Numbers - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Things New and Old: Volume 11, Camp and the Cloud, The

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(Num. 9:15-23.)

“And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony, and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed; whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it was two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.”

A more lovely picture of absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, divine guidance it were impossible to conceive than that presented in the foregoing paragraph. There was not a footprint nor a landmark throughout that “great and terrible wilderness.” It was therefore useless to look for any guidance from those who had gone before. They were wholly cast upon God for every step of the way. They were in a position of constant waiting upon Him. This, to an un-subdued mind, an unbroken will, would be intolerable; but to a soul knowing, loving, confiding, and delighting in God, nothing could be more deeply blessed.

Here lies the real gist of the whole matter. Is God known, loved, and trusted? If He be, the heart will delight in the most absolute dependence upon Him. If not, such dependence would be perfectly insufferable. The un-renewed man loves to think himself independent — loves to fancy himself free — loves to believe that he may do what he likes, go where he likes, say what he likes. Alas! it is the merest delusion. Man is not free. He is the slave of Satan. It is now well-nigh six thousand years since he sold himself into the hands of that great spiritual slaveholder, who has held him ever since, and who holds him still. Yes, Satan holds the natural man — the unconverted, unrepentant man in terrible bondage. He has him bound hand and foot with chains and fetters, which are not seen in their true character, because of the gilding wherewith he has so artfully covered them. Satan rules man by means of his lusts, his passions, and his pleasures. He forms lusts in the heart, and then gratifies them with the things that arc in the world, and man vainly imagines himself free because he can gratify his desires. But it is a melancholy delusion; and, sooner or later, it will be found to be such. There is no freedom save that with which Christ makes his people free. He it is who says, u Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” And again, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8.

Here is true liberty. It is the liberty which the new nature finds in walking in the Spirit, and doing those things that are pleasing in the sight of God. “The service of the Lord is perfect freedom.” But this service, in all its departments, involves the most simple dependence upon the living God. Thus it was with the only true and perfect Servant that ever trod this earth. He was ever dependent. Every movement, every act, every word — all He did, all He left undone, was the fruit of the most absolute dependence upon, and subjection to, God. He moved when God would have Him move, and stood still when God would have Him stand. He spake when God would have Him speak, and was silent when God would have Him silent.

Such was Jesus when He lived in this world; and we, as partakers of His nature, His life, and having His Spirit dwelling in us, are called to walk in His steps, and live a life of simple dependence upon God from day to day. Of this life of dependence, in one special phase of it, we have a graphic and beautiful type at the close of our chapter. The Israel of God — the camp in the desert — that pilgrim host followed the movement of the cloud. They had to look up for guidance. This is man’s proper work. He was made to turn his countenance upwards, in contrast with the brute, who is formed to look downward.1 Israel could form no plans. They could never say, “Tomorrow we shall go to such a place.” They were entirely dependent upon the movement of the cloud.

Thus it was with Israel, and thus it should be with us. We are passing through a trackless desert, a moral wilderness. There is absolutely no way. We should not know how to walk, or where to go, were it not for that one most precious, most deep, most comprehensive sentence which fell from the lips of our blessed Lord — “I am the way.” Here is divine, infallible guidance. We are to follow Him. “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8) This is living guidance. It is not acting according to the letter of certain rules and regulations: it is following a living Christ; walking as He walked; doing as He did; imitating His example in all things. This is christian movement, christian action. It is keeping the eye fixed upon Jesus, and having the features, traits, and lineaments of His character imprinted on our new nature, and reflected hack or reproduced in our daily life and ways.

Now, this will, assuredly, involve the surrender of our own will, our own plans, our own management altogether. We must follow the cloud; we must wait ever, wait only upon God. We cannot say, “We shall go here or there; do this or that, tomorrow, or next week.” All our movements must be placed under the regulating power of that one commanding sentence — often, alas! lightly penned and uttered by us — “If the Lord will”

Oh, that we better understood all this! Would that we knew more perfectly the meaning of divine guidance. How often do we vainly imagine, and confidently assert, that the cloud is moving in that very direction which suits the bent of our own inclination. We want to do a certain thing, or make a certain movement, and we seek to persuade ourselves that our will is the will of God. Thus, instead of being divinely guided, we are self-deceived. Our will is unbroken, and hence we cannot be guided aright; for the real secret of being rightly guided—guided of God—is to have our own wall thoroughly subdued. “The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.” And again, “I will guide thee by mine eye.”

But let us ponder the admonition — “Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.” (Psalm 32) If the countenance be turned upwards to catch the movement of the divine “eye,” we shall not need the “bit and bridle.” But here is precisely the point in which we so sadly fail. We do not live sufficiently near to God to discern the movement of His eye —the will is at work. We want to have our own way, and hence we are left to reap the bitter fruits thereof. Thus it was with Jonah. He was told to go to Nineveh; but he wanted to go to Tarshish, and circumstances seemed to favor, Providence seemed to point in the direction of his will. But, ah! he had to find his place in the belly of the whale, yea, in “the belly of hell” itself, where “the weeds were wrapped about his head.” It was there he learned the bitterness of following his own will. He had to be taught, in the depths of the ocean, the true meaning of the “bit and bridle,” because he would not follow the gentler guidance of the eye.

But our God is so gracious, so tender, so patient! He will teach and He will guide His poor, feeble, erring children. He spares no pains with us. He occupies Himself continually about us, in order that we may be kept from our own ways, which are full of thorns and briars, and walk in His ways which are pleasantness and peace.

There is nothing in all this world more deeply blessed than to live a life of habitual dependence upon God; to hang upon Him moment by moment; to wait on Him and cling to Him for everything; to have all our springs in Him. It is the true secret of peace, and of holy independence of the creature. The soul that can really say, “All my springs are in thee,” is lifted above all creature confidences, human hopes, and earthly expectations. It is not that God does not use the creature, in a thousand ways, to minister to us. We do not at all mean this. He does use the creature; but if we lean upon the creature, instead of leaning upon Him, we shall very speedily get leanness and barrenness into our own souls. There is a vast difference between God’s using the creature to bless us, and our leaning on the creature to the exclusion of Him. In the one case, we are blessed and He is glorified; in the other, we are disappointed and He is dishonored.

It is well that the soul should deeply and seriously ponder this distinction. We believe it is constantly overlooked. We imagine, ofttimes, that we are leaning upon and looking to God, when, in reality, if we would only look honestly at the roots of things, and judge ourselves in the immediate presence of God, we should find an appalling amount of the leaven of creature confidence. How often do we speak of living by faith, and of trusting only in God, when at the same time, if we would only look down into the depths of our hearts, we should find there a large measure of dependence upon circumstances, and reference to second causes, and the like.

Christian reader, let us look well to this. Let us see to it that our eye is fixed upon the living God alone, and not upon man, whose breath is in his nostrils. Let us wait on Him— wait patiently—wait constantly. If we are at a loss for anything, let our direct and simple reference be to Him. Are we at a loss to know our way, to know whither we should turn, what step we should take? let us remember that He has said, “I am the way;” let us follow Him. He will make all clear, bright, and certain. There can be no darkness, no perplexity, no uncertainty, if we are following Him: for He has said, and we are bound to believe, “He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness.” Hence, therefore, if we are in darkness, it is certain we are not following Him. No darkness can ever settle down on that blessed path along which God leads those who, with a single eye, seek to follow Jesus.

But someone whose eye scans these lines may say, or, at least, may feel disposed to say, “Well, after all, I am in perplexity as to my path. I really do not know which way to turn, or what step to take.” If this be the language of the reader, we would simply ask him this one question, “Art thou following Jesus? If so, thou canst not be in perplexity. Art, thou following the cloud? If so, the way is as plain as God can make it.” Here lies the root of the whole matter. Perplexity or uncertainty is very often the fruit of the working of the will. We are bent upon doing something which God does not want us to do at all upon going somewhere that God does not want us to go. We pray about it, and get no answer. We pray again and again, and get no answer. How is this? Why, the simple fact is that God wants us to be quiet—to stand still—to remain just where we are. Wherefore, instead of racking our brain and harassing our souls about what we ought to do, let us do nothing, but simply wait on God.

This is the secret of peace and calm elevation. If an Israelite, in the desert, had taken it into his head to make some movement independent of Jehovah; if he had taken it upon him to move when the cloud was at rest, or to halt while the cloud was moving, we can easily see what the result would have been. And so it will ever be with us. If we move when we ought to rest, or rest when we ought to move, we shall not have the divine presence with us. “At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.” They were kept in constant waiting upon God—the most blessed position that anyone can occupy; but it must be occupied ere its blessedness can be tasted. It is a reality to be known, not a mere theory to be talked of, May it be ours to prove it all our journey through!

Things New and Old: Volume 7, Golden Candlestick, The

(Num. 8:1-4.)

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, and unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work; according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick.”

Here we have a lovely type of the work and testimony of the Holy Ghost founded upon the atoning work of Christ. “The seven lamps” express, in typical language, the perfection of the Spirit’s light. “The beaten shaft” with which those seven lamps were connected, expresses in the same way, Christ as the foundation of all the Spirit’s action. But not only were the seven lamps” inseparably connected with “the beaten

shaft," they also threw their light immediately thereupon, thus typifying that the grand object of the Holy Ghost, in all His operations, is to bear witness to and glorify the Person of Christ. "The seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick." The seven lamps did not throw their light upon themselves, but upon the beaten shaft that sustained them.

