves everybody took away all fear of the wrath to come. Thousands of thinking men forsook such an effeminate ministry, and those who continued under it were lulled soundly asleep. The children of the former, for the most part, grew up entirely godless; while those of the latter believed in a "god" which is the figment of a sickly sentimentality. And, my reader, where there is no reverence of God and respect for His Law, there will never be genuine regard for human law.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

For the balancing part of this wondrous story, for which no man has an explanation, except that IT IS GOD—read what happened to the sun in the story of Hezekiah, Isaiah 38:1-8. What statement do you have regarding God's ways?

Joshua 10:15-21

"And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities" (v. 20). The closing words of this verse make it clear that, notwithstanding the extremely heavy losses which the Amorites had sustained, some of them succeeded in making good their escape. That some of them *would do so* was intimated by Joshua's "smite the hindmost" in the preceding verse. It was too late then to round them all up: only the laggards in the rear could be overtaken. So it is in the spiritual warfare of the Christian: even after his greatest victories, some of his enemies still survive. In view of God's dealings with Israel we need not be surprised at this, for at a later date He told them: "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may *prove* Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not" (Judges 2:21, 22).

"And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel" (v. 21). That "all the people returned to the camp" shows that none of the Israelites had been slain by the enemy. So it is spiritually. Whatever buffetings the believer endures, none of his graces can be destroyed by Satan. That the men of Israel returned to the camp to Joshua in peace shows how the saint should conduct himself when he has been granted success over his foes, namely, seek and enjoy communion with the antitypical (what is foreshadowed) Joshua. That none moved his tongue against them demonstrates how fully the fear of God had fallen upon the Canaanites: so awed were they that none dared to curse their victors, or utter a word of reproach against them.

Let us remind the reader once more that Israel's conquest and occupation of the land of Canaan present to us a typical picture of the Christian's warfare and present enjoyment of his spiritual inheritance. That warfare is many-sided, and constitutes one of the principal parts of the "service" in which the Lord requires His people to be engaged, and which renders all their other actions unacceptable unto Him while it be disregarded. Alas that we are living in a day of such gross darkness and crass ignorance that comparatively few, even in Christendom, have any scriptural concept of the kind of enemies which the saint is called upon to conquer, or the nature of that work in which he ought to abound. The worst of his foes is neither the world nor the Devil, but rather "*the flesh*." It is not external temptations but *inward lusts* that constitute his gravest menace and greatest danger. It is the *subduing* of those "fleshly lusts, which *war against* the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11), the resisting of his inbred corruptions, which the believer is to be constantly occupied with, for while they be neglected all his other efforts to please God are in vain. "From whence come wars and fightings among you [Christians]? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (Jam. 4:1).

It is the mortification of their lusts and the cultivation of their graces which is the lifelong task that God has set before His children. The greater part of the New Testament consists of the epistles, which are addressed directly to the saints, and they will be searched in vain for any exhortation which bids them preach to others, engage in evangelistic activities, or do "personal work." On the other hand, those epistles will be found to abound in such injunctions as, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. . . . Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. 6:13, 13:12), "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24), "Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:14).

There is the scriptural answer to the oft-raised question, What can I do for the Lord in return for all He has done for me? How can I best express my gratitude for His wondrous mercy? By keeping "thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. 4:23), for true godliness is not so much a thing of the head, or of the hand, but of *the heart*. Therein lies the "sphere of his service." There he will discover more than enough to keep him diligently engaged the remainder of his days: to transform a barren wilderness, or rather a neglected field (Prov. 24:30, 31), into a garden for his Master to delight in; to root out the weeds and burn up the thorns and thistles, and to replace them with fragrant flowers and luscious fruits; for only then will he be able to say, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits" (Song 4:16). But alas, pride and the restless energy of the flesh cause him to be occupied with the gardens (souls) of his fellows, instead of working out *his own* salvation with fear and trembling. It is much easier to preach unto others than to gain the mastery over sinful self. It is greatly to be feared that many a Christian has cause to say, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept" (Song 1:6).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness" (Col. 3:5). Here is the duty enjoined, the great task assigned. The tense of the verb expresses continued action, that which is to be our daily concernment and practice, and not merely by fits and starts. The evil lusts here named are termed "members" because indwelling sin is compared with an organism—"the old man" (Eph. 4:22), "the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24). In addition to our natural bodies, there is a body of corruption, which wholly compasses the soul—"the body of the sins of the flesh" (Col. 2:11). "Your members which are upon the earth" is added to prevent our supposing that the reference is to a mortifying of our physical bodies, for external macerations are of no avail. It is our depraved nature which uses these lusts, as the natural body does its members. Sin is very much alive in the Christian, for the flesh or evil nature is ever opposing the spirit (Gal. 5:17), and he is called upon to employ no half measures in resisting the same. Corrupt propensities are to be dealt with unsparingly, sinful desires sternly denied, evil thoughts rejected with abhorrence.

Dangerous enemies are not to be handled gently, and sin is to be shown no mercy, but is to be so striven against that we earnestly seek to slay it. "Mortify" means put to death, destroy. Extinguish all lustings after earthly and carnal things which are opposed to the spiritual anti heavenly life which we have in and from Christ. Yet the term is not to be understood absolutely, in the sense of slaying so as to deprive of the being of sin; but rather to render it useless. In Romans 4:19, we read of Abraham that "he considered not his own body now dead," yet it was not so absolutely; but its natural vigor was greatly abated. Hence Hebrews 11:12, speaks of his being "as good as dead." As Owen well expressed it, "To mortify signifies a continued act, in taking away the power and force of anything, until it ceases to be dead unto some certain ends or purposes." The flesh cannot be subdued without our doing violence to its affections, and the figurative expression of "mortifying" is used to denote the painfulness and troublesomeness of the task. But however unpleasant the duty, we only make more pain for ourselves if it be neglected. Neglect weakens and wastes indwelling grace, for it is impossible for sin and grace to be strong in the soul at the same time.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

From 2 Peter 2:11, may it be correctly stated that those who choose to "walk in the flesh" are sensual, arrogant and indulgent? What is meant by "the mortification of the flesh" and the "cultivation of their graces" as being the lifelong task that God has set before His children?

A. W. Pink states: "It is much easier to preach unto others than to gain the mastery over sinful self." **Why is this true? What specific area of our beings must be guarded most carefully in order to produce true godliness in our lives? (Proverbs 4:23) Are the members of our natural bodies to be shown any mercy when it pertains to daily cleansing of the "sins of the flesh?"**

We are to "mortify" or "put to death" any of our members that have a tendency toward evil lusts. A. W. Pink says in order to understand this fully; we are to recognize that this does not mean the sense of slaying so as to deprive of the being of sin—rather to render it useless. **Are you able to explain this through your own personal experience?**

Commit the following verses deeply into your heart:

"I discipline my body, and bring it into subjection, lest when I preach to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27)

"I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy Word" (Psalm 119:101)

Joshua 10:22-43

In Joshua's requiring the kings to be brought before him, the Christian is taught that he must (in prayer) bring all his foes—be they inward lustings or outward temptations—to the Savior, for it is not by his own strength he can vanquish them. Next, "Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings." And we are told, "They came near and put their feet upon the necks of them" (v. 24). Very striking is this, and most important the spiritual instruction contained therein. Being dealt with in this manner betokened that these kings were in complete subjugation unto the people of God. And *that* is the attitude which faith is to take unto all its enemies, regarding them as foes already defeated—not by himself, but by his victorious Head; and, as a member of His body, sharing therein. Christ has gloriously prevailed over sin and Satan, and it is the Christian's privilege to appropriate the same unto himself. Has not God promised him, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. 91:13)? That is realized each time the saint treats with contempt and abhorrence the evil solicitations of Satan and his agents.

What we have just said ought to be the constant and uniform experience of the believer. That it is not so is due in part to his failure to plead daily the promise of Psalm 91:13, and count upon the Lord making it good more fully unto him. God has "put all things under His [Christ's] feet" (Eph. 1:22), which is explained by, "Thou hast put all things *in subjection* under His feet" (Heb. 2:8); and by Joshua's bidding his captains place their feet upon the necks of these defeated kings we are thereby shown that our Savior would have His people bring into subjection their spiritual enemies and share in His triumph over them. He would have them plead before God the efficacy of His sacrifice, and beg Him to grant them a deeper acquaintance experientially of its cleansing virtues. Is it not written, "they overcame him [the Devil] by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11)? And so shall we, if we trust in its sufficiency—not only to put away our sins from before God, but also to enable us to prevail over them in our present warfare. Christ has made believers "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6), then let them earnestly seek grace to act as such, having dominion over themselves, ruling their spirit (Prov. 16:32; 1 Cor. 6:12).

"And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight" (v. 25). The ultimate and complete victory of the believer is infallibly certain. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Rom. 16:20). The juxtaposition of those two things should be carefully noted, the second one intimating that the first statement is made for the express purpose of quickening us to fight the good fight of faith. The issue of that fight is not left in the slightest doubt. The members of Christ's body must be partakers of the victory of their Head. In emphasizing the prediction of Genesis 3:15, too little attention has been given to the promise of Romans 16:20. Christians have to do with a foe that was completely defeated at the cross, for through death Christ annulled him who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14) and spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them (Col. 2:15). Those consolatory declarations are made to encourage us to resist the Devil, regarding him as a foe already conquered, as one who has no claims upon

us, as one whom at the close God will tread under our feet; and the extent to which we *appropriate* "the [available] grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" will be the measure in which we shall tread him underfoot *now*.

"And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day" (vv. 26, 27). The mightiest of those who have rebelled against God and persecuted His people will yet be treated with the utmost ignominy and summary judgment. Hanging them upon trees demonstrated that they were accursed of God (Gal. 3:13). "*Though* hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished. Their wisest counsels prove a snare to entangle them, their most valiant and vigorous exertions expose their weakness and end in disgrace and dismay, their choicest blessings are changed into a curse and their secret retreats become their prisons or their graves! Kings and mighty captains, who are disobedient to God, will at last be treated as arch-rebels, to be distinguished only by the deepest infamy and heaviest vengeance; and all the Israel of God will join the triumph of the Captain of their salvation in trampling upon the necks of their proudest opposers, exclaiming, 'So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord' (cf. Psalm 149:6-9)" (Thomas Scott).

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Quoting from the lesson: "The members of Christ's body must be partakers of the victory of their Head. Christians have to do with a foe who was completely defeated at the cross, for through death Christ annulled him who had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14), and spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them" (Colossians 2:15). A. W. Pink then tells us that these declarations were stated to encourage us to resist the Devil, regarding him as a foe already conquered, and one who has no claims on us. **State if you believe this as a truth that you have incorporated into your life, and also give an illustration of how you have used it—all to God's glory.**

Joshua 11:1-6

Before developing the central theme suggested by the verses which are now to be before us, let us offer a few comments upon their setting. "And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent" a message to many of his fellow kings, and they, with their armies, met together to fight against Israel (Josh. 11:1-5). It has been pointed out by another that "Jabin seems to have held in northern Palestine a similar position of power and influence to what Adonizedek king of Jerusalem did in the south." If the reader refers back to Joshua 10:1-5, he will find that that king had done precisely the same thing, except that his assault was made not directly against Israel, but upon the Gibeonites who had made peace with them. It is a trite remark to say that "history repeats itself," nevertheless it is one which casts an unfavorable reflection upon fallen human nature, for it is tantamount to acknowledging that one generation fails to profit from the faults of those who preceded them and avoid the fatal pits into which they fell. What proof that all are "clay of the same lump" (Rom. 9:21), and that "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man" (Prov. 27:19).

"When Jabin . . . had *heard* these things." Once more we meet with this important word: compare Joshua 2:10; 5:1; 9:1, 9; 10:1; and note the various reactions of those who received such tidings. It is true that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), yet it is also a fact that "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them" (Prov. 20:12). True alike both naturally and spiritually, for morally man is both deaf and blind to the things of God (Matthew 13:13, 14), and therefore the voice of mercy is disregarded and the sinner perceives no beauty in Christ that he should desire Him. To his need and to the remedy he is alike insensible. Until a miracle of grace is wrought within him, his imagination is darkened and his heart closed against God. That is why multitudes that hear the Gospel with the outward ear profit not, and those who *are* saved under it and receive it into their hearts do so solely because *God* has made them to differ from their unbelieving fellows. Jabin "had heard" of the destruction of Jericho and Ai, but instead of trembling thereat he hardened his heart. Thus do sinners rush madly to destruction, notwithstanding the repeated warnings they receive from the deaths of their godless fellows.

The greater the dangers menacing God's people, the greater support may they ask for and expect from Him. The more entirely their hearts be fixed on Him as their strength and deliverer, the more certainly shall their spiritual enemies be subdued by them. See this most strikingly exemplified here in Joshua 11: "And when

all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel" (vv. 5, 6). First, let us observe that Jehovah here made good the word that He had given through Moses: "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee . . . to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deut. 20:1, 4). How this reminds us of the declaration, "He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23)! One of the titles which Deity has taken unto Himself is "The faithful God" (Deut. 7:9). How safely then may He be relied upon! None ever yet really trusted Him in vain.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel." Very striking indeed is that statement and most blessed. Does the reader perceive its real force as he weighs its connection with what immediately precedes? Surely it is apparent: the challenge made by the Canaanites was not simply against Israel, but against Israel's *God*! It is like what we find in the opening chapters of Job, where something very much more than a satanic attack upon that patriarch is in view. The evil one dared to assail *Jehovah Himself*, for when He asked him, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and shuns evil?" we are told that "Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land" (Josh. 1:8-10). That was a maligning of the Divine character, for it was tantamount to saying that Job worshipped God not for what He was in Himself, but merely for what He had bestowed upon him.

