

FROM
EGYPT TO CANAAN;

OR,

The Exodus and Pilgrimage of Israel.

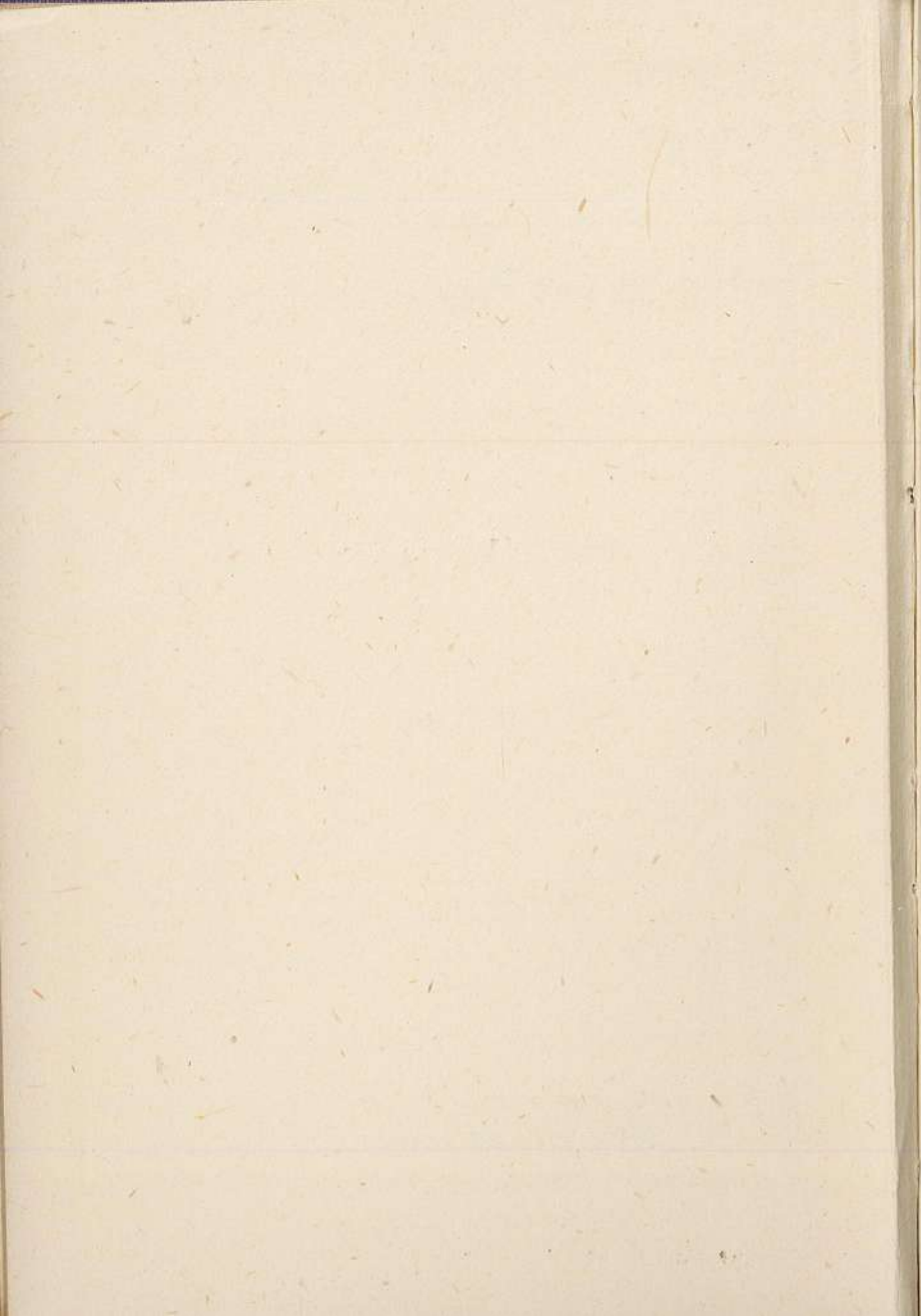
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE BELIEVER'S REDEMPTION,
SALVATION, WORSHIP, WALK AND WARFARE

With Coloured Chart

BY
JOHN RITCHIE

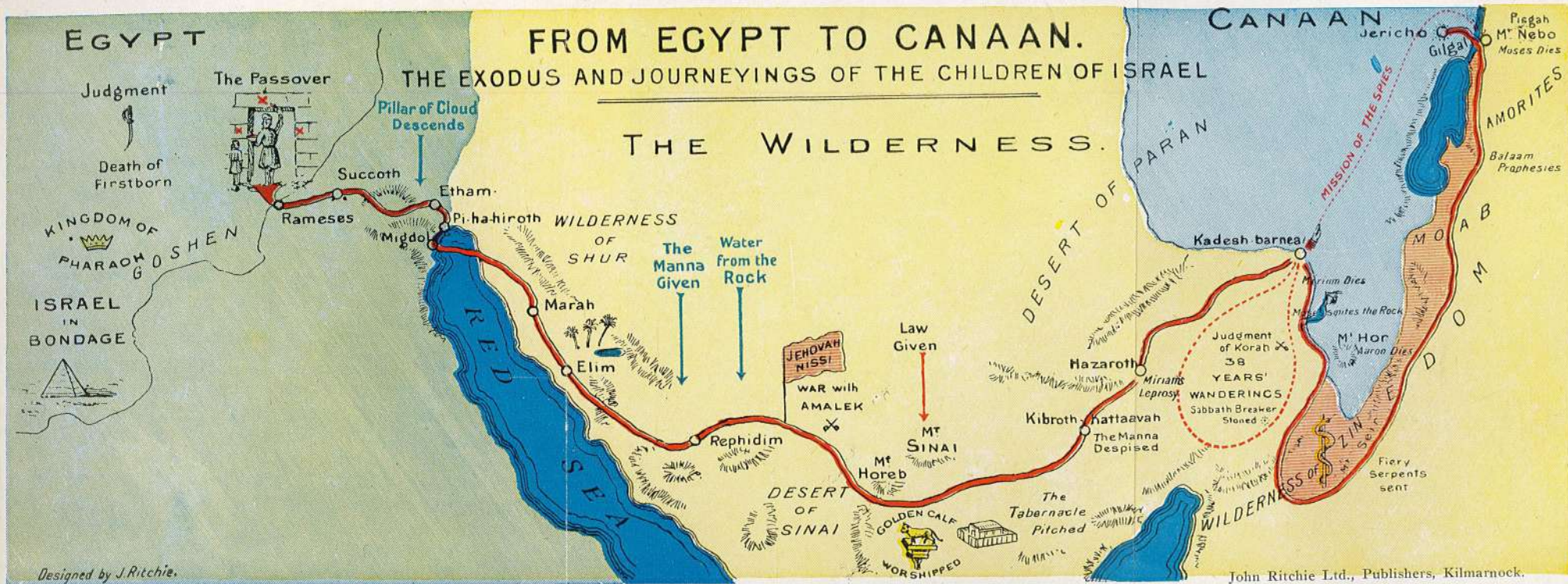
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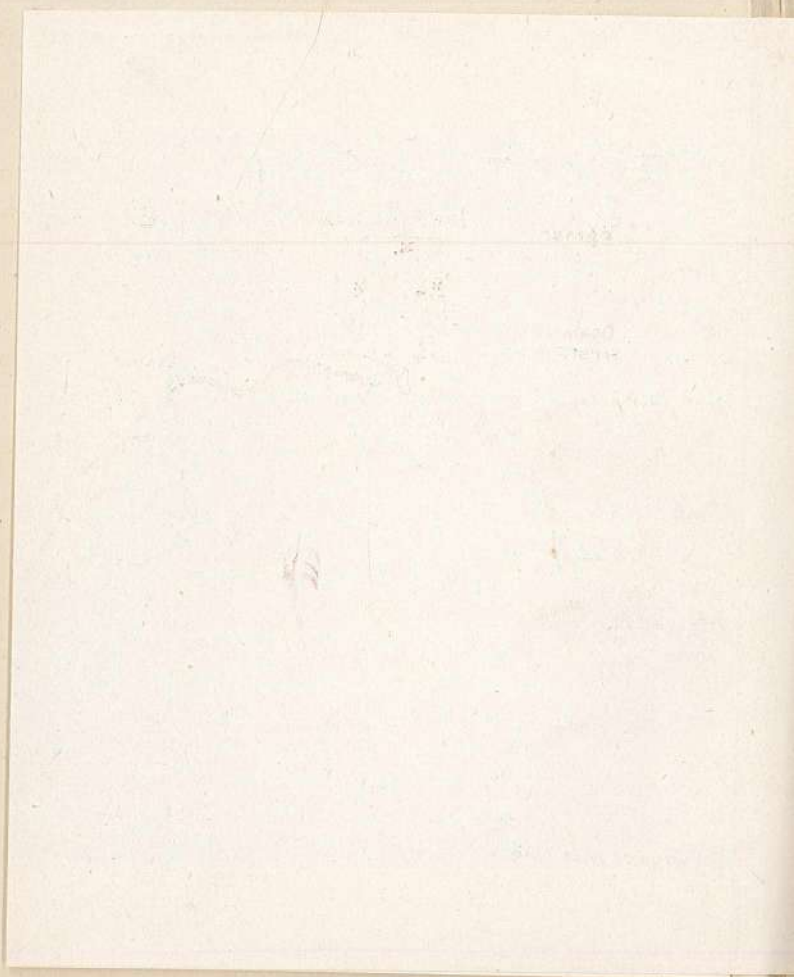
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Designed by J. Ritchie.

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From Egypt to Canaan.

THE TYPES OF SCRIPTURE.

A BELOVED sister in Christ, who a few years ago departed to be with her Lord, had written along the margin of her well-read Bible, the following two lines :—

“ IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE NEW LIES HID,
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE OLD LIES OPEN.”

This simple testimony to the value of Old Testament type and teaching, is most blessedly true.

Many look upon the books of the Old Testament as having been useful for a bygone age, but of little value to us of this present time. But this is surely evil ; and he who esteems lightly, or passes carelessly over these parts of Holy Scripture, cannot do so without losing much that would be of real value to his soul. It is written, “ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ” (2 Tim. iii. 16-17). And again—“ Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that *we* through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope ” (Rom. xv. 4). The former of these Scriptures assures us that the typical parts of the Bible are the breathings of God, and the latter, that they are of practical value to us.

The Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, abound in typical teaching.

To the Christian reader they are mines of untold

wealth, for they speak of Christ, and "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9).

These books may be compared to a great picture gallery, in which the Christ of the New Testament is seen, in all the varied glories of His Person, and aspects of His work. Christ is the key of all the types. They all point onward to Him. And when *He* is known, and loved in the heart, when *His* blessed Person is the object of the affections, it will not be hard to recognise Him, even although veiled as in the types. It is said "Love is quick-sighted," and can see beauties in its object, where other eyes see none. This testimony is true regarding heavenly things. Love to Jesus, and true heart longings after Him, are the best qualification for the understanding of the typical Scriptures. No single type could have told out all His worth, therefore there are many, and even then the "half hath not been told." To know *all* that Jesus is, the depth of His love, the glory of His Person, yet remains for a future day—and what we know not now, we shall know then, when we see Him as He is. Meanwhile may we have understandings opened, and hearts engaged, and may He who journeyed with the two of old, on the road to Emmaus, expound to our hearts the things concerning Himself in all these Scriptures.

Seeing Jesus thus, we shall see ourselves also, for we are *one* with Him. Some of the types, therefore, speak of the believer's union with Christ, and of *salvation*, as well as the Saviour; *deliverance*, as well as the Deliverer.

Of course we have now a clearer light and a fuller testimony. *Jesus* has been here Himself, and the glory has been seen in Him without a veil. The only begotten Son from the bosom of the Father, has been on earth Himself, and we can trace His footsteps along the pages of the four Gospels, from Bethlehem to Calvary, and back again to Heaven. *Divine love* has now been fully revealed, and *Divine justice* has been satisfied in the Cross of Christ; things that found no

full expression in the *types*. The Cross alone bears full testimony that "God is light" and "God is love."

An old writer has said that in the *types* "God was taking His Christ and showing Him to us in parts." They speak to us of *one* Christ, but in His varied glories. Take, for example, the offerings. They show the *one* offering of Jesus Christ, in its many hues, as burnt-offering, meat-offering, peace-offering, sin-offering, and trespass-offering. So also in the other *types*. Each proclaims in its own measure, the worth and beauty of the Lord Jesus.

Saints in all ages have found much to comfort and edify them in these Scriptures, and the young believer is instinctively drawn to their study, even before he can give a reason for applying them to himself at all. He feels that they describe his own case, and tell the story of what goes on in the kingdom of God within his own soul. It was from one of the typical books that the blessed Master taught Nicodemus the story of His own uplifting as the Antitype of the serpent on the pole (John iii. 14); and from another He chose the words wherewith He defeated the Devil in the wilderness. In Corinthians x. 11, we have a divine warrant for regarding the history of Israel as a type of our own. It is written, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples (margin, or *types*), and they are written for *our* admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

To this eventful history, the young believer is directed in the following short papers. They are written with a desire to help such in the searching of the Word of God. Let the reader take his Bible, and read prayerfully each chapter as we proceed. This journey from Egypt to Canaan is a wonderful one, and, unlike human biography, it shows us the dark as well as the bright side, it tells the blunders as well as the victories of this ransomed people, and what the Christian's path often *is*, as well as what it *ought to be*.

EGYPT—THE WILDERNESS—CANAAN.

There are three different positions in which the Children of Israel are presented to us in the Scriptures, which are each typical of the believer's place and portion.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT.—Here they are found under the shelter of the blood on the lintel, secure from judgment, and at peace with God. They are seen, within their houses, calmly feasting on the flesh of the lamb roast with fire; and with loins girded, shoes on feet, and staff in hand, ready to depart from Egypt.

This shows the Christian in the midst of a condemned world, sheltered by the blood of Christ, and delivered from wrath to come. In the midst of death he is in life, and for him judgment is past. The blood of the Lamb of God is the answer to all the claims of justice, and with him it has no further question. He is at peace with God, and, in the enjoyment of this peace, is seen feasting on the lamb slain—type of a suffering Christ. Clad in pilgrim garb, he stands on the tip-toe of expectation, waiting for the hour, when the Lord shall summon him from earth to heaven. Meanwhile, he is in the world, but not *of* it. The blood on the lintel is between him and the Egyptians without, and he has express command not to leave his separated position, until the morning (Exod. xii. 22).

In Egypt, the Israelite is sheltered, feasting, waiting. In the world, the believer has salvation, communion, hope. The first epistle to the Thessalonians, views the believer in this position.

ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.—Separated unto God. The Red Sea rolls as a barrier between them and Egypt, separating them from the scenes of their slavery and idolatry for ever. They are a chosen people, dwelling alone, not reckoned among the nations. God is their guide—the pillar of cloud hovers above them, to lead the way. They are fed by God's manna, daily

falling from heaven ; they drink of His water, flowing from the smitten rock ; they walk in His light, and fight under His banner. Egypt is *behind* them, Canaan *before* them, and God is *with* them.

This shows the believer, delivered from this present evil world by the Cross of Christ (Gal. i. 3) ; he is crucified to the world (Gal. vi. 14), dead and buried (Col. ii. 12), stranger in a strange land (1 Pet. ii. 11), looking *forward* to a better, even a heavenly country.

With the government of the nations around him he takes nothing to do ; but, pilgrim like, he walks quietly along the King's highway, rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. His Father's eye is over him, and he walks looking up. All his springs are in God, and on Him he depends for the daily supply of all his need. His is a walk of faith, consequently of trial, and often of failure. Here it is that the bitter waters of Marah are found and tasted ; and immediately followed by the sweet waters and palm trees of Elim. Here Amalek comes out to fight the pilgrim ; but God is *with* him now, as He had been *for* him at the Red Sea, and so his enemies are all defeated—for "God is stronger than His foes."

The wilderness is to the believer "The School of God." There he experimentally learns his own worthlessness and weakness, and proves the grace and power of a present God. He knows now, not only in theory, but in painful experience, that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing. It has had opportunity of showing its true character, and has done so. Here, too, he proves the God of all Grace, enough for every emergency ; restoring him when he falls, in weakness his strength, in battle his deliverer, his storehouse and his barn, at every stage of the way.

We know how sweet it is to hear the young believer sing, "I know my sins are all forgiven," and "Heaven is my Home," as he stands on the first step on the wilderness, with exulting heart and beaming eye, as

Israel stood and sung their song of deliverance on the shore of the Red Sea. But is it not a grander sight still, to see the aged pilgrim leaning on his staff, with the long dreary wilderness behind him, all the life-long discipline, the ups and downs, the failures and restorations past. Standing there on the *last* step of the desert, to hear him exclaim as Caleb did—"Behold the Lord hath kept me alive *as He said*, these forty and five years . . . 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 come in" (Josh. xiv. 10, 11). He has *learned* himself, and proved God; and this is experience. Surely when we stand in His light, and look back over all the rugged road the Lord our God has led us, delivering, upholding, defending, and restraining us, when our wandering feet had well nigh slipped; when we see how near the end of the precipice we had sometimes wandered, and were kept back by His hand, we shall, with adoring hearts, proclaim, "*He hath done all things well.*"

The 23rd Psalm is the wilderness song of one who is proving Jehovah as his Shepherd on the journey home. There the pilgrim is seen, with the Cross (Psa. xxii.) *behind* him, the glory (Psa. xxiv.) *before* him, and the Shepherd (Psa. xxiii.) *with* him. Although he is treading the "valley of the shadow of death," with enemies all around, yet he fears no evil, for the Shepherd is by his side, and *His* rod, *His* staff, *His* guiding eye, are all engaged for the pilgrim, until he reaches "the house of the Lord," his everlasting home.

Dear young believer, do you find this world a dreary wilderness? Do you feel you are walking through a foreign land, where nothing can satisfy your heart, or attract your eye? Satan and your own heart will seek at every step to allure you into some bypath, and bring to your remembrance Egypt's pleasures you have left behind. *Look up.* The Man at the right hand of God

is for you, and He can bring you through. Soon you shall reach the Father's house, and receive a hearty welcome there.

"There no stranger God shall meet thee,
Stranger thou in courts above ;
He who to His rest shall greet thee,
Greet thee with a well-known love."

The Epistles to the Philippians and the Hebrews, and the first Epistle of Peter, address the believer as in the wilderness, and heaven as beyond.

ISRAEL IN CANAAN.—Their feet standing on the land flowing with milk and honey. Jordan crossed, the wilderness past, and Egypt far behind. They stand with sword in hand, a nation of warriors, taking possession of the land of which God had said—"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you" (Jos. i. 3). Their's is no *idle* life, it is the "fight of faith." *Onward* is their watchword: led on by the Captain of the Lord's host, they go from victory unto victory. This shows the believer as already risen, and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Not so much looking forward to heaven at the end of the journey, but *already* there; and already blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). The Epistle to the Ephesians may be called "The Believer's Canaan." There the expression "*heavenly places*" occurs often, and the believer is viewed as already there in Christ. Heaven, not earth, is the place of his inheritance and blessing. He is the partaker of a *heavenly* calling (Heb. iii. 1), his citizenship is *heavenly* (Phil. iii. 20), and where his treasure is, there is his heart also. Canaan is not a type of that which the believer enters, when he departs to be with Christ; *there* he shall be at rest. In Canaan he handles the sword and shield. So in the Ephesian position. In chapter vi. he is seen in conflict with wicked spirits, who would dispute his right, and seek

to hinder his enjoyment of the portion grace has given—hence the conflict. He stands clad in the armour of God, like a warrior in the day of battle; and if he abides “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” he shall overcome. The old corn of the land, type of Christ risen, is his daily food. He is thereby strengthened for the battle. This warfare is no “child’s play,” but a downright contest with the devil, and he who knows most of his place and portion in Christ, will find it the hottest.

