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The Promise of the Spirit

(International Convention Address)

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT through faith." (Gal. 3:14)

The word of God tells us that if we are Christ's then we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29) But it is only as the Apostle Paul opens up to us the scriptures that we begin to realize the immense implications behind the original promise. Much more than a mighty deliverance is brought to our attention. The promised Seed is to be more than just the one who will bruise the Serpent's head. He is to be even more than the head of a heavenly family, blessing all nations. The Seed is to be all this, but far more than this: it is to be a divine family, a new creation brought forth only by divine power without the intervention of human hands. It is entirely the product of faith and the divine will.

We need hardly say that the head of this new creation is our Lord. What we must constantly remember is that we must be conformed to him in all things for, as the Apostle Paul also reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:49, "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

But how does this change take place? How do we become heirs and joint-heirs with our Lord? Paul's words in Galatians 3:27 point the way: "For as many as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. Verse 29:" And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

But what does it mean to be baptized into Christ? Paul again tells us, in Romans 6:3. "All we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." And for what reason? That we may walk in a new way. For he continues,

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

But again we ask, What does this mean in the practical outworking of our Christian life? In what way does this make us heirs? The words of our Lord to the Pharisees in John 8:39 answer these questions: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." This answer points them to their complete lack of faith, but points us to Abraham as the father of the faithful. It draws our attention directly to the record of his life in the book of Genesis, just as Paul has also done in Galatians. Let us therefore turn to Gen. 11:31 where the record of Abram's walk of faith begins.

ABRAM'S WALK OF FAITH

We are all aware that we, like Abraham, have been called to leave our old associations with this present world and seek that city whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:10) As we follow the life of the patriarch, we will not only note those parallels confirming our calling, but others showing us the level of our attainment, and others pointing toward the full attainment of faith in Christ. For if being Christ's means we are Abraham's, surely we must be doing the works of Abraham.

Even as we commence to think along these lines, we see the connection between the call to leave this old world and baptism, for this baptism is into Christ's death. This old order of things is the flesh in all its manifestations. The only way to deal with it and to live in the spirit, as did our Lord, the antitypical Isaac, is for us to trust the Lord to remove the flesh by his cross.

As we follow the journey of Abraham through the promised land, we will see the flesh in many of its ways. We will see how God's dealings with Abraham removed its influence from his life until he was totally and completely at rest in God, trusting Him for all things.

So the call came to Abram [not Abraham, for he had not learned anything of that spiritual walk]. We too, as he did, respond to the moving of the spirit, knowing that no man comes to Christ except the heavenly Father draws him. (John 6:44) We leave our family and friends while still only understanding things with the natural mind. We have only the old family name, Adam. But Abram did not come out alone. He was accompanied by his father and his nephew Lot. Perhaps he thought they would be a help to him. Perhaps the family ties were too strong.

Yet God understands our frame—and Abram's. Patiently He waited for Abram to learn the lesson. After a long journey they come to Haran. Instead of going on to Canaan, they stopped. Why? The word of God does not tell us. It simply says they came to Haran and dwelt there. (Genesis 11:31)

What were they doing in Haran when the object of their journey was just over the horizon? We cannot say for sure, but verse 32 tells us that Terah, Abram's father, was 205 years old. Perhaps the long journey had been too much for him, or he may have been in declining health and had to stop. Abram might have had to care for him. What we know is that Abram made no further progress until, "Terah died." It was only then that God spoke to Abram. Genesis 12:1 reads, "Get thee from thy father's house." Taking his father had only delayed him.

Likewise when we begin our walk with Christ, we cannot help but bring much of the old Adam with us. It is quite natural. This earthen vessel is all that we have. Its instincts, good and bad, are an indivisible part of its being. The faults we would gladly leave behind if we could, and the heavenly Father makes full allowance for this. But what needs His special attention are those better characteristics, those abilities which, as we lay them down on the altar of sacrifice, we feel will be useful to us in our service to the Lord. We do not actually realize immediately that to lay them down means to let go of them.