Such is the type, and if the reader will turn, for a moment, to the third chapter of the Acts, he will find a very striking instance of the application of the type. Christ, the great Antitype of the golden shaft, had left this world and taken His seat in the heavens; and the Holy Ghost, the great Antitype of the seven golden lamps, had come down from heaven, to emit the bright light of testimony in this dark world. But to whom does this blessed Spirit bear witness? Only, and always to Jesus. Whom does He seek to exalt? Ever and only the Name of Jesus. As in the type, so in the Antitype, " the seven lamps give light over against the candlestick." If repentance and remission of sin be preached it is in the Name of Jesus. If souls are to be saved, salvation is only in the Name of Jesus. If a poor cripple is to be healed, the healing can only be found in the Name of Jesus. "The seven lamps" can only "give light over against the candlestick."

How strikingly all this comes out in Acts 3 Peter, filled with the light and power of the Holy Ghost, can only bear witness, and refer all his actings immediately to Christ. The lame man thought only of receiving an alms from a benevolent individual; but Peter at once hides himself, and exalts the Name of Jesus, in those memorable words, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Here we see the seven lamps throwing light over against the candlestick. If a benefit is to be conferred upon a poor cripple it must be seen to come directly from a risen Savior. It is not a benevolent man dispensing around him his silver and gold, but a vessel filled with the Holy Ghost bearing witness to the Name of Jesus; or to use the language of our type, it is "the seven lamps giving light over against the candlestick." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

This is a great principle, and one much needed in this day of activity and effort. We have to remember that activity is one thing, devotedness, quite another. It is not that we want to lessen activity, or cripple effort; by no means, we only want to see them based upon, connected with, and referring to Christ alone. We want to learn, more deeply, the lesson of "the seven lamps," and to remember, at all times, that service, to be of any value, in God's account, must have Christ for its source, and Christ for its object. Be it sweeping a crossing, or evangelizing a nation; be it a penny given to a pauper, or a life and fortune dedicated to the objects of benevolence, it is all of no account with God unless its immediate source and object be Christ Himself, for "the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick."

Bible Queries, Notes on Former Queries: Vol. 3, 44; 122; 526

Q. 44.-Do not {vi 25220-25224}Luke 7:24-28 rather sustain Iota's thought, when Christ says " What went ye out for to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" Christ, I think, there desired to point out that John was not moved by surrounding things, and driven about and shaken by the wind.-Eph. 4:14.

E. H.

Q. 122.-May I suggest that the reason why the burnt offering is mentioned before the sin offering in Num. 6:14, is probably because devotion to Jehovah is the primary thought in this verse, rather than trespass against Jehovah. In the preceding verses the law provided an offering for the Nazarite who had, during the days of his separation, defiled the head of his consecration; therefore the sin offering is first mentioned in verse 11.

Before he could offer as in verse 14, the Nazarite must of necessity have proved his consecration to Jehovah by the fulfillment of his vow. As soon as the days of his separation were fulfilled, the Lord graciously allowed him, by the burnt offering, to express that he had willingly performed all that he had voluntarily undertaken to fulfill. At the same time, by offering a sin offering, he confessed and acknowledged personal failure in the practical fulfillment of his vow.

In verse 16, it is the priest who offers the Nazarite's offering to the Lord. Now the sin offering is first mentioned-full atonement must be made for the sins he had committed, before the now freed Nazarite could enjoy that communion which the burnt offering here typifies.

It may not be out of place also to mention that, although the individual offender must needs offer his several offerings in the order set forth in the law for each particular offering, this does not necessarily infer that the burnt offerings, and those portions of the other offerings which were to be consumed by fire, were consumed in consecutive order. Even with regard to the great day of atonement, {vi 3226-3227}Lev. 16:24, 25 implies that the priest's burnt offering, the people's burnt offering, and the fat of the sin-offering, were all consumed simultaneously. In Lev. 9:24, we are told that fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat-what of? the burnt offering simply? The burnt offering was wholly consumed-" the fat" evidently signifies the fat of the peace and other offerings, &c., so also 2 Chr. 7:1; {vi 11812-11821}2 Chr. 29:20-29 is most instructive on this point; v. 21 speaks of a sin offering, v. 24 of the burnt offering and sin offering, but in v. 27 the term " the burnt offering" appears to include all that was at that moment being consumed on the altar, viz., the burnt offering, and the fat of the sin offering; compare Lev. 4:19. At the same moment Jehovah graciously accepted the entire offering of the many worshippers. A. J.

Q. 526.-In the second part of the answer you say, "A Bible reading ought to be free for 'all to ask questions; the only limit mold be that which propriety would suggest when they are large or public." Will you please give me your authority for this answer? and also when you have done so, tell me what you can about 1 Tim. 2 it, where in reply to a desire on the part of a sister as to how she should behave herself in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth, she is told to learn in silence with all subjection. Does this mean that she is to ask questions? A. J. B.

A. Our correspondent has told us a great deal more about 1 Tim. 2 Than the passage itself does, and moreover lays great stress on " silence," which is rendered in the Revised Version " quietness." His main error, however, is in assuming that the reading of the Scripture for mutual edification is ever regarded as a meeting of the assembly, where the Holy Ghost is free to distribute to every man as He will. The difference is so obvious that it only needs pointing out. A reading meeting is nowhere regarded in the light our correspondent puts it, and we still adhere to our former answer.

Q. have heard it stated that previous to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, believers went to Hades (the blessed portion, paradise) but after that He had broken the power of death by His resurrection, believers departed to be with Him, i.e., at God's right hand, and not in Hades. Do you think that may be so? H. W. P.

A. There appears to be no good ground for this thought. Our Lord Himself and the dying thief went to Hades, and it is not abolished till Rev. 20 and we can find no Scripture to support the idea. It is worthy of note that the apostle says in t Thess. iv, 17 even of those who have died in Christ and are therefore "with Christ" "So shall we be forever with the Lord," as something new; as it surely will be, when the complete man, body,: soul, and spirit stands for the first time in the Lord's presence on the morning of the resurrection.

Brief Thoughts on the Separation of the Nazarite, Separation of the Nazarite, Brief Thoughts on the: 3

Num. 6

Separation unto the Lord is now connected with separation from the vine of earthly stimulants and joys, and it will continue until Jesus exercises His rights directly as the Lord of all here below. For “this [is] the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and he shall offer his offering unto Jehovah, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt-offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin-offering, and one ram without blemish for peace-offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings. And the priest shall bring [them] before Jehovah, and shall offer his sin-offering, and his burnt-offering: and he shall offer the ram [for] a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto Jehovah, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put [it] in the fire which [is] under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put [them] upon the hands of the Nazarite, after [the hair of] his separation is shaven: and the priest shall wave them [for] a wave-offering before Jehovah: this [is] holy for the priest, with the wave-breast and heave-shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine” (vers. 13-20). The Lord will no longer refuse to be a King, and retire alone on high to intercede as Priest; but, actually invested with dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages, should serve Him, He will come again, and He will bring to rein with Him those whom. He now separates from the world, as cleansed through His blood and risen with Him. The days of separation are fulfilled..... and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. Then will be the fulfillment of the millennial psalms in all their meaning: “Jehovah reigneth, let the earth rejoice.” In that day, truth is no longer fallen in the streets, for it shall spring out of the earth, and the Father's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Until then the blessing is deliverance, not only from sin but from this present evil world. If I have learned the cross, I have learned that thereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world (Gal. 1-6). Now, that which stamps the world, as the world, is ignorance of the Father. “O righteous Father,” says the Lord, “the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.” He and the world had no fellowship; neither have His disciples, for, just before, He had thus spoken of them to His Father: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” It is not they ought not to be, but they are not. Men may reason plausibly; but to hear any excuses for, or exhortations to, union with the world, is to listen not to the good Shepherd's voice, but to the deceits of the enemy. And is it not enough that Satan should accuse the brethren, and deceive the whole world? Ought brethren also to be deceived by that old serpent?

Our place for the present, our only true place, is separation from the world in every shape. “For their sakes,” said our Master in His ever-memorable prayer for us, “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth;” for our separation is through the knowledge of Christ in His separation. As He is, so are we in this world. We know Him where He is, that we may know ourselves as there in Him also. This is sanctification through the truth, resulting from Christ's sanctification of Himself.

By-and-by the saints shall judge the world (1 Cor. 6:2). Meanwhile, an apostle says: “What have I to do to judge them also that are without?” (The powers that be should do that.) “Do not ye judge them that are within?” (1 Cor. 5). Such is the province of the church, now at least. And preaching the gospel to the world, so far from being fellowship with it, is rather to gather people. out of it, These then say; “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.” They are separated unto God, and should preserve their Nazariteship intact until the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, when the world shall know that the Father sent the Son, and loved us as the Son was loved.