We are at once in Egypt, in the Wilderness, and in Canaan.

As a matter of *Fact* we are in the world; and it is night. “The night is far spent,” and we shall leave it finally in the morning, at the coming of the lord.

As to *Experience*, we are in the Wilderness. Children still at school, under the Father’s discipline. This also is a life-long lesson. It will only be perfected at the Lord’s coming for us, or our going to be with Him.

As to our *Position* we are in Canaan, for while the world is *around* us, and the flesh *within* us, in Christ we are far above both, and our standing is *in Him*. There we encounter the devil, and our conflict with him will only cease, when, at the coming of the Lord, he is cast out of the heavens (Rev. xii. 9). Even now we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us, who for us won the fight and through us triumphs still, and Satan shall be bruised beneath our feet (Rom. xvi. 20). He cheers us on in the conflict by telling us this shall be “*shortly*.” Till then dear fellow-saint and soldier—

“Gird on thine armour, face the mighty foe,
Deal with the sword of heaven, the deadly blow;
Onward—still onward in the fight divine,
Slack not the conflict till the field be thine.”

ISRAEL IN EGYPT. BONDAGE IN SIN.

The first chapter of the book of Exodus, gives us a view of Israel in Egypt. There, they are *slaves* of

Pharaoh the Egyptian King, and *idolaters* bowing down before Egypt's gods (Ezek. xx. 7-8). Bitter was their bondage, and hard their lot, in making bricks to their merciless master, as the chapter shows. The task-master's whip, and the clanking chain, reveal their state, and show that they are under a power stronger than their own. They may groan for deliverance, but they cannot escape. The strong man armed keeps his goods in peace.

Yet they had their little pleasures, for they speak of "the fish they did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlick" (Num. xi. 5). It would not have suited Pharaoh's purpose to have withheld these things from them, for they helped to content them with their lot, and to make them do his work more willingly.

This is a picture of the state of every unconverted sinner. Egypt is the type of this world (Rev. xi. 8); Pharaoh of Satan, who is its Prince and ruler (John xii. 31; Eph. vi. 12).

Man, by nature, is the slave of Satan; this present evil world is the scene of his slavery; and his sins are the chains that bind him. Man is sold under sin (Rom. vii. 14); he cannot deliver himself, for he is "without strength" (Rom. v. 6). He is the tool of Satan, led *captive* by him at his will (2 Tim. ii. 26). It is quite true, that it is a willing bondage, for Satan has his mind blinded (2 Cor. iv. 4), and his understanding darkened (Eph. iv. 18), so that he thinks his bondage liberty, and cherishes the very sins that are his fetters now, and shall be the gnawing worm to agonise him in hell for ever. Oh, the cunning devices of the Devil!

He will even loose the burden a little, and slacken the chains, to let his captive enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season," in order that he may more securely bind and blind him for ever.

Satan is a skilled chain forger; his long experience has given him ample opportunity to watch the tastes

of his victims, and provide a chain suited to each. Some are held by the iron chain of lust and passion, and go headlong to their doom. Others, with the more respectable chains of worldliness, the love of money, and the praise of men. Thus they are led silently, but surely, down to the pit. The drunkard's cup, the miser's money bag, and the hypocrite's cloak of false religion, alike suit his purpose. A form of godliness, without conversion to God, may be the most potent tool for Satan's use, to delude and destroy his victim's soul for eternity.

Here let me pause and ask—Have *you* been delivered from Satan's galling yoke, or are you still his slave? Are you certain that no secret sin, loved and cherished, is noiselessly binding you to Satan and this world? Your conscience may be at ease, your peace unruffled. The chain, long hugged, may have rusted upon you, but if you have not been set free by the Son of God, you are yet held fast in Satan's power, and he is leading you on to "the lake of fire."

One eye had seen the captives toiling at Egypt's brick kilns; one ear had heard their groan; one heart had known their sorrows. The God of Abraham remembered His covenant and said—"I am *come down* to deliver them" (Exod. iii. 8). Blessed Gospel tidings! If any help is given, it must "come down," for "no man can by any means redeem his brother" (Psa. xlix. 7).

"God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16)—and, "Christ Jesus *came* into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

Here we have the answer to the type. God has been manifest in flesh, He has "come down" to deliver. By His death on the Cross, He has bruised, and conquered Satan. Death has been vanquished, and its sting withdrawn. The grave of Christ is empty, and He is seated on the right hand of God, with all power in heaven and on earth. He sends the Gospel to the

sinner's ear, proclaiming "liberty to the captive," and commands him to believe it. This Gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

Do *you* believe the Gospel? Have you opened your ear and heart, to receive the glad tidings? If you have, you are the Lord's freeman, and, if the Son of God has made you *free*, you shall be "*free* indeed" (John viii. 36).

PHARAOH'S EFFORTS. THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.

Moses and Aaron, commissioned from God, are sent to Egypt. They go to headquarters at once, and standing in the court of Pharaoh, amid the greatness and grandeur of Egypt, they present the demand of Jehovah—"Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness" (Exod. v. 1).

Pharaoh declares open defiance at once, and orders the bondage to be increased. He shows his contempt and hatred of God in the words—"Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Exod. v. 2).

This is Satan's way; it is the first of his plans to hinder the deliverance of a poor sinner. Here, there is no disguise. It is the roar of the lion of hell, and open hostility to God and His truth. So long as he can keep his slaves at peace, quietly serving him, he does it. Let but God begin to deal with the sinner for his deliverance, and immediately hell is let loose to hold him. Satan never gives up his prey without a struggle. At this point the sinner's state is worse (see Exod. v. 15-23) than before, for his conscience is awake, and his chains are felt. Eternity is revealed, and like the prodigal (Luke xv. 17), he has "come to himself."

The First of the Enemy's Wiles.—The demand of Jehovah is pressed upon Pharaoh. Judgments are

falling on him and his land for refusal. His tactics change. He sees that in open fight he cannot succeed, for "God is stronger than His foes." But what if by secret craft he can accomplish his purpose? He will try it at any rate. He calls Moses, and makes the concession—"Go ye, sacrifice to your God *in the land*" (Exod. viii. 25). This looks very gracious, it is a considerable stretch on Pharaoh's part. It thinly veils the treachery of the devil. The aim of this piece of strategy is to destroy the very object of the people's redemption, and their testimony to the true God. But Moses detected the plot, and immediately resisted it with the plain word of Jehovah—"We will go *three days' journey* into the wilderness, and sacrifice to our God as *He shall command us*" (Exod. viii. 27).

The word of God was definite, it could not, therefore, be compromised. The distance out of Egypt, where the altar of Jehovah was to stand, was measured by Jehovah Himself, and Moses could have no hand in lowering the standard. He presents Jehovah's claims in full, in the face of the enemy.

Here then is one of the wiles of the devil. If he cannot, as a roaring lion, hinder the deliverance of a sinner by open opposition, he will endeavour as a subtle serpent to keep him sacrificing in the land. And has he not succeeded? Satan has no objection to any man adopting a religion that keeps him as a decent worldling, "sacrificing in the land." Oh no, he will even give such his patronage and applause. The world will speak well of him; he will be caressed and admired by all. Worldly religion embraces everything, and condemns nothing but wholeheartedness for Christ. It is conducted "*in the land*" on the principles of the world's charity, and being of the world, the world loves well its own. But let the call of God to march "*three days' journey*" into the wilderness be insisted on—that is, the full length of the Cross, and, what followed on "*the third day,*" the resurrection of Christ, to

lead the believer—and Satan will move hell to hinder that. He hates an out-and-out separation to God. Full well he knows, that he who apprehends that he is dead and risen with Christ, bids farewell to him, his empire, his service, and his land for ever.

Professing Christian, have you taken "the three days' journey out of Egypt?" Are you separate from the world? Remember, you cannot bear a true testimony for God, or worship Him in truth, and at the same time have fellowship with worldlings, either in their sinful pleasures, or in their religion. "*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*"

The call of God is clear—"Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. vi. 17).

The Second Wile of the Enemy.—"I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to your God in the wilderness, *only ye shall not go very far away*" (Exod. viii. 28). This is hard pleading. It simply means—"Do not go out of my reach, but keep near enough to Egypt, so that I may without much trouble draw you back again, and thus destroy your testimony as a separated people." Borderland Christianity is a grand tool for Satan; it suits his purpose well. A man that is neither out-and-out for God, nor yet a thorough worldling, is a stumbling-block to everybody. *The world* smiles with contempt at the man who prays in the prayer meeting the one night, and sings at the concert the next. Honest people can gauge the depth of such a profession easily. They put him down as a hypocrite. He has no power at all for anything, save for mischief. He is respected by none, neither Christian nor worldling. His own conscience is defiled, his soul is vexed, and his whole appearance miserable. Lot was one of the class who don't "*go very far away.*" He tried to blend politics and piety while living in Sodom, and the people mocked him. His worldliness entirely paralysed his preaching. His children married Sodomites, and the end of it was, he was dragged out of Sodom, saved

as by fire, to end his days in a lonely cave with a blighted testimony.

Young believer, Satan will try this stratagem with you. He will whisper, "Don't go too far. There's no need for being tight-laced. You may be a Christian and sing an innocent worldly song, take a dance, or enjoy a bit of pleasure. There are many good Christian people who see no harm in doing these things. We must not make ourselves peculiar. We must be like other people." All this style of reasoning is from the devil. By it he wishes to blunt the testimony of saints for God in the world, and drag them down to the level of carnal religious men. We are distinctly told, in God's Book, that His people are a "*peculiar people*" (1 Pet. ii. 9), that they are not to walk "as other Gentiles" (Eph. iv. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 3). Saints of God! resist the devil, steadfast in the faith. Contend for "the three days' journey" in all your ways. Let the cross and grave of Christ, be the measure of your separation from the world. This is God's Christianity.

The Third Wile of the Enemy.—"Go ye now that are men" (Exod. x. 11). Poor Pharaoh is in sore trouble. The hand of God is coming heavier and heavier upon him. He stretches a bit further. He will now let them go the "three days' journey," but wants the "little ones" left behind. This is clever work. Parents in the wilderness worshipping Jehovah, and children left in Egypt still, beside its idolaters! What a spectacle, too! What a testimony! Well did Pharaoh know, that if he succeeded in this, his end would be gained. He knew that if the "little ones" were left, the parents would soon return. Alas! that many Christian parents should have forgotten this, and left their children in the world, engrossed in its pleasures, and running in its course unrestrained. The testimony of many a Christian parent has been blighted, by leaving his little ones in Egypt, encouraging them to attend its assemblies and learn its ways, in the company of the most un-

godly. Lot and Eli were both of this class, and the judgment of God that fell on their families, stands a warning to all who follow in their steps.

The Last Wile of the Enemy.—Pharaoh is hard pressed, and he makes a last attempt. It is but very feeble, nevertheless, if he can hold anything, and only keep one slender link unbroken, he may be a gainer by it. "Go ye, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and herds be stayed, let your little ones also go with you" (Exod. x. 24). Pharaoh is now to be very accommodating. He will be easily pleased. His demands seem reasonable. Flocks and herds would be burdensome on a journey. Would it not be better to leave them? Moses says, *NO*. Although, personally, the meekest man on earth, he was one of the Lord's "*Invincibles*." He would not yield one iota of God's demands. Flocks and herds must be Jehovah's too. He must have all. And so Pharaoh got the final and decisive answer—"*There shall not a hoof be left behind*" (Exod. x. 26). This was the Divine demand. It could not be conceded. Not a point could be yielded. Jehovah must have His own. Decision gained the victory, and the enemy, foiled at every point, was obliged to retire defeated.

Young believer, let your watchword be *decision for Christ*. Never attempt to lower the claims of God. Yield nothing to Satan in carrying them out. Never mind what others do, let it be yours to render obedience to every Word of God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Be like Moses who would not lower the claims of Jehovah; like Daniel who would rather enter the lion's den than disobey his God; like the three Hebrew young men, who went into the fiery furnace rather than worship an image set up by earth's greatest monarch. They lost nothing by their faithfulness, for God has said—"Them that honour *Me*, I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30). Entire separation to God is the Divine standard, believer. No half-heartedness,

no half-way house. Worship, little ones, business and all, must go the three days' journey, and bear the mark of resurrection life.—SEPARATION TO GOD.

DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

The final judgment of Egypt was pronounced in a few but solemn words. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite *all* the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord" (Exod. xii. 12).

"The wages of sin is death." In other plagues Israel had been exempt, but in this one there is no difference. All have sinned, all must die. God, as a Holy Judge, must execute judgment without respect of persons on all who deserve it. In the silent midnight hour, the time when they would least expect it, the awful judgment came.

Such will be the judgment of this world. In long-suffering grace and love, God postpones it meanwhile, for He has no delight in the damnation of the sinner. But its hour must come. Wrath long pent up, will burst in awful fury on the Christless and the God-forgetting crowd. The day is appointed, the sentence is recorded. It will be executed when men are least expecting it. As a thief in the night, suddenly, swiftly, like the lightning's flash, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, "taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel" (2 Thess. i. 7-8). Things will go on as in days before the flood. The world will roll on its course, buying, selling, and sinning, till all shall be brought to a dead halt, by the appearance of the rejected Jesus of Nazareth in the clouds of heaven.

"There was a great cry in Egypt" (Exod. xii. 30). It was the cry of agony and despair from a people feeling the weight of Jehovah's rod, the echo of a

deeper wail, a more terrific shriek, that shall ere long be wrung from the lips of the Christ-despising crowd, when they plead for rocks and hills to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. But from the sinner, that cry will go up unheeded. The unbending rocks will mock his prayer, and He that sitteth in the heavens shall "laugh at his calamity, and mock when his fear cometh" (Prov. i. 26). Terrible prospect this, for the Christless sinner!

For Israel's first-born sons, a ransom was provided, a deliverance wrought.

THE PASSOVER.

The twelfth of Exodus has been named "The Picture Book of Redemption." It is one of the fullest, clearest, and simplest of Old Testament foreshadowings of salvation by the Blood of the Lamb. This is the grand theme of Holy Scripture, from Abel's lamb offered on the altar outside Eden, to the Cross of the Lamb of God, "without the gate" of Jerusalem. Of this the prophets spake, and psalmists sung, and the melody of heaven's new song shall ever be "Thou hast redeemed us to God by *Thy Blood*." A *bloodless* religion is a sinner's ruin. First instituted by Cain the murderer, and perpetuated by all his seed. Preachers and professors of the 20th century, curl the lip and raise the sneer at what they call a "religion of the shambles." Should this meet their eye, let it remind them that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22), and that a religion without *blood* is a sure title to the lake of fire.

We will now look at this precious type. Every stroke is perfect, every part full of the deepest meaning. We know that it speaks of Jesus, for it is written "*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*" (1 Cor. v. 7).

1. *The Lamb*.—It was to be without “blemish,” and “a male of the first year.” The emblems of meekness, purity, and strength. Such was Jesus. He “was led as a lamb to the slaughter,” and for the hands that shed His blood He sought forgiveness. He was “without blemish.” Had there been a spot found in Him, He would have been unfit for sacrifice; but *Jesus* was perfect. He “*did no sin*” (1 Pet. ii. 22). He “*knew no sin*” (2 Cor. v. 21). “*In Him was no sin*” (1 John iii. 5).

He was *perfect* as the babe of Bethlehem—*perfect* as the boy of Nazareth—*perfect* as the Son of Man—and *perfect* as the Lamb of God on the Cross. He died in the full vigour of His manhood; and, as the Son of God from the bosom of the Father “mighty to save.”

“Ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day” (verse 6). This was the testing time. It gave ample opportunity to test it, and to find out a blemish if such there had been. Jesus was well tried; His life below was the testing time. Heaven, earth, and hell tried Him, and we have the witness from each that He is the Lamb “without blemish.” The *Father* testified from heaven. “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. iii. 17). The *demons* cried, “I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God” (Mark i. 24); and from the temptation of the wilderness, when the devil’s wiles were used against Him, in the most unfavourable circumstances, He came forth unscathed (Matt. iv. 11). *Man* testified also. Pilate, the Roman governor, said, “I find in Him no fault at all” (John xviii. 38). Judas, the false disciple, confessed that he had betrayed the *innocent* blood (Matt. xxvii. 4). The centurion who watched His dying agonies, owned that He was a “righteous man” (Luke xxxiii. 47). The dying robber by His side, confessed that He had done “nothing amiss” (Luke xxiii. 41). Thus His very foes bore witness to Jesus, as

the Lamb "without blemish." Precious, perfect, spotless Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot!

2. *The Manner and Time of its Death.*—"The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it, in the evening" (Exod. xii. 6).

Every sinner had a hand in the death of Jesus. The world was represented around His Cross. "Against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts iv. 27). The representatives of man's wisdom, man's power, and man's religion were there, each alike against Him, as witnessed by the inscription of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin upon His Cross. They differed in many things, but in this they were all agreed that the Son of God ought to die. Herod and Pilate who before were enemies, shook hands over His death (Luke xxiii. 12).

The Lamb was slain in the *evening*, the judgment came at *midnight*. There was just time to sprinkle the blood, but none to spare. This is the *day* of the reign of grace, the *midnight*, dark with judgment, is approaching.

3. *The Use made of the Blood.*—The blood was put into a basin, and a bunch of hyssop was prepared to use it. Behold now the picture of a sinner's salvation. "And ye shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses . . . and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when *I see* the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 7-13).

It was the blood on the lintel and doorposts—and *the blood* alone—that secured the salvation of Israel's first-born sons on that awful night. It was not the living lamb, tied to the door post, nor even the blood in the basin, but the blood applied and sprinkled on the door where the first-born lived—the blood appropriated by the bunch of hyssop. It was not the blood

and the bitter herbs, nor the blood and the unleavened bread, but the BLOOD OF THE LAMB ALONE, that saved the first-born sons from judgment.

Nor was it their happy feelings, nor their pilgrim garb, that made them sure of salvation. Their *assurance* rested on something infinitely better than any of these shifting things. They were assured of salvation by the WORD OF THE ETERNAL GOD, for *He* has said, "When I see the blood *I will* pass over you." This was enough. They were as safe from the destroying angel's sword, as if they had been standing in the land of Canaan.

How is it with *your* soul? Have you taken refuge underneath the precious blood of Christ? Do you believe it was shed for you, and that God has accepted the sacrifice. He sees the blood, He knows its worth, and He says to all who have put their trust in it, "I *will* pass over you."

Does He speak the truth? If he does, you are safe. Away then with doubts and fears, and changing frames and feelings.

What did it matter to a blood-sheltered Israelite, how he *felt*, or what he *feared*, so long as God was true to His word—"I *will* pass over you." Neither his fears nor his feelings could ever make that word untrue. The blood of Christ *alone*, is the ground of *salvation*, and the writ en Word of God is the ground of *assurance*. The blood Godward, the Word manward.