What we have just pointed out is made yet plainer in Satan's next words: "But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face"—so far from adoring Thee because of Thy personal perfections, Job merely renders a mercenary service for what he gets from Thee. Base insinuation was that: Job is Thy dutiful servant not because he has any love for Thee or genuine regard to Thy will, but from selfish principles, and *that* reflects no credit on Thee. It was an impugning of the Divine character, a blasphemous challenging of God's own excellency. As the sequel shows, the Lord accepted the challenge, and by so doing made fully evident the adversary's lie, for after he had been allowed to slay his sons and seize his possessions, the Lord gave Job the same commendation as before: "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and shuns evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him" (Job 2:3). Thus did God glory over the baffled Devil and upbraid him for his failure, for Job was equally loyal to Him in adversity as in prosperity. Still Satan was not satisfied: "all that a man hath will he give for his life . . . touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face" (Job 2:4, 5). And again he was proved a liar, for the patriarch declared, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15).

Though the circumstances were different, the same principle was really involved here in Joshua 11:—the Devil's enmity against and opposition to God. For it was the Lord who had given Canaan unto Abraham and his seed, and He it was who had brought them into it. Palestine was Israel's by right of Divine donation. But now the occupancy of their inheritance was hotly challenged. All those kings with their armies were determined to destroy them. The gauntlet was thrown down: let it be put to the issue was the language of their actions. The Lord promptly accepted the challenge, and let it be known unto Israel that "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zech. 2:8). Blessed figure of speech was that: telling not only of the inherent weakness and tenderness of the Lord's people, but intimating their nearness and dearness unto Himself. God strongly resents any affront done to them, and will severely punish those who seek to harm them. Therefore did the Lord immediately assure Joshua that there was no reason for him to be dismayed by this imposing force of the enemy: they were but flinging themselves upon "the thick bosses of *His* bucklers" (Job 15:26), rushing headlong to their destruction, as would be made to appear on the morrow. So likewise, in the end, will all the works of the Devil be destroyed.

A most important truth is exemplified in all that has been pointed out above, yet one that is little apprehended by God's people today, namely that Satan's assault upon them is really an attack upon their Lord—upon them only because of their relationship to Him. That is illustrated again in Acts 9: for when He arrested Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, as he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," He said, "why persecutest thou Me?"—it was the Devil who was impelling Saul, as it was Christ and not merely His disciples against whom he was venting his animosity. And thus it is now. As God suffered Satan to afflict Job so sorely, not because that patriarch had given occasion to be severely chastised, but in order that his integrity might the more plainly appear and the Divine character be vindicated,

so He still permits the adversary both to tempt and buffet His people, that their steadfastness (in varying degrees, but always from a total apostasy) may redound to His own glory. As we are told in 1 Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ"—not only, and not principally, *theirs*, but primarily and pre-eminently *God's*.

The practical value of this important truth scarcely requires to be pointed out. Since it be the Lord Himself rather than His redeemed against whom the venom of the serpent is ultimately aimed, how secure are the saints in His hand! Secure, because His own personal honor is involved in their preservation, He has given definite assurance that "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39), that they shall "never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28), and therefore if the Devil were to bring about the eternal destruction of a single one of them Christ would be eternally disgraced. But such a calamity is utterly impossible, for though Satan be mighty, the Son of God is almighty. Upon that fact, in full persuasion of the everlasting preservation of every soul who has fled to the Lord Jesus for refuge, may each believer rest with implicit confidence. Here, then, is yet another important lesson taught the believer in this invaluable book of Joshua concerning his spiritual warfare, namely that the contest is, ultimately, between Satan and his Savior, and therefore the issue cannot be in the slightest doubt: as surely as Joshua and the children of Israel overcame and vanquished all the Canaanites who came against them, so will Christ and His Church triumph gloriously over the Devil and his angels.

But further. It is the believer's privilege to realize, especially when fiercely assaulted and sorely pressed by the foe, that the outcome of the fight in which he is engaged rests not with him, but with the Captain of his salvation, and therefore to Him he may turn at all times for succor and for victory. What the Lord said here unto Joshua the Christian should regard as being said unto himself: "Be not afraid because of them." Those who are now arrayed against the Christian and who seek his destruction shall soon themselves be destroyed. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20), and meanwhile, as the apostle immediately added, "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Amen." But just as that assuring word spoken to Joshua was addressed unto his *faith* and could be enjoyed only by the exercise of that grace in the interval before its fulfillment, so serenity of mind while menaced by his foes can only be the believer's as he by faith appropriates that promise unto himself. Then let his triumphant language be, "*Behold*, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid" (Isa. 12:2). In proportion as he does so will he be warranted in resting on that declaration, "Surely He *shall deliver thee* from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers." (Ps. 91:3, 4).

We have considered the Divine response made to the formidable movement inaugurated by Jabin and his fellows. The Lord promptly took up the cudgels on behalf of His menaced people. He assured His servant that he need entertain no fear whatever about the outcome, promising him, "I will deliver them up all slain before Israel" (Josh. 11:6). In like manner is the Christian to be assured, and therefore it is his holy privilege to enter upon and engage in the good fight of faith resting on the sure pledges of God, confident of a successful issue. "He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23). The more we meditate upon the veracity of the Promiser, the more will faith be strengthened. In proportion as we truly realize that we have to do with One who cannot lie, the greater confidence shall we have in His Word. Instead of being so much occupied with the difficulties of the way (which will but engender doubts), we need to look above unto Him who has given us such "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1:4) to be the stay of our hearts, to cheer and gladden us. Those promises are to be treasured up in our minds, for they are both the food of faith to nourish and strengthen it and the fuel of faith to stoke and energize it, otherwise it will lack that which is necessary for its activity, as a fire will not burn without wood or coals—thus coldness of heart is due mainly to faith being deprived of its fuel!

There will be little or no success in our spiritual warfare unless we make much of the Divine *promises*, and still more of the Promiser Himself. The foes that have to be encountered are far too powerful to be overcome by any might of ours, and therefore must we look to Him whose soldiers we are. If we do so, no matter how great our weakness or formidable the task assigned, the Lord will not fail us. "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). There were strong impediments in the way of her faith, and at first she was staggered by them, but as she regarded the immutability and fidelity of the Promiser her doubts were stilled, faith prevailed, and strength was given. As Manton well said, "Every Divine promise has annexed to it the challenge, 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?'" As in Sara's case, so with us, very often there is a fight

with unbelief before faith is established on the promise. But instead of suffering obstacles to hinder faith, they should be made a help to it—arguing, Here is a grand opportunity for me to prove the sufficiency of my God. He never promises more than He is able to perform. His word never exceeds His power: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also *will do it*" (1 Thess. 5:24).

It should be duly considered that this massing of the Canaanites against Israel occurred not soon after they entered the land, nor did they encounter anything like such an opposing force either at Jericho or Ai. No, rather was this trial met with after they had made considerable progress in taking possession of their heritage. Thus it was too with the father of all them that believe: each new test of Abraham's faith was more severe than the preceding ones. And so it is in the Christian life. Thus it is the mature and *aged warrior* to whom this word is most appropriate: "Be not afraid." Why should Joshua fear? Since God had so wondrously delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, overthrown Pharaoh and his chariots in the Red Sea, provided for them all through their wilderness journey, miraculously opened the Jordan for them to enter into Canaan, most certainly He was not going to abandon them now and allow them to perish at the hands of Jabin and his armies. No indeed, when God begins a work He never stops when it is but half done, but always completes and perfects it (Phil. 1:6). So it was with Israel under Joshua; and so it is with every elect vessel "whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Much takes place between the one and the other, but though death itself occurs (as has been the case with His people for the last six thousand years), the former guarantees the latter.

Let then the tried and aged pilgrim take comfort from the Lord's dealings with Israel, and give no place whatever to Satan's lie that God has tired of him. Like the fiend that he is, the Devil seeks to attack us most fiercely when much oppressed by circumstances or at our weakest physically. When natural vigor has abated and the increasing weight of years is felt, he will seek to inject the most God-dishonoring doubts into the minds of His people. Reject them with abhorrence, and rest on the Divine assurance, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). He who has cared for His child all through the years most certainly will not forsake him or her in the time of old age. He who has responded to your cries in former days will not turn a deaf ear now that your voice has grown feeble. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles [has he not done so?]: yea, in seven [the final one] there shall no evil touch thee" (Job 5:19). Past deliverances are sure earnest of future ones. "And even to your old age I am He: and even to gray hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I *will* bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. 46:4): those are the "I wills" of Him who is the Truth. Rest your whole weight on them.

But resting upon the promises does not mean that the saint may shirk any of his duties, or even relax in the performing of them. Rather do such Divine assurances involve corresponding obligations. That is clear from the two halves of the verses quoted in our opening paragraph: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)" (Heb. 10:23). That "for" is very forceful, supplying us with a powerful motive unto steadfastness and diligence. Since God be faithful to us, we ought to be faithful unto Him. To hold fast the profession of our faith is a comprehensive expression which includes every aspect of the Christian life, and the knowledge that God will infallibly make good His word unto us is to animate unto fidelity in the carrying out of its engagements. The Divine promises are not only comforting pillows on which to rest our weary heads, but cordials to strengthen, spurs to move us, encouragements for us to press forward along the way, arguments for us to make use of in prayer. The Divine promises are the food of faith, and faith is for producing good works. That is the practical application which the apostle made of the Divine assurances in 1 Corinthians 15:54-57: "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

So far from annulling the believer's responsibility or countenancing any slackness in the discharge of the same, spiritual privileges involve additional obligations. But alas, man is such a creature of extremes that even a Christian when he be deeply impressed with one aspect of the Truth is very apt to become so absorbed with it as to lose sight of and leave out of his reckoning the counter-balancing aspect of the Truth. Because *God* performs everything for us, it does not mean there is nothing for *us* to do. If we ascribe the glory unto Him to whom alone it is due we shall freely own to the Lord, "for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us" (Isa. 26:12); nevertheless that does not alter the fact He has bidden us "work out your *own* salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12), yet that too is immediately followed with, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." There the *two sides* of the Truth are placed in juxtaposition, and notice well the order in which they are set before us. First the enforcing of our duty, and then the encouraging motive to inspire us therein. The latter is not added to induce indolence, but in order to encourage effort. We have no scriptural warrant to expect that God will show Himself strong in our behalf unless we make conscience of His

precepts and use the means He has appointed. Our bread is Divinely guaranteed (Isa. 33:16), nevertheless it must be labored for (John 6:27).

The relation of Philippians 2:13, to Philippians 2:12, is a double one, being designed both to cheer and to humble us. The child of God is very conscious of his weakness, and knowing that the world, the flesh and the Devil are arrayed against him, and contemplating the tasks set before him—tasks which are spiritual and far above the compass of mere nature—he asks, How can I possibly accomplish them? The answer is, Divine assistance is assured. The believer is not left to himself, but the omnipotent God operates within as well as for him, and therefore is he to go forth in the confidence that Divine grace will be sufficient for him. Help is indeed needed by him, and if he conducts himself aright that help will certainly be given. On the other hand, he is required to work out his own salvation "with fear and trembling," that is in a spirit of humility and lowliness. But how is that possible unto those who are proud and independent? We are all of us Pharisees by nature—boastful and prone to self-glorying. How then can we be emptied of such a spirit? And again Philippians 2:13, supplies the answer. From this consideration: since it be God who works in me all that is praiseworthy; then I have nothing to boast of. I am constantly to remind myself that it is God who makes me to differ from those of my fellows whom He leaves to themselves. The strongest inducement possible to produce a self-abasing spirit is the realization that apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5).

Above we have said that there will be little or no success in our spiritual warfare unless we make much of the Divine promises: let us now add that the same is equally true of the Divine *precepts*. That also is taught us in Joshua 11:6, for immediately after assuring His servant, "Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel," the Lord added, "thou shalt hough their horses and burn their chariots with fire." God's promises are not designed to further slothfulness, but to stimulate to the performance of duty. God does not work in us to promote idleness, but to "will and to do of His good pleasure." When the farmer sees God working by softening the ground with gentle showers, he is encouraged to plough and plant his fields. When the yachtsman perceives God working by stirring the becalmed air with a breeze, he is encouraged to hoist his sails. So it is spiritually. Grace is given the regenerate for them to *use*: "stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (2 Tim. 1:6). We are to "work out" what God has wrought in us, yet in complete dependence upon Him. We must beware of abusing the truth of Divine operations and take to heart the warning of the lazy servant who hid his talent in the earth.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

In the land of the Canaanites news spread quickly that Joshua and his people had conquered the five Amorite kings, yet in spite of this, another rebel king arises—Jabin of Hazor, gathering together forces of many kings in the north to again fight the children of Israel. A. W. Pink likens this to the multitudes who hear the Gospel, yet are not saved, because of the hardness of their hearts. **Tell how God intervened for Joshua and Israel when the threat of a great army as numerous as the sand on a seashore was before them. Can you recall a similar threat to your spiritual life.**

Following are listed the various teachings given in this lesson, all of which will be of vital help as we also walk this pilgrim way serving the Lord, and growing in Him. **After each statement below that instructs in this way of God, give a Bible verse that verifies it:**

- The greater the dangers facing God's servants, the greater support they may ask for and expect from Him.
- When we are loyal to God in all our walk, though Satan bring us adversity, we can know and trust God absolutely.
- God resents those who do us evil, and He will severely punish those who seek to harm us.
- God does allow the adversary to tempt and buffet His own, in order that their steadfastness may redound to His glory.
- He has given us strong assurance that we shall never perish, nor any man pluck us out of His hand.
- When we do suffer severe testing as believers, we can be assured that the outcome of the fight does not rest with us, but with the Captain of our salvation.
- We can be confident because of His faithful promises.

- His Divine protection at all times helps us to do our part and fulfill our duty in the matter, for He always gives us a share in the situation to carry out.