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Brief Thoughts on the Separation of the Nazarite, Separation of the Nazarite, Brief Thoughts on the: 2

Num. 6

No type ever reaches up to, much less can it exhaust, the glory of the Lord. Hence we constantly find a point where Christ personally is rather the contrast than the object pictured. Aaron was the high priest taken from among men, but Jesus was the Son of God. The one with the blood of bulls and goats offered once every year for himself and for the errors of the people; “but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:11, 12). So Christ, as we know, was incapable of defilement: the death of man or of Israel in the scene which surrounded Him, did not and could not affect Him, Who, if he were the Nazarite, was infinitely more. None could take His life from Him. If He laid it down, it was purely and entirely the spontaneous act of His grace, though even then He will not swerve from the will of the Father. “have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Blessed be His name! He did lay down His life for the sheep. For it was the will of God that we should be separated by that true Nazarite unto God Himself, and Christ came to effect His will of sanctifying us, and this could only be by the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. For, as Jesus had said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” And Christ would not abide alone as God's Nazarite, but, having died, and thus removed our defilement and death by His own death for us, He is beyond the region of the dead; and there too are we brought, as risen with Him. The dead corn of wheat has produced much fruit. Risen with Him, great is the company of the Nazarites now.

It is wondrous, yet most certain, that He Who knew no sin was made sin for us. Never was Christ's consecration of Himself more holy than when the spotless Victim was wreathed and filleted with our sins, which He verily owned, and bore, and suffered. for, according to the judgment and wrath of God. Perfectly without sin, He alone could be a sacrifice for us; perfectly made sin for us, He alone could blot out our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. But now the work is finished, and He has taken His seat at God's right hand, “for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Do we think of our need of a sin-offering? The answer is, Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5). Do we think, further, of the need of a burnt-offering? The answer is again, Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. 5:2).

Accordingly, all our Nazariteship flows from, and is in unison with, this original source. Whatever professes to be holiness, or is accredited as such, that is not based upon the crucifixion of the flesh and is not carried on in resurrection-life, is not true Christian holiness. It may be indeed a fair show in the flesh, but it is virtually a denial of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Once, beyond doubt, when God owned a worldly sanctuary, He owned a fleshly holiness, which rose no higher than mere outward restrictions. For the world and the flesh, however clearly known to Him, had not yet proved themselves to be irremediably evil. But now He owns neither the one nor the other. The cross of Christ was the end of both to those who see as God sees; and Christ is risen and seated at His right hand in the heavenly places, and His power to usward who believe is according to the working of that mighty power which wrought in thus exalting Christ. A man as such, may be wise, mighty or noble (1 Cor. 1); he may be possessed of a thousand natural advantages; he may be even religious in the flesh to a high degree (Gal. 4-6). Earthly things are these, though they may be called earthly blessings; and the Holy Ghost designates those who mind them as enemies, not exactly of Christ, but of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3). Men may court such earthly things, they may boast of them, and lean upon them; but shall we, shall Christians? Shall we not rather, as true Nazarites, count those things which were gain, loss for Christ? Shall we not seek yet more to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead? It is as dead and risen with Christ that we are Nazarites, not by subjection to ordinances, such as Touch not, taste not, handle not. Whatever is unworthy of such dead and risen men is not meet for us. Therefore, brethren, beloved of God, let us set our minds on things above, not on things on the earth. Even while we are here below, we are one with Him above: our life is hid with Him in God. And so really and inseparably are we identified, that when He shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Meanwhile, therefore, let us mortify our members which are upon the earth.

Thus then, sin and death having entered, the death of Christ could alone meet our defilement; and hence He resumes His Nazariteship in resurrection.

And it is in resurrection that He associates believers with Himself, as His brethren in the truest sense. “Touch me not,” said Jesus to Mary Magdalene, “for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” Such is the gracious provision hinted at in the type: “And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. And he shall consecrate unto Jehovah the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled” (vers. 9-12).

“The eighth day” (ver. 10) is the introduction, the first day, of a new week; and so we find the Nazarite commencing, as it were, his separation over again. If sinners are to be separated to God, it can only be by death—the death of Christ. By His resurrection, He began in power the new creation. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17). The total accomplishment may not be until the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:5); but faith looks at Christ, and can speak this language even now. Our separation is maintained in His separation, as to our life; and separation in our walk must be from walking according to the life we have in Him. “If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.” To walk as men—not merely as bad men, but as men, after a human way—is beneath those who are Christ's (1 Cor 3.). Wherefore, says the apostle elsewhere (Col. 2), if ye are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, &c. In truth, they were dead, and they were risen too, risen with Christ, and therefore are called to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Brief Thoughts on the Separation of the Nazarite, Separation of the Nazarite, Brief Thoughts on the: 1

WE have here, in type, the separation of Christ, and of those that are in Him, from the world unto God. That we might thus be set apart by His separation, He commenced it afresh in resurrection through His offering for sin.

The sanctification of the Nazarite did not go beyond the purifying of the flesh. It was in this, like the other shadows of the law, ceremonial, and not that which purgeth the conscience. But as the sanctuary made with hands was the pattern of heaven itself so did the carnal Nazarite set forth Him Who was always, thoroughly, intrinsically separate from sinners, and unto the Lord. From His mother's womb, Christ was really that which the Nazarite outwardly prefigured— “that holy thing” (Luke 1:35). As a child, He was the same. The grace of God was upon Him (Luke 2). Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? He alone could say in its full force: “My flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary” (Psa. 63). Again, as in Psa. 84: “My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” Besides other and higher glory of His person, Christ was the blessed man who never walked in the counsel of the ungodly nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. Other blessed men there are whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (Psa. 32). But Christ was the one blessed man who, regarded as made of a woman, made under the law,

had no transgressions to be forgiven, nor sins to be covered, but His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did He meditate day and night. In this, then, He stood alone, truly and totally separate unto the Lord, wholly apart from the world for God. Here below, in the flesh, He was the pure and holy Nazarite, blessed in Himself. All others were sinners. If these were blessed, they were blessed exclusively through Him: and this was by death and resurrection.

But if, in the flesh, He stood thus alone, in resurrection Christ is the first born among many brethren. This is another condition and most precious it is to us.

Now, let us consider in what the separation consisted.

First, “He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink; neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk” (Verses 3, 4).

Wine maketh merry; it maketh glad the heart of man. But Christ had not one feeling in common with a world estranged from God. He could love and pity, but kept aloof from all earthly joy and gladness. To Him in Whom God was well pleased, nothing here below yielded enjoyment. He needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man (John 3). If men would come and take Him by force to make Him a King, He departs into a mountain Himself alone (John 6). If His unbelieving brethren would have Him to show Himself to the world, He says, My time is not yet come (John 7). This blessed Nazarite walked as God's heavenly stranger through the world; and the more He knew the fullness of joy in Jehovah's presence, and the more He detected and stood aloof from the spurious pleasures of men, the more did He feel the wretchedness, and sin, and sorrow, of all around Him. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; but man hath no ears, no voice for God. Could this gladden the heart of the Nazarite? Looking up to heaven, He sighed (Mark 7:34).

Secondly, “All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord; he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow” (ver. 5).

The head and beard are referred to in scripture as the seat of glory and strength. Thus, in Psa. 133, “it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard;” and, therefore it was that the priests, in the case of the death even of near kindred, were forbidden to make baldness upon their head, or to shave off the corner of their beard (Lev. 21). These tokens of humiliation did not become those who enjoyed special access to God. On the other hand, he who typifies the defiled and defiling outcast from God and His people, the leper, even in the days of his cleansing, had to “shave all his hair off his head, and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off” (Lev. 14). Sin has utterly tainted that which otherwise would be comely. But the Nazarite is typical of Christ in His separation as a man unto God, and He was without blemish and without spot, and all that sprang up in that Holy One was lovely and acceptable to God. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 3). His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work (John 4). Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God, He could say throughout; even as at the termination of His earthly career, He told the Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. To have cut off the beauteous locks of the untainted Nazarite, would have been to have cut off the feelings, interests, thoughts, affections, purposes and acts of Christ, which were all fragrant and precious in the sight of God.

Thirdly, “All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord” (ver. 6-8).

Christ is life and the prince of life, as Satan is he who hath the power of death. And when one, bidden to follow Him, said, Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father, Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God (Luke 9). This world will care for its own things, but Christ and His people are for the living and true God—for Him only. So truly was this verified in Christ, that even death itself He accepts as having to do with God and God with Him. It is not Judas, nor the Jews, nor the Romans, nor Satan, that His eye is upon; but “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18).

(To be continued, D.V.)

Food for the Flock: Volume 9, Galatians, Illustrated by the Orders Given to the Kohathites, A Word on

UM 4:1-20{UM 7:1-9{AL 5:1-10{AL 6:12-14{IT is impossible to read the epistles carefully, beloved brethren, without seeing that the grace of God, as manifested in the cross of Christ, is presented in them in two very distinct ways. First, we find salvation through the redemption that was there wrought once for all. Secondly, we learn that this same grace characterizes the path of the Christian through this world. The apostle says: " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ [not, ' By which I have been saved or have been brought to God,' but] by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." That is, not merely does his soul rest in the deliverance wrought for him from Satan's power, from sin, from death and judgment, but he finds a separation effected between Him and the world, and so completely, that there is no desire on either side to come together again. And that which has made the separation is the cross of Christ. So that we may look at the cross of Christ and say: Well, if I am to go into the world, I must give up what God has vouchsafed to me in that cross; I must outrage Him who was nailed there for me, who sheaved the depth of His love to me in giving Himself, and in such circumstances of unutterable suffering for the manifestation of divine righteousness in itself and in its effects.