None of the blood was put upon the threshold, or sprinkled on the floor. Ah no, it was too costly to be trampled under foot. Yet sinners are treading under foot the Son of God, and counting His blood worthless (Heb. x. 29). They are making a stepping-stone to hell of the fact that Jesus died. The corrupt Christianity of the present hour is piled up on the fact that Christ died. Roman Catholics, Protestants, and unconverted professors alike believe that; but, it is like the blood of the Paschal Lamb in the basin. It is not used, it is

not appropriated by faith. They are not saved ; because they have not sprinkled it, they have not believed in its power.

How do you treat the blood of Christ ? Are you safe, or exposed ? Is it above your head, accepted ; or beneath your feet, rejected ?

THE FEAST OF THE REDEEMED.

When the prodigal returned to his father's heart and home, he was set down at a furnished table—he shared a feast of joy. The kiss, the robe, the ring, and the shoes were not all. Once at rest in his father's love, his doubts and fears removed, he heard his exulting parent say, "Let us eat and be merry," and the blesser and the blest, the rejoicing father and the welcomed son, sat down together to feast upon the fatted calf.

When the Jewish ruler's daughter was raised to life by the Lord Jesus, He commanded that something should be given her *to eat*. When a sinner is quickened into newness of life, and welcomed to the heart and household of God, his bliss is crowned by being made partaker of the children's bread. He is called to the fellowship of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ ; a fellowship known and enjoyed even here below, and to be yet more fully known, where sin can never mar it, nor aught else hinder its flow, in the presence of God and the Lamb.

The feast prepared for the Israel of God while under shelter of the bloodstained lintel in Egypt is the type of this. Their deliverance from judgment had been secured by the sprinkled blood on the lintel and side posts, *without*. *Within* the dwellings of the ransomed people, all was peace and joy, and that amid surrounding scenes of awful despair. The redeemed were

gathered around a table, each one girted for a journey, a staff in every hand.

Meanwhile they were fully occupied feeding on the lamb during the hours of that eventful night. It was not spent in cool indifference, nor unconscious slumber.

Blessed lesson for us. We have been left in this dark world for a little while, to hold communion with the Son of God. This is the highest privilege of all the Lord's redeemed.

Dear young believer, you have known the meaning of the blood-stained lintel. What do you know of the table spread? Is it your daily habit to live in communion with God? Do you spend your ransomed moments feeding on Christ? God has given the blood of Christ to answer the claims of your awakened conscience, and now it is at rest, perfect rest. He has also given the *Person of Christ* to satisfy your longing heart. How truly happy is the heart that delights itself in the Lord. It needs no other cheer. It wants no other joy.

THE EATING OF THE LAMB.—“Ye shall eat the flesh on that night, roast with fire, and with bitter herbs ye shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and the purtenance thereof.”

Jesus is the Lamb of God. Roasting with fire shows the suffering He endured from the hand of God. We feed upon a suffering Christ. We have fellowship with Jesus as the suffering One. And what a feast this is! How tender it makes the conscience! How it moves and fills the heart with tenderest love to Him! Thinking of His dying agony—His anguish of soul upon the tree, His deep and mighty love that many waters could not quench, nor floods drown, we love Him in return. The heart is won, the affections are engaged, and Jesus—Jesus only—becomes the object of the saint's admiration, and worship, the theme of his sweetest song. All else grows dim, the world loses its

hold, the soul recoils from its pleasures, once so truly loved, for it has got a better *portion*, and it is satisfied, yea abundantly satisfied.

The Lamb was eaten with *bitter herbs*. Eaten by themselves they are an unsavoury morsel. Not so eaten with the roast lamb. The "bitter herbs" have been spoken of as sorrow for sin. And surely at no time does sin appear so exceedingly sinful, as when in communion with the Lord. There the mask is dropped, and sin is seen in its true character in the light of the Cross. We remember *whose* sins they were that brought the blessed Sufferer there, and beneath whose load He died. The heart melts, the tears flow—tears of true love, too—a tribute of affection to the One who died. Grace alone can work true repentance, love alone can win the rebel sinner's heart, and where that grace and love are truly known, such sorrow for sin and hatred of it too, will not be found wanting. Many seeking souls have put the "bitter herbs" in the place of the sprinkled blood. They have sought to find peace with God by being sorry for the past, instead of in the blood of Christ alone; and in this condition they have gone on for years, *hoping* their hard hearts would melt, and that they would *feel* love to God begotten in them. Such love is foreign to the revolted heart of fallen man, nor can he ever put it there. Love to God can only be begotten by believing His love for us.

"Then a sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves a heart of stone."

Unleavened Bread completed the feast. Its meaning we find in 1 Cor. v. 8—"The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Leaven was not to be eaten, nor to be allowed in the dwelling. It is a type of *evil*, always evil, only evil; and of such evil as slowly and gradually works in upon the believer, defiling and destroying the vitals of his Christian life. We read of

the "leaven of malice and wickedness" (1 Cor. v. 8); "the leaven of the Pharisees—Hypocrisy" (Luke xii. 1); "the leaven of the Sadducees—Rationalism" (Matt. xvi. 6-12); and "the leaven of Herod—Politics" (Mark viii. 15). If the believer allows or practises these evils, he will not enjoy communion with Christ; and in days like these, when such leavening demons are doing their deadly work among men, it becomes the saint to watch lest he also be defiled.

The *attitude* of the feasting one is significant. "Thus shall ye eat it; with your *loins* girded, your *shoes* on your feet, and your *staff* in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover" (Exod. xii. 11). This was pilgrim attitude. They fed on the tiptoe of expectation, waiting for the signal to depart. They stood as strangers in a strange land, but their home was waiting them on the other side. O that it were *really* so with all of us, my dear brethren.

Pilgrims and strangers we are on earth, at least so we sing. But do we live as if we believed it? Are we always ready to hear that Voice that shall call us away? But, ready or not, the hour will come when "the Lord Himself shall descend with a shout," and the living, together with the dead in Christ, shall be caught up to meet Him. Earth, so poor, shall be left behind, and we shall be at home. Thus saved by the blood, assured of salvation by the Word, communing with the Father and the Son, by the Spirit let us stand like girded men that wait for their Lord, saying, "COME, LORD JESUS."

THE MEMORIAL FEAST.

The feast instituted on the night of Israel's deliverance was to be observed by them throughout all generations. Redemption by the blood of the Paschal lamb they were ever to have in

remembrance. Even after the wilderness was past, and the pilgrim host had settled in the land flowing with milk and honey, the memorial feast was kept. Doubtless it pointed onward (as do all the types) to Calvary, but it was the memorial also of a redemption and deliverance past. What the feast of the Passover was to Israel—the Lord's Supper in many respects is to the Christian now. Of course there are many points in contrast, as grace is to law, and Christianity to Judaism. The Passover was the memorial of the deliverance of an earthly people—the Lord's Supper commemorates the redemption and call of a *heavenly* people. The Passover was eaten by a nation circumcised in the flesh—the Lord's Supper is for those who reckon themselves dead to the flesh, and now live to God in the Spirit.

There are three points connected with the Passover as found in the Scriptures which claim our notice, 1st—Its institution by Jehovah at the first, and the obedience of His people in observing it. 2nd—Its corruption, or the devil's imitation of God's Passover and the people of God drawn into the snare. 3rd—The restoration of Jehovah's *original* feast at various stages, according to the measure of His peoples' light and faithfulness.

It was "*the Lord's Passover*" (Exod. xii. 11). It was a "*Feast of Jehovah*" (Lev. xxiii. 3). Therefore *His Word* alone must guide. His commands alone must be obeyed. They were to be observed unaltered by Israel's seed "*for ever.*" The New Testament feast is "*The Lord's Supper.*" It is not the believer's "*own Supper,*" nor the "*Church's Supper,*" else their voices might be listened to, and their dictates obeyed. Being as it is the Supper of Him who is now "*Lord and Christ,*" the loyal heart will bow to His will, and recognise no other authority. Who gave man a right to intermeddle with what is the *Lord's*? Can He not

order His own table and rule His own house, apart from the officious interference of the "will of man?" We firmly believe He can. In the days of the Lord's life on earth, the feast of the Passover had dwindled down to a mere religious form. The traditions of men had so set aside the commandments of the Lord, that it had entirely lost its character. Speaking of it, Jesus calls it "the *Jews'* Passover," "a feast of the *Jews*" (John ii. 13; v. 1). It was no longer a "Feast of Jehovah," no more "The Lord's Passover." Jehovah will not identify His name with a sham, or stamp it with His approval. Let believers learn a lesson. They may gather round a table to break the bread and drink the wine; they may keep a feast and call it by the Lord's name, and yet, because of man's traditions, and human rule and presidency at the table, this may not be "the Lord's Supper." The Lord's Supper can only be rightly observed, where Christ's Lordship and His Word, are the only recognised authorities.

It was for all the Lord's people (Exod. xii. 47), unless perchance, some were defiled, as in Num. ix. 6. If an Israelite neglected to keep the feast, he was "cut off from among his people" (Num. ix. 13). To neglect the keeping of the feast incurred Jehovah's displeasure, as keeping it "unclean," or "with leaven," would have done. This is needed truth in a day like ours. Positive neglect of the Lord's Supper is tolerated on all hands, and the believer who absents himself from the Lord's table for weeks and months, because of some paltry excuse, is allowed to take his place at the table without rebuke, whenever he chooses. Surely if in a day of "shadows" and a "worldly sanctuary" reverence and subjection were required of the Lord's redeemed in the keeping of His feast, much more ought it to be so now, where the saints are gathered in the light of the Divine presence, and where "Jesus in the midst" is *Lord*. A believer defiled either by contact with evil without, or by allowing the flesh to defile him

from within, ought not to go to the table of the Lord in this condition. Some at Corinth evidently did so, and the Lord judged them by weakness, sickness, and death (1 Cor. xi. 29, 30). But for defiled ones a gracious provision has been made. For the Israelites defiled by the dead, there was the "water of separation" (see Num. ix. and xix.), and for believers now, there is self-judgment and confession (see 1 John i. 8, 9).

It was not for the foreigner and the hired servant (Exod. xii. 45). The Lord's Supper is not for the unconverted, whose condition is that of "strangers and foreigners" (Eph. ii. 19). No unconverted communicant was at the Feast when it was instituted by the Lord. Judas Iscariot went out before it *began* (compare Matt. xxvi. with John xiii.), and we read in the Acts of the Apostles that the disciples "continued in the breaking of bread," and "of the rest (*i.e.*, the unconverted), durst no man join himself to them" (Acts ii. 42 ; v. 13).

Things are changed now. The unconverted "parishioner" claims his seat at "the sacrament" as he does his stance on the market, and even in most of the churches and chapels in Christendom the unconverted crowd to "the sacrament" expecting to get salvation, or in some way to be made ready for heaven by this "means of grace." The ministers and office-bearers of many of the so-called churches, do not even ask the young communicant if he has been "born again." "Hired servants" truly they are too ; poor souls, working hard to earn the salvation that God says is a gift, and this "sacrament taking" helps them on in the sad delusion. Some of God's people are mixed up with this sham, and by giving it their patronage and support, they help on the ruin of souls.

It was to be kept at the Lord's appointed place.—When Israel reached the land, the Lord chose a place to put His Name there. Thither the worshipper was to bring his offering (Deut. xii. 14), and THERE he was to keep

the Passover. (See Deut. xvi. 5-6). The city chosen was Jerusalem. There the feast was to be kept, for there the Lord had put His Name (see 2 Chron. vi. 5, 6), and thither the tribes went up to "the testimony of Israel" (Psa. cxxii. 4). On the fourteenth day of the first month, year by year, the people of Israel might have been seen emerging from their homes, and gathering together to the "City of the Great King," to keep the memorial feast. Beautiful sight! Telling of true-heartedness to Jehovah and obedience to His Word; and only eclipsed by the account of the early disciples, who, in obedience to their absent Lord's request, "This do in remembrance of Me," persisted in gathering together to *His Name*, there to eat the Lord's Supper. One gathering point—"the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and one feast—the Lord's Supper. All the saints were together (Acts ii. 44). There were no sects or rival churches, in these days.

"The saints were of one heart and soul,
And love to Christ inspired the whole."

The time to keep the feast.—Once a year—the fourteenth day of the first month—was God's appointed time to keep the feast. To have kept it twice in the year, or once in two, would have been like disobedience. To do what God commands is obedience, and nothing else is. The word in connection with the Supper is "This do ye, as *oft* as ye drink it in remembrance of Me; for as *often* as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come*" (1 Cor. xi. 25, 26). The Church, in her early love, kept the feast on the first day of every week (see Acts xx. 7), and this is our example. Cold must be the heart to Jesus, who thinks once a quarter, or once a year, "*often*" enough to shew forth His death. "As seldom" as ye do it, would be a more fitting word for such conduct. And yet this is the practice of thousands who claim to be the Lord's.

May He open their eyes to see "a more excellent way." We see that the order of the feast—the guests, the place, and the time, have all been arranged by the Lord; and loving hearts delight to know that His will is still the same, and are joyfully ready to do it. Now we shall look at

THE DEVIL'S COUNTERFEIT.

Wherever God does a work on earth, Satan first tries to oppose it, and next to corrupt it by introducing a sham.

Jeroboam, the king of the ten tribes, was an idolater. It would not have suited his purpose, however—which was to draw away the people from God's king and city—to have introduced idolatry in a barebones fashion. He ingeniously contrived another plan. This was to set up a complete set of counterfeits of all God's institutions for His people's worship. Altars at Dan and Bethel, in connection with calves of gold, man-made priests from among the lowest of the people, and a passover *like* unto the feast at Jerusalem, on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. A complete set of diabolical shams, "devised," we are told, "*out of his own heart*" (1 Kings xii. 33). Sham altars, with sham priests officiating and a sham feast at a *wrong* time; and the people turned from God's reality, to Satan's counterfeit, as the many always do, until "the feast of the Lord" gradually disappeared, and the devil's counterfeit became the order of the day. In connection with the Lord's Supper the counterfeit is easily discerned by those who have "eyes to see." Let any Christian take his Bible and compare with what God has there commanded, what goes by the name of the Lord's Supper around him—from the Roman Catholic "sacrifice of the mass" down to the Pro-

testants' sacrament—and he will see where things are. Where is the Scripture authority for the annual or half-yearly sacrament, accessible to all the members of the sect in which it is observed, whether converted or not? Where in the Book of God do we read of an "officiating" minister "dispensing the sacrament," and "administering the ordinance," or of appointed "Fast Days" to prepare the carnal and ungodly to "go forward" to this "means of grace?"

All the godly who are in association with these things must surely see that they are in direct antagonism to the revealed will of the Lord, and mourn in bitterness of spirit over them. But this is not enough. If God has put it within their reach to carry out His will, it surely becomes every saint to wake up and act, rather than to sit at ease among the ruins and say, "We must take things as we find them." This may suit lukewarm, worldly professors—but it is refreshing to see in the Scriptures, men of a different spirit, such as Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nehemiah, who not only mourned over the ruin, but set themselves to work to effect a

RESTORATION.

Hezekiah was the first of these reformers. His father was an idolator, and things in the kingdom were at their worst (see 2 Chron. xxviii.). Nevertheless, he was not daunted, but set to work at once. "He clave to the Lord, and departed not from His commandments" (2 Kings xviii. 6); and when a man is obedient to the light he has, God gives him more. He began by demolishing idolatry, cleansing the house of the Lord, and setting men and things in their true places, according to the light he had. Next came the Passover. He sent letters to "all *Israel* and *Judah*, to come up to *Jerusalem* to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of *Israel*, for they had not done it of a long time in such

sort as it was written " (2 Chron. xxx. 1, 5). This was a bold step, and could scarcely be expected to meet the universal approval of a backslidden people. So the thing was laughed to scorn, and the messengers mocked (v. 10). But some felt the rebuke, humbled themselves and came, and they kept the feast with great joy, as it had not been kept *since the days of Solomon* (v. 26). This was true rejoicing, and a step at least in the right direction.

Josiah was the next. When little more than a boy, he began to search the long-lost Book of the law (2 Chron. xxxiv.), and he found there that things were not at all as they ought to be. So he set to work. The Passover was kept on the fourteenth day of the first month, the right time; and in Jerusalem, the right place. Great joy and blessing followed, for there was no Passover like it from the *days of Samuel the prophet* (2 Chron. xxxv. 18). This was a further advance; but the days of Samuel were not the "great original" of Exodus xii. A long pause followed. Judah was carried captive to Babylon—the temple was destroyed—the people sat in darkness and sorrow, by the willows of Babylon, till Ezra and Nehemiah arose. The mass of the nation saw Jerusalem no more; but a remnant arose and went back to Jerusalem with *the Book of God in their hands*. They commenced to set things in order "as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God" (Ezra iii. 2).

This was true ground to take. Back to the beginning—away past Solomon and Samuel, and a long list of other "good men"—right back to what was "written in the law of Moses." This is the only firm rock on which to plant our feet. "Thus saith the Lord" is that on which we must take our stand. Good men are not our pattern, for although we may revere their memory, it is beyond all dispute that they have made great mistakes. It was Aaron, the *good* High Priest of Israel, who set up the golden calf, and *wicked* Jeroboam

could point to his example as authority for his calves at Dan and Bethel. You see where we may find ourselves if we follow man. God and His Word are alone infallible. We must act upon that Word, as they did in Ezra vi. 19-22.

The Passover was kept according to the twelfth of Exodus. Although only a handful were there, yet it was kept with joy, "for the Lord had made them joyful." This was true recovery. Not anything new, but the old thing, the original thing *revived*, at least in miniature. No doubt it was but a small affair compared with the palmy days of the beginning, and we read that they wept as well as sang (Ezra iii. 11, 12). But they had a "little strength," and they spent it for God. This is what we are called to do in regard to the Lord's Supper. We are not to coin a new feast, nor copy the Reformers, or the great men of other days, but go back to the Word of God for the original. There has been much blessed truth recovered during the last three centuries, as Hezekiah and Josiah so far recovered the Passover; but the danger has been to settle down at every step gained, and stereotype a creed. And so all the sects have done. But the *whole* Word of God, apart from the traditions of men, must be our guide. We read in that Book that "On the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts xx. 7); that "they came together into one place to eat the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20); and that this is to be continued "*till He come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). Ecclesiastical pretensions, and boasting of reviving or reconstructing an "Apostolic Church" we entirely disclaim and thoroughly abhor, but as a feeble remnant of the scattered sheep of the blood-bought flock of God, in conscious weakness, gathered unto the Great Shepherd, owning Him as Lord at His own table, let us joyfully respond to the request of His loving heart: "*This do in remembrance of Me.*"

DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

Closely connected with the people's salvation from the destroying angel's sword was their separation and departure from the land of Egypt. The same night on which the blood of the Paschal lamb was sprinkled on their lintels and door-posts, they turned their backs on Egypt, its people, and its gods, and bade farewell to the scenes of their idolatry and slavery, for ever. Every link that had bound them was snapped, and they went free to serve the living and true God.

How solemn and how real their departure from that doomed country must have been ! At the dead hour of midnight, amid the shrieks of the Egyptians bewailing their first-born dead, they silently hurried forth !

"Egypt was glad when they departed" (Psa. cv. 38), and Pharaoh urged them forth from among his people. Truly might they say, "By strength of hand, the Lord brought us forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Exod. xiii. 14); and He who led them out, could never lead them back again.