Joshua 11:7-23

"And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burned their chariots with fire" (v. 9). In the flush and excitement of victory Israel's leader failed not to comply with the orders he had received from his Master, and it is blessed to see how the Holy Spirit has taken notice of and recorded the same, thereby showing us the value which God places upon obedience. Not only so, but the chronicling of these details here is for our spiritual instruction, intimating as they do once more that *further victories* are not to be expected by us unless we remain in complete subjection to the Divine will. The continued blessing of God on our efforts to overcome our foes is dependent upon the maintenance of lowliness and submission unto Him, for if pride or self-will is allowed, then the Holy Spirit is grieved. Humility ever expresses itself in obedience to God. What is recorded here in verse 9 explains what follows to the end of the chapter, where we are shown how Joshua's progress remained unretarded. In what particular way this "houghing" was done we are not informed, so we cannot be sure whether the horses were only rendered powerless for warfare or completely destroyed. In view of burning the chariots, it seems more likely that they would be killed, so as to prevent other Canaanites from using them; the more so since they would be of no value to Israel.

"And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burned their chariots with fire." What proof was this that "*There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety*" (Ps. 31:16, 17)! As God can save those who are without armies, so those with them are helpless if He be against them—as was clearly demonstrated at the Red Sea. It is a striking fact that the most glorious days of military victory for Israel were when the veto of Deuteronomy 17:16, was strictly regarded by them. In addition to their remarkable exploits in the time of Joshua, we may recall their victories over Sihon and Og (Num. 21:23-26, 33-35), their overcoming of Sisera and his nine hundred chariots of iron (Judges 4:3-16), and David's victory over the king of Zobah, with his thousand chariots (2 Sam. 8). On the other hand, it is equally noticeable that Israel's declension dates from their transgression of Deuteronomy 17:16 (1 Kings 4:26; 10:26), and that defeat came from the very quarter in which they foolishly placed their confidence (2 Chron. 12:2, 9 and compare Isaiah 31:1): all of which goes to show "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety [or "victory"] is of the Lord" (Prov. 21:31). It may also be pointed out that later, when Israel renounced this vain confidence, God healed their backsliding (Hos. 14:3, 4).

God and War

The title of this article may possibly shock some of our readers, thinking that "Satan and War" would be a more appropriate and accurate one. There are an increasing number today among churchgoers who repudiate the idea that God has anything to do, designedly and directly, with such calamities as tidal waves, earthquakes, or wars. Since *there are* such things, these people attribute them to and blame them upon the Devil. Their beliefs differ little from the religious conceptions of the ancient Persians and modern Parsees, for Zoroastrianism teaches that there are two Gods presiding over this sphere, a good and an evil one; that all blessings are to be ascribed unto the former and all our ills unto the latter. And just as that ancient system of philosophy and religion contains no definite statement as to *which* of the opposing deities will ultimately triumph, so these modern dualists have so little confidence in the true and living God, and are so determined to dissociate Him from the affairs of this scene, that they talk (and even write) about the likelihood of this earth being blown to smithereens by some devilish kind of bomb, instead of this world being (when it has served His purpose) destroyed by *its Creator* with fire (Ps. 1, 3), as *He* did the antediluvian (before the flood) world by water.

It needs to be constantly pressed upon this skeptical generation that the One who made this world is now *governing* it; and that not merely in a vague and general way, but most definitely and specifically. The Lord God presides over all its affairs, regulates all its events, directs all its inhabitants. If He did not, if there be some creatures beyond His control some happenings outside His jurisdiction, then there would be no guarantee that everything which transpires on earth (as well as in heaven) shall redound to His glory, and that all things are working together for good to them that love Him. Instead, all confidence in the future would be at

an end, all peace of heart and tranquility of mind an empty dream. But Scripture is far too plain on this matter to be misunderstood: His kingdom ruleth over all (Ps. 103:19), "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11), "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). So far from Satan being able to thwart Him, he could not lay a finger upon Job or any of his possessions until the Lord gave him permission to do so; and the demons could not enter the herd of swine without Christ's consent (Mark 5:12, 13). Nor can the Devil gain the slightest advantage over a saint without his own allowance, and if he resists him steadfastly in the faith, he is obliged to flee from him (Jam. 4:7).

Since "all things" are of God, then wars must not be excluded. So truly is this the case that His Word declares, "The Lord is a man of war" (Ex. 15:3): thus Deity hesitates not to assume unto Himself a militant title. And again He declares, "The Lord mighty in battle" (Ps. 24:8), which is illustrated and demonstrated again and again in the history of Israel, when He showed Himself strong in their behalf and slew their foes. "The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land" (Isa. 13:4, 5). It may be objected that these are Old Testament references, and that the spirit of the New Testament denounces all war as now being unlawful. But the New Testament is far from bearing that out; its teaching thereon is in full accord with the Old. Thus, when the soldiers came to Christ's forerunner for instruction, asking, "What shall we do?" he did not say, Fight no more, abandon your calling, but gave them directions how to conduct themselves. When the centurion came to the Savior and drew an argument from his military calling, our Lord did not condemn his profession or rebuke him for holding such an office; instead, He highly commended his faith (Luke 7:8, 9).

When foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ declared that God would send forth *His* armies (Matthew 22:7), so that the Roman legions were but instruments in His hands, directed by Him to effect His judgment. When examined by Pilate, our Lord said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but *now* is My kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Those words clearly imply that, though carnal means were then improper for advancing His spiritual kingdom, yet had not His state of humiliation precluded His assumption of the royal scepter His followers might, lawfully have fought to defend His title. Moreover, His qualifying "now suggests that such a time *would* come, as Revelation 19:11, plainly confirms. When the ten kings determine to make the mother of harlots desolate and burn her with fire, we are told, "For *God* hath put it in their hearts to fulfill His will" (Rev. 17:16, 17). How entirely different is the God of Holy Writ from the fictitious one of the sentimental dreamers of this effeminate age!

In our previous comments upon Israel's fighting in Canaan, our principal emphasis has been upon the application thereof unto the *spiritual* warfare in which the Christian is called upon to engage, but our articles would lack completeness if we failed to devote one unto the *literal* side of things. Much of human history consists of a chronicling of wars, and it is a matter of no little concern and importance that we should turn the light of Scripture thereon and ascertain *God's relation* thereto. Is He but a far-distant Spectator thereof, having no immediate connection with the horrible carnage of the battlefield, or is His agency directly involved in the same? To speculate upon such a matter is not only useless, but impious. War is ever a frightful calamity, the more so if it be a civil one, when one part of the populace is madly fighting against another; or when *many* nations become involved or embroiled. At such a time the suffering and anguish experienced rudely shake the belief of many in an overruling providence; and even God's own people find it difficult to stay their minds on the Ruler of the universe and trust in His goodness and wisdom, unless they be firmly rooted in the Truth.

Those who are familiar with history know how many sad proofs it contains that human beings are often more cruel than are the beasts of the jungle. Lions and tigers kill their prey in order to appease their hunger, but men destroy their fellows only to gratify their insatiable lusts of ambition and avarice. During the course of the centuries wild animals have killed thousands of mankind, but within the last few years literally millions have been destroyed by the restless wickedness of those who cared not what immeasurable suffering would result from the meeting of their greedy desires. We cannot sufficiently deplore the depravity of human nature which has made men beasts of prey, or rather devils to one another, seeking whom they may devour. The events of this enlightened century only too plainly confirm the teaching of Scripture on the thorough corruption of fallen human nature, that in their unregenerate condition men are "hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). But let us not condemn the ferocity and wickedness of our fellows in any self-righteous spirit, but in the humbling realization that we too are clay of the same lump, and that if a spirit of benevolence now governs us, it is naught but sovereign grace which makes us to differ.

But while we contemplate with grief, shame and horror the vile works of men of the same vicious natures as our own, we must by no means overlook and ignore the place which Divine providence has in all those occurrences in which they are the actors. God is supreme, and all inferior agents are under His government, held by Him in such effectual control that they can do nothing without Him. In the most tremendous evils which they inflict, they are the ministers of His vengeance. Even when whole nations be destroyed, by whatsoever means, the hand of God is in that work of judgment. We briefly alluded unto this before but deemed it necessary to supplement what was there pointed out. "I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians' and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit [courage] of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof . . . and the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall reign over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 19:2-4)—words which ought to cause not a few people to revise their ideas on this subject. When cities are reduced to rubble, when civil war afflicts a country, when kingdoms are destroyed, the agency of God is to be acknowledged therein.

The worst tyrants, when inflicting the greatest outrages, are the instruments of God, accomplishing His will. In Jeremiah 25:9, we find Jehovah referring to Nebuchadnezzar as "My servant"—just as He spoke of "My servant Moses" (Num. 12:7) and "David My servant" (Ps. 89:3). The king of Babylon was just as truly an instrument in effecting the Divine purpose as they were: they in delivering and building up, he in punishing and destroying. "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord . . . and they shall eat up thy harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: . . . they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword" (Jer. 5:15, 17). God brings judgment upon a nation as surely as He gives blessing: uproots as truly as He plants. "Lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs: they are terrible and dreadful" (Hab. 1:6, 7). How clearly do those words show that heathen nations are under God's control and *used* by Him when it serves His purpose.

The Babylonians were employed by the Ruler of this world for the chastisement of His people and commissioned by Him to carry the Jews into captivity, yet in so doing they incurred great guilt and were made to reap as they had sown. Those things may seem utterly inconsistent unto carnal reason, yet they are not so in reality, for Nebuchadnezzar acted with no thought of fulfilling the Divine decrees, but rather to satisfy his own rapacity, and therefore was his kingdom providentially destroyed by Him with an unexampled destruction. Others were sent by God to execute His vengeance on Babylon, and though they in turn were incited by their own passions, nevertheless He it was who called forth their hosts and gave them the victory. "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children" (Isa. 13:17, 18). How awful does Providence appear here! Even when savage idolators violate every dictate of humanity, they are the executors of the judgments of the Almighty. While their conduct is most horribly guilty, in the Divine sovereignty it fulfils God's will.

"The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth. . . . He shook the kingdoms: the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof" (Isa. 23:9-11). The demolition of Tyre by the Chaldeans was not only the fulfillment of prophecy, but was accomplished by Divine agency. God did it, yet man did it. In unconsciously doing the work of the Lord, men act quite freely, and therefore are justly accountable for doing what it was eternally predestined they should do. Philosophy cannot plumb such a depth by its own line, but Scripture clears up the mystery. Of Cyrus God declared, "Thou art *My battle axe* and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (Jer. 51:20). What is there said of that mighty conqueror is equally true of all conquerors that ever lived, or shall live, on this earth. Conquerors regard themselves almost as gods, but the axes and saws with which men cut and cleave wood might with far better reason exalt themselves to the rank of human creatures. None of them can do anything but what God's counsel determined before to be done by their hands, and therefore it is our bounden duty to give God the glory for all the judgments which are done by them, and to adore His awful providence in all the miseries they inflict upon guilty kingdoms.

It is in the light of all that has been said above that the conquest of Canaan by Israel is to be viewed. Joshua 10:30, 42, makes it quite clear that the "*sword*" of Joshua was the sword of the Lord—compare "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20). Equally so, it is in the light of various passages found in the Pentateuch that we must consider the severity of God's dealings with those whom His servant was

commissioned to slay. The original inhabitants of Canaan were flagitious offenders, not only in being gross idolators, but in trampling underfoot the laws of morality and of humanity. If the reader turns to Leviticus 18:3, 27, 28, and then ponders what is recorded between verses 3 and 27, he will perceive the horrible depravity which the Amorites exhibited, for in those verses a black catalogue is supplied of the vile "*abominations*" of which they were guilty. Those heathen tribes were like a cankerous sore in the body politic, contaminating the surrounding nations, and therefore it was an act of mercy unto the latter, as well as a just punishment upon the former, that God ordered Joshua to destroy them root and branch. The Lord had borne long with them, but now that the iniquity of the Amorites had come to the full (Gen. 15:16) naught but summary judgment suited their case.

Not only is no apology required for the Lord in connection with His solemn works of judgment, but He is to be owned and magnified therein. "O Lord, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For Thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defended city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built. Therefore shall the strong people glorify Thee" (Isa. 25:1, 2)—as Israel did when Pharaoh and his hosts were overthrown by the waters of the Red Sea, and as the inhabitants of heaven shall exclaim "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments, for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand" (Rev. 19:1, 2). God is glorious in His works of providence as well as in His works of creation. As He made all things "good" at the creation of the world, so He doeth all things "well" in His government of it. He is to be revered and adored even of those works which He performs by the hand of His creatures. He is glorious in what He does by and through wicked men as well as by His saints: glorious in His acts of vengeance as well as in His acts of grace.

But if the balance of truth is to be preserved on this subject, due place must be given and full regard had to another class of passages, which show that when God deals in judgment—whether it be with individuals or nations—He does so because man's sinfulness calls for it, and not because He delights therein. This is clear from Ezekiel 14, where, after announcing the "four sore judgments" which he would send upon Jerusalem, the Lord God declared, "And ye shall know that I have not done this without cause" (vv. 21-23), for as Jeremiah 22:8, 9, informs us, "And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods and served them." How plain is the testimony of Lamentations 3:33, "For He doth not afflict willingly [from His heart] nor grieve the children of men." Equally so is Ezekiel 33:11, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Therefore are we told that judgment is "His strange work. . . . His strange act" (Isa. 28:21), for it is not as agreeable to Him as His works of mercy.