Now there are two sides to this proposition. You might withdraw from the world and say, I stand apart from it; and in so doing might have your heart lifted up with thoughts of your superiority to it in thus standing aside. But the other side of the question presents itself, Would you have the world draw aside from you? Are you crucified to it? Paul had learned the value of the cross, and accepts the double position.

With the Galatians it was far otherwise. There was on their part an attempt to make a path down here, such as the natural man might walk in; but Paul says, I will not have it nor seek it.

It had not been always so with these saints. They had at first received the truth honestly, and their hearts had burned with affection to Christ and His people. He bears them witness that their love to him, as the minister of it to them, was such that they would have' plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. There was every sign of the work being a true one in their souls; at the beginning he had nothing to say against their course at all. But when he looks at them after some years (there is no actual date given, but evidently some years had gone by), such a change had taken place in them, that, in considering their ways, he stands in doubt of them as to whether there was a real work of God in their souls. He says: I have confidence in the Lord about you, but when I look at you, I can scarcely recognize you as my children.

Now what made this difference? You do not find in the epistle that there was any moral evil among them. But the fact was they had given place to an evil principle which was undermining and ruining everything. They wanted to arrange spiritual things so as to suit human nature and thus walk by sight, not faith. They were seeking to get up a system of their own in which everything would go on wheels, as people say; like a machine in working order, you have only to turn the steam on and all is set going at once. That suits the natural man. The Galatians had not got in their souls the sense of the Holy Spirit as a present living power in their hearts, and so they turned to an external machinery based, no doubt, on what in its origin was divine, but, when misapplied, became the means of resisting God's present purpose in grace; and by it they brought themselves into bondage to their own ordinances.

The apostle goes at once to the root of the matter and spews them that, in so doing, they had really given up the truth that God had sent down the Holy Ghost to dwell in the hearts of those that believe, to guide them into all truth, and to take of the things of Christ and show them unto them, and to be in them a present living power for walking worthy of Him who had called them to His own kingdom and glory, besides giving them the power to cry Abba, Father, and to know what it is to be " an heir of God through Christ."

I may be forgiven a short digression here for the purpose of making this clearer; for it is of great importance. The admittance that deliverance has been wrought, is quite a different thing from the knowledge that oneself is individually free. Now in the first seven verses of chapter 4 there are two distinct statements as to the work of the Son and the Spirit. There is, first, the mission of God's Son to redeem those that were under the law. That was Christ's own work quite apart from us. Then we read: " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." -This is quite another thing it is the mission of the Holy Ghost, and is accomplished in us. The cry " Abba, Father," is much more than the statement that God is Father. It means that the believer has the sense in his soul of the relationship the words imply, and that he rejoices in it. When I state that such a person is my father, there is nothing in the mere statement which implies my attachment to him, or gives a guarantee that I shall not break away from him and never` speak to him again. But when a child addresses his father as such, calling him affectionately" my Father," the relationship between the two is evidently being kept up. Now God sends His Spirit into our hearts for this very purpose. Surely it needed a divine Person in us to make such a relationship known so as to be enjoyed.

It is based upon redemption: there we find the door of access into it; but we have to learn in our souls individually what it means for a slave to become a son. Let us take the figure of a negro in slavery. Suppose you wanted to-deliver such an one and set him free, how would you go about it? The first step would be, of" course, to go to the master and settle with him as to what price he would take. It would be of no use to ask the slave what he considered his price to be; he could not settle it. It is evident: that the act of purchase is entirely apart from the slave. But now, having paid the price, you have to do with the poor man himself, and then the question is how to make him understand that you intend him to be free.

A first impulse might induce you to let him go. But if so, how is he to live? He has no mean of providing for himself. He is without friends, -without a position, without means in the wide world. You would surely furnish him with means, but what is he to do when the money is -spent? The same difficulty recurs. You take him into your house, and let him work for you, and pay him as a hireling for his labor. After a while, let us go and ask him how he likes his new life. We remark to him: You are free now! Tree? he answers; what does that mean? I have changed masters, it is true: my present master is very kind to me, so that my life is no longer burdensome to me as it was; but still he is my master, and I am his servant: what do you mean by being free? As long as the relative position remains the same, one born and bred in slavery cannot possibly understand what freedom is. But bring him into the family, make him as one of the children; will he not then learn, through newly awakened affections, what it is to he in another relationship altogether? They have set me at their own table, he says; they treat me as one of themselves; they talk to me as one interested in the family matters; this is different indeed! I feel I am a slave no longer; he who was my master is now my father; now I know that I am free!

And then, what place is ours at the table? Ask the negro slave again; what place would his slave's heart dare to crave for? Would he not shrink from being at the same table as the other members of the family,? Would he not look on himself and say, I am black, they are white; I cannot sit with them; let them give me a little-table by myself, or one in another room? Ah, it is not thus God deals with us. But we must change the simile. The slaves are many, but there is one SON, and He sets us in the place of His own firstborn.

It is " the Spirit of his Son" that He has sent into our hearts. He would turn our eyes and thoughts away from our miserable selves, that, our gaze may be fixed on the SON and our hearts, ravished with His glory; and He sends down the Holy Ghost to say to us in living power, " If a, son, then an heir, an heir of God, joint heir with Christ." Everything that belongs to the relationship is ours; for sonship and heirship go together; but the Lord's heart finds contentment, in making known the Father. (John 17:26.) Now, while upon this subject, just let me ask you one thing. Which part of the blessing has the greatest attraction for your soul? Is it the' inheritance and its glory, or is it the relationship with the Father? Surely not one of us will hesitate to say that the relationship is by far the more precious of the two. But that, dear~ friends, we have now. We are waiting for the inheritance; we have the /eve of that; it is the " hope " attached to the revelation of God's righteousness, as expressed in this epistle, and inseparable from the relationship into which we are brought. But the relationship, the more blessed of the two, is ours to enjoy wow. The doctrine exposed in the Galatians is the fundamental principle of Christianity: God has sent down His Spirit into our hearts here, and that because we have been made sons through redemption. He sends the Spirit into our hearts, that we may know the relationship, and enter into it, and enjoy it. In Ephesians we see the blessed fruits of its exercise and what flows from it, as well as the activities of these divine affections in the power of the Spirit. In Galatians we find the introduction to it, and the power for its exercise, the Holy Spirit.

Now the Galatians had practically given this truth up; the apostle has therefore to lay the foundation of first principles, insisting upon the relationship into which they had been already brought, and sheaving that as to the inheritance which attaches to it, the Holy Spirit is the present earnest. So when speaking of how we are to live down here until we get to the inheritance, be says, " Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." The Holy Spirit occupies us with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as we go on our way, forming us morally in

His image. (2 Cor. 3)

There is 6, remarkable point too, if we pay attention to it, in chapter v., which shows the character of this power that works in us. We have in verses 19, 22, the contrast marked between " the works of the flesh " and " the fruit of the Spirit." Why are the words different? "Works" suppose effort; the natural man understands this; it expresses his life in the world; but there is no effort connected with the thought of " fruit." No amount of trying would ever get fruit from a tree. If it is in a suitable climate and in a good state and watered, it must bring forth fruit.

Consider too " the fruit" mentioned in verse 22. Would you confide your heart to a person who says, I am trying to love you as much as I can? Would you not feel instinctively there was something wrong? Real love is so engrossed with its object, that it is only tried with the feeling of its own insufficiency: there is no effort, no difficulty about it; it is the natural outflow of what exists within, and only seeks a vent in order to skew itself, though never for its own sake. In the same way is it not clear that one who says, I am trying to get joy, or I am trying to get peace, is only painfully manifesting that he has not got it? All these fruits, different and varied as they may be, and admitting of growth and culture, are produced without effort the moment a soul is really subject to the Spirit of God, led of the Spirit and indwelt by Him. But, as with the healthy tree, there must be, for the development, and abundance of fruit, the suited climate and nourishment. The vital power is the Holy Ghost; the meat and drink in Christ (John 6); the climate is the grace of God (Rom. 6:14); the ground we are rooted in, His love (Eph. 3:17; John 15) We are first " born of the Spirit," as the Lord says to Nicodemus, that is, made children through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; then we are called to " walk in the Spirit."

I now desire to look at the practical hindrances which came in to turn the Galatians aside from the path of faith in the power of the Spirit_ Paul says to them: " Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" This is why I read those passages in Numbers, because we find in them several points which bear upon the subject before us. It is a Serious thing to find these young saints who had received the word in its fullness from an apostle, turned away in so short a time from the truth they had been taught. Is not this a solemn warning for us all?

In the book of Numbers which contains the Levitical ordinances, we find God's thoughts as to what He considers His service1 in this world. The Levites were first as an entire tribe separated to God, and then their three families made three principal classes (or four, if the priesthood be included), each having a different service to perform. Those who, after the priests, were brought into the nearest place were the Kohathites.

Now, without entering much into the details that are given to us, we may notice that the special service of the Kohathites was in connection with the vessels of the tabernacle, with the dwelling-place of God in the midst of His people-those vessels which set forth individually different phases of Christ's glory. When the camp removed (and the journeying was characteristic of the wilderness), their duty was to bear the holy vessels. They could not choose their burden; they were not even allowed to touch the holy vessels; but after the priests had covered them up in the ordered way and 'put them upon bars or staves, then the Kohathites came forward to receive each one his appointed service and learn what his duty- was. They were not to look at the holy things uncovered, on pain of death. This was a particular ordinance as to their special service. (Chapter 4:17-20.) It was the priests, who went habitually into the tabernacle, whose duty it was to cover the vessels and prepare them for removal.