The believer's separation from the world is closely linked with his salvation. We read of "Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from *this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 3-4). The Cross of Christ is the door of escape from a doomed world, as well as the place of refuge for a guilty sinner. By the Cross the believer is crucified to the world, and separated unto God.

Many do not see this, or do not want to see it. They boast of the Cross as their deliverance from the wrath to come, but ignore its power to separate them from the world. They live at home in Egypt—the ungodly are their associates; and although they speak of being in heaven at last, they grasp as much of the world as they can, or, to use a popular phrase, they try "to make the best of both worlds." It is not "the

will of God and our Father " that His children should be mixed up in unhallowed alliance with the world. He has spoken on this with a clearness that none need mistake. What think you of such a verse as this : " Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? whosoever, therefore, will be a *friend of the world, is the ENEMY OF GOD* " (James iv. 4).

This does not read like " making the best of both worlds " does it ? Nor has any one who ever tried to do so, found the game to be a gaining one, either for time or eternity.

Learn then, young believer, from this part of Israel's history, the way of the Lord, in separating His redeemed from this present evil world. Shrink not from making the line a clear one. Let the gap between you and the world, be as wide as God has made it.

" Redeemed of the Lord, we are heavenward bound,
We dare not rest on enchanted ground,
For behind us is Satan's black flag unfurl'd,
O'er a sin-bound race, in a death-doomed world—
And around us the devils jibe and jeer,
O'er the frantic souls that are perishing there."

The "*mixed multitude*" (Exod. xii. 38), may teach us another lesson. If one trick fails, the enemy will try another—for his devices are not one, but many. If he cannot retain some of God's redeemed in Egypt, he will seek to send Egyptians up to Canaan mixed up among them. And has he not succeeded ? In the dead of night, it would have been a difficult thing to detect a few Egyptians among a band of some two million of people. Probably this mixture consisted of the Egyptian friends of Israelitish families, for it would appear they had intermarried (see Lev. xxiv. 10), and what more natural than to accompany their friends ! But these became a weakness and a curse to them. It was the "*mixed multitude*" who cried for flesh, and

loathed the manna, and they led Israel to do the same (Num. xi. 4 ; xxi. 5). And so it ever is. During a time of soul saving, Satan introduces his counterfeits, and sends them on along with the Lord's redeemed. They may go on all well for a time, but by and by they must come out in their true colours—always leaving their marks among the people of God. Some follow for the loaves and the fishes, and others are led on by natural feelings, and none more likely than the relations and friends of true believers, who have outwardly adopted the profession and name of "Christian," through their influence, but who are at heart Egyptians. Such will only become a clog and a snare to the true believer ; therefore let us watch the worldlings, who "unawares creep in" among the saints. Sooner or later, they will return to the world, and their influence for evil is mighty.

"And they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required, and they spoiled the Egyptians" (Exod. xii. 36). Some have been puzzled with these verses, and an evil use has been made of them by others, to prove that it is a right thing to "fleece" the world, and take its goods and money, to be used in the work of the Lord, as these jewels evidently were in the building of the tabernacle, or perhaps for the making of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii.). The words will bear no such meaning. "Borrow" and "lent" in this case, only mean, "asked" and "given"; and when they did ask, it was only their hard-earned wages for years of unpaid work in brickmaking. Men must be hard up for proof, when they need to resort to this, to justify begging sermons, religious raffles, and bazaars, to raise money to carry on their "cause" or to build magnificent temples, wherein man's pride may figure and his vanity be exhibited under the garb of religion.

But their folly is becoming manifest to all. May God's saints be kept from the spirit of such things, as well as from fellowship with them. To work to a worldly master and receive his wages, or to hire an ungodly servant and pay him for his work, is right ; but to borrow from the world and not pay, or to go in debt with the world, or beg from it, is against the plainest teaching of the Word of God (Rom. xiii. 7, 8 ; 2 Cor. viii. 21).

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE.

As sinners we need a *Saviour*, as captives we need a *Deliverer*, and as pilgrims we need a *Guide*.

The God of love, Who from His holy habitation beheld us in our lost estate, and gave His Son to be our Saviour and Deliverer, has also given us *His Holy Spirit* and *His Word* to guide us. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have been all engaged in the work of our salvation ; and they are all engaged in our home-bringing to the rest beyond !

Encamped in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness, and not knowing a step of the way that lay between them and their Canaan home, how it must have gladdened their hearts to see the pillar of cloud descend. Unasked, and we may say unexpected, God came down in the cloudy pillar to be their Guide ; to walk with them, to defend them, and to be their Companion. What though the way be long and dreary, and the "great and terrible wilderness" beset with dangers, and filled with fiery serpents and scorpions, so long as God is with them ! Every step and every danger are well known to Him, and if they only follow whither He doth lead, all will be well.

In the daytime the cloud was a covering, stretching over the entire camp, to screen them from the heat ; and as the shades of evening fell, it became a pillar of fire, to give them light (Psa. cvi. 39). So they were

never in darkness. To travel by night, was as easy as by day, for the Lord God gave them light, and "there was no night there." How faithfully and lovingly He performed His guiding work as the Shepherd of Israel, the words of Deut. xxxiii. 10-12 tell us: "He *found* him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He *led* him about. He *instructed* him. He *kept* him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord *alone* did *lead* him, and there was no strange god with him." And blessed to tell it, their failures, their murmurings, and their sins, did not drive Him away, nor make Him withdraw the cloudy pillar from them. It accompanied them all the forty years of their pilgrimage, it hovered above them as they marched in triumph through the dried-up bed of Jordan, and at last it found its rest amid the glories of the temple, in the land. And "this God is *our* God for ever and ever."

The threefold position of the cloud, tells us of God *for* us, God *with* us, and God *in* us. At the Red Sea it stood between them and their foes (Exod. xiv. 19); as they walked along the desert, it went before them, to seek out a resting-place (Num. ix. 17); and in the tabernacle it rested in their midst (Exod. xl. 34). When the cloud moved they followed; when it rested so did they. Jehovah was their Leader, and King. It was His to command; it was their's to obey. He was the Shepherd, they were the sheep. And he Who guided Israel across the dreary desert by the pillar of cloud and fire, has not left us unprovided for. He has given us *His Spirit* and *His Word*. These are to be our pillar of cloud and fire, till desert days are done. In their light we shall walk safely and securely—we shall walk with God.

Of the Word, it is written, "Thy Word is a *lamp* unto my feet, and a *light* unto my path" (Psa. cxix. 105);

and of the Spirit, "He shall guide you into all truth, and show you things to come" (John xvi. 3). O how blessed it would be for God's people, if they knew no other Counsellor, and sought no other Guide! And here we would invite the young believer's attention to the teaching of the Word of God on two deeply important subjects. (1) *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, and (2) *The Authority and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures*. Let him take his Bible, and search out what God has there said, on these important subjects.

"The other Comforter" promised by the Lord Jesus on the eve of His departure, is a Divine Person, and not an "influence," as you so often hear Him called, by religious people. Think of calling the "Eternal Spirit" an "influence!" Ten days after the Risen One ascended from Mount Olivet, and took His seat at the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit came down. From that day until now, He has been here, although, as in the days of the cloudy pillar, the people whose guide He came to be, have proved unfaithful and unworthy of Him. Still He is here, and as our Lord has told us, He will "abide with us for ever" (John xiv. 16). Not surely because we deserve it, but as of old the cloud rested on the blood of atonement on the mercy seat, during the forty years of Wilderness failure, and did not leave them for an hour, so the Holy Ghost abides with us on the ground of accomplished redemption.

When a sinner believes the Gospel he is at once sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13). God puts His seal upon him, and says, "Thou are Mine." The Spirit of God dwells within Him, witnessing with his spirit that he is God's child, and raising the cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). He is the earnest of glory to come, and the pledge of the redemption of the body (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 14).

By this indwelling Spirit, we worship ; and only such worship as is begotten within the heart of the saint by Him is accepted of the Father (John iv. 23, 24 ; Phil. iii. 3).

He is our *Teacher* (John xvi. 14 ; 1 John ii. 27). Without His teaching, the Word of God will be a locked treasure ; for "the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). This is humbling to man's pride ; it sets aside his skill and wisdom, and puts his boasted science in the dust. The babe in Christ—the convert of yesterday—who, in singleness of eye and simplicity of heart, sits down to search the Word of God with an open mind, depending on the Spirit's teachings, will learn *in reality* more of God's truth than all the philosophy of the world's Universities can ever teach him. The deep things of God have been hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes. This is comforting to an isolated saint. He may be shut up in some lonely spot, far sundered from his brethern ; the fellowship of saints and the ministry of the teacher may be denied him, but he need not repine. He is not left alone. The best of all "expositors" is with him, even the Spirit of God. If he live in His ungrieved power, the Spirit will open the mysteries of God to his soul ; and what he learns thus, will not be readily forgotten or let slip. Theoretic knowledge is cheap ; it can be picked up with little trouble. It is easily acquired, and as easily let go. But the still small voice of the Spirit, speaking to us in the Word, will cause our hearts to abide in Him. We fear there is a lurking idea among many of the saints, whose avowed principles would surely teach them otherwise, that only a "learned man" can expound the Scriptures in a way that we can have confidence in, and this because he has studied a little of the Greek and Hebrew languages. This leads to the recognition of false ministry and clerisy, as they exist around us.

The system where clerisy is seen in full bloom, declares, that only the ordained and thoroughbred priest can expound the Word, and the people believe it. Others may not go quite so far, but the germ of the evil is there ; and that is, that God's Word is a sealed Book to common people, and that those *educated* in the world's Universities are its only exponents.

It is our privilege to be *led* of the Spirit, not only in our worship, but also in our walk and every-day life. To enjoy His leading day by day, we must have broken wills and contrite spirits. The Lordship of Christ—His absolute authority over us—the surrender of our wills, must be practically owned in every department of our lives, and His Word alone must be our counsellor. The Spirit's leading will always be contrary to nature, irksome to the flesh ; a path where faith alone can walk. Remember the path of Jesus. From His baptism in Jordan, He was "*led of the Spirit*" to be tempted of the *dévil*, and finally to suffer the agony of the Cross !

Beloved, are you prepared for such a path, when you ask that God's Spirit may guide you ? It means self-denial, trial, and suffering. And here we would caution the young believer against a "*spurious*" leading of the Spirit, much spoken of at the present time. It is Satan's counterfeit of this most blessed reality. Every conceivable and ungodly action, done under a pretended sancity, is attributed to the leading of the Spirit. Believers marry the unregenerate, go into partnership in business with them, and sit with them at the communion table, and then tell us, they were "*led*" to do it—"*it was laid upon their hearts.*" This is as false as it is impossible. The Spirit's leading will be *always in harmony with, and in no case contrary to, the written Word*. The Holy Spirit will always lead the saints to *obey* the Word, never to *ignore* it. How could He inspire an apostle to write, "*Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,*" and then *lead* the

saint to disobey it? Let the young believer ponder this. No path, no undertaking, can be the leading of the Spirit, that has not the *sanction of the written Word*. It is an easy thing for the devil to make us believe the Lord is leading us in a certain course, when it is the will of the flesh to tread it. Our safeguard is to ask ourselves, "Have I been commanded by my Father in heaven to do this thing? Has He said so in His Word; and where?"

Cleaving thus to the Lord and the Word of His grace, and walking in His Spirit's power, we shall be led on safely. Earth's darkest days shall be illuminated with His presence—and there is no sorrow there. Our home is before us, and the way, though rough, is bright. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; *they* shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance" (Psa. lxxxix. 15).

THE RED SEA.

There are many believers who do not enjoy settled peace. Sometimes they are bright and happy, at other times sad and downcast; sometimes their assurance is full and clear, but at other times they are found doubting if they are really the Lord's. Occupied with their frames and feelings, their joys and sorrows, they live upon their own experiences, looking *in*, instead of having the eye of faith on Christ, and rejoicing in Him and the full deliverance that He has wrought for them. This may arise from a variety of causes. Some, at the time of their conversion, have only heard and believed an obscure Gospel, or part of the Gospel of God concerning His Son. They have been taught that to doubt and fear as to their ultimate safety is a certain mark of grace, and that the very best thing that God can mark in His saints, is an everlasting wail over the evil that dwells within. Thus they continually live in a hazy

atmosphere, brooding over their own experience and attainments, their inward holiness or corruptions. It is very far from our object, in speaking thus, to make believers think lightly of indwelling sin, or underrate the power of Satan. We believe it is highly important that every saint of God should know the character of the flesh within him, and estimate aright the power of the devil against him. But we are equally persuaded of this, that brooding on these things gives no victory over them, and that *victory*, and not *defeat—liberty*, and not *bondage*—is the normal condition of the man who has believed the Gospel of God. The latter part of the seventh chapter of Romans may be the experience of many; but that it is the every-day experience of a soul knowing death and resurrection with Christ, we do not believe. How could God command His saints to "Rejoice evermore" if He gave them no higher note to sing than "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

The foregoing thoughts have been suggested by the character before us, and the position and experience of redeemed Israel, encamped between "Migdol and the Sea." Pi-hahioth was their camping-ground—it means the "opening of liberty," which to them it truly was. They were still on the borders of Egypt, and within the boundary line of Pharaoh's kingdom. The Red Sea rolled before them—the wilderness had shut them in. Maddened and infuriated at the thought of losing them, Pharaoh with six hundred of his chariots was hastening on their track—to make at least a desperate effort to recover his prey. The people, in fear, cried out to God—for as yet they knew not that He was on their side and against their foes.

The history at this point tells the experience, and describes the state of many a young believer and trembling saint of God. Do you see yourself in this? Perhaps only recently an awakened sinner, asking, "What must I do to be saved?" Then the eye was

turned to Jesus, as the One who died for sinners, and through faith in Him you had peace with God. Not so with Satan. Like Pharaoh, he presses hard upon your soul—he brings up the past—he beclouds the future. He tells you that you are his, that you have done his work, and must receive his wages. Your state is apparently worse than when you were Christless; you had no such troubles then, for the devil held his goods in peace. It is not so now, for—

“ Sin, Satan, Death press near
To harass and appal.”

Like Israel, you almost wish you had been left in Egypt, quietly doing the devil's work; for it looks as if he were soon to have you in his clutches again. Others around you are happy: they sing for joy, but you can only groan. Possibly they give you but little sympathy, for they do not understand your case. They never were encamped like you, between “ Migdol and the Sea.” They passed into liberty at once, and in the full sunshine of the Gospel of God, they sang their song of deliverance. But no such song is yours, for there is no song in Egypt—no praise between “ Migdol and the Sea.” The “ Salvation of the Lord,” as typified at the Red Sea, must be known, ere the song of deliverance, or the shout of victory can be heard.

The word to Israel was, “ *Stand still*, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you to-day, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever. *The Lord shall fight for you*, and ye shall hold your peace ” (Exod. xiv. 13, 14). And what a word it was, for the trembling thousands of Israel! The Lord had undertaken the battle! He had placed Himself between them and the foe. It was no longer a question between Pharaoh and Israel: it was now between Pharaoh and Israel's God. They

were to "*Stand still and see.*" And so it is with us, for Jesus has espoused our cause—

"He stood between us and the foe,
And willingly died in our stead."

The Rod of Moses was stretched over the sea, and immediately its waters were cleft asunder. A pathway was opened through the surging waves, and they stood like crystal walls on either side. This was the Lord's doing, and surely it was marvellous in their eyes. "Speak to the children of Israel that they *go forward*," was the next command. "And by faith they passed through the Red Sea," not only where no water was, but on "dry ground." The place of their feet was firm and sure; there was no yielding beneath the step. But it was a path where faith alone could walk, and step by step in faith they trod it, until the other shore was reached.

Onward, then, rushed the foe; but alas for the strength of Egypt, it had entered the scene of its utter destruction.

First, the dark side of the cloud, then the broken chariot-wheels, and finally the surging billows of death around Pharaoh's mighty host, made them to feel that Jehovah fought for Israel and against their foes. The triumph was complete; not one Egyptian was saved, not a child of Israel was lost. The morning sun shone forth on an unruffled sea, with Pharaoh's host entombed beneath its waters, and on the redeemed and delivered captives standing on its further shore looking back on the "Salvation of the Lord," and singing their song of victory in the enjoyment of it.

This is the figure of a mightier conflict, and a grander victory, once won for guilty man. Pharaoh is the type of Satan—Egypt of this world, of which he is the ruler. The Red Sea is the figure of Death—the boundary line of Satan's kingdom—his last and greatest stronghold.

The Camping-ground, "between Migdol and the Sea," is a condition those are found in, who know not as yet the fulness of the "Salvation of the Lord," as wrought *for them* through the death and resurrection of Christ. Let the believing reader turn his eye for a moment to "the place called Calvary," and to the tomb in the garden which was near it, and contemplate what was done for him there. Let him watch the gathering foes and powers of darkness, and see how each has been met and defeated, and that for ever. The sight will give him lasting peace, and if doubts and fears distress him "the Cross" will chase them away.

The *world* was there in every form and grade. The world—religious, political, and profane—was represented around that Cross. The world's probation was there closed. Its condemnation was sealed, and its doom written there. By the same blessed work the believer is delivered from this "present evil world," and by the Cross has escaped its doom. As the Red Sea rolled between the children of Israel and Egypt, so stands the Cross between the believer and the world. It is the impregnable barrier that separates him from it for ever. Does the reader know this—does he with his heart believe it—and does he act as if it were true? Does he reckon himself to have died out of this world with Christ, in order that with Him he might rise to enjoy a better?

Satan too was there in all the might of his power. The "Prince of Life," and "him that had the power of death," met on Calvary. It was the decisive contest between the seed of the woman and the serpent. Satan had the power of death—it was the stronghold of his kingdom. Men of faith, like Hezekiah, wept sore when death drew near; it was untrodden ground, for no one had passed through it and returned to earth again. But Jesus entered the stronghold, and for a time it looked as if He had been conquered. The Prince of Life was laid within the tomb. The stone and

seal were put upon Him. The scattered flock, and the rejoicing world seemed to say, that Satan had gained the day. But his apparent triumph was but short. Jesus burst the bars of death. Vain were the stone, the watch, the seal, to hold the Prince of Life. "Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Satan's head was bruised—he was defeated in his own stronghold; his power was broken, and his kingdom conquered. The Lord is risen indeed! The keys of death are in His hand! He has won for all His people a life beyond death and Satan's power. The weakest saint has life in Christ, even life for evermore. Satan can never capture him again; he is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Col. i. 13, R.V.). Because Christ lives so does he, and through Him he is more than conqueror. The victory is complete. The "Salvation of the Lord" is sure. Doubting one, "Stand still," this hour, and behold it.

THE SONG OF REDEMPTION.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord: it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely" (Psa. xcii. 1; cxlvii. 1). But before one can praise God he must first know Him. To praise an unknown God, or to give thanks to one known as only "hard and austere," demanding and exacting, would be impossible. To ask a mourning heart to sing, or a soul in bondage to praise, would be to mock them. Deliverance must be known and enjoyed—salvation must be accomplished and accepted, before a burst of praise can escape the sinner's lips, or a note of thanksgiving ascend to God. Every question must be settled, the conscience must be at rest, and the heart filled, ere praise begins. All this is seen in the song of the fifteenth of Exodus. It is the first recorded

song of Scripture ; it was sung by a people saved ; and the time of their singing was immediate, and consequent on their salvation. It is good to know all this ; for many nowadays sing who might rather weep ; and groans would be a truer expression of their heart than songs. In the previous chapter this singing band is seen in terror, their enemies are around them in power, they cry out in fear, they cannot sing. How could they, in the very jaws of threatened death ? But now the tables are turned, the foe is routed, and the victory won. The order is, they "*saw*"—they "*believed*"—and then they "*sang*" (Exod. xiv. 31 ; xv. 1). And again, "They *believed* His Word, they *sang* His praise" (Psa. cvi. 12).