So God waits as He did with Abram. Nothing could be done until Terah died. No further progress could be made. Not until we begin to let go of our lives and let God begin to use our abilities by His spirit can it be said that the new life has started. Then God can say, "Get thee... unto a land that I will show thee."—Gen. 12:1

"So Abram went as the Lord had spoken" (verse 4) to the plain of Moreh. Here the Lord appeared to him and there he built an altar. Up to this time the Lord had only spoken to Abram, but now he appears to him. For the first time we have an altar mentioned. This should also have been our experience. Perhaps we can remember

the time, as we began to let go of the things of this world, our vision of the spiritual realities and the face of the Lord became clearer to us, that we were entering more deeply into the spirit of consecration.

"And Lot went with him." Such a seemingly casual remark here in verse 4 implies that the natural mind is not eliminated that easily. As we follow the travels of the patriarch, we will begin to see how deeply ingrained is the old nature and how subtle its effects.

Verse 10: "There was a famine in the land and Abram [travelling south] went down into Egypt." We can sympathize with and understand his actions, for the famine was "grievous." The Lord had told Abram to go to a land "that I will show thee," and that land was not Egypt.

It is very easy to say in retrospect that a famine is nothing to God, that all Abram had to do was look to the Lord and his promise just given. But the test was very real and it needed faith. We ourselves know that stressful situations demand attention. It is far from easy to look to the Lord for His guidance rather than to make a hasty decision. Or whilst quite properly planning for a secure future, to leave the Lord out of the arrangements, only later to see that the Lord's way was best, that we compromised our best spiritual interests.

So it was for Abram. After the decision to go down to Egypt for help, even before he had entered the land, he had to compromise the truth. Genesis 12:11-13, "It came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife... say I pray thee that thou art my sister." This was the truth, yes, but only half the truth. It was a deception. Yet God was patient with Abram knowing the earthen vessel He was working with. So He sent a plague on Pharaoh until Abram was obliged to leave Egypt.

Happy are we, if as the Apostle Paul admonishes us, "we judge ourselves that we should not be judged." (1 Corinthians 11:31,32) However if not, God seems yet to be faithful to judge us for "we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world." Happy still if, having made some compromise, we find under the influence of the spirit that we cannot live a half truth and, with Abram, return to the house of God and to consecrated ground.

Genesis 13:1-4, "Abram went up... to Bethel unto the place where his tent had been in the beginning... unto the place of the altar, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord." He was back in communion with his creator after learning a valuable lesson. How wonderful it is that the Father can bring out important spiritual blessings for us from even our worst mistakes.

Verse 5: "And Lot also... went with him." Abram had still not realized the importance of that first word from the Lord, "Get thee from thy father's house and from thy kindred." God now, with that infinite patience and loving grace, does what Abram had not been able to do: He removes Lot from Abram.

SEPARATION OCCURS

The next incident demonstrates the wonderful working of the spirit to overrule that which opposes us to the objective God intended. Verse 7: "And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle." Truly the "flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh." (Gal. 5:17) But now Abram was prepared to deal with the situation. He knew now that compromise was fatal. More than this, he now understood the importance of resting in God, in the condition to which He had brought him. It mattered not to Abram how much or how little land was under his control. He rested in the promise. God's word on the matter was sufficient. So Lot could choose. If Lot went to the left, Abram would go to the right.

Without constraint they parted, as we read in vs. 9: "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself from me." **Separation!** This was the very thing that God had purposed from the beginning. Under the almost invisible working of the divine hand, everything was happening so naturally. Yet as soon as Abram had learned to respond to the Lord's leading, he finds himself doing the Lord's will exactly, without effort of any kind.

Separation is the very thing we seek. After the separation from Lot, the word of the Lord comes even more fully confirming the promise (see verses 14-18). What spiritual import there is in the words,

"Lift up thine eyes, look from the place where you are, north, south, east west, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever... Arise, walk through the land in the length and in the breadth of it."

We too are at Bethel, the true house of God. We should also lift up our eyes to these heavenly things and walk through the heavenly Canaan that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ."—Ephesians 3:18,19

Thus Abram moved his tent and "came to dwell in the plain of Mamre." (Genesis 13:18) The name *Mamre* in the Hebrew means *strength* or *vigour*. It was here also that Abram again raised an altar to the Lord. Likewise the increasing awareness that the spirit brings to us of the love of Christ

can only increase the spirit of our consecration to him.