None of these vessels might, on any account, be put into wagons, as was all else that pertained to the tabernacle; they were to be carried alone on the shoulders of the Levites. Wagons were offered at the time of the dedication of the altar by the twelve princes of the tribes for the service of Jehovah, and God told Moses to give them to the Gershonites and the Merarites, as useful in transporting the curtains, boards, bars, sockets,, and other different parts that fell to their share in the transport; but to the Kohathites He gave none, " because the service of the sanctuary belonging to them was that they should bear upon their shoulders."

As we have seen, all these vessels thus carried were covered up. There was nothing to be seen, nothing to attract attention except the ark with its covering of blue; all else was under the badgers' skins. Upon the ark was first put the veil of the tabernacle; then the badgers' skins, and over that they were to " spread a cloth wholly of blue." This gave to the ark a very marked place. When the Israelites were moving from place to place, the ark in its blue covering was always to be distinguished, standing out in contrast with the white robes of the priests and Levites. But this exception only brought more fully into view the fact, that all the other vessels of the sanctuary were concealed under the badgers'-skin coverings. No one could tell from the outward appearance what these vessels were, though each Kohathite might know what his appointed charge was. But there was nothing in the service itself, or what was visible of it, to bring glory to those occupied in it. An external looker-on could only have the impression that the Kohathites were set apart for the hardest labor. On no account were they to be allowed the relief of a wagon for bearing their charge. They were always to carry on their shoulders. Is not this attitude full of meaning for us? The Kohathites were subject to what they carried, and their hearts were exercised as to the value of what they bore; each one must keep in his proper place, and bear his appointed, outwardly unattractive burden.. But if any asked them what they did, their answer would be, that they carried the vessels of the sanctuary. And, better than all, they could have the sense in their souls that the eye of Israel's God was upon them: they were set apart for the service of His house.

NOW have we anything in our hearts of the spirit of the Kohathites? God has called us near to Himself, that we may bear His truth in testimony to Him through this world. Are we bearing it as the Kohathites were called to do? It was no question of choice with them: their service was one of simple obedience, yet very near to God, and, if their heart was in it, one of singular delight. And observe too, they must needs walk together. No vessel of the sanctuary could be carried without a bar, which supposes at the very least two bearers. Every personal consideration must with them be set aside. One might be stronger than another, or able to walk faster; but neither the strong nor the weak could decide the pace or the time; that depended alone on the cloud which directed every movement of the camp. And none were in more direct dependence on it than the Kohathites. But so walking in their divine order, might they not count on help from Him who manifested His glory on the ark they bore? So it was, on [a most memorable day of joy in Israel, which we will speak of presently. Their service obliged them to look up to God, both for guidance and help: it was characterized in every detail by obedience and dependence upon Him.

Does not all this transport us at once into the epistle to the Philippians, where we find the aged apostle suffering with joy in prison, despised and forgotten in the world, cheering and exhorting the saints to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, to be heavenly minded, " walking by the same rule," forgetting what was behind and reaching forth to what was before? Could he not present himself to them as an example, having labored in the gospel in the very spirit of the Kohathites? " Necessity is laid upon me," he says; so he would have his service without charge; its reward was in itself, in its being for Christ's sake. So we can understand how deeply he felt

the conduct of the Galatians.

Alas, God's order is easily forgotten by us. As it was with the Galatian saints, so had it been before in Israel: human nature is the same. God has written His judgment of it for our learning and instruction. Let us go over briefly the facts of the history in 2 Sam. 6 It was a wonderful moment for the king after God's own heart, when he thought of bringing the ark to Zion. Up to that time there had been a moral blot on God's chosen people: a fortress in the land from which no power of Israel could dislodge the enemy. Joshua, the Judges, and even king Saul who in his zeal for Israel sought to destroy the Gibeonites, had left it untouched. There the enemy was insolent, more so than anywhere else. The place was impregnable in their eyes: " the blind and the lame " could keep out the hosts of Jehovah. It was a standing reproach on them, and consequently on Jehovah's name. But as soon as David receives the crown of the kingdom over Israel, and the whole land is at his feet, he feels his responsibility is now to put all at God's feet; so the first thing he does is to go to the fortress of Zion and wrest it out of the hands of the Jebusites. God owned this act of faith, and chose the place from that time " to place his name there." That which had been the stronghold of the enemy is to be henceforth the brightest spot of all. But the glory of the victory is not complete until Psalm 132 can be sung there, and David can say in the words of Moses: " Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength." This leads to fresh exercises of heart, and to fresh lessons of human weakness. Yet David is a Kohathite in heart, and shews, as is clear from the end of chapter v., that dependence on God was his habit; and he finds in practice that God is for him.

But now comes a very different scene. David had been faithful in fighting the enemy: he has to be tested as to faithfulness in God's house. Then is manifested of how real danger to the soul is the moment after a victory has been gained. The ark has to be carried up to Mount Zion; but David does not think of the Kohathites. His mind is full of the victories God has given him, and he gathers together 30,000 chosen men of Israel, and consults with every leader about bringing up the ark. (1 Chron. 14) He only finds the world's wisdom with them, but does not detect it: and they imitate the Philistines with 'their cart and oxen. But the oxen stumble, Uzzah puts forth his hand to steady the ark and is smitten, and David, displeased, carries it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

Why was it that God allowed the oxen to-stumble? How is it that David has to give up his enterprise with shame, whereas when the Philistines did the very same thing 'all went right, and God was glorified? It was as David himself owned soon after, because " we sought him not after the due order."

The Kohathites were not in their right place. God allowed this to be worked out to its full result, in order that David's heart might be fully tested and brought into the light of His presence. David's thought of bringing up the ark was very beautiful, but he forgot " the due order." Like the Galatians in an after day, he replaced the service of the sanctuary by the Philistine cart and oxen, and did not do it even so well as they: and so it generally happens when God's saints imitate the world. It seemed so simple and natural; but because it was so, it was manifestly of the world. It was not God's way.

David however learned the lesson; and when afterward he set the Kohathites in their proper place, God " helped them " as they bore the ark of the covenant, and the joy in Israel was legitimate and blessed. At every stage of the Levites onward progress, they offered a bullock and a ram.

But to return to Num. 4 There was a special injunction as to the Kohathites that we do not find in the case of the other Levites. The Lord said: " Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites: but thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden: but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die." There was danger for them that did not exist in the same way for others; for they were in the place of greatest nearness to God. God will not suffer in His presence that which is not worthy of Himself. He does not interfere with the world in its sin. He lets that go on its way until the judgment. But He will be sanctified in those that draw near to Him, and for them especially exists the danger of being cut off if unsubject to the order of the sanctuary. This was what did happen on the day of the consecration of Aaron. The nearer we are to God, the more careful we must be to do everything according to God's order. Only after the holy things were covered were they to come and take them. They were separated by God to this special service, but they were not allowed to exceed it or look upon the holy things.

What instruction is there for us in this? Is it not, not allowing the natural man, the curiosity of an unsanctified heart, to satisfy itself with that which God has put in His house to set forth the glory of Christ? The natural man must not be allowed to trespass here, even to admire. God has given us His truth in order that the truth may command us, may rule our hearts and form our ways; it is not for the natural man to admire or to criticize it. And those who were in the greatest danger of doing this were those who were brought the nearest. God will have the conscience exercised as to His presence, as to what it is to have to do, with Him: The sense of this in the soul is like the ballast in a vessel. The unladen ship must have ballast. All may go well if the wind happens to be gentle and favorable, but without ballast, if a storm rises, the ship must be lost. God, having brought us in Christ into a position of the greatest nearness and privilege, and having given us a nature capable of enjoying Him, will not have our natural minds working about His truth, or enjoying it as a natural man might enjoy it. Want of care as to this gets us out of the current of God's thoughts, and leads into the state of the Galatians, who having begun in the. Spirit, went on to make a fair show in the flesh. We may enjoy God's truth in a fleshly way; but then God comes in in judgment.

May our hearts be so exercised before Him that we may become apt to learn more of His thoughts about service and testimony in communion with His own dear Son.

That which is nearest to the Lord's heart is the church for which He gave Himself. " Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." Have I got anything in my heart that answers to the Lord's as to this? God has brought us into communion with His own firstborn Son, and will have our hearts set upon Christ's interests, our thoughts occupied with Him, that we may be able to understand with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God." United by the Holy Ghost to all saints in Christ, you cannot isolate yourself from them without practically giving up the testimony and service He has appointed, and ignoring holiness as God has set it forth in Christianity. The Kohathites must work together.

Of course we do not find the church as the body of Christ in the Old Testament, but we do find there the " order " of the house of God, and in those who are brought so near to God as the Kohathites were, we have a distinct indication of what He seeks in those whom He has now made nigh in His Son.

First, they are under the power of the truth; they bear it on their shoulders, valuing it, and caring for it as that which is most precious. Secondly, they walk together; and what keeps them together too is the position of service in which they are set in dependence upon God. Thirdly, they do not seek to satisfy the craving of the natural heart with God's holy things; they walk as to them in God's presence in the Spirit, so as not to satisfy the lust of the flesh. These are the three characteristics of the Kohathites.