And this is just where praise comes in ; it is after salvation, not before it. The feet are first taken from "the horrible pit and the miry clay," and then the "new song" fills the mouth. The prodigal first received his father's kiss of love ; then "they *began* to be merry." Philip went down to dark Samaria and preached Christ ; the people believed the Word, and there was "*great joy* in that city" (Acts viii. 8). The Ethiopian in the desert of Gaza believed, and then went on his way "*rejoicing*" (Acts viii. 39). The story is the same, and so is the order, in every case. Salvation comes first—the joy of salvation and its song follow after.

Beloved reader ! Can you truthfully take up the language of this song, and say, "He is *my* God ;" "He is become *my* salvation ?" The ungodly can talk of "our Saviour ;" and, like the demon-possessed damsel at Philippi, they can speak of "the men who show unto *us* the way of salvation," and yet remain Christless. But the young convert's first and sweetest song is, "Jesus is mine, and I *am* His." He can say with David, "The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer ; *my* God, *my* strength, in whom *I* will trust ; *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and

my high tower " (Psalm xviii. 1). What a constellation of "mys!" It is all personal; it is all sure. No "hoping of being saved;" no thinking it presumption to be sure. It is all assurance here, as in the song on the shore of the Red Sea! Look, too, at the subject of this "new song." It is all about Jehovah—the glory of His person, the greatness of His power. "The *Lord* is my strength and song." "The *Lord* is a man of war." "He hath triumphed gloriously." Not a word about *self*; not a syllable about what *they* had done. This is praise. And the new song of heaven shall eternally be, "Worthy is the Lamb." Singing one's own experience or attainment is not praise; these at best are changeable and imperfect; but Jesus is for ever the same. His glories are unchangeable; and the Father's ear is ever open to hear them told out in His children's praise. Praise is the overflow of a heart filled with a consciousness of God's love and grace; it can only come from one in the enjoyment of God's salvation. Crowds of religious men and women may sing psalms and hymns, Sunday after Sunday—there may be the most orthodox language used—the most entrancing music—the most perfect arrangement and harmony—and yet, if they are unsaved, if they have never seen "the salvation of the Lord," if they have not passed through the Red Sea, the whole affair is a piece of solemn sham. So long as a soul is "dead in trespasses and sins," it cannot praise, for "the dead praise not the Lord" (Psa. cxv. 17). The most daring insults are offered to the God of heaven under the pretence of praise. The most solemn scenes of the "Messiah's" sufferings are set to music, and sung by hundreds of careless sinners, and applauded by thousands more! The death agonies of the Son of God are brought forth in a popular form, to please the revolted tastes of wicked men, and soothe their consciences into forgetfulness of the day when the murdered One and the murderers shall meet. The scenes of the "Judg-

ment Day " are turned into song, accompanied by strains of music ; and God's redeemed ones are not clear of the open shame, nor are they separate from it. O ! if they would only think of the tenderness of the heart they so rudely pierce by this unhallowed work ! If they but remembered the depth of the darkness, and the woe that He passed through to make them His, and to separate them from the world that cast Him out, how different all this would be !

Beloved Christian ! we entreat of you to ponder this well.

We address especially the young believer, and upon him we urge the solemn responsibility laid upon him by God, to stand clear of these works of darkness. We do so the more plainly, because we have seen the youthful feet of the lambs of the flock of God led into the path of the wicked, and the snare of the devil, through such religious entertainments, when they could not have been so, by the openly ungodly concert or opera. In the one case it is the devil undisguised, in the other the same devil transformed into an angel of light, and supported by his servants in the garb of " the singers of the house of the Lord " (1 Chron. ix. 33).

THE WILDERNESS

" So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur, and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water " (Ex. xv. 22). The song, the timbrel, and the dance had just ceased, and that first gush of joy and excitement that fills the bosom of the newly-delivered one had subsided. The people get time to look around and ahead of them on the waste and thirsty desert. Their Canaan home is far before them ; Egypt is far behind them ; and the Red Sea rolls between, to lock them out of it for ever. It is only now that they really begin to

find out where they are, and what has happened. They find themselves in a new world, with new surroundings. The young believer will easily see the application of this to himself. He well remembers the bondage of his former state : then how his eye was turned to behold the "salvation of the Lord" at the Cross of Jesus, and the empty tomb. What joys and songs of gladness filled the heart ! What hopes and prospects rose before his newborn soul. Almost impatient to be with Jesus, the happy heart would sing—

" Rise up and hasten, my soul, haste along,
And speed on thy journey with hope and with song :
Home, home is nearing, 'tis coming into view,
A little more of toiling, and then to earth, adieu ! "

Everything seemed so changed, the soul was in a new world, earth looked far behind, and heaven so near and real. Well do we all remember those happy hours when in a newly-known Lord Jesus we so rejoiced, and it is the will of God we should still rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

Many speak of these early days of pilgrim life as if they had been mere excitement. They congratulate themselves that now they have settled down to a more sober and intelligent condition. They have gained a deeper knowledge of the Word, and can speak fluently of many things that in earlier days they knew nothing of. Be it so ; but we cannot help thinking that in the case of some, there has been a growth in knowledge without a corresponding enlargement of heart, and if the understanding has *gained* something, the heart has *lost* a good deal. There is a want of that warmth of affection and love that marked their earlier days—a love that would have led through flood and flame for Jesus' sake, and even if the energy of mere nature did at times mingle with it, we believe it was infinitely more pleasing to the Lord, than a clear head and a

cold heart ever will be. Surely, dear brethren, a longer acquaintance with the Lord, and a deeper knowledge of His ways, ought to have the opposite effect. Our affections ought to be the warmer, and our joy the deeper as we go on to know Him. We cannot admit that such joys are only the portion of God's new-born sons, and that "as we grow older we must grow colder," as some have said. We are sure at least, that such is not the will of God, however true it may be of the experience of saints. The excitement may pass away, as does the blossom from the trees, but the precious fruit of the Spirit of God, "the love, the joy, the peace" (Gal. v. 22) will mellow and ripen, as we live in the sunlight and warmth of His presence. "Fulness of joy" (John xv. 11; 1 John i. 4) and "continual praise" (Psa. lxxxiv. 4; Heb. xiii. 15) are the blessed portion of all who dwell and walk with God.

But how few continue to go thus for God, and to sing amid the discipline of the desert, as they did in the days of youth. How few of the voices that sang the song on the Red Sea shore at the *beginning* of the *wilderness* journey, joined in that song of Num. xxi. 17, as they neared the *end* of it! How many had broken down by the way! How many had murmured and been destroyed! And is it not so still? I do not speak of the eternal salvation of the soul, but of the failure and declension of the saved on their heavenward journey. Believer, how is it with you? Do you still retain the freshness and simplicity of your first love? Do you find your heart sending forth its streams of praise to God, as it did when first you were converted—it may be years ago? Cold orthodoxy cannot make up for the lack of this. No amount of service done *for* Him, or knowledge *of* His Word, is of so great esteem in the sight of God as the devotedness of a heart affection for the Person of the Lord Jesus. O! to be kept childlike and virgin-hearted in the simplicity of Christ.

But we must pass on.

Exod. xv 22 gives us an account of the people's first experiences in the wilderness. "They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water." This was trial of a new kind: there had been nothing like this in Egypt. "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" (Psa. cvii. 5). Real wilderness life had now commenced, and they begin to feel the roughness of the way that leads them to their Canaan home. The Lord who loved them had brought them into the desert to have them alone with Himself (Exod. xix. 4), that He might lead them about and instruct them in many things (Deut. xxxii. 10). And this was their first lesson. Alas! how unwilling they were to learn it. "The people murmured saying, What shall we drink?"

Such is the present scene to the child of God. Spiritually it is to him a wilderness. Rightly instructed, he will not seek a portion here, nor expect the comforts of home while on a pilgrim journey. Many dangers he will have to face, many foes to meet, many conflicts to endure. Hardships are to be borne—he will "find no water."

Dear young believer, do you not find it so, since you have been converted to God? How changed everything is! Associations and companionships that you loved and enjoyed, previous to your conversion, have lost their charm and sweetness now. Worldly lusts and pleasures are now as foreign to your tastes, as a new creature in Christ, as they were palatable to the old man. The world is a waste, howling wilderness, and in it you "find no water." There is nothing to refresh or cheer your thirsty soul. But you need not murmur or repine, for with God is the fountain of life, and He is now teaching you that you must look to Him for satisfaction and sustenance, as well as for salvation. This is the great lesson of the wilderness—to trust an unseen but present God, to draw from Him day by day, hour by hour, all that you need to sustain you in the desert. This is not learned in a day—nor is

it an easy lesson—but we need not fear, for we know the Hand that is leading us on, and the love of the Heart that is planning for us. Should He lead us through seas of trouble, where the spirit is overwhelmed, and the tears made to flow, we know He will not leave us: but as He draws each false and failing prop from under us, on which He sees we too fondly lean, it is that He may draw us the closer to Himself, to prove how good and kind He is. Thus chastened, subdued and weaned from trusting in an arm of flesh, we will go along the wilderness leaning on the arm of our Beloved.

MARAH is yet a deeper trial. “And when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were *bitter*” (Exod. xv. 23).

• What at first sight seemed to give relief, was found to be but bitterness. How the heart does cling to anything of earth, rather than trust the living God, and let Him provide. But He loves us too well to allow of this, and so He turns our fancied joys to bitterness. We have all had our Marahs to pass since first we began pilgrim life. Some have found them at home, others in the world. It has been truly a bitter draught to some, to find a once-fond parent turned against them for Jesus’ sake, or to be looked upon with contempt and scorn by those we once hoped would have helped us. To bear the daily frown of a cold and cruel world, and to be looked upon with suspicion by those we seek to bless, is bitter enough to nature. But we need not be surprised at all this, for it is only what He promised, and we are only in company with the Master Himself, and the saints of former days. He told us that in the world we should have tribulation, and that through tribulation we should enter the kingdom (John xvi. 33; Acts xiv. 22). Although some who profess to be the Lord’s, have found out an easy way to heaven, in which they can have the world’s friendship and approval; the old road,

where Jesus and His suffering saints have trod, has its Marah's still, and who would be such a coward as to shrink from treading it ?

Look at Paul. Converted on his way to persecute the suffering saints of God, he was immediately told how great things he must *suffer* for Jesus' sake (Acts ix. 16), and what these sufferings were, let 2 Cor. xi. 23-28 tell. The first Epistle of Peter, which especially views the believer as a pilgrim passing through the desert, has for its keynote the word "*SUFFER.*" Look at Chaps. ii. 19 ; iii. 14-17 ; iv. 12-19 ; what a record of *suffering*, but what *consolations* too !

At Marah of old, the Lord showed Moses a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, they were made sweet. How near to the waters of bitterness, was the tree of sweetness found ! How close to the *suffering* pilgrim of first Peter is the *suffering* Son of God. In chapters ii. 21-23 ; iii. 17, 18 ; iv. 13, the tree is in the waters, and they are made sweet. We are treading the same desert that His dear feet once trod ; we meet the same kind of trials as He met, and who would fear to tread a path where we have such fellowship with Him. The dread and bitter cup of the wrath of God He drank Himself alone ; that kind of suffering we can never share : but the suffering that came to Him for righteousness' sake, and as God's witness in an evil world, *that* we may share, and we shall, if we walk with Him along the path. Others shared it who have gone before.

Look at Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi ; first cruelly treated, then made fast in the stocks. This was Marah, but the tree was in the waters. Praises rang through the prison at night, and we know what followed. The Marah waters were made sweet.

See the three Hebrew young men cast into the raging furnace of Babylon. Noble witnesses for the truth of the God they loved ! But they were not left to walk in the furnace alone : they got a com-

panion to walk with them whose "form was like the Son of God"; and *who* would object to walk, even there, in such company.

The lesson to be learned by us is this—that it is not the Lord's way to remove the prison, or to extinguish the fires, but to be very near us while we endure them. He does not promise to keep us exempt from the trial, but He has promised to be with us in it, and "*with* the temptation also to make a way of escape that we may be *able* to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). This applies to hundreds of the smaller things of everyday life. He does not remove the "thorn," but gives "grace" to bear it (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9), and thus the bitterness thereof is made sweet. So "we glory in tribulations also" (Rom. p. 3).

Elim, with its twelve wells and seventy palm trees, comes next. A green spot in the desert, and all the more seasonable after the trial. Elim was not Canaan, but it was a refreshing spot on the way, and a happy foretaste of the time when Israel should dwell in the land, and keep the feast of tabernacles under the shade of the palm. To us it speaks of the coming glory, when wilderness days are gone, of which we even now have the *earnest* and the *hope*. Never do we so grasp the "blessed hope," or long for the joys of home, as when we have just been at the bitter waters; for

"Trials make THE promise sweet."

The "sufferings" and the "glory" are closely linked together in 1 Pet. i. 11; iv. 13; v. 1, 10. Even *here* our Marahs and Elims are very near each other. The little crew on the lake of Galilee must have enjoyed the calm He gave them, after so rude a storm! How the hearts of Martha and Mary must have brimmed with joy at the feast of reunion, after the sorrow and tears of John xi. And thus it shall be with us, when He hushes the storms of life to rest, and together with

our loved ones raised, receive us to our home. Oh how grand it will be to be there !

“ There, besides life's crystal river,
There, beneath life's wondrous tree,
There, with nought to cloud or sever,
Ever with the Lamb to be,
Heir of Glory ! what a hope for thee and me ! ”

THE MANNA.

The manna was the wilderness food of the children of Israel. For forty long years it was given to them morning by morning, from the hand of their faithful God. Neither their murmurings nor their sins restrained Him from sending it, until their feet stood in the land of their possession, and they had eaten of its fruit. “ Then the *manna ceased* after they had eaten of the old corn of the land ; neither had the children of Israel manna any more ” (Josh. v. 12).

Precious and practical are the lessons we may gather from the manna. Like Israel of old in the wilderness, we are left to hunger. The new life, begotten of God, within us, finds no sustenance in the present evil world. It sighs for heavenly things, it hungers after God. Worldly things are foreign to the taste of the “ new man,” although “ the flesh ” still lurking in the saint can relish them well. Let us be on our guard then and watch, lest we *feed* the old and *starve* the new.

Exodus xvi. opens with a view of the wilderness, and a murmuring camp complaining for want of bread. It is the second month since Egypt was left behind, and whatever bread they had brought in their kneading troughs was exhausted. There was no help for them but in GOD ; and, blessed be His Name, *He* was near and ready to charge Himself with the responsibility of supplying all their need. Not surely because they deserved it, for the sequel shows the reverse, but

because He loved them with a love, which all their murmurings could not quench. Blessed it was for them, and blessed it is *for us*, that such a love is His. He provided for them according to His love for them. And so the manna fell in rich abundance from the courts of heaven, right down at their very doors. Unearned by the sweat of the brow, it fell during the hours of night while they slept, the gift of God, and they had only to gather it and eat. "Man did eat angels' food"—"He *satisfied* them with the bread of heaven" (Psa. lxxviii. 25 ; cv. 40).

Jesus is the manna for our souls ; it is by feeding on Him that our spiritual life is nourished and sustained. As He *only* can give life, so He *only* can sustain it. And this He does by presenting Himself to us in the written Word by the Spirit. Not only in His death as the Lamb slain, nor in His resurrection from the dead, as the old corn of Canaan ; but as the One who humbled Himself, who was down here below in the likeness of men—"the Word made flesh who dwelt among us." As strangers here, we need the friendship and the consolation of One who has been Himself a stranger here, and this we have in Jesus. How cheering to our souls it is, to trace His footsteps from the manger to the Cross, as recorded in the Gospels. How the manna character of Jesus appears there. The *small, round* thing, lying on the face of the wilderness, unknown and unnamed among men. He came in the night of the world's darkness, and passed away unheeded and despised by those He came to bless.

They knew Him not, but His people know Him, and delight to feed upon Him as the One who humbled Himself.

The manna was *white*. It lay unsullied in the dew-drop on the sand of the desert. Such was the blessed Lord. Although *in* the world, and continually moving amid its defiling scenes, He was holy, harmless, undefiled. *White* in His unsullied path from the manger

to the Cross, as His garments were on the transfiguration mount. So is the written Word that reveals Him. Infidelity and superstition have done their best to prove there are spots and imperfections in it, but they have failed. The Word shines on in its brightness, and the saints adoringly proclaim, "Thy Word is *very pure* : therefore thy servants love it " (Psa. cxix. 140). The manna was *sweet*—the taste was like *honey*. The Philistines once asked, "What is sweeter than honey?" The youngest saint can answer, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste ! yea, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth " (Psa. cxix. 103).

Such is the bread on which the Lord would have us feed during our pilgrimage, and even after life's journey is past, we shall not surely forget the bread of our wilderness days ; for such is His love, that an omer was to be treasured for a memorial in the inner sanctuary. The manna once lying on the desert, was lifted up and treasured in the "golden pot " within the vail. The gold here, as elsewhere, speaks of glory. Jesus who had not where to lay His head on earth, is glorified in the highest heaven, and we shall behold His glory. But even then, the memory of his humiliation shall not be forgotten. We shall never forget Gethsemane and Golgotha. The memories of Bethany and Nain shall be with us, and we shall "eat of the hidden manna " (Rev. ii. 17) in its everlasting sweetness there.

The manner in which the manna was gathered is of great importance to us. May the Lord enable us to feel it so.

"*They gathered every man according to his eating.*" God gave it, they gathered it. It had to be appropriated by them in order to be enjoyed. And so it must be with us. There is bread enough and to spare, there is fulness in Christ for all our needs, but we must diligently gather it up from the Word for ourselves. No believer can expect to prosper in his soul, if he neglect the Word of God. It is the means appointed

by God, whereby He ministers strength and sustenance to His people, and he who slights it will be a positive loser. If a man neglect to feed his body, his strength will soon diminish, and his whole constitution will suffer; so it is with the inner man, though alas! it may not be so readily perceived.