Is our faith growing more firm and vigorous? Are we walking in our inheritance as the apostle admonished us in Col. 2:6,7: "As ye have therefore received Christ, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith." Every step should mark a new stage in our consecration just as every altar that Abram raised to the Lord marked his progress in the land.

When we have reached this stage we should be ready to enter into a victorious life in Christ, having put on the whole armour of God. (Ephesians 6:10-17) Thus also we find with the patriarch in Genesis 14:1-16. Lot, now embroiled in the politics of Sodom, is taken captive in a war with the kings of that area. Abram is obliged to help him.

Although we may know what it is to be separated from natural thinking, we are by no means free from it. Otherwise, as the apostle said, "then must ye needs go out of the world." (1 Corinthians 5:10) Satan cannot touch the "new man" that is being developed in us. He can only attack us through the flesh. But armed with "the whole armour of God," wielding the shield of faith, we can "quench all his fiery darts," overcoming the powers of darkness.

Therefore we see Abram with a mere handful of men subduing five kings. Returning from victory he is met by two people: the king of Sodom and the king of Salem. The contrast between them could not be more striking and in the different way in which Abram responds to them. Both offer gifts to Abram, one a blessing with bread and wine, the other all the spoils of the city. From the one, Melchizedek, he receives the blessing and gift and deferentially offers a tithe of all the spoil. From the other, he turns away without a second thought saying, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet and will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." Nothing could better demonstrate Abram's complete rest in the Lord for everything and his complete disregard for anything the flesh might offer.

So too with the believer who has finally come to realize the foolishness of trusting the flesh for anything in his service to the Lord. Only by letting Him use our abilities do we truly recognize Him as Lord. It is not in the old nature to produce the new man.

Abram, not lacking confidence in his God and having been assured of the land, still has difficulty in seeing how God can make it possible. The only one who seems likely to inherit is Eliezer, his steward. The Lord replies: "Behold the word

of the Lord came to him, saying, this shall not be thine heir, but one that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." (Genesis 15:4) Then, taking him out under the starry heavens, God promises that his descendants will be just as numerous.

But Abram asks for a sign. Likewise with us, even when we have "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4) we still need to be brought to understand the meaning of Ephesians 3:20 that "he is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Even when we believe, we discover that there is still a further level of faith to be reached. Abram believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6) Still he requested some further confirmation.

How glad we are that we have such a patient heavenly Father who will bear with us also. God responded to Abram's request just as he does to every earnest plea sent up, not in unbelief, but with the desire that our faith may be strengthened. He prepares to make a covenant with Abram which will yet again seal the promise.

THE MAKING OF A COVENANT

With us also when, after coming to rest in our justified condition, we are drawn to consecration, our trust increases and our spirit of consecration deepens. As our consecration increases, we appreciate our need for total submission. Our only concern is how to achieve it. And here our heavenly Father leads us forward demonstrating yet again our need of Him. He arranges our covenant just as He did for Abram. (See Genesis 15:9-21)

When a covenant between two parties was made in that day, an animal was sacrificed and divided into two portions. Then the two would walk up and down between the sacrifice and thus seal the agreement. God directs Abram to lay out the pieces. After he did so, Abram waits. God seems to delay. The day draws on, but still the Lord does not appear. Now the vultures see the carcasses and descend. Abram dares not let them even touch the sacrifice or it will be defiled. All day he walks up and down between the offering to keep the birds away. When night comes, he falls into a fitful sleep. He wakes to see a lamp of fire moving up and down between the offerings.

The Lord was making the covenant to guarantee the promise. But Abram was not walking with Him. Neither we nor Abram can keep a covenant perfectly, and God cannot accept less. The law covenant demonstrates this. Since God is clearly the only party in the Abrahamic covenant, it is sure. God had permitted Abram to prepare the offering, and it was all he could

do to keep it from the birds. But this demonstrated his sincerity and intention, and this was all the Lord needed.

We also must bring our offering to the Lord, presenting our bodies a living sacrifice." (Romans 12:1) We must endeavour to keep it before Him, "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, realizing that it is God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12,13) God will keep His side of the covenant if we walk in sincerity of purpose before Him. We will make mistakes and will not always fully understand His will for us, but our heavenly Father can use our shortcomings to teach us what it is to walk after the spirit and not after the flesh.