God approves of righteousness wherever it be found, and rewards the same with temporal blessings; but He ever disapproves of sin, and sooner or later visits His anger upon it (Prov. 14:34). Yet even when the dark clouds of His judgment are hanging over a kingdom or an evil system, calamity may be averted by national humiliation before God and reformation of conduct (Ex. 9:27-29; Luke 19:41-44; Rev. 2:21, 22). How much to the point are those words of the Lord in Jeremiah 18:8: "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced [judgment], turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them"—as was most definitely exemplified in the case of Nineveh. That verse has, of course, no reference to the alteration of His eternal decree, but instead enumerates one of the principles by which God *governs* this world, namely that He deals with nations as with individuals—according to their conduct, making them to reap as they have sown, for His judgment is ever tempered by His mercy (Judges 3:8-10).

Now each of the two sides of our subject pointed out above was illustrated in Joshua 11: On the one hand we are told, "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses" (v. 20)—because they had filled up the measure of their iniquities and were ripe for judgment (compare Matthew 23:32; 1 Thess. 2:16; Rev. 14:7, 18). On the other hand we read that "But as for the cities that *stood still* in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only" (v. 13), by which is meant those who remained passive and fought not against Israel. So that here too in wrath God remembered mercy. That is one of several passages which show that Israel did not massacre *unresisting* Canaanites (cf. Deuteronomy 20:10, 11)—Joshua 24:11, shows that those in Jericho assumed a hostile attitude, and therefore we may conclude that those in Ai did so too.

Those words, "And Joshua made war a long time with all those kings," tell us of his *constancy*, and the stability of those who served under him. They did not take things easy after Jericho was captured, nor relax their efforts when Ai fell before them, but continued steadfast until they had completed the task assigned them. What a noble example for the Christian to follow in the prosecution of his spiritual warfare! Let him not be appalled by the obstacles confronting him, deterred by the number of enemies to be overcome, nor disheartened by his failures along the way. Patience and fortitude must be earnestly sought from above. Though the fight of faith lasts "a long time," for it is to be without any intermission while we are left in this scene, yet "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). It is just because we are so prone to flag (to become unsteady, feeble, or spiritless) in our efforts during the performance of duty that this exhortation is addressed unto us and *repeated* in 2 Thessalonians 3:13! Then let us watch and guard against this evil tendency and persevere unto the end.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

As A. W. Pink has stated, "since all things are of God, then wars must not be excluded." And – "The Lord is a Man of war." Many people fail to correctly understand the occurrences in the Old Testament that involve battles and killing. **Here, to the best of your ability, give reasons why wars have to take place on this earth as it now exists. Also, tell why God does use His own men to fight, and at other times uses the wicked to accomplish His will in the situation. Does this alone declare that God is always in control of what happens here, though it may not appear that way to our weakened understandings?**

Joshua 12:1-24

The twelfth chapter forms a fitting conclusion to the military campaigns of Joshua, containing as it does a summary of his numerous victories and a list of the thirty-one kings which were smitten by him. A short account is there given of the conquests made by Israel both in the times of Moses and of Joshua. The land which the Lord gave unto Israel consisted of two parts, for though it was but a single country, yet its terrain was divided by the Jordan. Thus the conquest of Canaan was a single enterprise, though it was actually accomplished in two distinct stages. That portion on the eastward side of Jordan was subdued by Moses, and given to the two and a half tribes, but the much larger half lay on the western side, and was subjugated by Joshua and allotted unto the nine and a half tribes. Typically, that probably has a threefold significance or application. First, *redemptively*, the fruits of Christ's mediatorial work: far more have benefited therefrom since His death (the Jordan) than those who were saved by Him during the days of His public ministry. Second, *dispensationally*, in connection with the Church and its members: most probably a much greater number of them being sinners taken out from the Gentiles than those who had formerly been from the Jews.

Third, *spiritually*, in connection with the believer's salvation: a portion of his inheritance is entered into and enjoyed by him before the Jordan is crossed, but the principal part of it lies on the farther side of death. But while looking for the mystical meaning of this, let us not overlook the practical lesson. "Them did Moses the servant of the Lord and the children of Israel smite; and Moses the servant of the Lord gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh. And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west . . . which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions" (Josh. 12:6, 7). The linking together of those two things is instructive. "The enjoyment of present blessings should revive the grateful remembrance of former mercies, and the benefit derived from the labors of the living servants of the Lord should remind us to respect the memories of those who have hitherto served Him in their generation. The national covenant mediated by Moses engaged many temporal advantages to Israel" (T. Scott).

"And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west . . . all the kings thirty and one" (Josh. 12:7, 24). It may be thought strange that there should have been so many kings in such a small country. In reality, it supplies evidence of the accuracy and veracity of this historical record, for it is in perfect accord with the ancient practice followed in various countries, namely that many of their principal cities had their own separate kings. Historians inform us that when Julius Caesar landed in Britain he found four kings in the single county of Kent—then how many more would there be in the whole island? How blessedly did Joshua's conquest of all those kings illustrate the truth that the more entirely our hearts be fixed upon the Lord our strength (Josh. 11:6, 7), the more certainly will our foes—

however powerful or numerous—be subdued before us! According to its gematria (the use of letters instead of figures—for our modern numerals were unknown to the ancients), thirty-one equals EL—the name of God. If then He be for us, who can be against us?

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

We learn here that the conquest of Canaan was a single enterprise, though it was actually accomplished in two distinct stages. We also learn great spiritual truths pointed out by our teacher; namely, the threefold significance. **We shall list these in the left column below, and request that opposite each one you write the fullness of each teaching.**

Redemptively, the fruits of _____
Christ's mediatorial work. _____

Dispensationally, in _____
connection with the Church _____
and its members. _____

Spiritually, in connection with _____
the believer's salvation. _____

Also, what does the number thirty-one (31) mean according to its gematria?

Joshua 13:1-33

The thirteenth chapter of Joshua is another chapter which offers very little scope for the commentator, for it consists largely of geographical details. After a brief but blessed word from the Lord to Joshua himself, the first six verses contain a list of those parts of the land which had not yet been possessed by Israel, together with an assurance from God that He would drive out from before His people the inhabitants of those sections also. In the next six verses the Lord gives orders concerning the dividing or apportioning of Canaan, naming some of the places therein and the bounds thereof. Then comes a reference to the portion which Moses had allotted unto the two and a half tribes on the eastward side of Jordan, with a detailed description of the same. Parenthetically, mention is made of Israel's slaying of Balaam, and twice over we are informed that Moses gave no inheritance to the tribe of Levi. Thus its contents admit of no unified treatment, its central subject being, perhaps, best described as the spoils of victory enjoyed by Israel and the respective portions therein assigned to her tribes.

Canaan was (as we have previously pointed out) at once a Divine gift, yet as to their occupying of the same it was the result of Israel's own prowess. It was bestowed upon them by free grant from God, nevertheless it had to be conquered by them. Therein there was an accurate shadowing forth of the Christian's inheritance. That too is wholly of Divine grace and mediatorial purchase, but it is not actually entered into by the heirs of promise without much effort on their part. It is at this point that theologians have so often gone wrong, by attributing either too much or too little unto the creature. Only by cleaving very closely to Holy Writ as a *whole*—and not by singling out detached fragments—are we preserved from serious error. On the one hand, we must see to it that we return right answers to the questions, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7); on the other, we must give due place to such exhortations as "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luke 13:24) and "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest" (Heb. 4:11); and not ignore such statements as "knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col. 3:24). Only thus will the balance of truth be preserved.

It is indeed true that the child of God has nothing good or spiritual but what the Lord has freely bestowed upon him. But does that mean he is as passive a "receiver" as the earth is when fructified by heaven's refreshing showers and genial sunshine? Great care needs to be taken in answering that question lest we contradict the Word of Truth. Certainly he is no co-operator with Christ in the work of his redemption. There is not the least warrant for us to say, "God will do His part if we do ours." There is no dividing of the honors: the glory is God's alone, and we have *no ground* for boasting. Most assuredly the elect have nothing to do with their election, for God chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, and there is not a line in His Word to show that His choice was determined by anything praiseworthy which He foresaw in them. Those

ordained to be vessels of honor were "clay of the same lump" as the vessels appointed to dishonor. Nor had they a thing to do with their redemption, for all that was required to make atonement for their sins and reconcile them to God was accomplished by Christ centuries before they existed. Nor had they anything whatever to do with their regeneration, for they were dead in trespasses and sins when the Spirit quickened them into newness of life.

But it is quite wrong to infer from the above that the regenerated soul remains a passive agent. Equally wrong is it to suppose that he is now possessed of any self-sufficiency, that his new nature empowers him to perform his duty. Though he has become a living branch of the Vine, yet he is entirely dependent upon the Vine's nourishing and fructifying. But we must not confine ourselves to *that* particular figure and relationship. The Christian is a moral agent, and grace has been given him to improve. Means of grace have been provided, and he is responsible to employ the same. He has a conflict to engage him, a race to run. There is a world for him to overcome, a devil to resist, a salvation to be worked out with fear and trembling. True, in and of himself he is quite incapable of accomplishing such tasks; nevertheless, through Christ he "*can* do all things" (Phil. 4:13). He must tread the narrow way if he would actually enter into the fullness of Life, and is required to endure unto the end if he is to be finally saved. He must fight the good fight of faith if he is to enter into the eternal inheritance. These things are just as true and real as those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs.

It must not be forgotten that Scripture itself records, and without the least condemnation or criticism, such utterances as "by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer" (Ps. 17:4), "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word" (Ps. 119:101), "I keep under my body" (1 Cor. 9:27), "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). Those are not carnal boastings but true statements of fact, and due place must be given to them in our theological system, or our doctrinal beliefs are very defective. True indeed, it was by Divine grace that those men conducted themselves thus, yet *they* were active moral agents therein, and not passive ciphers (insignificant individuals). Thus also was Canaan a Divine gift unto Abraham and his descendants, but they had to fight—fight long and hard—in order to enter into possession of the same. True also that the Lord fought for them, and that their victories must be ascribed unto Him who so signally showed Himself strong in their behalf; nevertheless that altered not the fact that *they* fought and subdued their foes. Both the Divine and the human sides are to be recognized and owned by us.

In like manner our salvation has the same two sides unto it. God is indeed both the Alpha and the Omega thereof, yet He deals with us as rational creatures and enforces our responsibility in connection with the same. So far as we can discover, the plants in the garden and the trees in the orchard owe their growth and fertility entirely to the Creator. But it is otherwise with believers: they are required to use the means of grace which God has appointed, and look to Him to bless the same. The vegetables and trees are incapable of taking precautions against pests and tornadoes; but we are obligated to avoid evil, resist temptation, and take shelter from the storm. Eternal life is a Divine gift (Rom. 6:23), but we are to "lay hold on" it (1 Tim. 6:12). The celestial inheritance is "the purchased possession" of Christ for His people (Eph. 1:14), yet it is also "the reward" of service unto the Lord (Col. 3:24). Grace is freely given, but we are to use it, and must improve the same if we would receive more (Luke 8:18; Matthew 25:16). "Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face evermore" (Ps. 105:4)—there is the meeting-place of the two sides! We have no sufficiency of our own, but if grace be duly sought (Heb. 4:16) then "our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

"Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (Josh. 13:1). Unlike Moses, of whom it is recorded that at the close of a still longer life his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated (Deut. 34:1), the strenuous life Joshua had lived took heavy toll of him, and the infirmities of old age had come upon him. Probably he had then reached the century mark, for he was one of the twelve originally sent forth by Moses to spy out the land, and therefore would be at least as old as Caleb, who was then eighty-five (Josh. 14:10), and most likely quite a few years more, for he was but 110 at the time of his death (Josh. 24:29). But it is blessed to see that, despite his increasing bodily weakness, the Lord did not desert him in his old age, but now honored him with a special visit and a most gracious communication. And that, dear reader, is recorded for the particular comfort and encouragement of His aged pilgrims. Unto them He has given the sure promise: "And even to your old age I am He [the unchanging One]; and even to gray hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. 46:4), and that blessed assurance is their holy privilege to rest upon day by day with childlike faith.

It is to be noted that after informing His servant that he was old and stricken in years—for the Lord never flatters man, nor withholds His Truth (except in judgment) from man—He did *not* say "but there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed": instead it was "and there remaineth." Thus He was not saying this by way of reproach. It appears to us that God so addressed Himself to Joshua on this occasion, First, to *instruct* Him: to let him know that He was no Egyptian taskmaster, who imposed burdens grievous to be borne; rather did He tenderly remember that Joshua was dust. By virtue of growing frailty he would be unfit to complete so vast a task as conquering the whole of Canaan—the major part of which remained to be done. Second, to *humble* him. While Joshua had much ground to be thankful for the considerable success with which the Lord had crowned his efforts, he had no reason to be elated, for the enemy was still in possession of the remoter sections of Israel's inheritance. Third, it was, as the following verses make clear, for the purpose of acquainting him with his immediate *duty*.

While the Lord took knowledge of the enfeebled frame of His servant, yet He did not for that reason encourage him to be slack. On the contrary, He assigned him a new though much lighter task. It is not the revealed will of God that His people should spend their old age in idleness. He does not preserve them through all the dangers of youth and the trials of maturity that they should be mere cumberers of the ground. He may well suffer them to become exceedingly tottery and perhaps bedridden and entirely dependent upon others; yet even so it is their privilege and duty to beg Him to make good in them that precious word, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing" (Ps. 92:14). They may still commune with the Lord, and manifest the effects thereof. The decay of nature is no reason why grace should languish. Even when thoroughly helpless, the fruits of patience, meekness and gratitude may be borne, and they may carry themselves as the monuments of God's goodness and the memorials of His faithfulness, and thereby "show forth His praises." Though the strenuous efforts of earlier years be no longer possible, the *ministry of prayer* is available unto the very end, and who can say that more will not be accomplished therein for eternity than by any other spiritual activity?