Beloved Christian! we desire to press this matter home upon your heart and conscience. We feel it to be a matter of immense importance and one affecting the very vitals of Christianity. The low state of spiritual life among the people of God, the lack of divine power in the service of the Lord, and the sadly uneven walk of many who profess to be, and many of whom we would fain hope truly are the Lord's are things deplored and mourned over among us. But is there not a cause? Most undoubtedly there is; and we would humbly suggest that the chief cause is this—*Neglect of the soul's nourishment, through a lack of meditation, on the Word alone with God.* This is a busy age. Things go at a great rapidity, and everything tends to draw the saints from their *closets* and their *Bibles*. Controversies in the *church*, and upheavings in the world are engrossing the attention of many of the saints, and the devil is making capital of the occasion in quietly alluring saints from the solace of the "secret place." Troubles and perplexities are abroad in the commercial world, and from early till late, Christian men are occupied scheming how those difficulties are to be met. It is perfectly right that the Christian merchant should have his business so ordered that the world will not be able to point the finger of scorn at any inconsistency therein, but *nothing on earth* can justify the habitual neglect of communion with God in meditation on His Word, nor will God's blessing rest upon the man who attempts it. It may be, that such seasons will at times be necessarily short, but the Lord knows all our circumstances, and He can make a little gathering go a long way, "for he that gathered

little had no lack." Every man gathered *according* to his eating, some more, some less, but the manna was adapted to the requirements of all; so little children, young men and fathers, all find their portion in the Word (1 John ii. 12-17). The next point is—

It was gathered early. The camp was early astir. Gathering manna was their morning work, for "when the sun waxed hot it melted." This is an important point. "They that seek Me *early* shall find Me," is a statute in the kingdom of God, and in the experience of the saints. "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear" (Isa. l. 4), was the language of the Perfect Man. It was His custom "a great while before day," to seek the "solitary place" alone with God (Mark i. 35). The early dew was often brushed from the grass by His feet, as He hastened to the mountain-side to commune secretly with His God. The early-gathered manna is the sweetest. If the "daily newspaper" or the "morning letters" be perused as the first thing in the morning, there will be but feeble appetite for the heavenly manna. If the cares of the household, or the anxieties of business, are allowed to crowd in upon the soul, before it has received strength from God through meditation on His Word, it need scarcely be wondered at, if things are felt to be a drag and burden all day. A well-known saint has written—"if I neglect *morning meditation on the Word and prayer*, nothing goes well during the day." O that this were felt by each of us more! But where the blessedness of the early-gathered manna has never been enjoyed, the lack of it cannot of course be felt. Strengthened by the bread of God, renewed in the inner man morning by morning, how calmly shall we go forth to meet the vicissitudes of life, and how peacefully encounter its conflicts, and bear its daily cross. We know full well that many of the saints of God from the nature of their calling, have but little time to meditate on the Word. The mother, the

domestic servant, and many others, will find it difficult to secure such seasons ; but the Lord is not ignorant of our circumstances, and He can give *much* strength out of the little that has been diligently gathered.

It was gathered daily. Yesterday's portion will not do for to-day. Lord's Day's manna will not suffice for Monday. It had to be gathered fresh and used, else it bred worms and stank. Truth stored in the notebook, or the intellect, unexperienced by the soul, and unpractised in the walk, is of little value : it neither sanctifies nor nourishes. Retailing out to others, what has never been experienced by ourselves, cannot be a blessing. It only "stinks" in people's nostrils, and puffs up ourselves. It is by reason of "use" that we grow in the knowledge of Christ. Practising what we know, God gives us more. Walking uprightly in the ways of God along the desert, we shall never lack an appetite for the heavenly manna. Thus may it be with us, dear brethren, till the wilderness be past.

The Manna Despised. In Numbers xi. we have another account of the manna, but alas, how changed ! How soon the fine gold grows dim, and the warmth of youth and first love declines. The second year of desert life often finds the saints of God less true-hearted than the first. So it was with Israel. Redemption by blood, deliverance from Egypt, and even the daily manna had become insipid things now to them, very commonplace to hearts that had departed from the living God. The truth is, "in their hearts they had turned back to Egypt" (Acts vii. 39), and now they remember the nice things they once had there, and sigh to obtain them. They had remembrance of Egypt's dainties, but not a word about the brick-making and the bondage. The devil takes good care not to remind them of their former state ; but he holds up the pleasures of it to the best advantage, and the result is, God's manna is despised.

Do you know aught of this fellow-believer ? Can

you honestly say, "*Jesus, Thou art enough*," as you did when first converted? You remember those happy days when He was so precious, and the Word so sweet that told you of Him. How eagerly you read and searched the Scriptures, and seized each spare moment to do so. Your Bible was your constant companion; the trashy novel, the light literature, the comic journal had no attraction then. Jesus, and "*Jesus only*," was enough. There was pleasure in Him, recreation enough in His service; nothing more was wanted. Do you find it so to-day? Alas, many do not. They have, like Israel of old, "*turned back in heart to Egypt*," and desired its pleasures. What they cast aside long ago is now devoured with greed. Things they once gave up as unworthy of Christ, are now their boast. What mean worldly gatherings, the so-called innocent amusements, the questionable songs indulged in by many, and their conspicuous absence at the prayer-meeting. The well-thumbed novel and dust-covered Bible; the *hours* spent in trifling conversation, and the *minutes* in prayer? They tell their own story. As an excuse for this miserable exhibition, some will tell us, "*We cannot be always speaking about Christ; we cannot be always reading our Bible; we must have some change, some variety.*" Ah, yes, it is just the old story: "*There is nothing at all beside this manna.*" I would like to know what more "*beside*" is needed. Is Jesus not enough to satisfy? The everlasting song of heaven will be Jesus, *only* Jesus; and if He will be enough for heaven, why not for earth? If enough for eternity, why not for time?

The "*mixed multitude*" were the first to lust after Egypt's fare, the rest followed. Young believer! beware of religious professors, or even Christians of mixed principles and carnal ways. They can do more to lead you away from God than an open enemy.

But this is not all. This lusting after Egypt's food changed the taste of the manna. Once it was like

"honey," now it is said to be like "fresh oil." Any one knows the difference: the sweetness had gone. And not satisfied with the manna as it came, they began to bake it into cakes, perhaps to save the trouble of gathering it daily. When the heart gets away from God, how little sweetness has the Word. It becomes a barren and tasteless affair to read through a single chapter. "Manna" cakes are easier found. Explanations of the Word, and sermons or addresses from the Word, mingled with man's ideas, suit the taste better, and by reading these instead of the Word, trouble is saved. Alas! for the soul that prefers man's words about Christ, to God's own testimony concerning His Son.

Numb. xxi. shows the evil fully grown. The people tell God "There is *no bread* . . . and our soul *loatheth* this light bread." Fearful words. Judgment followed. How often has it to be so with the saints! Back-sliding begun in the heart, the *closet* and the *Word* neglected, is soon followed by an open fall, or some terrible stroke of the rod. Thus only the sluggish soul awakes out of the devil's snare. How much more pleasing to God, and joyful for us, when the heart can sing—

"Jesus, Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill."

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

"My soul doth thirst for God, the living God" (Psa. xlii. 2). "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Psa. lxxiii. 1).

These are the breathings of a saint of God in the wilderness; the outgoing of that Divine and heavenly life which has its source and supply in the living God. It may be truly said of it, that it came *from* God, and

goes to God. Like the water rising again to its level, its aspirations and longings ascend to the God from whom it came, and nothing short of this will afford true satisfaction to the "new man" in the believer. Dead forms and ceremonies of religion may satisfy lifeless souls who have only a name to live while they yet are dead, but the truly heaven-born soul, will pant—as the thirsting hart pant after the waterbrooks—for direct, personal dealing with the living God, and it will break through each rank of opposing powers of darkness, until it gains its object. This will be true in less or greater measure in every child of God. It is one of the distinctive marks between the man of the world and the child of God—between those who have the Christ-life within them, and those who are dead in sin.

Thoughts such as these crowd upon the soul, as we read the opening verses of Exodus xvii., and see a murmuring camp in the midst of a barren desert without a drop of water. It was unbelief that led them to complain, for their eye was off Jehovah, their God, and yet their very failure was a proof that they were out of Egypt and in the desert with God. We never read of Egyptians complaining so, nor did the sons of Israel, so long as they sat by the river of Egypt. Now they were in the place of need, where faith is tried, and where, alas! it so often fails. In spite of all their murmurings, the Lord was there, and ready to satisfy the thirsty camp with water, as He had satisfied the hungry camp with manna in chapter xvi.

And so we have oftentimes found it since we began our desert life, beloved fellow-saints. Moses was commanded to take the rod wherewith he had turned the river of Egypt into blood, and smite the rock in Horeb. The rock was smitten, and the water gushed forth. The very rod, whose stroke was judgment to the Egyptians, was used in grace to bring the refreshing stream to the many thousands of Israel.

The spiritual import of this to us is very plain. "THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST" (1 Cor. x. 4). Christ smitten in judgment on the Cross for our blessing. The water is the type of the Spirit given to us, as the fruit of Christ's death and completed work. Had the rock not been smitten, the stream would have been pent up within it; and had the blessed Lord not borne the heavy stroke of judgment for us, there could have been no salvation, no possession of the Spirit of God. But blessed be His peerless Name, He who was once "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," has now gone up on high to be glorified in the highest heaven. The Spirit has come down as the witness of His exaltation, and of the purging of our sins (John vii. 39; Heb. x. 15); and He dwells in all believers as the Strengtheners and Sustainer of their spiritual being.

Of Israel we read, "they did ALL drink the same spiritual drink" (1 Cor. x. 4); and of believers now, that they have been "ALL made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. x. 4, R.V.). This is the birthright and the heritage of every member of the family of God. There is no such thing as a believer in Christ who has not received the Spirit. We know there are some who deny this, and endeavour to teach that certain of the people of God have not received the seal of the Holy Spirit. But this is alike opposed to the teaching of the Word, and to the experience of the saints of God. What we learn there, is that "as many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He power to become the children of God" (John i. 12, R.V.); and "*Because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). It is not "because ye know this, or that doctrine," or "because you have attained to this measure of devotedness, or to that of holiness," but "because ye are SONS," and "Ye are ALL SONS of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26, R.V.). "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God"

(Rom. viii. 17, R.V.) ; and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is *none of His*" (Rom. viii. 9).

But we must distinguish between things that differ. The Scriptures distinguish between believers having "received the Spirit," and "being filled with the Spirit" (see 1 Cor. ii. 12, with Eph. v. 18) ; there is also a distinction made between life and growth. The life is the same in all, but the development of that life may be different in each. The Spirit of God dwells in every son of God, but the manifestations may be in varied measures. The new-born babe has life *in Christ*, and there is no other life. Such terms as "The Higher Life," "The Holy Life," are misnomers. They convey unscriptural thoughts. The "Life" is of the same character in all, although it may vary in development and manifestation in each. The Scriptures speak of the "weak" and the "strong" (Rom. xv. 1) ; the "carnal" and the "spiritual" (1 Cor. iii. 1) ; but here it is a question of development and not of the *character* of the life received. Some, because of worldliness and false teaching, like the Corinthian and Galatian saints, are retrograding ; and others, like the Thessalonians, are "growing exceedingly" and abounding in the graces of the Spirit. Such distinctions, too, are marked concerning the Spirit of God. Stephen and Barnabas were men "*full of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts vii. 55 ; xi. 24) ; while some at Corinth were only "babes," envying and striving with one another (1 Cor. iii. 1-3), yet even they are addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints"—their bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. i. 2 ; vi. 13). We all know the difference between the tiny brook, and the mighty stream overflowing its banks, although the water be the same in both. May it be ours, dear brethren, to "be *filled* with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18), and to *walk* in the Spirit (Gal. v. 16). This is what our God has commanded us, and those who, through grace, know most of the blessed experience of this, will have the least to say

about it. Like Moses, when he descended from the mount with the skin of his face shining, it will be manifest to all, and we shall not require to tell it ; it will tell itself. The weary and thirsty souls we come in contact with, as we pass along the desert, will get the benefit of it, for if we be drinking deep at the fountain ourselves, the living waters will flow out of us in "rivers" (John vii. 37, 38). This is the great need of the present hour among all who minister the Word among the saints, and preach the Gospel to the world without. The Lord preserve us from being satisfied with sound and orthodox preaching, devoid of the quickening and life-giving power of the Spirit of God. To walk with God and serve Him thus, we need to give heed to the weighty admonitions, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. iv. 30), "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19). Alas ! we often do so, and this is the cause of our weakness and barrenness.

In Numbers xx. 7-11, we get further mention made of the rock. Here Moses is commanded to "*speak* to the rock, and it shall give forth its water." There was to be no second *smiting* ; it was smitten once for all, and now the word was "*Speak* to the rock." But Moses *spake* to the people—unadvisedly too—and *smote* the rock. He disobeyed God, and for this he was not allowed to enter the land of Canaan as Israel's leader. Our Rock has been once smitten, and as the result, the Spirit has been given. We do not need to ask Him to "come down," or plead with God to send Him down to dwell in us. As the *Witness* of the perfect purgation of our sins (Heb. x. 15), as the *Seal* of our present redemption, and as the *Earnest* of our future glory, He is *in* us. As the well in the garden supplies the moisture to the plants, and as the stream flowing through the field of husbandry causes the seed to spring and grow, and bear its fruit, so is the Spirit of God in the believer. He who draws nigh to God, and "*Speaks to the Rock*," will lack no moisture ; his leaf will be green and, like the

palm tree, he will be full of sap and flourishing. The words he speaks will refresh the weary saints, and from him shall flow the stream of life to needy sinners all around. His soul shall be "like a watered garden, and like a spring of waters whose waters fail not."

Dear young believer, covet to know the fulness of the Spirit of God ; to drink deep of the stream that giveth health and causeth fruit ; and O ! eschew and shun whatever would lure you from the smitten side of Him with whom is "the fountain of life" to the "broken cisterns" of the world that fail to satisfy.

WAR WITH AMELEK.

From the *first* gathering of the manna, and the *first* refreshing draught of the stream that flowed from the smitten rock, Israel now pass on to other scenes, to meet the first enemy and to fight their first battle as the Lord's redeemed. They would willingly have passed on in peace to their Canaan home ; they did not court the clash of war ; they were not the aggressors in the fray. Amalek, a near kinsman of Israel's, according to the flesh, a grandson of Esau, now increased into a strong and warlike people—"the first of the nations" (Num. xxiv. 20)—came forth to impede the progress of Israel, and to fight against them in the desert. Notice that this unprovoked attack came from Amalek, not from Israel. Its object was to extirpate the people of the Lord, and to blot them out. It was cunningly done, for we read—"He laid wait for him in the way" (1 Sam. xv. 2). It was cowardly too, for the "feeble," the "faint and weary" were set upon first ; and the "hindmost" of the host became the prey. The lessons here our souls may learn are varied and weighty. They form part of "the things that were written aforetime for our learning," in order that we may be furnished and equipped for a wilderness warfare of which this is but the shadow,

We may look at this battle—first, in its relation to Israel ; next, as the type of a war in which every believer has to share.

The enmity of Amalek against Israel was nothing new. It was only the continuation of the old struggle between the elder and the younger—the child of flesh and the child of promise, as seen in Ishmael as he persecuted Isaac ; in Esau as he struggled with Jacob, from the hour of his birth and onward ; and now in Amalek against the new-born nation, redeemed and separated to be Jehovah's chosen people.

So long as the people of Israel were in Egyptian bondage they had no fighting to do. Amalek abode in his place in peace, and his enmity slumbered ; but no sooner have redemption and separation to God been accomplished, the manna tasted, and the water drunk, than he comes forth to oppose and fight. We learn then that Amalek is the foe of a redeemed and pilgrim people ; that the warfare is unknown in days of bondage ; and that deliverance from Pharaoh must precede war with Amalek.

The answer to this in the history and experience of the children of God, is both striking and instructive. Amalek, which means " a people that licks up," is the type of the flesh. The war in Rephidim with Israel, foreshadows that conflict known only to those who have been redeemed to God, delivered from the authority of darkness, and severed from the present evil world. The unconverted know nothing of it ; they are under the dominion of the flesh, they serve its lust, they do its will. It does not therefore fight its subjects, it rules over them. But from the moment of the second birth, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the conflict, with the flesh begins. And as it was in the type, so it is in the antitype,—the flesh begins the struggle. The new-born soul, alive to God and pressing on along the heavenly path, would feed on the manna (Christ), and drink of the water from the rock (the Spirit) in

peace ; but the flesh will not allow it. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit."

The first attack of this subtle foe is often a surprise to the young believer. He has just begun his wilderness journey with a song ; the fetters of his bondage have been broken ; he has eaten of the heavenly bread, and drunk of the refreshing stream. The sins and the sorrows of his former days are past, and he has lost taste for things that once charmed him in the world. Were it not for the thorns and briars that surround his feet, he would almost forget that "this world is a wilderness wide," so great is his joy, and so satisfied his soul, as he walks along calmly with his God.

Of a sudden the foe is heard, and the conflict in earnest begins. Some old habit has asserted its power ; some evil suggestion like a meteor darts through the thoughts ; some fleshly lust demands to be indulged. The effect on the young believer is appalling. He never counted on this ; he thought the days for such things were past. A new creature in Christ, and a son of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he imagined the flesh within him had either died, or ceased to be. So quiet and unoffensive had it been since the hour of his conversion, that he imagined (and some have said) that it had been eradicated root and branch. But, alas ! it was not so. Seductive, treacherous, and subtle, it only lay in ambush watching its favoured change to assail the "heaven-born life," the new man created in righteousness, and to war against the Spirit of God now dwelling within the child of faith.

These two are distinct and essentially different, as were Amalek and Israel in the desert. The Spirit of God neither eradicates nor absorbs the flesh in a believer. It may not be expelled ; it cannot be improved. It is evil, only evil, always evil ; enmity against God. We are told by God to have "no confidence" in it (Phil. iii. 2) ; to make "no provision"

for it (Rom. xiii. 14) ; not to " yield our members " as weapons to its service (Rom. vi. 13). It will always oppose, but it need not oppress ; it will ever conflict, but it need never conquer ; for the Lord of Hosts, mighty in battle, is on our side, and He giveth us the victory.

Israel was no match for the foe that here confronted them. Amalek was " the first of the nations," a people accustomed to warfare. Israel had " seen no war " (Exod. xiii. 17), and had no experience in handling the sword and shield. Had the battle joined in strength with strength, the issue would doubtless have been the defeat of Israel. But this high heaven could not allow. Weak and unfit for conflict as the infant nation appeared, they were the people of Jehovah. They had been redeemed and separated unto Him. His arm had been made bare in their deliverance from Pharoah, and He will not now stand silently by, and see them overthrown by Amalek. His power had been exercised for them in the defeat of Pharoah's host, that same power is now to be exercised *through* them for the victory over Amalek. The lesson here is one of great worth to the redeemed of the Lord. There are times when it seems as if they were to be swallowed up quick, and their enemies have an easy triumph over them. So far as *they* are concerned this might easily be done. Sin in the flesh, is a strong and relentless foe ; it has long experience, and finds in the young believer one who appears to be an easy prey. But the Lord of Hosts is for him. Divine power is on his side. The power that once wrought in raising Christ from among the dead, now works *in* the feeblest saint (Eph. i. 19, with iii. 20), and that power is his strength in battle. Blessed be God. The ultimate victory is sure ; for a time it may seem as if " Amalek prevailed," but his latter end is " that he perish for ever " (Num. xxiv. 20).

The manner in which this victory was won, has in it

all-important lessons to the children of God. The battlefield had its upper and lower spheres. Up at the hilltop, Moses held the rod—the symbol of Jehovah's power. Down in the valley Joshua used the sword upon "the strength of Amalek." So long as Moses' hands upheld the rod, Joshua's victory with the sword was sure ; but when these hands fell down, the victory passed to Amalek. In Moses on the hill, we have a type of the believer in communion with God. While he abides there, his hands uplifted in conscious need, the power of God is exercised on his behalf. "When I am weak *then* am I strong" is the experience of a saint on the hill, with the rod of God in his hand. But it is not in man to abide in this position : he must be helped to maintain it, else his hands will soon hang feebly down. Aaron (exalted) and Hur (freeborn) take their places by his side, and by them his hands are upheld, until the battle has been fought and the victory won, by the sword of Joshua. This is at least an illustration, if not a type, of the two Advocates or Helpers, given to the believer, by whom his communion and strength are to be sustained in wilderness warfare. He has on the one side a great High Priest within the veil, who ever liveth to make *intercession* for him there (Heb. vii. 25), an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous (1 John ii. 2). His cause is well represented there, by the anti-typical Aaron whose word to all His people is "I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of My righteousness" (Isa. xli. 11). On the other side he has the "other Comforter," the Paraclete (or, Advocate, the word is the same as in 1 John ii. 2) of whom it is written—"In like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. The Spirit Himself maketh *intercession* for us" (Rom. viii. 26, R.V.). Thus, with one Intercessor *with* God for him, and another Intercessor *in* him from God, the believer has power to prevail.