What a comfort and joy it is to the heart to know that God has brought His people so near to Himself that He may bless them there according to His own thoughts! Surely He desires for us that we may be practically under the power of the place in which He has set us "IN CHRIST." The tendency of human nature is always to measure things by the amount of outward blessing or success. It characterizes very much so-called christian work in the day we live in. But if I am really on God's ground, I shall be content with knowing that His eye is ever on His saints, and that He thinks of the appointed place and measure and sphere of service that He has allotted to each of His own. In this He is sovereign; but if living in the sanctuary and furnished with His thoughts, we shall get intelligent in discerning His ways, and find ever fresh occasions of joy in tracing them out. Personally we have to ask ourselves, Am I in the place where He wishes me to be? Am I occupied with the service of His Son in the path of obedience, and in constant dependence upon Him, allowing no principle of the flesh or of the world to come in between me and Him so as to hinder my adopting His divine " order"? All the rest must be left in His hand.

The Lord has put His name upon us, and calls us to do whatever we have to do for His sake. "I know thy works." Weakness is no real hindrance, for if felt as it ought to be, it only draws us nearer to Him, and becomes the opportunity for His grace to shine forth, and His strength to be made perfect in it. To such He says, "I have set before thee an open door which no man can shut." God will have us hold the truth in communion with Himself (otherwise it has no power over the soul), in order that we may be found going quietly forward as His witnesses, " led of the Spirit," and with the constant, sense of being in His presence under the power of the truth He has revealed to us.

We shall find that it is the cross of Christ-which furnishes the secret of power for testimony: " always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." May it be more and more so with us, through the infinite grace of God. [W. J. L.]

Christian Friend: Volume 12, Numbers 4:13

The covering of the brazen altar was a purple cloth, the royal color. If we suffer, we shall reign. There is a connection between the cross and the crown upon the earth and in heaven. Thus, was it with Christ, the King of the Jews, according to the superscription written on the cross; and the very throne of God was the answer to His sufferings, inasmuch as He was the burnt-offering, offered according to the power of the eternal Spirit acting in man, according to the exigency of the divine Majesty. The comparison of Psalms 19, 20, 21, 22. is, under this point of view, most interesting. Psalms 19 contains testimonies of the creation and the law. Psalms 20 presents Messiah suffering, but externally, so that man can take an interest in Him. Psalms 21, Messiah exalted; and, as a consequence, vengeance striking His enemies, who had rejected Him. Psalms 22, His sufferings, as forsaken by God Himself. This is the expression of Christ alone; whilst, in Psalms 20,21, the Jewish remnant were speaking of His outward sufferings. There is no vengeance in connection with those sufferings consequent on His being forsaken of God; for it was expiation. There is nothing but blessing, which the mouth of the Saviour announces, and to which He Himself responded by praising in the midst of His saints. This blessing will extend to the ends of the earth during the millennium.

J. N. D.

Christian Treasury: Volume 4, Levites: Numbers 4:1-35, The

This passage sets before us the particular service of the Levites in transporting the tabernacle and holy vessels, when the camp of the Israelites was set in motion during their wilderness journeys. It serves to show very distinctly that the work of the priests takes precedence of the service of the Levites. It also shows that the higher the order of the service, the more care must be taken to prevent any intrusion of the self-satisfaction so natural to man's heart.

Of the three families of the Levites, the Kohathites had the highest privilege, in that their particular office was to carry the holy vessels, but they were not permitted, on pain of death, so much as to catch sight of them, before they were covered. Particular injunctions, such as we do not find mentioned in the case of Gershon and Merari, were given to them, to carry everything confided to their care, upon their shoulders. It was doubtless a token of their complete subjection and submission to God's order. The Gershonites had charge of the coverings and hangings, and the Merarites, of the boards, pillars, and silver sockets.

The priests, whose duty was to cover the holy vessels, and prepare the burdens of the Kohathites, had their sphere of service particularly in the inside of the tabernacle, except for the Most Holy Place, as well as the privilege of feeding upon the sacrifices, and presenting the value of these to God.

Worship should precede all true service, and should characterize it. We should remember too that all believers are priests. Service is more of a specialty, and is fitly represented by the Levites. It is of deep interest to each one of us, for all are called to serve the Lord in some way or other.

Each family of the Levites had its allotted portion, and was required to keep to it, whereas worship is the portion of all God's people at all times. Of this, the attitude of Mary in Luke 10, affords a precious example. The portion she chose was a better one than that of Martha who was cumbered about serving the Lord.

Jesus may have been weary with His journey, and Martha's service may have appeared most fitting and appropriate, and to our point of view even necessary, bin Mary sees behind that hunger and weariness. Her soul is enthralled by the fullness and all-sufficiency of Christ, and in artless simplicity, she draws upon His unfailing resources. What a portion was hers! She had a choice to make, and she made it; she used the

opportunity afforded her, as one which was not likely to occur again, and that without any special effort on her part. She did not have to go out of her way to get the "good part." which the Lord said "should not be taken away from her." And consequently she had Jesus all to herself, while she sat at His feet, and heard His word. No wonder Martha envied that, though she was filled with her own good thoughts about serving.

Levitical service is of a different character. Each Levite had a burden, but not according to his own choice. He had simply to do what the High Priest told him. He was in absolute dependence, and there was to be perfect obedience, and the utmost reverence in carrying out all that was allotted to him.

The great thing for God's servant is to hear the Master's voice, and to obey it. We should not choose as to where we would go, nor determine what we would do. It is not ours to decide whether our burden is to be the holy vessels, the curtains, or the boards. The question for each one is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" It is, however, in all cases, very important to remember that our service as priests, feeding upon the value of Christ's sacrifice, precedes all suited Levitical service.

There is another precious truth set forth in the journeys of the Israelites through the wilderness. We find it in Num. 9:15 to the end, and how beautiful it is to see it! God Himself is with His people, in the midst of their camp. And so it is with us; God is with us here in our allotted place on earth. The commandment of the Lord decides where the rest is to be, and His commandment settles the movement proper for the journey. Whether the rest be long or short, or by whatever pathway He may lead us, all is ordered by Him, and our part is simply to "keep His charge."

In chapter 10, we have the trumpets, and by these God's mind was communicated to the people. Every movement in the camp was to be directed by the silver trumpets. How this speaks to us of the Word, in all our movements. May we always be ready listeners, expecting to hear the trumpet-sound! May God's Word be known and followed by us, all along our wilderness journey!

We have a portion unknown in times gone by, for, as children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we are called more or less to all the varied services set forth by priests, Levites, and camp-servants. It is our happy and blessed privilege to feed upon the Sacrifice inside the court, and then, as directed by our great High Priest in heaven, who is ever watching over us in all our journey, to listen to the trumpet-sound of the Divine Word, and thus do whatever we do, in word or deed, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

Num. 16 presents man's failure, and God's way of dealing with it, showing clearly who were His, and who were privileged to draw near to Him. The next chapter gives God's defense and exaltation of His servant in the presence of all. In chapter 19, we have the provision for any defilement, provided in the red heifer, without spot, or blemish, and never subjected to a yoke. What a type of our blessed Lord! Not only have our sins been put away by the sacrificial work of Christ, but as we journey on, we learn how the ashes of the red heifer, which furnished the water of separation, meet every defilement contracted along the road. Christ is not only our great High Priest, but our Advocate. He is the one who keeps us constantly in communion with Himself, through the operation of the Holy Ghost by the Word.

W. Lowe

Christian Friend: Volume 14, Numbers 32:29

In these words of Moses concerning the two and a half tribes, he lays down the three indispensable conditions of conflict with Satan's power. First, they must pass over Jordan; i.e., applying it to believers now, they must accept for themselves the truth of death and resurrection with Christ; for it is this which Jordan typifies. The Red Sea is Christ's death and resurrection for us, but the Jordan is our death and resurrection with Christ. Now this is true, as both Colossians and Ephesians show, of every Christian; only there are many who never enter into it, who rather, as to their experience, take up the ground of being in the flesh—a standing like that of the Jew under the law. The exact words of Moses, though he understood not their typical significance, are therefore to be noted. He says that these tribes must "pass over" Jordan if they are to have part in the Lord's wars; and, in like manner, all who would engage in true Christian conflict must take up for themselves (only to be done, of course, in the power of the Holy. Ghost) their association with Christ in death and resurrection, as also their being seated in Him in the heavenlies. This involves, it need hardly be said, the total and practical setting aside of the flesh in every shape and form; the truth of Gilgal, which is, according to Colossians 3:5, to mortify our members which are upon the earth, etc.; the acceptance of, death upon all that we are as children of Adam, that only Christ may be displayed in our walk and ways. Furthermore, Moses says that they must be armed; and the apostle likewise exhorts us to take unto us "the whole armor of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Ephesians 6:13) It were nothing but folly to expose ourselves to the attacks of Satan, his wiles, and his fiery darts, unless we were clothed in the divine panoply. Finally, he says, they must pass over Jordan, every man armed to battle, "before the Lord." This is the secret of all courage in conflict, to know that we are before the Lord; that we are underneath His eye. These conditions fulfilled, Moses promises that the land shall be subdued before them, for victory then would be assured. If the reader will now turn to Joshua 6, and read it carefully, he will discover that the children of Israel; when they encompassed Jericho, answered to these conditions (see vv. 7, 9, 13), and that therefore the city was subdued by the mighty power of God.