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

This lesson teaches us such truths as: God has Himself given us the victory—nevertheless we must be faithful to take the land that remains. **Name at least two more of these practical truths, and if possible, give Scripture verses that attest to them. Also, what does God promise for the older age of a faithful servant?**

Joshua 14:1-5

"And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them. By lot was their inheritance, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and for the half tribe" (Josh. 14:1, 2). Joshua was now old and stricken in years, and before the time came when no man can work the Lord had bidden him engage in the most important task of superintending the apportioning of Israel's heritage (Josh. 13:1, 6, 7). Invested with Divine authority to act as Israel's head, manifestly enjoying the favor of the Lord, possessing the full confidence of the people as their tried and faithful leader, none other was so well suited to perform this particular work. But like all the other duties which he had discharged, this one called also for the exercise of faith, for Joshua was now required to assign the entire country of Canaan which lay on the western side of Jordan: not only those portions of it which Israel had already conquered and taken possession of, but also the extensive sections which were still occupied by the Canaanites. This called for the most implicit confidence in the Lord—that He would grant the tribes possession thereof.

The land of Canaan had already been conquered, so far as its standing armies had been completely routed, its principal strongholds destroyed, and its kings slain. Yet much of its actual territory was still in the hands of its original inhabitants, who remained to be dispossessed. It is important to distinguish between the work which had been done by Joshua and that which still remained for Israel to do. He had overthrown the ruling powers, captured their forts, and subdued the Canaanites to such an extent as had given Israel firm foothold in the country. But he had not exterminated the population in every portion of it, yea, powerful nations still dwelt in parts thereof, as is clear from Judges 2:20-23, and 3:1-4; so that much was still demanded from

Israel. Therein we behold again the accuracy of the type (a shadow of what was to come). The antitypical (that which was foreshadowed) Joshua has secured for His people an inalienable title to the heavenly Canaan, yet formidable foes have to be overcome and much hard fighting done by them before they enter into their eternal rest. The same is true of the present enjoyment thereof: faith and hope encounter much opposition ere there is an experiential participation of the goodly heritage which Christ has obtained for them.

The method appointed for the dividing of the land is deeply interesting and instructive. Two distinct principles were to operate, yet the giving place to the one appears to rule out the other. The first had been laid down by the Lord through Moses: "Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him" (Num. 26:53, 54—repeated in Numbers 33:54). There was the general rule which was to be followed in the dividing of Canaan and the quartering of the people: the size of the section allocated was to be determined by the numerical strength of the tribe to which it was given. Yet immediately after Numbers 26:54, a second law was named: "Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few." That is to say, the disposition of the inheritance was to be determined by the sovereign will of God, for the lot was regulated by Him and made known His pleasure.

Those two principles seem to be mutually incompatible, and we are not acquainted with any attempt to show the agreement of the one with the other. It is the age-old problem of the conjunction of the Divine and human elements: in this instance, the human by the dimensions of the several tribes; the Divine by God's determining their respective portions. Yet, in the case now before us, no real difficulty is presented: the larger tribes would still obtain the biggest sections, but the "lot" specified the particular situation in Canaan which was to be theirs. Neither Joshua, Eleazar, nor the heads of the tribes were free to dispose of the land according to their own ideas or desires: the final locations were reserved to the providence of God, to whose imperial will all must acquiesce, howsoever contrary to their thoughts and wishes. Such an arrangement not only accorded unto God His proper place in the transaction, but it also precluded the exercise of any spirit of partiality or favoritism on the part of Israel's leaders, and at the same time served effectually to close the mouths of the people from murmuring.

The more those two apparently conflicting principles be pondered, the more shall we admire the wisdom of Him who appointed the same. Obviously, it was most equitable and advisable that the larger tribes should be accorded more extensive quarters than the lesser ones, for their requirements would be the greater. Yet, fallen human nature being what it is, it is equally evident that had Israel been left entirely unto themselves the weaker tribes would have been deprived of their rightful portions: for if not entirely denied a separate heritage, they would most probably have been obliged to submit unto having the least desirable sections of the land nor would there have been any redress (to set right), for in such a case (numerical) might would be right. It was therefore necessary for there to be a Divine supervision: not only in fixing the exact boundaries of each allotment, but also in determining their several locations, so that the mountainous sections and the fertile valleys should be fairly distributed. This is one of many examples where we see how the Divine legislation protected the welfare of the weak, and how the Lord ever manifested a concern for the poor and needy.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

In the dividing of the land there were two elements—the human and the Divine. **Explain why this was so, and what advantage it gave to the various tribes. Are these principles working in our lives today? Should they apply to us?**

Joshua 14:6-15

"Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea" (v. 6). Observe here the gracious humility of the man! Caleb was himself one of those who had been Divinely appointed to serve as one of the commissioners, to see that the lot was carried out in a proper manner (Num. 34:17-19); yet, lest it might appear that he was seeking unduly to use his authority in furthering his own interests, he brought with him some of his brethren to act as witnesses. How careful was he

to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22)! Equally circumspect should we be in all of our public transactions.

"Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart" (v. 7, and cf. Numbers 13:30). Those last words are very expressive and blessed. It was in Caleb's heart that God was fully able to give what He had promised: that the gigantic Amorites with their chariots of iron were nothing to Him. Caleb was strong in faith, and therefore he was quite sure that Jehovah would make good His word. It was the Lord Himself who had put such a firm persuasion in his heart: just as at a later date, when faced with a task that was formidable unto flesh and blood, Nehemiah declared "neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem" (Neh. 2:12): that too was something which burned within and sustained him through heavy trials. David also had "found it in his heart to build the house of the Lord." How that language of Caleb's made it evident that his heart was set upon the Promised Land! His "treasure" was there, and so was his heart also. That was his animating hope all through the forty years he had to spend with his unbelieving fellows in the wilderness. And so it should be with each Christian: his affections set upon things above as he journeys through this world to the antitypical (that which was foreshadowed) Canaan.

"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God" (v. 8). His fellows walked by sight instead of faith, and consequently they were occupied with and appalled by the obstacles which stood in the way. Full of distrust themselves, they infected the whole of the congregation with the same, intimidating and discouraging them so far that their spirits sank. But Caleb refused to be influenced by them, yea, boldly withstood them. "I wholly followed the Lord my God" was not the language of presumption, but a plain declaration that he was neither daunted by the power of the enemy nor swayed by the skepticism of his brethren. It signified that on that occasion he had faithfully discharged his duty, remained steadfast in his faith in God, assured that He would enable His people to overcome the mighty sons of Anak. That meaning of his, "I wholly followed the Lord," is made clear by the contrast of Numbers 32:11, where the Lord complained of his unbelieving fellows, "they have not wholly followed Me," and from the fact that He there predicated the same fidelity and perseverance of Joshua. The great value which God set upon His servant's steadfastness appears in His having recorded it in His Word no less than six times: Numbers 14:2; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:8, 9, 14.

"And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God" (v. 9). The sure word of prophecy he had hid—held fast, treasured—in his heart throughout the lengthy interval. It is to be considered that probably most of that generation of Israel would be ignorant of the Divine grant which had been made unto him and his descendants so long before, and therefore Caleb quoted the Lord's promise thereon for their benefit more than Joshua's, so that it might appear that he was not now making any selfish or unreasonable demand. The Divine promise was recorded in Deuteronomy 1:36, and treasured in the mind of Caleb. His object was to prevent this particular part of Palestine being put in the lot with the other portions of the country. He had a definite and valid claim upon the same, and he here insisted upon his right. Since God's own mind concerning it had been plainly made known, then it would be useless to appeal unto His will respecting it via the lot, as in the case of the sections for the tribes.

"And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old" (v. 10). What a God-honoring testimony was this! Passing through all the vicissitudes of Israel's wilderness wanderings, during which so many of his fellows were removed from this scene, engaged in the five years of fighting in Canaan, when no doubt there was often but a step betwixt him and death, Caleb here ascribed his preservation not to "good luck" or "fortune" (heathen terms!), but unto Him "which holdeth our soul in life" (Ps. 66:9). Caleb had something more than a general realization that his times were in God's hands (Ps. 31:15): his faith had laid hold of a special promise, as his "as He said" plainly shows. He was resting on the word of One who cannot lie—as David, at a later date, relied upon God's changeless veracity "do as Thou hast said" (2 Sam. 7:25). We are on both sure and comfortable ground, my reader, when we take our stand upon God's promise, expecting a fulfillment. Caleb's repeated "and now" was tantamount to his saying, The time has at last arrived for the Lord to make good His engagement.

"As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in" (v. 11). In those words he was forestalling an objection which might be made against his appeal. Should the demurrer be advanced. But you are much too

old for such a difficult and dangerous venture as the dispossessing of the giants from the mountainous district of Hebron, that such a strenuous and hazardous task called for a much younger man. Caleb here pressed his physical fitness for the same. The One who had preserved his life throughout the years had also renewed his youth like the eagle's (Ps. 103:5). Ah, my reader, God does nothing by halves when He appoints a man for any particular work, He also equips the worker and furnishes him with everything needful. Not only so, He sustains and animates the heart for the task. Faith inspires resolution and courage, and He who had enabled His servant to hold fast for so long to His promise also removed all hesitation and fear, so that Caleb was just as ready and eager to set about the task which lay before him as he was in the prime of life.

"Now therefore give me this mountain, of which the Lord spoke in that day; for thou heard in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord *will be* with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said (v. 12). The second half of this verse is very lovely, yet some have quite misunderstood its force. Though Caleb still retained his vigor, it was not that upon which he relied, nor yet upon his military ability and experience; but instead, upon the Lord. Thus his "if so be the Lord will be with me" was not the language of doubting, but of self-renunciation. He had no confidence in the flesh and felt his own insufficiency. There will not be faith in God, nor even a sincere looking to Him, my reader, while we retain faith in ourselves. Trust in the Lord is ever accompanied by distrust of self. No, Caleb was conscious that the successful accomplishment of the work before him was quite beyond his own powers, but he counted upon the faithfulness of God to undertake for him. Proof was this that the Divine promise was no empty theory to him, but a precious reality. Therein he differed sharply from his unbelieving companions: they were occupied with the power of the enemy and their own impotence; he with the omnipotent One and the sureness of His word.

"And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance" (v. 13). Thus was the promise of God through Moses made good by Joshua. This is very blessed, for it causes us to look beyond the shadow to the substance: the fulfillment of all the Divine promises is in and through the antitypical (that which was foreshadowed) Joshua. "For all the promises of God in Him [Christ] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20). Since Christ Himself is the end and chief object of all the promises, He has become by His mediatorial character both the channel of supply to all who receive the grace of God in truth and the medium of their responsive praise. To the certified promises thus declared to God's elect, in the person of His Son, the Church now sets the seal of her Amen, affirming thus adoringly to the glory of the Father what the lips of Christ have first spoken to her heart. In Christ we now have by an everlasting covenant of grace whatever good things God spoke aforetime. In the Lord Jesus the very fullness of God dwells, and in that holy humanity which He took upon Him for our sakes. The concentrating of God's mercies in the living and effective Vindicator of His promises—"the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14)—is declared to be "to the glory of God by us," because of the praise which He receives from His people as they realize that all is summed up for them in God's Beloved and in their Beloved.

"Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb . . . unto this day, because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba: which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war" (vv. 14, 15). Hebron signifies "fellowship," and may have been so named because of the wonderful communion which Abraham had with God there (Gen. 13:18, first mention). This is the place above all others which the enemy of souls seeks to prevent God's people occupying. What a suitable place was Hebron for Caleb! How appropriate an inheritance for the one who (we are once more told) "wholly followed the Lord God of Israel"—who persevered in the performing of his duty, though opposed by ten of his companions and menaced by the whole congregation; which shows us that the ones and twos who are out and out for God must not expect to be popular, no, not with their brethren. Nevertheless, Hebron or the place of intimate fellowship with God is ever the portion of such. Finally, let it be duly noted that upon Caleb was conferred the honor of the hardest task of all—the overcoming of the mighty sons of Anak. The next chapter tells us, "And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak" (Josh. 15:14). Of course he did! God never fails such a one.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

This Bible story about faith and reward has become one of the most appealing and instructive to us as Christians. **How has it instructed and benefited you? Are you finding 2 Corinthians 1:20 an absolute in your own growth in faith? Are all God's promises to us today found in our antitypical Joshua? Who is our antitypical Joshua?**

Joshua 15:1-63

"This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families" (Josh. 15:1). The first two of the tribes to have made known to them their allotments were Judah and Joseph: that being detailed here, the other in the next chapter. Upon which Matthew Henry said, "Judah and Joseph were the two sons of Jacob on whom Reuben's forfeited birthright devolved. Judah had the dominion entailed on him, and Joseph the double portion, and therefore the two tribes were first seated: Judah in the southern part of the land of Canaan, and Joseph in the northern part, and on them the other seven did attend, and had their respective lots as appurtenances to these two; the lots of Benjamin, Simeon and Dan were attendant to Judah, and those of Issachar and Zebulon, Naphtali and Asshur to Joseph. These two were first set up to be provided for, it should seem, before there was such an exact survey of the land as we find afterward [Joshua 18:9]."

"It is probable that the most considerable parts of the northern and southern countries, and those that lay nearest to Gilgal, and which the people were best acquainted with, were first put into two portions, and the lot was cast upon them between these two principal tribes, of the one of which Joshua was, and of the other Caleb, who was the first commissioner in this writ of partition; and by the decision of that lot the southern country fell to Judah, of which we have an account in this chapter; and the northern to Joseph, of which we have an account in the two following chapters. And when this was done, there was a more equal dividend (either in quantity or quality) of the remainder among the seven tribes. And this, probably, was intended in that general rule which was given concerning this partition: 'to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth' (Num. 33:54): that is, 'Ye shall appoint two greater portions, which shall be determined by lot, to those more numerous tribes of Judah and Joseph, and then the rest shall be lesser portions, to be allotted to the less numerous tribes.' The former was done in Gilgal, the latter in Shiloh." It should also be pointed out that, as the injunction was given that when Israel were on the march "these [i.e. Judah] shall first set forth" (Num. 2:9), so the assigning of Judah's portion first was a prophetic intimation of the future pre-eminence of this tribe.