But there is another sphere of this warfare. Joshua handling the sword against Amalek, shews the believer using the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God (Heb. iv. 12) against his own flesh, mortifying (or making dead its "lusts" (Col. iii. 5, R.V.), "casting down" its "reasonings" (2 Cor. x. 5) and minding no longer its "things" (Rom. viii. 5). This warfare is not imaginary, but real; and the man who dwells habitually on the hill with God, will know best how fierce is the battle in the valley, with that flesh which is, and ever will be, at enmity with God. Let no man be misled by the sentimental and one-sided theories of a "rest of faith," where no war is known; or of a peaceful region where no Amalek foe may come. The language of poetry and mysticism may paint to fancy such a place, but the warrior of the wilderness remembers the word uttered on the eve of that day of battle—"The Lord will have *war* with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exod. xvii. 16), and keeps his sword ever by his side. In later days, we read of Amalek appearing as the foe of Israel in other scenes. Agag the king was spared by Saul, and the best of the sheep and oxen were reserved under the plea of doing sacrifice to the Lord (1 Sam. xv. 9-15). For this Saul was rejected, and lost the kingdom, and he who spared the Amalekite from the sword of the Lord, was slain at last himself, by the hand of an Amalekite (2 Sam. i. 10, 31). A man of another spirit was Mordecai the Jew, who refused to bow to, or acknowledge the Agagite as his Lord. Although found in a place of favour with the king, Mordecai's eye discerned in the haughty Haman the oppressor of Israel, and the enemy of the Lord (Esther iii. 1-6), and as it ever has been, and will be, obedience gained the day. Israel, as represented in Mordecai, even though an exile in a strange land, honoured God and prevailed, and Amalek, in the person of the haughty Agagite, was overthrown.

SINAI.

From the battle and the victory at Rephidim, Israel must now pass on to other scenes. A Millennial picture is presented in chapter xviii., where the Gentiles, as represented in Jethro, are seen rejoicing in Jehovah's goodness to Israel ; the assembled tribes with travail and sorrow behind them, representing that nation in days to come, after the fiery trial of "the great tribulation," gathered in peace under their Messiah—King ; while in Zipporah and her sons, the Church, the Bride of Christ is seen. Here, as elsewhere in the wilderness journey, a glance of days of coming glory is seen, but only as a passing gleam of sunshine in a cloudy day. The "way of the wilderness," with its toils and conflicts, has again to be faced and trod, and thus they came to the desert of Sinai, and encamped before the mount of God. Great events were to happen there, and lessons learned by the pilgrim host, never to be forgotten. There are such epochs still in the life history of the saints of God. Individually and collectively we must still encamp, and hear the Voice that speaks. Service and conflict must cease, and often in solitudes greater than Horeb, the word of law and grace comes with power to the souls of the people of the Lord. Yet it need not come with alarm, for well we know—in a way that Israel did not—that He who speaks, speaks not in wrath, but as a Father to His Children, and only for their joy and blessing.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

The giving of the law is the first of the great events recorded during the encampment at Sinai. To Israel, this was the beginning of a new dispensation, in the nature of Jehovah's dealing with them. Up till now *grace* had wrought for them : their sins and murmurings

had called forth fresh displays of Jehovah's gracious hand. Till now blessing had been given them unconditionally, and in spite of their failures: Jehovah's heart and hand had been toward them, fulfilling the promise made in covenant with their father Abraham (Gen. xv. 13-14). "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself" (Exod. xix. 4), are words that tenderly describe the character of Jehovah's dealings with His people. Now the blessing is to be continued on the ground of their *obedience*. "If ye will obey my voice, and *keep* my covenant, *then* ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people," and the people ignorant of their own ability, and of the nature of the claims of a Holy God alike, at once accepted the terms and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." We cannot here enter into details regarding the nature of the law, and its claims, and of man's failure in keeping it, with the consequent curse and condemnation brought upon him as a transgressor. We will briefly note the testimony of God's Word, as to the believer's relation to Divine law, before and after his conversion.

There is a distinction to be made between "law" as a principle of God's dealings with man, and "the law" as given by Moses to Israel at Sinai. There is also a marked contrast between the age of law, and the age of grace. *Law* characterises all God's dealings, in all ages. He is a God of order and of rule—in all departments of His kingdom. Heaven and earth, Israel and the Church; saints and angels are subjects of His rule. Thrice to the proud Gentile Nebuchadnezzar, did God, through Daniel's lips, repeat the words—"The Most High *ruleth* in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. iv. 17, 25, 32), and this abides through all dispensations the same. "The law" was given at a specified time, to a special people, and for a definite purpose. There

was no such law from Adam to Moses (see Rom. v. 13-14). The period of the law is clearly stated. "The law was given by Moses" (John i. 17). "*Till* the Seed should come, to whom the promise was made" (Gal. iii. 19). Then "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and "under grace" God's present dealings with man continue. The law was not given for man's salvation. "It was added because of transgression" (Gal. iii. 19). "The *law* entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. v. 20). "The law is holy, just and good." Man is a sinner, and by the knowledge of what God requires of him, in the law, is made to know that "sin is made exceeding sinful" (Rom. vii. 13). The whole world manifested, convicted and tested, stands with closed mouth "guilty before God" (see Rom. iii. 19; v. 12). How strange, that what God gave to show man his ruin, and condemnation, should be used as a ladder to reach heaven by works! Yet such is man's perversity. If God gives him a law, he will promise to keep it, and yet openly and knowingly break its first three commandments, ere it reaches him on tables of stone (see Exod. xx. 3-5, with Exod. xxxii. 1-5). If God proclaims salvation by grace (Titus ii. 12), he will seek to gain it by keeping fragments of a broken law (Luke xviii. 11-12).

To the believer, the law with its demands, has no terror. He knows that in Christ its claims have all been met for him. "What the law *could not* do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4). In Christ the believer is judicially dead to the law: it has no further claim upon him. He is able to look at it full in the face, and say, "I through the law died to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19, R.V.). "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 19, R.V.). The law

cannot apprehend or condemn a dead man ; and the believer has become "dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4). He stands now in Christ risen, possessed of a new life, united to a new husband, controlled by a new power. "The *law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the *law* of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2) is the language and experience of his soul.

But it has been said, the law is the believer's "rule of life." This was what the Galatians were seeking to make it. They had begun with grace, but had returned to the law as a "rule of life." "Ye are not *under* the law but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14) is God's answer to this. The believer is a child in the Father's house (Luke xv. 32 ; 1 John iii. 1), a subject of its rule. He is in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13) ; he confesses and acknowledges Jesus as His Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3 ; Phil. iii. 8), and all this brings with it responsibility. But his obedience is prompted by love. His subjection is not in the spirit of a slave, but of a son. He serves in the liberty of one who has access and welcome to the innermost circle of Divine favour and love. He is not a lawless person ; neither is he a legalist ; he walks and serves in "the liberty wherewith Christ made him free" (Gal. v. 1). This honour belongs to all the saints. See that you do not let it slip then, dear fellow-believer, or lose it by worldliness, or in the mists of human tradition. Let Christ be your object. Set Him before you as your example. Honour Him only as your Lord. Let His Word alone be as your rule and guide.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

At the call of Jehovah, Moses had gone up to the Mount of God (Exod. xxiv. 13) ; Aaron, Hur, and the people were left in the valley below Mount Sinai. There they were to be tried, their dependence and

obedience tested, during the personal absence of their leader, and the sequel shews how sadly they failed, and wherein their failure lay. Moses was out of sight : he was in the presence of God. For a short period all seems to have gone well, but their faith and patience at length gave way. When they saw that Moses "delayed to come down," they gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and demanded that he should make them "gods to go before" them, and coupled with this demand, they added words, which at once reveal their fallen condition—"for this Moses, the *man that brought us up* out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." On the Red Sea shore, they had ascribed to Jehovah the glory of their deliverance (Exod. xv. 13), but here, under the crest of Sinai, and in sight of the glory of the Lord, abiding like devouring fire on the mount, they apostatize from God, and give His glory to another. Such is man ; not only in nature, fallen and lost, but even after redemption and separation from the world are known, man's evil heart, dominated by unbelief, will lead him "from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). Israel "forgot God their Saviour" (Psa. cvi. 19), and "in their hearts turned back again into Egypt" (Acts vii. 39). This was the root of their sin. Aaron, desirous of pleasing the people, and doubtless in the same condition of unbelief as themselves, invited them to break off their ornaments, and with his own hand he fashioned a golden calf, which he set up before their eyes, and built an altar, before it, proclaiming "a feast to the Lord." This was terrible wickedness—all the greater because it was perpetrated by a man of Aaron's standing—and the crowning act of all was, the association of Jehovah's Holy Name with this dark idolatry.

The scene before Mount Sinai has been repeated again and again, in the history of Christendom. The Lord Jesus had gone up on high to the immediate presence of God. His people, His Church which bears

His Name, and calls Him Lord, is left on earth, in the place of dependence and obedience, to keep His Word, to bear testimony to His Name, and to own His Lordship, until the time of His return. "To serve" and "to wait" (1 Thess. i. 9-10) was the employment, and the attitude of saints of early times, but this continued only for a little time. "The hope" became obscured; the minding of "earthly things" (Phil. iii. 19) usurped its place: "My Lord delayeth His coming" became the language of the many, and then the traditions of men, the fashion of the world, clerisy, priestcraft, and doctrines of demons, rolled in like a flood, and apostasy from God supervened. The molten calf—the worship of Egypt; or what men now call "Natural Religion"—something to appeal to men's senses and fill their eyes, took the place of "Jesus in the midst." The voice of leaders, the creeds and liturgies of men, supplanted the Word of God, and the place of Christ as Son and Lord over God's house (Heb. iii. 6). What is that which calls itself "The Church" to-day, but a defiled camp, where man's will, and man's word rule supreme. The voice of the people ever "set on mischief" (Exod. xxxii. 22) can always find some in high places, such as Aaron, who ought to know better, but fear the people more than God, to carry out their desires, and thus the apostasy of Christendom has been accomplished. What a sight before high heaven, that zealous host, at early morning, offering their burnt-offerings and their peace-offerings—notably no sin-offering—before their calf, and immediately after filling up their busy day in ungodly revelry! "They sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Such is the world and its religion: a combination of hypocrisy and lewdness: from the sacrament to the ballroom; from the church to the theatre; from the altar rail to the gambler's board and the drunkard's cup. And the darkest blot, the deepest insult to a Holy God is this, that men like Aaron, who have been

in the counsel of heaven, and co-workers with Moses "the man of God" are found as the ringleaders and abettors of this unholy sham. Verily they shall have their reward.

While this scene of revelry was advancing in the valley, another was transpiring on the height. The man on the mount was receiving from Jehovah His thoughts about it. When Moses descended from the mount, he stood, possessed of the mind of God, about that shameful sight. He could not be dazzled by the excuses and lies of his brother. He had heard from Jehovah's lips that the people "had corrupted themselves"; he viewed the scene from the presence of the Lord; he looked upon it from the mount of God. This makes all the difference. A carnal man can only see sin as it affects himself or others; a spiritual man must look upon it as it dishonours God, and deal with it and those who are guilty of it, or associated with it, accordingly. When Moses met his brother Aaron at the mount of God, a number of years before, he "kissed him" (Exod. iv. 27). They had both come forth from the presence of God then, their fellowship then was in the light, their love was the love of brethren. But Aaron had lost that fellowship with God; he had gone out of the way, and led others after him. The time now, was not the time to kiss, or to speak of brotherly love, and Moses knew it. He does not therefore act as if nothing had happened, but charges home the sin of Aaron upon him; and taking the idol which his hands had made he burns it and grinds it to powder. This was acting according to the mind of God; it was giving effect to the judgment of heaven. Less than this would not have sufficed. The honour of Jehovah had been trampled down, and Moses did not allow his "brotherly love" to hinder him from faithfully vindicating it. Nor was this all. He knew that the camp could no longer be the place of Jehovah's rest, so he stood in the gate and said,

“Who is on the Lord’s side let him come unto me?”

It was not a question now of who were Israelites—that had been made clear on the night of their exodus from Egypt; but now it was—Who is *for* Jehovah?

“And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.” They took their place on

Jehovah’s side, openly and definitely, and for this they received the Lord’s approval, and His “covenant of life and peace” (see Deut. xxxiii. 8-9; Malachi. ii.

5). They shunned not to execute the judgment of the Lord, even upon their brethren, for the fear of the Lord and the honour of His Name was before them. In

this day of a defiled camp, an apostate church, in which the Name of God is dishonoured, the Lordship of Christ ignored, and His Word rendered of none

effect, the call is again heard—Who is on the Lord’s side? It is not a question of who are Christians, but of who are willing to give the Lord His place and

take their stand with Him, even should they have to leave their kindred and dearest earthly treasures, in order to obey the will of God, and purge themselves

from association where He has been dishonoured. This may sever many a link, and cleave asunder many a lifelong bond. It will be sure to cost us something,

yea, more than flesh and blood can bear, but to those who set the Lord before them, and by grace determine to be on His side, strength will be given to go forth

“without the camp,” and to use “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” to accomplish whatever He has commanded. “And Moses took the

Tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation,” or the “Tent of appointed meeting.” And it came to pass

that every one which *sought the Lord*, went out unto the Tabernacle of the congregation (Tent of appointed meeting) which was without the camp” (Exod. xxxiii.

7). And thus it is, that all who seek the Lord, and hear the call of a rejected Christ, whose Name and

claims have been dishonoured in what professes to be the church, "go forth unto *Him* without the camp," gathering unto His Name alone, to hear His Voice as the one Shepherd of His flock, to own His claims over them individually as his disciples, and His authority and rule in "the house of God; the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 14-15).

JEHOVAH'S DWELLING PLACE.

The tabernacle was Jehovah's dwelling place in the midst of His redeemed people. The twelve tribes encamped around it, and the cloud abode above it. Here it was that Sacrifice and Priesthood, Divine worship and order began. There was no sanctuary in Egypt. Redemption and separation had to be known before there could be a dwelling place for God, or a place of worship and service for man. The tabernacle was a shadow of good things to come. It pointed onward to Christ. Its sacrifices were foreshadowings of the one Perfect Sacrifice. Its priesthood was typical of the priesthood of Christ within the veil. Of course there are many points in contrast, for the law "was not the very image" of the things foreshadowed. The sacrifices were imperfect, and had then to be repeated. The priesthood passed from generation to generation. But "Christ being come" we have in Him a perfect Sacrifice, of eternal value, and a Priest Who abideth and liveth for ever. It is not our present purpose to enter into details of these tabernacle types. We have done so elsewhere*. It was the Divine Centre around which the chosen people assembled and encamped, each in his Divinely-ordered place. Divine rule was acknowledged there: His commandments were obeyed in all that pertained

*See "Lectures on the Tabernacle in the Wilderness," by JOHN RITCHIE.

to His glory, and His people's welfare. *From* that tabernacle He spake and gave commandments concerning all that pertained to His Worship, and the order of His House (see Lev. 1), and of all that belonged to the people in their service, their work, and their warfare (see Num. i. 1). It was composed of the freewill offerings of the people (Exod. xxv. 1, 4 ; xxxvi. 1, 7), and built according to the Divine pattern, shown to Moses on the mount (Exod. xxv. 8-9 ; xxxix. 32). There the cloud—the manifested presence of Jehovah—came down and abode with the sanctuary, and was visibly manifest upon it, by day and by night.

The tabernacle and the camp—the church in the wilderness (Acts vii. 38), the place of the Divine dwelling, and the circle of Divine rule, is typical of the church of God, His dwelling place, and His kingdom.

There, in the midst of the nations, severed from all, and not reckoned as worthy of a place among them, were the people of Jehovah, His peculiar treasure, "a people *near* unto Him" (Psa. cxlviii. 14), in whose midst He dwelt, and among whom He ruled as their King (Num. xxiii. 21). This was the distinctive glory of Israel, and their power among their enemies. Yet they sinned it away, and demanded a king to be like unto the nations (1 Sam. viii. 6), and in the reckoning of God they thus rejected Him (1 Sam. v. 19). To elect a leader, to make choice of a man as the minister, is virtually to thrust the Lord Jesus from His place "in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20) of His people. The man may have many gifts ; he may stand head and shoulders above all around him, like Saul, the man of the people's choice, but that makes no difference. In principle, God is rejected, the Lordship of Christ is disowned as surely as if the choice had been one like Jeraboaam's priests, raised from among "the lowest of the people." May God's saints learn the sin of clerisy and human rule, and flee from both, humbly seeking to gather around and cleave unto Christ, as their only Lord and Centre "in the midst."

THE MISSION OF THE SPIES.