Correspondence, Correspondence: John 20:17-27; Num. 31:23; Wrath/Disobedience/Devil; Rom. 8:9

Ques. Why does the Lord is John 20:17 tell Mary Magdalene not to touch Him, yet in verse 27 Ile invites Thomas to 'thrust his hand into His side? T. W.

Ans. From verses 17 to 23 we 'find truth belonging to the Christian position and relationship. Whereas Thomas figures Israel who as a nation will not believe on, Christ Jesus as their Messiah till they see Him coming in His glory accompanied by His heavenly saints.

The 'Lord called Mary by name, and led her out of the Jewish fold. (John 10:3.) When He says, "Touch Me not," it is indicative of His new position at the Father's right hand, where He is not known after the flesh. (2 Cor. 5:16.) Then He gives her a message that tells 'her, Wand all believers now, that they are Christ's brethren, and that His Father is their Father, His God is their God. In the Verse 19, we have Christ the

center of gathering and they look upon His hands and His side, reminding them of 'His finished work. Verse 21, they are His sent ones, with the message 'of 'forgiveness of sins, also verse 22, they receive His resurrection life and the Holy Spirit.

Another period begins, eight days after. Thomas would not believe 'during the last Period. Now he is compelled to admit it. His confession, "My Lord and my God," shows it, but it is a Jewish expression.

Verse 29, refers to the believing remnant who are converted after the Church is caught up. They have a more blessed place, some of these are martyred, (Rev: 6:9-11; 12:11; 14:12, 13,) while other suffer persecution, but faithfully follow the, Lord. (Rev. 7:14; 14:4.) The Lord takes care of them. (12:14.,) Such passages tell of His appearing.' (Zech. 12:10; 14:5; Matt. 24:30; 25:31; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7.)

Ques. Numbers 31:23: by M. D. Ans. 'The war in this chapter was 'under the charge of Phinehas the priest, who had acted for' God in judging fornication and idolatry, when it tame into Israel by these same people, through the counsel of Baalam. (Chapter 25 and 31:16.) Here they are instructed to' throughly cleanse themselves from all taint of evil that might come from such associations. Everything they had taken had to pass through cleansing of fire or water. That is, judgment of evil by the Word of God.

By this we learn to exercise ourselves, 'to judge ourselves from all defilement from our previous associations, (2 Cor. 6:44-18; 7:1.)

Num. 35 The manslayer is the Jew of today. The Cities of Refuge is the' Church of God. If found still' in' his heart 'a murderer of Christ, he 'will' be executed. If, like Paul (1 Tim. 1:12-15,) he did it ignorantly in unbelief and owned his guilt, he will be saved.

There is no safety for him unless through Christ.

The manslayer might go out and be killed, it was only temporal and on condition of keeping inside, but the believer is eternally saved and can never perish, cannot go cut of Christ. (John 5:24.) When the high priest died in Israel, the manslayer could return to his inheritance. When the Lord Jesus comes forth from where He sits at the Father's right hand, Israel can again return to their land of Palestine.

Every sinner, Jew and Gentile, should flee at once to the Savior.

Ques. What is the difference of the children of wrath, the children of disobedience. and the children of the devil?

Ans. They are the same persons viewed from different stand points. Children of "wrath" indicates what is before them.

Children of "disobedience" refers to their unbelieving character. Children of the devil contrasts with children of God: Believers are redeemed, are brought to God, and are the children of God. Man, since the fall, is under wrath, is disobedient to God, and under the power of Satan.

Ques. Why are the terms "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" used in Rom. 8:9?

Ans. ''The Spirit of God" is God's mark put upon every believer. The Spirit of God dwells in him. He is called the "Spirit of Christ" because by Him the life of Christ is produced and seen in the believer. The same blessed person is spoken of in different ways in this chapter.

Christian Treasury: Volume 9, Counsel of Balaam, The

Num. 31:16

"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”

Here we see what Balaam's counsel was. This wicked man, a man whose eyes had been opened and willfully closed, when he saw that he could not curse the people, counseled Balak how to deceive them. What the enemy could not do with open assault, he would accomplish by stealth. This unfolds the true state of Balaam, for we might have hoped that he was changed by the revelations which he had. But the crafty man knew that if he could get the people to intermarry and then come to the idolatrous feasts, he would bring them down in their practice from the exalted place in which they stood, and then they would reap God's governmental dealings.

Now it is precisely here that we have to be on our guard. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are a people of God's choosing and blessing—a heavenly people. But the enemy would tell us that it is not too bad if we mingle with the world, and join in its pursuits.

In the Lord's address to the church in Pergamos we read, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." This period of the Church's history, depicted by Pergamos, is that wherein the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, and the Church and the world formed an unholy alliance. There were some then who taught that this was not bad, but the Lord tells us it was the doctrine of Balaam. It tells the saints that there is nothing wrong in unholy association with the world, and it is on every hand today. It is the warp and woof of present-day Christendom.

How terribly sad it is when such bad counsel comes from the lips of true children of God. Some have openly advised young Christians to join fraternities and earthly societies of one kind and another when God has said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Through bad counsel, even from Christians, many dear young believers have kept company with unbelievers, only to end in an unholy marriage, a linking of light and darkness. Dear young Christian, please remember that all such counsel comes from the enemy of your soul. It has a deeper source than the lips of the one who gives it. And if you follow the counsel of Balaam you will reap sore disappointment from the world, and the government of God in your life.

The devil can never frustrate the purposes of God to bless us. He can never keep us out of heaven, or take away one blessing which we have in Christ up there, but he can spoil your joy and mine, and ruin our testimony for the Lord if we follow the counsel of Balaam. The word "fornication" in Rev. 2 has reference to an unholy alliance between the people of God and the world-a mixture of holy and unholy. Our

happiness depends on walking in the good of all that God has given us. May the blessings bestowed on us and the glories that await us so captivate our hearts that the world will have no appeal to us. May the language of this hymn be the expression of our hearts:

"O worldly pomp and glory,Your charms are spread in vain;I've heard a sweeter story,I've found a truer gain.Where Christ a place prepareth,There is my loved abode;There shall I gaze on Jesus,There shall I dwell with God.”

Let us not trust in our own hearts, "for he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. 28:26. We have an old nature which is susceptible to the counsel of Balaam. And dear young Christians, beware of the little things. Great matters turn on little affairs. The bait may be small but the hook is large. It is the small edge of the wedge that enters first. The enemy of our souls would like to draw us away from faithful devotedness to Christ, and he will use any means that he thinks will succeed.

There are many practical applications that could be made of shunning the counsel of Balaam. But we leave it to the reader to make his own application in the matters of his daily life. Anything that will draw you away from Christ in heart, anything that will make you compromise the truth, anything that is contrary to the Word of God—shun it. The world is more to be feared when it smiles on us than when it hates us. "The kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Perhaps the devil would dangle financial advantage, or social advance, or any one of a thousand things before your eyes. May God give the reader and the writer spiritual perception to see the tempter's hand in these offers, even though disguised like Jacob's when Isaac said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." Gen. 27:22.

There was One who trod this path before us who never wavered for an instant in faithful devotedness to His Father, and in entire separation from the scene through which He passed. He began and finished the path of faith in all perfection (Heb. 12:1,2). May we keep our eyes steadfastly on Him.

P. Wilson

Girdle of Truth: Volume 2, Firmness of Love in Discipline, The

Numbers 27:12-23

There is a firmness in real, perfect love which an easy, amiable nature is able neither to appreciate nor exercise. We see it in the Lord Jesus. He maintained His discipline or education of His disciples, (of Peter for instance,) and did not relax, as one who sacrificed their blessing to present gratification. And we see this firmness of love in the Lord of Moses at the opening of this scene.

The Lord has Moses under discipline, and He will not abate the discipline. Moses had forfeited the land, and the Lord will not let him enter the land. In this He is peremptory. We see it further in Deut. 3:24-29. "I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get, thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan." If saints incur chastening, they must go through chastening, Jacob is a wanderer at Bethel, and the Lord does not send him home again, but lets discipline take its course, so that Jacob shall wander still further. It is not the way of divine love, which is perfect love, to slacken the hand in such cases. The style of the Lord here is peremptory. " And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin." (ver. 12-14.)

Moses then spake, and the excellent character of his words seems to be in this, that in a moment like the present, when he had been humbled and rebuked, and nature might have behaved itself sullenly, or at least been silent and reserved, Moses is all anxiety about the sheep of Israel. For Moses, as I may say, was no hireling, " whose own the sheep are not."He loved them as his own. He had an individual, personal interest in the flock. He loved them and their blessing, and could not bear the thought of their being left in the wilderness without a shepherd. Let another take his office. In meekness he will bear that, and rejoice in it-only let the flock be led and fed. Like himself on an earlier occasion, (see chap. 11,) His honor may be put on the Seventy, but Moses could say, "would to God that all the Lord's servants were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." Let him be displaced, so that Israel be fed. " And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and -which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." (ver. 15-17.)

This is very lovely workmanship of the Spirit in the servant of the Lord. This earnest care for the people, and this meek forgetfulness of himself, may rebuke our hearts. Moses does not resent the disadvantage into which he was put by the hand of the Lord; he is quiet under that, so that others be blest. " For we are glad, when we are weak; and ye are strong," said another like him.