The next incident in Abram's life illustrates this. God again seems to delay. The important matter of the seed grows more pressing to Abram and Sarai. So they use their own judgement and a son is born to Abram by Hagar, Sarai's handmaiden. The unhappy consequences of this soon become apparent. So it is whenever human wisdom is used to further the Lord's work. Some arrangement is devised other than that which the Lord had in mind. Before we know it, we are placed in a position where we must wait for the Lord's favour to return.

At last Abram clearly sees that God must provide the seed and that Sarai's age and his own waning vigour are not important. Now he waits. God once more reiterates the promise. More than this, He gives Abram a new name, and a sign: Circumcision. All of this occurred before the promised seed had come. Circumcision was a sign of that righteousness by faith (Romans 4:11), but also a figure for us of that complete separation from the flesh which allows us to walk in the spirit. The Apostle Paul clearly shows in Colossians 2:10-12,

"Ye are complete in him [Christ] which is the head of all principality and power, in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

This is a "circumcision without hands," owing nothing to our own efforts (and therefore miraculous), being the "circumcision of Christ." Now the seed of promise will come, the "new man," born not of the flesh by our own efforts, but of God. With the sign and the new name comes a closer walk with his creator. God takes

him into His confidence; he is no longer a servant but a friend. God appears once more to him (Genesis 18:1). Then comes the revealing of the Lord's mind. Verse 17: "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?"

The Lord had revealed that he was about to overthrow Sodom. Abraham intercedes not just once, but a number of times. He is heard in that Lot is saved (Genesis 19:29). From the beginning of the Gospel Age the intercession of one for another is an evidence of spiritual maturity. As we read in Galatians 6:1, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in meekness."

ABRAHAM'S TESTS CONTINUE

One last step now remains before the child of promise is brought forth. A "root of bitterness," long thought dead, must be dealt with. Once again all the events seem to occur in a natural manner and they reveal the hidden fault. All Abraham had to do is recognize his mistake.

Abraham journeys south once again, this time into the kingdom of Abimelech. Just as with Pharaoh, Sarah is introduced as his sister. Although Abraham had undoubtedly learned from his last experience, he had not realized the need to completely eradicate this dangerous half truth from his thinking. It had lain all these years as an error from the old life, springing up now to bring forth its fruit of contention and strife. Once again we see the patience, love, and wisdom of the divine creator towards those who are sincerely endeavouring to walk with their God. He makes a means of correction and grace, a means for the new man to advance spiritually.

Originally Pharaoh had become aware of Abraham's deceit by the force of circumstances. Now the hand of God is seen more distinctly. First He holds Abimelech back from his intended act. Then God discloses in a dream what He had done and that he had been saved from death. (Gen. 20:3-6) Then comes the surprising instruction from God to Abimelech respecting Abraham. Verse 7: "Now restore this man his wife, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee and thou shalt live."

What can we say of such grace and favour? Abraham had certainly wronged Abimelech and he was rightly admonished by him. Yet God clearly upholds Abraham before him. It seems that as the Lord's people walk before Him sincerely endeavoring to be led by His spirit, the very mistakes they make bring to light their secret faults. Under His hand their experiences have a remedial effect which bring them to judgment. Once this is dealt with, they may stand before Him.

Paul prays in Philippians 3:9 "to be found in him not having mine own righteousness... through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Or, as he says elsewhere,

"Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27)

So too, Abraham realized that God was bringing to light his shortcomings in faith which, when seen, can be remedied, that after correction he could stand before his creator, being upheld by him, that he might intercede and bless.

Now at last the Lord visits Sarah according to His word (Genesis 21:1). The child of promise is born, weaned, and comes of age. It must have seemed to Abraham that the Lord had achieved his aim. But the greatest lesson of all was yet before him.

When it came, the word of the Lord must have been a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. Genesis 22:2, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest... and offer him for a burnt offering." Abraham offers not one word of denial. Without delay, "early in the morning... and with Isaac his son... he went unto the place of which God had told him." (Genesis 22:3) There was no shadow of turning. His faith was complete. God has promised that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Genesis 21:12) The Lord had spoken. His word could not be broken.