At first sight it may appear as if the sending forth of the twelve spies to search the land of Canaan had its origin in the commandment of the Lord, but by comparing Deut. i. 22 with Num. xiii. 1-3, it is clear that it originated in the "will of man." "Ye came near unto me, every one of you, and said, *We* will send men before us, and they shall search out the land." And when we remember what the object of the mission was, it only confirms the fact, that it was the fruit of unbelief and disregard of the Word of God. He gave them their desire, as He afterwards did, when they desired a king, but neither the sending of the spies nor the desire for a king, was the will of God. When the purpose of Jehovah for the deliverance of His people was first made known to Moses, and through him to the people, it was in the glowing words, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land, unto a *good* land and a *large*, unto a land *flowing with milk and honey*" (Exod. iii. 8). They had already had the first and second parts of this definite promise fulfilled to them. They had been delivered from the Egyptians, and brought up out of their land. They might have well counted on their faithful God to fulfil what remained, and gone forward counting on him to do it. But instead of their trusting God, and believing His Word, they demanded that spies be sent to "see the land what it is," whether it be "good or bad," whether it be "fat or lean" (Num. xiii. 18-20). This was equivalent to saying—"We cannot accept God's description of the land of Canaan, we must have it confirmed by man." True, He told us that the land is "good," but we will send to see whether it be "good or bad." He said it was "flowing with milk and honey," but we must see whether it be "fat or lean." With this spirit prevailing, it is easy to account for the

attitude of the congregation, when the spies returned bringing back "an evil report." They were ready to receive the report of unbelieving men, to give it full credit, and to disbelieve God. This is the way of man's heart. The spies returned were unable to say anything against the land. The testimony was wrung from them that it flowed with "milk and honey," but that was immediately followed by an overdrawn description of the enemies and obstacles they would have to encounter in taking possession of it. They saw walled cities and great giants there, and themselves "as grasshoppers." Not a word about God and His promise at all. God was out of their reckoning: His promise "I will bring you in" had no place in their hearts. "They could not enter in because of unbelief." "They said one to another, let us make a captain and return to Egypt" (Num. xiv. 4). In their hearts they were there already (see chap. xi. 5), and where the heart is, the feet will soon follow. They stood at Kadesh-barnea—on the very borders of the goodly land. Its fruits lay before them: they were reminded of the Lord being able to bring them in and give it to them, and yet in the face of all this, they turned their backs upon it, and refused to enter in. This marked a crisis in their history. Jehovah had patiently borne with them in their murmurings and wilderness failures, but this deliberate rejection of the inheritance, this bold declaration of their unbelief of His Word, He must judge and punish. Had it not been for the intercession of Moses, the righteous wrath of an offended God would have consumed them in a moment. The unbelieving people were held to their choice. They must tread the wilderness for forty long years; there they must die and be buried. Their children would enter and possess the land, but the despisers of it must perish. There are solemn lessons here for the children of God. That goodly land of promise, is the type of the vast inheritance of spiritual

blessings (Eph. i. 3) to which every believer in Christ has access and title, but which must be trodden in order to be possessed. It is not what the eye takes in, but what the foot covers, that is possessed. Acquaintance with the geography of a country, is one thing ; to stand on its soil is quite another. And so there may be theoretic knowledge of heavenly things, with little or no possession of them in the soul. To take possession of spiritual blessings is sure to bring us into the place of "the sons of Anak," and the "walled cities." "Grapes" and "giants" are usually found together, and if we would feed on the one, we must fight the other. This is just where the many come short. They would have the blessings, but they fear the fight. The "grapes" are sweet, but the "giants" are strong, and rather than encounter them, they despise the whole inheritance of spiritual blessing, and go back to worldliness and backsliding. How often have we seen saints on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan, enamoured it may be with the blessedness of a life of faith ; of an out-and-out discipleship and obedience to the Word of the Lord ! But then the cross has to be borne. Friends will oppose : the world will revile : it may be, there will be loss of earthly things. These are the "walled cities" and the "giants" by which the faith of many is tested. They did not count on these, although, had they read their Bibles, they might have known, that their Lord had said "If any man will come after Me, let him *deny himself*, and *take up his cross* daily, and follow Me" (Luke ix. 23). And so they turn again to the world in some of its many forms, and there continue and end their days, unhappy backsliders, stumbling blocks to others, and eternal losers to themselves. The further history of this unbelieving host is a blank : God does not consider it worth while to write it. From the time that they "despised the pleasant land," until they returned to its borders, after thirty-eight weary

years of wandering, there is no record, save the stoning of the Sabbath breaker, and the sin and doom of Korah and his company—acts which have a striking significance in the history of a fallen and rebellious people, and which undoubtedly have their anti-types in the backslidings and apostacies of many in Christendom (see Heb. x. 28 ; Jude 11).

It is a relief to the heart, to turn from the unbelieving host, to the two faithful men, who stood forth and boldly confessed their faith in the living God. Caleb and Joshua were of the twelve men chosen to spy out the land, but they were of "another spirit" from the rest. They believed God. They accounted Him faithful who had promised. They were men prepared to follow the Lord "*fully*" (chap. xiv. 24). As Caleb confessed, when his feet stood in the land of Canaan, forty-five years after, "I brought him word again as was *in mine heart*" (Josh. xiv. 7). Had Caleb been led through the land of Canaan blindfold, he would have said it was "a good land" all the same. He did not gain his information from what he *saw*, but from what the Lord his God had *said*. The Word of the Lord was in his heart: he believed God, both as regards the land, and His power to bring them into it. He saw the walled cities; he saw the giants, but above all these, greater than them all, He saw the living God. He believed that God was "well able" to give them the victory, and he testified—"Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." This was not the language of pride or self-sufficiency: it was the language of faith. This is apparent from the words with which he backed up his exhortation, "*And the Lord is with us, fear them not*" (Num. xiv. 9). Blessed testimony! And although it had no effect on the unbelieving host, it was duly valued and rewarded by the God of heaven. When the ten unbelieving spies lay dead in the wilderness, Caleb and Joshua lived still (chap. xiv. 36-38). And they received

the promise of Jehovah that He would bring them into the land which their brethren had despised. They had to wait forty long years for the fulfilment of the promise—and thus add to the faith patience—they had to tread the wilderness side by side with those who would have stoned them, and see one after another fall by their side, but they knew that the promise could not fail. How blessed to read the sequel as recorded in Joshua xiv. 6-15. To see the aged warriors meet in the land flowing with milk and honey, and to hear from Caleb's lips his thrilling testimony to the faithfulness of God. There he stood, hale and hearty, at the age of eighty-five, strong, and able for war as in the days of youth, ready to go up and take possession of his inheritance, still counting on the Lord to drive out the foe. Hebron—which means "fellowship"—became his inheritance, and from it he drove the three sons of Anak, who had terrified the whole host. From this let us learn, beloved fellow-believers, that God is ever faithful to those who trust Him, and that the path of blessing and of fellowship is the path of faithfulness and obedience to all that the Lord hath commanded.

"He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost ;
God's will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost."

NEARING THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

The closing chapters of the Book of Numbers, record the closing events of the wilderness journey. Full of instruction and solemn warning as they are, to saints of these last days, we can only briefly refer to them here.

THE DEATH OF MIRIAM (Num. xx. 1). The sweet singer who had led the song of praise on the Red Sea

shore first passes off the scene, and is buried in the wilderness of Kadesh. Like many a young believer, she made a bright and promising start of the pilgrim pathway, but her sky was soon overcast with clouds. She shared the murmurings and the unbelief of the host, and for this she must fall with others in the wilderness. From this we may surely learn a solemn lesson. It is good to begin with a song, but if we would end our pilgrim days in praise, and have an abundant entrance to the kingdom, we must go on with God.

THE SIN OF MOSES (Num. xx. 7-11). Of all the failures and sins of the wilderness, the failure of Moses, the man of God, is fraught with the most solemn instruction to the people of God. He was commanded to take the rod, and "speak to the rock" that its streams of refreshing water might flow. But Moses in anger struck the rock, and spake to the people, He spake "unadvisedly with his lips," and for this he was hindered from entering the land of promise. True, the people "provoked his spirit" (Psa. cvi. 33), but this did not palliate his sin in the eyes of a holy God. His high position, his former faithfulness, his nearness to God, and his personal meekness, did not compensate for this grievous dishonour to Jehovah. He had sinned a sin unto death, and neither his earnest pleadings with God, nor his longing desire to enter the land (Deut. iii. 25-27), could alter the Word of the Lord. There are solemn lessons for our souls here. Disobedience, even in a saint, can never go unpunished. True, there is "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. vii. 1), but there is Fatherly chastisement, such as the world knows nothing of. A saint of God can never lose his place in the Divine family, but if he sin wilfully he must feel the discipline of a Father's hand. The higher his place, the greater his privilege, the more severe his chastisement will be. Thus it was with Moses. He was permitted to see the goodly land, from the heights of Nebo, and to end his

course with undimmed eye. He was honoured as no man was ever honoured before, nor has been since, in being buried by the hand of God, but he was not allowed to lead the ransomed people whom he loved, into their inheritance. As the representative of the law he could not ; as the servant of God, he failed in obedience, and was prohibited.

THE DEATH OF AARON. Aaron the priest was the next to pass away. He was led up to Mount Hor, and there stripped of his official robes, and gathered unto his people. As the representative of that order of priesthood, which was of the law, he stands in contrast to Christ, whose priesthood shall never pass to another. "Thou art a priest *for ever*, after the order of Melchisedeck."

BALAAM AND BALAK. As the wilderness drew near to its close, another enemy advanced to meet the pilgrim host. This was Balak, the King of Moab, assisted by Balaam, the covetous prophet. We cannot here enter into the details of this extraordinary compact, or trace the devices of this accomplished servant of Satan. Suffice to say, his object was to curse the host of God, and to exterminate the people of Jehovah's choice. The time chosen was at the close of their wanderings, after forty long years of provocation and unfaithfulness to God. Balaam supposed that he would readily incite Jehovah to curse the people for their long continued failures. But in this he was mistaken. Instead of pronouncing His curse, God filled the prophet's mouth with blessings. Instead of giving him a solemn indictment against His people, He poured forth, in language grand and lofty, such as He had never used before, His delight in His redeemed, their glorious standing in His grace, their present calling, and their glory to come. This is like the Lord. He will reprove and chastise His people for their disobedience Himself, but He will not allow an enemy to raise his voice against them. He will not listen to

the adversary as their accuser. Satan may seek cause against the saints, but he cannot obtain judgment against them. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" In the presence of God, Satan may accuse, but he cannot condemn, and the day will come, when he shall be cast down from his place, as the "accuser of the brethren," finally to be trampled under the feet of the saints, who are overcomers "by the blood of the Lamb" (Rom. xvi. 20; Rev. xii. 10-11). Praise ye the Lord.

But another device of the enemy had yet to be revealed. If he cannot destroy the people of the Lord, by cursing, he will try and seduce them by craft and wile. When the devil fails to overcome the saints as "the roaring lion," he seeks to seduce them as "the subtle serpent," and alas! this wile of his too often succeeds. It is written concerning this second device of Balaam, that "he taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel" (Rev. ii. 14), and by this he succeeded in allying the chosen and separated people with the unclean. The reference to this as "the doctrine of Balaam" in New Testament times, in the midst of the church at Thyatira, warns us, that the same tactic will be used to drag the church of God into unholy alliance with the world. And has it not succeeded? Full well the devil knows, that a corrupted church, intermingled with the ungodly, unequally yoked with unbelievers, will bring down the judgment of God, as the iniquity at Baal-peor did in days gone by. Let the saints of God be fully awake to this. Already there are many anti-Christ's. The mystery of iniquity doth already work. The chief part of Satan's business among the saints is to seduce them into alliance and spiritual whoredom with the world, and thus blot out their testimony as a redeemed and separated people, unto the Lord.

THE WILDERNESS INHERITANCE. The two tribes and a half, seeking and obtaining their inheritance on

the wilderness side of Jordan (Num. xxxii. 1), outside the land of promise, presents another form of borderland Christianity too common in our day. They were attracted by the land of Gilead and its pastures, as a place for their cattle. Self and self-interest guided them in their choice, as it had guided Lot in earlier times (see Gen. xiii. 10), and for this they elect to part with their brethren, and to forfeit their share of the promised land. They did maintain a *kind* of unity with them, after their own design (Joshua xxii. 10), but they were always a source of weakness and trouble to the dwellers in the land. This generation are still to be found among the people of the Lord. The Lord's Name is named by them: they claim to be of the people of God, but the place of their dwelling, and the manner of their life and testimony savours more of earth than of heaven. They profess to be part of the "heavenly calling." Yet it is evident that "earthly things" have more of their hearts than things above. The "better part" is that across the Jordan, in that land where the eye of God of Israel rests continually, and where He dwells in His tabernacle in the midst of His people.

ON THE BORDERS OF CANAAN.

The last stage of the long wilderness at length is reached, and the pilgrim host come within sight of the land of promise. Canaan, the place of their inheritance, spreads itself out before them in all its richness and beauty. The land flowing with milk and honey, the brooks of water, the depths that spring out of valleys and hills, the wealthy cornfields and vineyards, the beauteous plains, all as the Lord had described them, are now full within their view. How that glorious sight must have stirred the hearts of the pilgrim people. Only one thing now remained; that was to "Arise and

possess the land." It was all theirs already by promise, but they must tread it in order to possess it. The Word of Jehovah was, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall *tread* upon, *that* have I given you." It was not enough to behold it, or to be able to describe it, they must plant their feet upon its soil in order to possess and enjoy it. The measure of their actual possession, was that which they *covered* with the "foot," no more. We may learn a passing lesson here. In spiritual things, it is not what we know, but what we actually possess that enriches our souls. Theoretic knowledge, apart from appropriating faith, is of little value. To read the words, "Blessed with *all* spiritual blessings" in the Book of God is one thing, to have these blessings as a matter of realisation in the soul is another. The measure of our actual spiritual wealth is not what we see to be contained in the promises of God, but what we get out of them from day to day. "*All* spiritual blessings" are ours in Christ, but the measure in which they will be in *us*, will be limited by faith's foothold on them. When the people moved from Shittim, their last camping-place in the wilderness, and came to the banks of the Jordan, it was harvest time, the season of the earth's richest blessing. They saw the land of their possession at its very best. But a barrier lay between them and that goodly land. The river Jordan—the Descender—deep and wide, overflowing its banks, impeded their progress. What were they to do? *Go forward*, and leave God to deal with the difficulty. They had proved His faithfulness already in dividing the waters of the Red Sea before them, when they came out of Egypt, and the same Lord God was *with* them, and *for* them now, on the banks of the Jordan.

Here it may be well to pause for a moment and reflect on the meaning of the type before us. Many regard the river Jordan to mean *death*, and Canaan, lying beyond it, to be the type of *heaven*. "Crossing

the Jordan " in hymnology is generally supposed to mean the believer's death, and the " shining shore " and " lovely landscape " on the other side, the place to which the ransomed spirit of the Christian goes, when it leaves the mortal body. Whatever truth there may be in all this, it certainly is not what the type lying here before us is designed to teach. " The other side of Jordan " cannot mean that heaven to which the believer goes, when earthly life is past. There are no walled cities, no giants, no chariots of iron there. The believer does not there handle the sword and shield ; he does not fight with enemies ; he does not wear the warrior's armour. He rests with Christ. He is in Paradise. His fight is fought, his warfare is ended (2 Tim. iv. 7-8). But when Israel crossed the Jordan, and entered Canaan, they had to fight. They entered as " men of war," to handle sword and shield. Enemies were there to contest their right to possession of the land, and the Word of the Lord concerning these enemies was " Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them " (Deut. vii. 2).

Canaan here is the type of the believer's *present* place of blessing, as we have it expressed in that glowing word " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places in Christ " (Eph. i. 3). Here is our spiritual Canaan, our " land flowing with milk and honey." And in the same Epistle we have our enemies and our warfare described. " We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness (or wicked spirits), in heavenly places " (Eph. vi. 12, margin). Here we have our Canaanites, seeking to force us from our ground, and hinder us from possession of our blessings. " The whole armour of God " is provided, to enable the Christian warrior to meet the foe, and under his Divine Joshua, His glorious Leader, the

Captain of Salvation, the risen Christ, to take possession of this goodly land.

CROSSING JORDAN.

The long-looked for day at length arrived, and the command of the Lord went forth, "Arise, go over this Jordan." The impetuous river, overflowing its banks, stretched itself out before them, barring their access to the goodly land; but even Jordan's swelling tide must yield to the power of "the Lord of all the earth," who now led forward His people, to the place of their inheritance. The rod of Moses had been used as the instrument to divide the Red Sea forty years before, but that rod, and the hand that wielded it, are far removed from this Jordan scene. "The ark of the covenant," with its mercy-seat and covering of blue, borne on the shoulders of the sons of Levi, clothed in their priestly garments, is now to be the instrument of Israel's deliverance. As soon as the priests, bearing the sacred vessel, dipped their feet in the brim of the swelling river, its waters were cut off. Jordan's flood rolled back—and rose up upon an heap, away back by the city Adam—a place unknown, but the significance of its name, in connection with the first man, and the death brought on by him, is evident. The waters thus cut off rolled on, and were swallowed up in the Dead Sea, to be seen no more. There was literally no Jordan visible to Israel that day. The dry bed of the river stretched as far as the eye could see on either side, the priests with the ark, up-borne on their shoulders, stood between the people and the heaped-up waters, so they "hasted and passed over." So long as the priests, with the ark of the covenant, stood there between the people and the heaped-up waters, not a drop could reach them. Before the weakest child in Israel could be reached by these waters, they must overwhelm the priests

and the ark. So long as the feet of the priests "stood firm" in Jordan's bed, they were absolutely safe, as safe as Jehovah could make them. And thus the whole host, men of war, old men, and little children alike, passed "clean over" Jordan, in the full light of day, and planted their feet on the Canaan side.

This inspiring sight has its typical lessons for the children of God. The Paschal Lamb and the sprinkled blood in Egypt pointed onward to the death of Christ, as that which saves from the wages of sin and the wrath to come. The Red Sea tells of deliverance from Satan's power, and separation from the world, by the cross of Christ. Jordan is a type of Christ's death and resurrection, as that by which death is abolished, judgment passed away, and a way opened into heaven for the people of God. Israel's passage through the dried-up river, tells of the believer experimentally and practically taking possession of this great truth in his soul, and reckoning himself dead, buried and risen with Christ. To grasp these glorious truths by faith, to make them one's own, is the entrance to a wide and wealthy range of spiritual blessing. That goodly land, in which "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"—in which "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "the exceeding riches of His grace," "the exceeding greatness of His power," are things known and enjoyed by the believer, that land lies "beyond Jordan." The man who lives as a man in the flesh, a man of the world, may read about them, and even speak about them, but the enjoyment of them is only known to him who reckons himself dead and risen with Christ.

MEMORIALS OF JORDAN.

The passage of Israel across Jordan was not to be forgotten. Twelve chosen men—one from each tribe—returned to the emptied bed of the river, to the place

where the priests' feet still stood, and from thence, each lifted a stone, which he carried on his shoulders to the Canaan side, and set it up on the promised land. These stones were to be memorials of the Lord's power in cutting off the waters of Jordan, and in bringing His people into the land. They were to be witnesses to generations yet to come of the power of the Lord's right hand. These memorial stones, raised up from the place of death, and borne by a power outside themselves to a new position, in which they were to bear witness for God, remind us of the present place of those who are risen and seated with Christ. Once like these stones they lay in death, under judgment, but now by the grace and power of God, they have been raised up, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ. Believers living in the power of this position, and manifesting by a daily life for God that their affection is set on things above, will soon attract the world's attention. The question will still be asked, "What mean ye by these stones?" Gilgal—where Israel's "approach" was rolled away, was a continual witness to "all the people of the earth" of what the hand of the Lord had wrought for His people Israel (Josh. iv. 24).

Another memorial, in a different place, must also be erected. In the deep bed of Jordan, in the place where the priests' feet stood, Joshua set up twelve more stones, to be overflowed and buried by the waters of Jordan when they returned in their strength. Here we have the other side of the picture, the counter-truth we may say. The twelve stones lifted out of Jordan, and set up in Canaan, tell of the new standing of the believer, as risen with Christ. The twelve stones buried in Jordan, never more to be seen by human eyes, tell of the believer's death and burial with Christ.

Baptism—the divinely appointed figure of the believer's death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, is the New Testament answer to the two sets of memorial stones in and *beyond* Jordan. To those who

know, and hence by faith appropriate and experience the reality, the likeness and memorial will be grateful and precious. To others it will be a stumbling block, and an offence.

The Book of Joshua goes on to tell of the conquest of the land, and the distribution of the inheritance among the chosen tribes. The energy, zeal, and faith displayed by the people, the conquests and victories won by them, the enemies conquered, and the mistakes made, are all full of instruction to the people of God in this day of ease and indifference in spiritual things. May it be ours, in the same spirit of faith, to press on as girded warriors, clad in the armour of the Lord, enduring hardness as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Onward children of the day !
Dauntless in the deadly fray,
Charge the hostile foe's array,
 Bid the rebels flee.
Girded by Almighty power—
Faith beholds the tempest lower ;
Faith awaits the conflict hour—
 Sure of victory.

Fight ! till ye possess the land !
Not a foe shall 'gainst you stand !
Shielded by the Lord's right hand,
 His Salvation see.
Sound the glory of His fame !
Jesus evermore the same !
Let the Saviour's peerless Name
 Now your war-song be !