It is to be observed that the description given of Judah's heritage is broken into at Joshua 15:13, by mention being made of Caleb (who belonged to this tribe) receiving Hebron for his personal portion. This was before us previously but a further detail is here recorded which claims our attention. After informing us that he drove thence the three sons of Anak we are told that "Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife" (v. 16). This should not be understood as an exhibition of any personal sloth on Caleb's part, still less of fear, but rather as his affording an opportunity for another to obtain some laurels as well as himself. It is to be borne in mind that in the East the father is regarded as having the right to dispose of his daughter, and it is the regular custom for him to select her husband without consulting her—compare 1 Samuel 17:25. Kirjath-sepher was a fortress of the Anakims, one that was difficult of approach, being situated on a hill (note "went up" in verse 15). The offer made by Caleb was an incentive to bravery: he knew that only a man of faith and courage would attack such a place.

In the above we obtain a further insight into Caleb's character and see what a well-balanced one it was: he was not only a man of strong faith, an intrepid warrior, but a dutiful father as well. It was not only that he desired to stir up Israel generally to set about the tasks which still required performing (Josh. 16:10, shows that some of them had already become slack in their duty), but that he desired to make sure that his daughter obtained a worthy husband. Caleb's challenge was accepted by his own nephew, for we read: "And Othniel the son of Kenez, the brother of Caleb, took it" (v. 17). It is noteworthy that, years later, this same Othniel who acted so admirably and valiantly on this occasion became both a deliverer, and a judge in Israel (Judg. 3:9), and, in fact, the first person who presided over the nation after Joshua's death. "It is good for those who are setting out in the world to begin betimes (early) with that which is great and good, that, excelling in service when they are young, they may excel in honor when they are old" (Matthew Henry).

"And he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife" (v. 17). It is to be borne in mind that there was nothing in the Mosaic Law which forbade the marrying of cousins. As others before us have suggested, it is highly probable that Othniel was in love with Achsah before her father made this proposal. It is also likely that Caleb was aware of it and looked favorably upon him, but decided thus to put him to the test before finally committing himself. It was both an honor to wed the daughter of the man who was the chief of his tribe and a great privilege for Othniel to marry into a family so marked by faith and piety, and to be united to one who we cannot

doubt had been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: such a woman is to be desired far above one who is endowed with the riches of this world, or possesses little else than a pretty face.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Jacob's oldest son, Reuben, had his birthright forfeited due to his sinning, and now the land that was to have been his, is allotted to Judah and Joseph. **To which was allotted the south and to which the north? By reading Numbers 2:9, state which tribe should break camp first, and lead? Is this prophetic of the tribal family through whom the Lord of our salvation would come?**

Joshua 16:1-10

"And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto," etc. (Josh. 16:1). The order of procedure among the tribes of Israel was always Judah first, the sons of Joseph second, which is in full accord with that parenthetical but important statement in 1 Chronicles 5:1, 2. "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's)." As Ellicott pointed out, "Accordingly, in the division of the land of Canaan under Joshua, there are three successive stages. First, the settlement of the tribe of Judah in the strongholds in the south of Palestine. Second, the estating of Ephraim and Manasseh in the center of the country, and in some strong positions in the north. Third, the settlement of the remaining tribes, so as to fill up the gaps between Judah and Joseph, and also upon the outskirts of their territory, so as to be, as it were, under the shelter of their wings."

Reuben's portion was much inferior to that of Joseph, for it lay on the wilderness side of the Jordan (Josh. 13:7, 15-21), separating them from the tribes on the western side, thereby exposing them to be attacked more easily by enemies. As a matter of fact, this tribe, with that of Gad (which adjoined it) was sorely stricken by Hazael (2 Kings 10:32, 33), and afterwards carried into captivity twenty years before the general seizure of the ten tribes by the king of Assyria (1 Chron. 5:26); whereas Joseph and his posterity were highly favored in their lot, for their position lay in the very heart of the land of Canaan, extending from the Jordan in the east to the Mediterranean in the west. It is therefore very striking indeed to note how that on the one hand we behold in Reuben's heritage and its history a solemn demonstration of God's "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate" Him; and on the other hand we see in the case of Joseph's posterity a blessed exemplification of the Divine promise "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments" (Ex. 20:4, 5). The disposings of Divine providence are not capricious or arbitrary, but regulated by moral and spiritual considerations which accord with the principle of sowing and reaping.

"And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages" (Josh. 16:9). This was because the tribe of Ephraim was now much more numerous than that of Manasseh. Matthew Henry appropriately called attention to the fact that "though when the tribes were numbered in the plains of Moab, Manasseh had got the start of Ephraim in number, for Manasseh was then fifty-two thousand and Ephraim but thirty-two thousand (Num. 26:34, 37); yet, by the time they were well settled in Canaan, the hands were crossed again (Gen. 48:13, 14) and the blessing of Moses was verified: 'They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and these are the thousands of Manasseh.' " Since the Ephraimites were much more plentiful than the Manassites, additional cities were given them besides "the lot" which fell to them. Those cities were in the heritage of Manasseh, God having assigned them more than their own needs required. No doubt that was to test them, to afford an opportunity of showing kindness to their brethren, by giving of their abundance to those who lacked. This is one reason why Providence so orders things that "ye have the poor always with you" (Matthew 26:11): note that "always"—sure intimation that Socialism, the Welfare State, will never become universally and permanently established.

"And they drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer" (Josh. 16:10), which marked the boundary of this tribe, and was close to the sea (v. 3). Their failure to do so was much worse than that of Judah to recapture Jerusalem (Josh. 15:63), for they made an attempt to do so, whereas these did not. No specific reason is given for their wanting in duty, whether it was because of cowardice, slothfulness, or something else; but the fact remains that they disobeyed the commandment in Deuteronomy 20:16. There is no intimation that

these Canaanites renounced their idolatry and became worshippers of Jehovah. But the second half of the verse seems plainly to indicate that their disobedience was due to the spirit of greed: "But the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute." Since the Ephraimites were strong enough to subject the Canaanites and compel them to pay tribute, no excuse can be made for allowing such to live with them. They considered their financial gain more than submission to God or the good of their country, which was in keeping with their general character—compare Hosea 12:8. They soon followed the ways of those heathen, and became idolators themselves (Judg. 17:1-5). The Canaanites continued to dwell in Gezer until the days of Solomon, when the king of Egypt took and gave it to his daughter who had married Solomon (1 Kings 9:16, 17).

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Give particular attention here to 1 Chronicles 5:1, 2. The second verse verifies the truths learned in the 16th chapter of Joshua above. **Below, relate briefly the inheritance history of:**

Reuben

Joseph

Manasseh

Ephraim

Also, which of the above failed to drive out the Canaanites from their land? See Deut. 20:16, for God's command concerning them.

Joshua 17:1-18

Before turning to the next chapter an incident recorded in Joshua 17 requires our attention. It may be recalled that the fourteenth chapter closed with the words, "And the land had rest from war." At first sight that seems to be a blessed statement, but in view of several later ones it should rather be regarded as the striking of an ominous note. The fact is that Israel had, temporarily at least, become weary of well-doing, and were resting on their oars, for they had failed to complete the task which God had assigned them. There were many places yet unsubdued, numerous companies of the Canaanites which were still unconquered. That resting from war was fraught with evil consequences, for soon after we are told, "As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out" (Josh. 15:63). And again, it is recorded of the Ephraimites, "they drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute" (Josh. 16:10). And once more, "yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in the land" (Josh. 17:12). Sad blemishes were those in the account given of the general success of the nation.

The above failures are to be accounted for by God's withholding of His power and blessing upon their efforts. And why did He not show Himself strong on their behalf? Because they had failed in their duty, for, instead of finishing the work which the Lord had given them to do, they became slack and took their ease, and later, like poor Samson when he awoke out of his sleep, said, "I will go out as at other times," but "knew not that the Lord was departed from him" (Judg. 16:20); thus it happened with them—they were shorn (sheared, cut) of their strength. For God to have given success unto those Israelites would be countenancing their indolence. Never does He place a premium upon slothfulness, but, instead, leaves those who yield thereto to suffer the painful effects thereof. The lessons for us to learn therefrom are obvious. God grants His people no furloughs in the "good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) to which He has called them, and should they take one, then their enemies will inevitably prove too strong, nor will the Captain of their salvation fight their battles for them. Our commission is, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men (act like a man), be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13), and if we heed not, most unpleasant will be the outcome.

It is important to note carefully the order of those four precepts, for the first three must be obeyed in order to the realization of the fourth. Unless we be vigilant in guarding against the temptations and dangers on every side, are faithful in holding the truth of the Gospel both doctrinally and practically, are undismayed and undaunted by those who oppose us—conducting ourselves boldly and bravely—we shall have no strength with which to overcome our foes. Nor is there to be any cessation in the discharge of those duties: the Divine command is "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58) i.e., striving against sin, resisting the Devil, bringing forth the fruits of holiness. But note well the precise point at which the great failure of Joshua

14:15, occurred: it was immediately following the most notable successes which had attended their arms, so that they probably thought they were now entitled to a respite. Here too the lesson is plain for us: it is right after some signal victory which grace has given us over our lusts that we are most in danger—tempted to relax our efforts. Ah, my reader, forget not that it is the "fool" who says "take thine ease" (Luke 12:19), whereas God enjoins us, "Let not thine hands be slack" (Zeph. 3:16).

In Joshua 17:14-18, an incident is recorded which afforded a further opportunity for Joshua to display yet another striking quality of his character. There we read of the children of Joseph coming to Israel's leader with a complaint:

"Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?" (v. 14). The tribe of Joseph was, of course, a double one, comprising the descendants of both Ephraim and Manasseh, nevertheless we consider that avowal of their greatness had reference to something more than their numerical strength, namely their honorable parentage—their being the descendants of the man whom Pharaoh had made lord of Egypt—and thus it was the breathing of pride. This is borne out by the subsequent history of this tribe, in the light of which their complaint unto Joshua was thoroughly characteristic of the haughty spirit that possessed them. Thus we behold their arrogance again in their murmuring against Gideon (Judg. 8:1), in the conduct of Jephthah (Judg. 11:9, 30, 31), and later still in the days of David they were constantly asserting their claim to superiority in Israel without exhibiting any qualification for it.

"And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee" (v. 15). Thus did Joshua turn their argument against themselves, rebuking their pride and discontent, as well as their unbelief and indolence, for there was plenty of room for their expansion if they possessed the necessary enterprise and courage. Ellicott pointed out that it is plain from what is here stated that a large part of the country of Palestine then consisted of uncleared forest, that the inhabitants of that district were far fewer than those in the valley of Esdrealon and of the territory assigned to Judah in the south. Also that this fact justifies the strategy of the attack of Israel upon the center of the country, so that the forces of the Canaanites were necessarily divided, and thus Israel could strike first with their whole force at the southern armies, and then turn round upon the enemies in the north. This serves to explain the ease with which they set up the Law at Ebal (Josh. 8:30) at the commencement of the invasion, and the selection of Shiloh for their capital afterwards.

"And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel" (v. 16). Here we behold their covetousness, for Joshua 17:5, informs us that "there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan," while another and separate inheritance had been allotted unto their brethren the Ephraimites. But though they had been given the largest share of Canaan they were not satisfied, while the reference they made unto the "chariots of iron" possessed by the Canaanites, who occupied the adjacent valleys, at once revealed the unbelief and timidity of their hearts and disproved their pretensions to being "a great people." See here again, my reader, the evil results of allowing ourselves an intermission from the warfare to which the Christian is called: as surely as he ceases therein and takes his ease, so will a spirit of discontent with his lot come upon him, and so too will unbelief occupy him with the might of his enemies and dispirit him.

"And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only: but the mountain shall be thine: for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong" (vv. 17, 18). We do not regard that as the language of satire, but rather as pressing upon them the discharge of their responsibility, and calling upon them to trust in the Lord and go forward in His name. Joshua pointed out that there were extensive tracts of wooded country which could be cleared for agricultural use, so that, if they continued to multiply, land would be available for their families. True there was the menace of the powerfully armed Canaanites in the immediate vicinity, but if they bestirred (rouse to action) themselves and performed their duty, looking to the Lord for protection and help, they might assuredly count upon His enabling them to drive out those who then possessed that land which He had given unto the seed of Abraham, and be granted strength to vanquish all their enemies. Thus from Joshua's reply it is clear that they were lacking in diligence and enterprise.

There can be little doubt that the Ephraimites and Manassehites expected to receive preferential treatment from Joshua, since he himself belonged to the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8); but Joshua refused to show

partiality unto his brethren, thereby demonstrating his fidelity unto the commission Jehovah had given him. Blessed is it to behold in that refusal still another adumbration in the character of his Antitype (Christ), for when the Savior was asked to assign the seats on His right hand and on His left unto those who were nearest and dearest to Him (James and John), He declined to show any favoritism (Matthew 20:20-23). In his Practical Observations on this passage Thomas Scott well remarked, "Alas, professing Christians are often more disposed to murmur, envy and covet, than to be content, thankful, and ready to distribute. Indeed, we are more prone to grasp at what belongs to others, than to manage our own to the best advantage; and many complain of poverty, and encroach upon the benevolence of others, because they rebel against the sentence of Divine justice, 'Thou shalt eat thy bread in the sweat of thy brow.'

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Is there a warfare to which the Christian is called? What follows when a person lets up in the spiritual fight in which God has placed him? Will God show any favoritism? Does God grant any furloughs for His people in the "good fight of faith?"