At the beginning of his call Abraham believed that God's word was true. This was belief in God. At the end of his journey he knew that God's word could not fail. This was faith in his God. God's word was greater than any earthly event. Even the death of the seed itself could not disannul it. If God had asked for Isaac as a burnt offering, it could only mean that He intended to raise him up again. Such a thing had not been known before, but Abraham's faith was being perfected. It was reaching forward from the known to beyond the knowledge of this world into the face of his God whom he trusted.

We can and must, if we are to be like Abraham and be led beyond ourselves, come as Paul declares, to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. As our opening text states: "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith." (*F.R. Binns, England*).

The Cup of Blessing

(A Memorial Meditation)

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10. 16).

It is impossible to lay too much stress upon the word "communion" in this very well-known passage. All too often it is taken to mean an entering into fellowship, a sense of union, of "being together", much as is implied by modern usage of the English word "commune". There was more, far more, than that in the Apostle's mind when he penned these words. The ceremony he was talking about, the remembering from time to time of our Lord's death, with all that it implies for the Church and for all mankind, is something too holy and too sacred to be defined merely in terms of a getting together in the bonds of a fellowship or a family relationship, intimate though these bonds may be.

Paul here is reminding his readers that in putting to their lips the chalice, which represented the life-blood of their Lord, slain on their behalf, they were deliberately and knowingly associating themselves with him in the purpose for which He was about to die, the reconciliation of mankind to God. This word communion, *koinonia*, means to share, to participate, and this implies action, joint action with the One who was about to give his life for the world. That meant in turn that they were consecrating themselves to follow him into death, baptised into his death as Romans 6 has it, that they might rise with him in newness of life and thenceforward be associated with him in his destined work of giving life to the world.

The key to the inner meaning of the text is perhaps found in our Lord's words at the Last Supper, recorded in Matt. 26. 27-28. *"He took the cup... and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"*. The ceremonial drinking of the cup with him in the knowledge that it represented his shed blood denoted a great thing. It meant that they were to share with him, to be associated with him, in that still future work which was ensured by the shedding of his blood. To drink of his cup meant to follow in the same way, to be devoted to the same end, to be dead to the world in the same sense as was Jesus, and consequently to be joined to him in the resurrection life and be co-workers with him in all that He is to do for mankind in that resurrection life.

It is not always easy to distinguish between the two aspects of our Lord's sacrifice and death.

In the first place He came to earth to give himself a Ransom for all, as Paul states in I Tim. 2.6, and this is something He must needs do alone, for only He could be acceptable in the sight of the Father as the Redeemer of men. When God *"so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son"* He did so in light of the fact that no other Redeemer was possible and no other available. It is in Adam that all men die, and it is only in Christ that men can be made alive (I Cor. 15.22). But making men truly alive involves two things; they must first be raised from the death state into which they have fallen on account of sin, and this is the effect of the Ransom. They must then be restored to the Divine likeness in order that they can enter into the eternity which is the crown of eternal life, for nothing that is defiled can enter into the Holy City (Rev. 21.27).

It is this work of restoration in which the followers of Jesus are associated and to which they pledge themselves when they partake of his Cup. It is a cup of dedication, of service, of endurance, of faithfulness even unto death. *"If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer (endure)we shall also reign with him"* (2 Tim. 2. 11-12).

(B.S.M.)

To Know He Knows

He knows the way I take,
What then if dark it be,
Or rough, or hedged about?
His staff shall comfort me.

And should His love withhold
What seems so dear, so sweet,
I'll humbly take my will
And lay it at His feet.

How sweet to know He knows
And holds me by the hand;
And safe will guide until
I reach the heavenly land.

(Anon.)