Joshua 18:1-19:51

"And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance" (Josh. 18:2). Why was this? Because some Divine decree had blocked the way? Because "God's time" for them to do so had not yet arrived? No indeed, from a very different cause. It was due to their own indifference. The immediate sequel makes it very evident that there was no unwillingness on God's part: the indisposition was in them. Thus, this statement is more than an explanatory reference, namely a word of reproach. In view of what is recorded in Joshua 15:63, and Joshua 16:9, 10, we see how infectious is the spirit of sloth: the evil which affected Judah and Ephraim had spread to the remaining tribes. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," more especially so where the leaders are involved: when the principal tribes of men be dilatory, those of lower rank will quickly emulate them. These tribes were heedless of their privileges, too unconcerned to avail themselves of their advantages.

"And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" (v. 3). Thus did their leader reprove them for not bestirring (rouse to action) themselves and securing their portions of Canaan. Such a reproof supplies confirmation of our remarks on the previous verse: it was due entirely to their own laziness, and not to anything in God, that they were not yet in happy possession of their possessions. True, the language of Joshua did not signify that those tribes could have occupied their portions before the same had been assigned them by the lot, but rather that they were to blame for not applying to the high court of Israel for the same. They had witnessed the allotments of the other two and a half tribes, yet had been too unconcerned to ask for theirs. This laxity was not confined to a single tribe, but had, like a dry rot, spread through the body politic. Not only is such an evil very contagious, but when it has gripped a person or people it cannot be easily and quickly thrown off, as Joshua's "how long?" shows.

How like the vast majority of modern church members were those Israelites! They had crossed the Jordan and set foot in Canaan, but they had become slack and failed to make their own the fair prospects before them. In like manner, countless thousands make a profession, join the Church, and, imagining that their sins have been forgiven and their souls delivered from the wrath to come, are satisfied with their case and complacently rest on their oars. They make no conscience of mortifying their lusts, no serious efforts to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, no progress in the Christian life. They are drones, yea, stumbling-blocks to those who seek to be diligent in making their calling and election sure. They are deceived by Satan. Persuaded that they were saved some time in the past, they delude themselves into thinking that, however slack they be in resisting the Devil and overcoming the world, they are eternally secure. They shirk the cross, yet imagine the crown is sure. They engage not in the good fight of faith, yet suppose they have laid hold of eternal life. They do not make the pleasing and obeying of God their daily concern, yet think to obtain the reward of the inheritance.

The fatal mistake made by so many is to think that, once assured their names are written in heaven, they may, with complete safety to themselves, lapse into a state of utter carelessness. Whereas, so long as he remains in this world, the Christian is required to "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved

away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23), to take heed that there be not in him an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and be on his guard against being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 6:12, 13), to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), and to hearken unto the solemn warning of Christ, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). It is he who "endureth unto the end" that shall be saved (Matthew 24:13), and not those who yield to their lusts and tempt Christ (1 Cor. 10:10, 7-9). Christians are called upon to build up themselves on their most holy faith (Jude 1:20), and that is a work which demands labor and industry. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13).

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Endeavor to memorize at least two of the following verses that apply to this lesson:

Hebrews 6:11, 12: "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end; that you do not become sluggish but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Luke 9:62: "But Jesus said unto him, No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Romans 8:13: "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

Joshua 20:1-9

"The Lord also spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: that the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. 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 neighbor 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." (Josh. 20:1-6).

In that passage we are furnished with a condensed account of the statutes with regard to murder which the Lord gave to Israel for the maintenance of righteousness in their midst. On the one hand, there must be a strict enforcing of justice; on the other, the exercising of mercy. The guilty were not to be cleared; the innocent must not be executed. Due and orderly investigation must be made, and each case tried on its own merits before a court of law. Where guilt was established, malice aforethought being proved by witnesses, the death penalty was to be inflicted upon the murderer. But when a neighbor had been inadvertently killed extreme measures were not to be taken against the one occasioning his death. Nor was the next-of-kin to the one slain permitted to take matters into his own hands and wreak vengeance upon him who by misadventure had tragically terminated his life. Instead, there was a sanctuary provided for the innocent, to which he could fly, shelter afforded for one who had involuntarily committed homicide.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

Since God had already declared His absolute judgment upon purposeful murder (Gen. 9:6), as well as in the Ten Commandments, would you agree that God is "ready to pardon; and He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness" (Nehemiah 9:17) in His dealing with mankind? Six (the number of man in the Bible) cities were appointed in the land of Israel for places of refuge to which the involuntary killer of another could flee for protection from those who would intentionally accuse him of this deed.

Ps. 103:13 Isa. 28:21 Mic. 7:18

Joshua 21:1-45

The residence of the Levites. On this occasion it will be *the cities* which were Divinely appointed them for residence which will engage our attention. Since it has pleased the Lord to devote a whole chapter, and a lengthy one, to the subject, it is evident that—whether or not we can discern it—there must be that in it which is of spiritual importance and practical value for us today. Nor shall we experience any difficulty in ascertaining its central message if we bear in mind that the *ministers of the Gospel* are the counterparts of the Levites of old. In that chapter we find it recorded that the heads of the tribe of Levi came before the assembled court of Israel and presented their claim for suitable places where they might settle with their families and possessions. Their petition was received favorably, and their request was granted. Forty-eight cities with their suburbs were assigned them—appointed by the "lot," as had been the case with all the other tribes.

"Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; and they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their suburbs" (Josh. 21:1-3). Aaron was a descendant of Levi, and in his official capacity as the high priest of Israel he foreshadowed the Lord Jesus, who now, as the Son of God consecrated for evermore, is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 7:28-8:2, and cf. Rev. 15:3-5). The sons of Aaron, by natural generation, are types of Christians who are given to Christ to serve Him (Num. 3:63), the brethren of Christ sharing by grace His double title of both king and priest (Rev. 1:6, 7). The priestly sons of Aaron and the ministering Levites were also a figure of the public servants of the Lord in the present dispensation, as is clear from 1 Corinthians 9: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (vv. 13, 14).

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

In this important lesson, we are taught the following regarding the Levites: God chose them to be His ministers; they did not own any of the land, but were given sustenance out of the inheritance of the rest of Israel at the commandment of the Lord, and they were given 48 cities and their suburbs for their dwelling places. Aaron was chosen to be the high priest of Israel, and he foreshadowed the Lord Jesus, who now is our High Priest forevermore. Today, we too, are ministers unto our Lord. **The following are historical facts about the Levites that you are to look up in the Word, in order to better understand this marvelous plan of our God:**

Levi was Jacob's son by Leah	Gen. 29:34
Jacob's prophecy about Levi	Gen. 49:5-7
Aaron, great grandson of Levi, chosen for Priesthood	Ex. 28:1
Tribe of Levi rewarded for holy zeal	Ex. 32:28-29
Chosen by God for holy service	Deut. 10:8
Substituted for Israel's first-born	Num. 3:12-45
Bear the Ark across the Jordan	Josh. 3:2-17
Become prominent singers under David	1 Chr. 6:31-48
Help repair the Temple	1 Chr. 23:2-4
Seal the Covenant	Neh. 10:1, 9-28

Some of their main duties were: Minister to the Lord; assist the priests; take care of the sanctuary and the tithe; prepare sacrifices; teach the people; decide legal matters; protect the king; perform music; and precede the army.

Joshua 22:1-34

For seven years they had served obediently under Joshua, had disinterestedly put the welfare of the nation before their own private comforts, had made no attempt to rejoin their families, but had remained by the side of their brethren until Canaan was conquered. Most commendable was their meekness in waiting for their dismissal. They did not chafe at the delay, but were submissive to their leader's will. Instead of seeking out

Joshua and complaining that it was high time for them to return to their homes, they quietly tarried for Him to take the initiative in the matter. As another remarked, "Like good soldiers they would not move till they had orders from their general. They had not only done their duty to Joshua and Israel, but, which was best of all, they had made conscience of their duty to God: 'Ye have kept the charge,' or, as the word is, 'Ye have kept the keeping,' that is, Ye have carefully and circumspectly kept the commandments of the Lord your God: not only in this particular instance of continuing in the service of Israel to the end of the war, but in general, you have kept up religion in your part of the camp—a rare and excellent thing among soldiers, and which is worthy to be praised" (Matthew Henry).

"And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as He promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan" (v. 4). How careful was Joshua to place the crown of honor where it rightly belonged, and ascribe the glory of their victory unto the Author of the same! At the same time, he considered it meet that thankful acknowledgment should be made to those who had assisted him therein. "God must be chiefly eyed in our praises, but instruments must not be altogether overlooked" (Matthew Henry). Equally definite was Joshua in here magnifying the fidelity of Jehovah, reminding Israel that the successful outcome of their military efforts, and the resultant rest for the whole nation, was the fulfillment of the sure word of the Lord. Having faithfully performed their part of the contract by sharing the hardships and dangers of their brethren, Joshua now made good the assurances which Moses had given to the two and a half tribes, publicly and solemnly granting them an honorable discharge from the army and authorizing them to rejoin their families.

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (v. 5). Ere dismissing the two and a half tribes, Joshua gave them salutary counsel. No instructions were furnished for the fortifying of their cities or for the cultivation of their land, the whole emphasis being placed upon the regulating of their spiritual lives. Nor was there any lowering of the rule to meet their "moral inability," but a strict maintaining of God's claims upon them. "Perfect obedience to the Divine Law was no more practicable in the days of Joshua than at present, yet his exhortation takes no notice of this, for the standard of obedience cannot be too high (Matthew 5:43-48), nor our aim too high, as we are sure to fall very far short of what we propose for ourselves. But the consciousness of our imperfections subserves the purposes of humiliation, and the feeling of our insufficiency dictates prayers for forgiveness and assistance" (Thomas Scott). It is not sufficient that we know God's Law, we are required to *do it*: in order to be obedient, we must "take diligent heed": we shall only walk in God's ways to the extent that we serve Him wholeheartedly, for love to Him is the spring of all acceptable obedience and worship.

A memorial marked that earlier extraordinary episode in the history of the nation, the crossing of the Jordan. Moses had built it when first they entered the land. Representatives of these very tribes had carried the stones out of the river and piled them as a cairn (stones piled up as a memorial) on its bank (Josh. 4), stones which were to be a sign to future generations. They had carried out the instructions of the Lord, "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 the 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" (vv. 6-7).

The Reubenites, the Gadites, and those from Manasseh apparently felt that as a memorial witnessed before their posterity to the miraculous entering into Canaan, so a memorial should also witness to their children why they recrossed the Jordan, and why they had their inheritance on the east side. No matter how plausible the argument for the altar seemed, there was a great difference between the cairn of stones and the altar as they stood on the bank of Jordan; the one was there in obedience to the Word of God, the other because of human reasoning and planning. Any departure from the divine will as it has been revealed, whether by an addition to it or a subtraction from it, must ultimately involve us in difficulties.

The intention of the two and a half tribes may have been sincere enough, but the appearance of the altar certainly seemed to violate the Word of God given by Moses, "And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, . . . there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God" (Deut. 27:1-10). Their brethren viewed it in that light. The motive may not have been wrong, but the method was not right.

From the reading of Joshua 22:11 in the King James Version, it would appear as if the two altars were very close together; but since the phrase, "at the passage of the children of Israel," might also be rendered "at the side of them" the actual position of this second altar is not given.

This memorial of sacred appearance might easily have been a trap for future generations instead of a witness. The brazen serpent which brought life to many dying in Israel (Num. 21), eventually became a snare and the people worshiped it. Good King Hezekiah destroyed it along with other idolatrous objects when he instituted his reforms in the nation (2 Kings 18:4).

We read that it was "a great altar to see to"; that is, to look upon. It was large so as to attract attention. How very human! An accomplishment by man generally results in a large celebration and display, an ostentatious reminder of successful performance. The classic example of this is Nebuchadnezzar and his massive image through which he sought worship. With pride he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" Even as he thus spoke, divine judgment was decreed against him (Dan. 4:30-31). Surely, "a man's pride shall bring him low" (Prov. 29:23). "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

Alarm spread quickly among the other tribes. "When the children of Israel heard of it [the building of the altar], the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them" (v. 12).

Shiloh, as we have noticed, was the center of government. Israel met there in a general and solemn assembly. This was not a movement resulting from mass psychology, nor was it a rash act that might burst into mob violence. The Lord through Moses had legislated already how apostasy was to be punished. Israel, therefore, in formal assembly gathered for consultation and investigation. This wise and firm action stands in vivid contrast to that of the men of Gilead who indiscriminately slew forty-two thousand of the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 12). The rash words of the Ephraimites on that occasion indubitably were provocative, but the harsh and cruel deeds of Jephthah and his followers were not justifiable.

The Spirit of God differentiates between righteous indignation and cruel anger and malice. Of the first He says, "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath"; but of the second He says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4:26, 31).

The thoroughness with which the governing body of Israel, probably the Sanhedrin, studied the matter is admirable. They conducted their investigation according to the will of the Lord which stipulated, should certain men arise and attempt to lead the people of their city into idolatry: "Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city" (Deut. 13:12-18).

The procedure they were to follow required both caution and patience. They were to enquire; that is, seek the answer to the difficulty. They were to search; that is, more intensely examine the evidence for proof. They were to ask diligently; make direct interrogations. They were to adopt a process of justice which would lead them to a righteous decision. Spiritual discretion and discernment will "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). The church at Ephesus was commended by the Lord because she "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). It was the failure in the Corinthian church to practice a judicial caution, a failure to investigate certain discrepancies, that brought upon them the severe reproof: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? . . . I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" (1 Cor. 6:2-5).