Joshua

HIS PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE

The leader of the Hebrews in the conquest of Palestine was Joshua, a prince of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:2). His pedigree is preserved in a more perfect form than that of any of his contemporaries (1 Chr. 7: 20-27), and it reaches back through some ten generations to Joseph. His father was Nun, of whom only the name is known. His grandfather, Elishama, marched through the wilderness of Sinai at the head of his tribe (Num. 10:22), and probably had the immediate charge of the embalmed body of Joseph, which was carried up for interment at Shechem (Ex. 13: 19;

Josh. 24:32). Joshua was born in the land of Goshen, the cradle of the Hebrew nation, in the reign of that long-lived Rameses II., who figures in history as the national hero of the Egyptians (the Sesostris of the Greeks), and the oppressor of the Hebrews. The favourite palace of the king was in Goshen, at Rameses-Tanis, the Zoan of the Bible (Num. 13:22), where there was also a vast idol-temple which he restored at immense cost. Joshua must therefore have been familiar from his youth with the sight of palaces, temples, obelisks, sphinxes, and other signs of the ancient civilization, and seen how his countrymen had yielded to the spell of the established idolatry during their long sojourn in the land of the Nile. One of his last appeals to the heads of the people reminds them how "their fathers worshipped other gods in Egypt" (Josh. 24:14), just as from the age of captivity a voice recalls how the Hebrews "defiled themselves with the idols of Egypt," and their maidens committed shameless sin (Ezek. 23: 8, 20:7, 8). The hard conditions of his early life, spent in cruel bondage, not less than his contact with a civilisation which fitted Israel for an independent national existence, were a qualification for the great task assigned him in the providence of God. His name was originally Oshea or Hosea, "salvation," but Moses added a syllable containing the name of Jehovah, as if to imply that the son of Nun was to be the instrument of God's salvation to the Hebrews (Num. 13:16). It was a singular honour that he should be the first to bear the name which is "above every name" (Phil. 2:9).

HIS EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

Joshua steps forth suddenly out of obscurity. His name first occurs in Scripture in connection with the defeat of Amalek in the first days of the desert life (Exod. 17:9). This fierce border tribe, occupying the peninsula of Sinai and the wilderness intervening between the southern hills of Palestine and the border of Egypt, fell upon the rear of the Hebrew host, which was encumbered with women, children, and baggage (Deut. 25: 18). Joshua had the task of repelling the attack. He won a decisive victory after an obstinate battle, which saved the Hebrews from all further molestation in the peninsula. From this day forward he takes the position of "minister" or attendant of Moses (Exod. 24:13). He ascends the mountain range of Sinai along with his master at the first giving of the law (Exod. 32:17). He is next heard of rebuking the prophesying of Eldad and Medad (Num. 11:28). When Moses resolves to send twelve spies from Kadesh-Barnea to search out the land of Canaan, Joshua is one of twelve, standing, no doubt, at the head as the most distinguished (Num. 13: 1-16). Joshua and Caleb alone of all the spies brought a favourable

report and encouraged the Hebrews "to go up and possess the land" (Num. 14: 6-9). We know nothing of Joshua during the weary years of the wandering in the Arabian desert. We can well suppose that none of the lessons of that singular period would be lost on the man whom Moses selected by God's command as the military leader who was in less than seven years to lay six nations and thirty-one kings prostrate at his feet (Num. 27: 22,23).

HIS CHARACTER AND FITNESS

Joshua stands before us simply as a godly warrior, designated to his work by a Divine call. He is "the first soldier consecrated by the sacred history." He was "strong and of a good courage" (Josh. 1:7). The key-note of his character was a remarkable simplicity of faith joined to a severe simplicity of life, an intense patriotism, a courage that feared no danger, and a cheerful and unselfish devotion to duty. He ruled the tribes constitutionally by consulting their representatives in all matters of moment (Josh. 21:1). Though they were divided by jealousies, he was able to win their confidence and to secure their co-operation in carrying out the great work of his life. We shall see that he was a splendid strategist in war. There is nothing, however, more remarkable in his life than his complete self-effacement in presence of the tremendous events of the conquest. Scripture is often reticent about its heroes. It is a surprise, however, to find that Joshua's name occurs seldom in any part of the Old Testament but that which bears his name, though the transactions of the conquest are often referred to. Only twice in the New Testament is he mentioned (Acts 7: 45; Heb. 4:8). Yet he was the greatest Hebrew character between Moses and Samuel—a period of four hundred years—and he alone, we are told, of all the heroes of Israel after the time of Moses, survives in the traditions of the Samaritans. There is something like solitude in his position at the end of his busy life—"a lonely man in the height of his power, separate from those about him, the last survivor, save one, of a famous generation"—and the silence of Scripture almost warrants the supposition that he was without wife or child or heir. This was the man so highly gifted by nature, by grace, and by opportunity, whom God raised up to lead the Hebrew tribes into Palestine.