Apparently unconscious of self-complacency, these men from Gilead presented their explanation with sincerity and clarity. Yes, they had built an altar patterned after the brazen altar in the Tabernacle, only larger. They may have thought that the pattern itself would have been a link between them and their brethren on the west side of Jordan. They may also have thought that in an altar of such shape, they would have a reminder of God's demands, the demands of the one and only true God. They may likewise have thought that its presence would confirm in their lives, and in those of future generations, that God could be approached only on the basis of atonement. One thing was sure, it was not to be used for animal sacrifices. They averred their plan: "Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice: But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us" (vv. 26-27).

Following their explanation they disclaimed any attempt to rebel against the Lord, or to depart from the service of the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

The reply of Phinehas expressed pleasure, not in that they had built an altar, but in that they had not trespassed against the Lord, and consequently the nation had been saved from God's wrath against apostasy. The absence of any reference to the altar by Phinehas at this time might be interpreted as a disapproval. It was the fact that the two and a half tribes had not transgressed that pleased the children of Israel when Phinehas and his associates on their return reported the matter. A civil war to extirpate the evil from the congregation had been averted. The joy that was Israel's through this clear understanding expressed itself in worship. "The children of Israel blessed God." Open strife and armed conflict had been avoided, and so praise ascended to the Lord.

"And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God" (v. 34). How long the altar Ed remained is not stated, but in little more than four centuries, its witness to God was forgotten. We read: "And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day" (1 Chron. 5:25-26).

Such are the good intentions of men. They do not have the strength to implement their good resolutions. The tendency of man is downward. The very generations for which the altar was intended despised its testimony and plunged into idolatry. Apart from the grace and power of God deterioration is stamped on all human plans.

(Gleanings in Joshua, A. W. Pink)

The building of a rather large and impressive altar by the children of Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh on the far side of the Jordan River, becomes a very questionable and rather reprehensible act, as seen by those of the children of Israel on the Canaan side of Jordan. **After reading this story in the 22nd chapter, do you believe the final decision on the matter, following discussions by the two sides, was in obedience to, and also gave honor to God?**

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way of death."

Proverbs 16:2: "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits."

Proverbs 16:9: "A man's heart plans his ways, but the Lord directs his steps."

Proverbs 18:12: "Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility."

Proverbs 21:2: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts."

No doubt these wise sayings of Solomon could apply to this part of the lesson. **We invite you to briefly write your own opinion as well.**

Joshua 23:1-24:33

These chapters contain the parting charges of Joshua to Israel at Shechem. He reviews the faithfulness of God, and all His gracious promises and leadings, and then solemnly pledges them to fidelity to Him and His holy covenant. And when they respond to His appeal and promise to serve the Lord with faithfulness, he reminds them that they are unable to serve Him in their own strength, and then reiterates his own determination for him and his household to serve the Lord, whatsoever others may do.

The chapter closes with a very humbling statement that the children of Israel served the Lord faithfully during all the days of Joshua and the elders who survived him, and the generation that had known the works of the Lord in Canaan, but we learn from the later book of Judges, that before the third generation they were sunk in apostasy and captivity, and the glory of their early victories had been exchanged for a declension and degradation far more terrible than the story of Israel's wanderings for 40 years in the wilderness.

For us there is the solemn lesson that, notwithstanding all the promises of the gospel and the abundant grace of Christ, there is need of the humblest vigilance and the closest abiding, even in the highest places of our Christian life. The greater the height, the greater the fall and the deeper the degradation. Israel's

wanderings in the wilderness after they came out of Egypt lasted only 40 years, but Israel's declension and degradation under the Judges, lasted over 400 years.

For an ordinary Christian to go back from God is a very serious thing; but for one who has known Him in all the fullness of His grace, to turn aside from the higher pathway of a life of consecration, is a far more serious and dangerous thing; and the Word of God is full of the most faithful and solemn warnings and admonitions to even those who have entered into the fullness of Jesus, to watch and stand fast, lest, being led away by the error of the wicked, they fall from their own steadfastness.

While on the one hand, we have the most gracious promises of our Father keeping us, yet at the same time, we have the most faithful warnings to abide and obey.

The echoes of this chapter ring through the New Testament, and especially those chapters that speak of our higher Christian life. When John tells us, "The anointing you received from him remains in you" (1 John 2:27), he also adds, "And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming" (2:28). While Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day" (2 Timothy 1:12); yet he also adds, "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (1:14). While in one breath, the Spirit says, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. . . . But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). He also adds, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall" (10:12).

God's Word is not a castiron system of theology, proclaiming infallible security for any man, irrespective of his own attitude. But it is the wise and loving touch of a mother's hand, on the side of our spiritual life that needs adjustment, whether it be encouragement to lift us up, or admonition and warning to hold us back from presumption and disobedience.

It would have been as cruel and unwise to encourage David, in the time of his disobedience, as to have discouraged Simon Peter, when his heart was breaking with remorse and sorrow.

The one needed stern rebuke, to let him see his sin, and the other needed hope and comfort, to reveal to him his Savior's mercy.

Therefore, let us not think it strange, if at one time we hear the Holy Scriptures saying, "They shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28); and at another time, "If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers" (15:6).

The very warning is designed to prevent the peril to which it refers.

What were some of the causes of Israel's declension?

1. The first was, perhaps, their undue dependence upon Joshua and the fathers who had brought them into the land. "Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31). But when these had passed away and they were thrown upon their own strength, resources and character, they did not have those elements of stability, principle and permanence which were sufficient to preserve them from the unholy influence of the surrounding nations, and so they gradually sank back again into heathenism.

There are many persons whose religious character is a reflection of the influence of others. Like young Joash, who served the Lord during the days of Jehoiada, his adopted father, and turned back to evil when he was gone, so these persons manifest much sympathetic goodness under the influence of favorite teachers and high examples, and in seasons of deep religious excitement, they may even seem to pass through an experience of great spiritual life, exhibiting many of its emotions and some of its fruits; but when these influences are withdrawn, it becomes evident that there was no real conviction of purpose and will, and no radical transformation of character.

The test will come to all such souls; they will find these favorable influences withdrawn, and these helpful surroundings changed, and they will be compelled to fall back on their own resources and their own direct knowledge of God and His sustaining grace. And when no longer pressed forward by stronger spirits and upheld by helpful hands, but met by opposition, misunderstanding, uncongenial associations, and, perhaps, direct persecution, they will soon find whether their purpose is rooted in God, and their spirit united to the living Christ and whether they are abiding in Him as the source of their strength and service.

If this, indeed, be so, they will continue even in isolation and opposition, and Jeremiah's picture of the man "whose confidence is in [the LORD]" (Jeremiah 17:7) shall be gloriously fulfilled in them. "He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (17:8).

The secret of Joshua's victory was that he had long before this learned to stand alone. To him the day had come, more than half a century before, when the unfaithful spies and the whole congregation turned against him, refusing to follow him, and even threatening to destroy him, while he and his faithful companion stood fast to their principles at Kadesh Barnea. His purpose was not affected by the failure of the multitude to follow him. It was not much more affected by the enthusiasm of the second generation to enter with him the Land of Promise. And even now, as he stood on the height and glorious elevation of an accomplished and victorious life, he was still as ready as ever to stand alone, and his lofty independence expresses itself in the heroic words: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

This must ever be the secret of steadfastness in the consecrated life. You must know the truth of the Lord for yourself, and commit yourself to it and to Him, even if you have to stand alone. You must be so persuaded of it that you cannot surrender it even if you die. And you must know the Lord so definitely for yourself, and not for another, that even if all the Christians in the world should fail, and all your friends forsake you, you must still stand and exclaim like Martin Luther, "Here I stand; I can do no other, so help me God."

Stronger than all the power of Babylon is the spirit of the men who stand in the fiery furnace, and say, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

2. The second cause of Israel's declension was their failure to do thorough work, especially in separating from and exterminating their enemies. We read in the beginning of the book of Judges of many of the tribes of Canaan, whom they should have thoroughly subjugated, that the children of Judah could not drive out of the valley (1:19); and that the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem (1:21); nor did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shan and her towns, but the Canaanites would dwell in the land (1:27); nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites in Gezer, but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them, and so of many of the other tribes. Not only so, but Israel, in some cases, put the Canaanites to tribute (1:28-30), making it even a profitable business, and a source of income to have them remain, when the Lord had commanded their utter extermination.

And still worse, we find them even entering into forbidden alliances with them, and also intermarrying among their sons and daughters (3:5-6). God's command to them had been, "You shall break down their altars" (2:2). "When . . . you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons" (Deuteronomy 7:2-3).

But here we read, "The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods (Judges 3:5-6). Israel had become content with the victories which had subdued their more formidable foes, and given them the chief strongholds of the land, but in a thousand little places the enemy still lurked and lingered, and gradually became tolerated, the danger of their continuance did not seem very great, and the trouble and cost of their extermination seemed greater than the courage and patience of Israel. Thus they were suffered to remain, half conquered, and for the time, wholly subordinate. In a little while it became a source of profit to collect tribute from these bold giants, and so, many of them were made tributary to Israel, contrary to the divine command.

A little later, relations of friendship and fellowship began to be established, and before long they were intermarrying with the tribes of Israel and raising a mongrel race in which the true seed would soon be wholly extinguished. Then to crown all, they naturally began to serve the idols of their heathen friends, and to mingle in all the abominations of their unholy religion, thus becoming in the end, really apostate from the worship of the true God altogether.

This is the sad story of the development of evil in many a life which once seemed wholly consecrated. Little sins are left unsubdued. Like Saul they destroy the Amalekites, but they spare Agag, their king, for some good purpose, as they suppose, and keep the best of the spoil with the idea that they are going to sacrifice it unto the Lord. They have not the courage to deal bravely and firmly with evil. After awhile they begin to turn it to profitable account and tolerate certain forms of sin and worldliness because of advantage. Their business interests would be ruined by too rigid a conscientiousness, for some of their investments are not wholly separated from forbidden associations; the profits, at least, will be divided with the Lord, and the end will

sanctify the means. A thousand specious and plausible excuses are made for things that ought to be thoroughly put aside and which, like the Canaanites, they put under tribute, and try to justify because of some advantage that can be brought out of them.

3. Perhaps the most serious cause of their failure was their inability to understand their own weakness. It was the spirit of self-sufficiency and self-confidence that brought about their ruin. There was a deep meaning in the words of Joshua which they could not understand. "You are not able to serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:19), said their faithful leader. He knew better than they the weakness of their own hearts.

They were ready enough to promise and to purpose, but they knew not how certain they were to go back again to the forbidden sin. Their fathers at Sinai had been as ready to answer, under the terrors of the mount, "We will do everything the LORD has said" (Exodus 19:8), but before the month was ended they were dancing around the golden calf. Peter was ready enough to promise, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will," (Matthew 26:33), and yet, before the next noonday, Peter was among the enemies of his Lord, a blaspheming, brokenhearted man.

The deepest need of our spiritual life is to know our utter helplessness, weakness and liability to err. Then we shall lean on His stronger arm, and in self-distrust abide in Him, knowing that apart from Him we can do nothing.

This was the great lesson of the Old Testament discipline. "For the law made nothing perfect" but, praise the Lord, "a better hope is introduced" (Hebrews 7:19). "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4). "Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (8:2). "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Galatians 5:16). The secret of victory is the profound consciousness of our utter inability and helpless nothingness. Our insufficiency is measured by His all-sufficiency, and as we decrease, He must increase. Most of our failures are meant to teach us our inability and worthlessness, that we may learn that apart from Him we can do nothing.

4. The review of God's faithfulness and grace is fitted to establish us and encourage us in fidelity and steadfastness. Joshua led them back over the history of the past, and recalled to their mind the marvelous dealings of Jehovah with them and their fathers. Then he reminded them of the good land into which He had brought them, and all the blessings with which He had surrounded them. By all these considerations He called them and bound them to remember their covenant obligations, and be true to their faithful God.

And so, God holds us to Himself by the memory of His grace and love. What marvelous promises He has given us, and how vast are the prospects and the recompenses that He has in store for us! By all these things, let us be true to our covenant and faithful to our heavenly Friend.

God would awaken us to a sense of our true dignity and our glorious future, that we might "live a life worthy of the calling [we] have received" (Ephesians 4:1). Behind us there lies a high and heavenly calling and a past full of His faithful love. Before us is a kingdom of incomparable and everlasting glory, and both are calling us to "stand firm." Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because "you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

We are strongly reminded: The Church of God has been slack, and she has not claimed her full inheritance of knowledge and truth – nor entered into all the fullness of God's precious promises. What a mighty admonition this is to each believer today! All the glorious gifts of God are ours (Ephesians chapter 1); the almighty presence of our Lord is sufficient for any obedient service that we dare to attempt in His strength and name; we have been given the *full* armor of God—we must not neglect to use it; and we have been clothed in all the fullness of the unchanging Holy Spirit. Although the world is ever beckoning and enticing us, we must at all times remember that we are seated in the heavenlies with Christ in God, and the world passes away and the lust thereof. Therefore, we are to go forth, standing tall in our Lord, rejecting sin, going out boldly, overcoming our enemies and possessing our full inheritance. We have crossed over the Jordan, and in so doing have died to flesh, self and all Satan's temptations. There can be no alliances with the ungodly, and we no longer recognize anything of the world as our support. Each day that we live, we learn to love and obey our Savior more and more, and all our praise is due unto Him!

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly
Above all that we ask or think,
According to the power that works within us,
To Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus
To all generations, forever and ever – Amen
Ephesians 3:20, 21

From these insights, it is definitely clear that God can only use those who have truly entered into His rest—that of letting go of every problem and difficulty by not trying to solve it through the area of our minds, where we operate in the flesh. **Is it possible to take every concern to Christ for the Holy Spirit to bring His perfect answer to us as we quietly await His timing and at the same time refusing to “solve it” by the actions of our human minds?** If so, it becomes “Not I, but Christ,” and He receives all the glory.