Christian thought now looks back with admiration upon a character without a parallel in the history of conquest. He must ever hold a foremost place among those Hebrew worthies who "through faith subdued kingdoms," and remain an example to all ages of that pre-eminent power of looking upward which strengthens all right means in carrying out God's work.

(Croskery)

“Giving All Diligence”

A most evident fact in the New Testament is that the saints are to be like their Heavenly Father in character. “Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” If God is creating us in righteousness, and if we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus, and if “Now we have the mind of Christ,” the thought forces itself upon us that the great fight of faith is the fight against our fleshly tendencies. God is Spirit.

The principal tendency is in our tongue, the index of our thoughts. Temptations must necessarily come to us as lessons, so our prayer is: O, our Father, abandon us not in temptation. We realise that we need the temptations, or, possibly, more clearly expressed, we need the trials of faith. This is most important, as without faith it is impossible to please God. We could not do His will without knowing, without believing, and thus sanctifying ourselves. This sanctification is such a complex network of heavenly wisdom that only by divine grace, opening the eyes of our understanding, could we understand what to do.

Careless saints naturally neglect the meditative study of the will of God. This matter is not a sentimental affair, but a doing of things. This is the will of God, even our sanctification. The will of God, then, is the renewing, making new, of minds which have been formed or composed of earthly thoughts. As a man thinketh in his affections, as he longs for things, whether heavenly or earthly things, so is he. He will talk of the things nearest his desires, and act along those lines.

This distinguishes the natural from the spiritual man. The spiritual man is manifestly sanctified, set apart from earthly loves, because his heart desires are entirely engrossed with the glories of his lovely home in heaven, and his heart is full of his hopes. But how could we live in heaven with nothing but spiritual things and work about us, if our minds were filled with earthly thoughts?

Creating one in righteousness simply means that God is opening the eyes of the wise ones to see His will in their daily lives. When the pure-hearted man sees what God's will is, he lays hold of the opportunity to do it. Such a one has no interest whatever in anything which is not true. Such has a love for the truth only, and would withdraw from anything which was in the least degree tainted. It is evident, then, that God has been working in him to the extent that he lets go wrong principles. God has no wrong principles in His character, neither has Jesus, because He used only the Father's mind. “The words I speak unto you, I speak not of myself but the Father's mind which works alone in me, only His will

being done in me, gives me the set-apart, sanctified life I now live in this earthly tabernacle. Our minds are exactly alike, therefore I and my Father are one. Sanctify them through Thy truth; as Thou art, and as I am sanctified through the truth, with no error, or wrong principles in our minds, that they may be one with us, even as we are one.” (John 14:10, 10:30, 36, 17:17, 21)

Such pure minds who love the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth as it is in “Thy Word,” in our Father's message to us, could never be deceived. The Apostle expressly states (2 Thess. 1:2); speaking of the wicked, systematic forms of fraud and deception, systems that work along fixed rules to ensnare, that these were instituted by Satan himself, “with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish”—in deceived men. He tells us that their hearts were not pure, “because they received not the love of the truth, the special sanctifying truth of which Jesus prayed in John 17: “Thy Word is Truth.”

The Church has been all these years in the School of Christ—the spirit-begotten, sanctified condition. God Himself has been working in us, in our mortal bodies, our earthly house, creating a new creature up to the extent of our purity of heart, our love of the truth, shaping it, polishing it after the fashion of His dear Son, Jesus.

This is the work now going on, separating unto God those who will have every thought brought into subjection to the will of God. This looks like holiness doctrine, doesn't it? It is holiness. It means that the new creature has power over the flesh to keep the body under, to bring it into subjection.

“I need Thee every hour” was undoubtedly written by one who was in the thickest of the good fight of faith. (p.p. 1 Aug. 1920)

He...entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid.

Mark 7:24

When Christ is in our home, it will be evident. There's no hiding it! It will be different from the homes where He is not welcomed. Those who enter its door will know of His presence. His Name will be honored; His Word will be obeyed; His love and goodness will be manifested.

—S. Hulshizer — ” —

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