The Lord then replies:-" And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation;" and perhaps more excellent than all are these words of the Lord.

He puts the matter at once into the hand of His servant. He commissions Moses to ordain his own successor, to lay his hand on Joshua. And He will have this done in a way to honor Moses-it shall be before the priest and in the sight of the congregation. And then, Moses shall instruct Joshua, give him a charge before the people, and constitute him (though not fully yet in measure) the head of Israel, as he had been, that Israel might be obedient.

This is very blessed. While the Lord, as we saw, will not relax the discipline under which Moses had brought himself, or alter the word which had gone out of His lips merely to gratify His servant, yet He will let all the people know, and Moses himself know, how He loved His disciplined servant, what a chosen vessel He esteemed him, and what an honored man he would make him. Moses shall have the honor of ordaining Joshua, of endowing Joshua, of instructing Joshua, and of putting some of his own honor upon Joshua. But still more. He answers his wishes to the full, as well as honors him. Moses had desired a shepherd for the sheep, one that would lead them out and bring them in; and the Lord now undertakes that Joshua shall be all this and do all this in the presence and in the behalf of Israel.

All this is very lovely in the faithful, unchanging love of God. The Lord would not slacken the hand or the word that was chastening His servant, but His heart is as near His servant as ever, and His purpose both to honor him and to make him happy, just as perfect and fresh as ever. It reminds me of Jesus and Peter. " I have prayed for thee," says the Lord Jesus to Peter, " that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22) Was not that putting new honor upon a chastened, humbled Peter? As before, in the time of Matt. 16:17, it was a rebuked Peter that was taken up to the mount of glory.

What a tale of divine, perfect love all these things tell us! Rebuked Peter is taken up the hill; humbled, chastened Peter is commissioned to strengthen his brethren; Moses, who had lost Canaan, is to ordain, endow, instruct, and dignify his successor-to strengthen, more than strengthen, his brother!

This is the way of perfect, divine love. It is firm, but it is unchanging in its favor and its objects-a mere easy, amiable nature, again I say, can neither appreciate or imitate it. Moses does as the Lord commands; (ver. 22, 23;) but that of course. It was his own joy and praise to do so.

This scripture gives us a beautiful sample of, communion between the Lord and one of His servants.

Helps by the Way: Volume 1, "The Vision of the Almighty."

Numbers 24:4-6.

Would we have happy thoughts about the saints? we must rise up to what the Church of God really is to God. We must get “the vision of the Almighty,” (the knowledge of the beauty and comeliness of the Church in all Christ’s perfectness) in order to have our souls soft, and tender, and humble about what passes around if we do, not see this we shall not be able to maintain the sense of Christ’s love. And, further, unless by the power of the Spirit we get away from circumstances, so as to see the Church, and the saints individually, as Christ sees them, instead of seeking to nourish and cherish them as Christ does, we shall be disappointed. This often makes us angry; it should not, but it does. We shall either lower our standard, and be content with conformity to the world in the saints, or become discontented and judicial, angry and bitter against them, the flesh being disappointed and vexed. Faith assumes the acceptance of the saints in Christ, while it seeks in the exercise of godly and gracious discipline that they should be maintained and bloom in the fragrance of Christ’s grace.

“As the valleys are they spread forth, as the trees of lign aloes which Jehovah has planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.” What a most blessed picture! And could we be happy in seeing them stunted, dishonoring the Lord? The glory of Christ is concerned; He gets His character from us. Paul says to the saints at Corinth (not “Ye ought to be,” but) “Ye are the Epistle of Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God.” No, I must grieve when I find in them that which is contrary to their beauty in Christ. They are “as trees of lign aloes, and as cedar trees.” It is not merely that God has not seen iniquity in them — He has seen beauty.

O beloved, our souls need to see the Church, and, the saints individually, thus in God’s vision, with our eyes open, in the Spirit: otherwise we shall not get into the power of God’s thoughts. We do not want “the vision of the Almighty” in order to ace that a saint is a saint; neither do we want “open” eyes, to discover inconsistencies in the walk of our brethren. We do want to rise up, and have our eyes open to see, as God sees, this beauty and glory of the Church.

God is in possession of us.

And remember this was said in the very presence of Balak. It is blessed we should have the certainty of these things in the midst of Satan’s power.

What does David say? “Thou preparest a table bore me in the presence of mine enemies.” The enemies can only look on and see how blessed I am, while I feast on what God has provided. “Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.” Not only have I got mercy and peace, but I have understood its fullness an overrunning cup. He can both dwell upon the proved faithfulness of God, and count upon it for the future also; as he goes on to say, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,” and finishes with, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob and thy tabernacles, O Israel!”

We have the strength of God’s love to think of for present comfort, and where there is a right view of the beauty and comeliness of the Church, and yet of her failure, there will be great humbleness and tenderness of spirit towards the Lord, and towards one another.

The Lord grant we may not sit down content in wretched coldness of heart, with evil in ourselves, or in our brethren. The waters of God are at the root of the plant, however miserable the pruning. How precious this! May we rise up in the sense of the beauty we have in God’s mind, to delight ourselves in Him who is our comeliness, to glory in him who is God’s delight, and our joy and glory. Amen.

J. N. D.

Things New and Old: Volume 24, What Hath God Wrought?

If we look at the history of the children of Israel at the close of their journeyings, and ask two questions, what widely differing answers we should get! Suppose we were to ask, first, What hath Israel wrought? We should get the answer in Deut. 9. Yes, at the very moment when God was just about to bring them through the Jordan into the land, they had been a stiff-necked people, and had been rebellious against the Lord. Not only had they made, and worshipped, the molten calf, but, as Moses said to them, “Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.” This, then, is the answer to the question, What had Israel wrought? Is it not evident, if God had dealt with them on the principle of law, according to what they had wrought, that, in righteousness, He could only have cursed them?

Let us now look at the other question—“What hath God wrought?” For an answer to this question we must turn to Numb. 23; 24 Here, at the close of their journey, we find the power of men and Satan combined to curse them, the very thing they deserved, if dealt with according to their sins. Balaam said, “Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me.... saying, Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” “From the top of the rocks.” What a contrast to the plains below! There we learn what Israel had wrought—what they were, and what they had done. Here, on the heights, we get God’s thoughts of His people, and what He had done. Balaam saw Him a person on high, whom he could not resist. Israel were a sanctified, or separated, people from the nations. God, who came down to deliver them from Egypt, is the same at the end of the journey. There is no change in God. “ God is not a man that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?.... He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.....God brought them out of Egypt..... According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?What they had wrought was rebelliousness and perverseness. God had redeemed them from Egypt, and at the end of the journey thus completely justified them.

All this is fact; but how God was righteous in thus passing over their sins, and not imputing them unto them, is not revealed in the Old Testament, and cannot be explained, except by that propitiation by the blood of Jesus which God hath set forth, to explain His righteousness, for the remission of the sins of His people.

We have thus, very briefly, looked at these deeply interesting scriptures. And now, at the close of another year, which may be the close of our journey here below, we would ask the same two questions; What have we wrought? What hath God wrought?

If we are believers, God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them—then, whatever He hath wrought in us is to His praise. But how much of our past has been like Israel in Deut. 9! Surely, if God were to deal with us according to what we have wrought, if He were to enter into judgment with us, could He justify our ways? No more than He could have justified Israel. Let us look up from these plains of Moab—let us look up from what we have wrought—whilst owning it all before Him; let us remember where God justified, it is then from that time said, “What hath God wrought?” Now, if we look up to those heights above, what do we see? One in His presence, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. What hath He wrought? Did He not come down in infinite love? Did He not engage our eternal redemption? Has He not accomplished it? Was He not delivered for our offenses? We see Jesus; we see Him; God sees Him. God raised Him from the dead for our justification, our accepted sacrifice, atonement, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. God says, all that believe in Him are justified from all things.

Thus the believer’s justification is entirely on the ground of what God hath wrought. “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This could not be on the ground of what we have wrought. Hence, whenever we look at ourselves, or what we have done or felt, as a ground of peace with God, we are unhappy and uncertain, filled with doubts and darkness. God, who changeth not, delivered up His well-beloved Son to bear our iniquities, and raised Him up again from the dead, for our justification—therefore He gives us the blessedness of sins forgiven, and sin not imputed. Yea, God, who, if He judged us, must condemn, is now our Justifier, Oh, wondrous grace reigning through righteousness! God is just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. From this time shall it be said, What hath God wrought? If we thus close our wilderness journey, let us remember God is for us. God is greater than Balak, or Balaam, or Satan the accuser. He is for us at the close as at the beginning. When He has proved us, and shown us all that is in us, He loves, He justifies unto the end. “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” “Moreover.... whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” What hath God wrought?

Christian Treasury: Volume 8, What Hath God Wrought!

Num. 23:23NUM 23:23

R. Erisman

The words "What hath God wrought!" were spoken by Balaam, a prophet in the land of Midian. He had been offered a reward by Balak, the king of Moab, if he would curse the people of Israel. Now Balaam was quite intrigued by this proposition, for we read in 2 Peter 2:15 that he loved the wages of unrighteousness. Balaam soon discovered, however, that cursing a people who enjoyed a favored-nation status with the God of the entire universe, the only true God, was no light matter. After being thwarted on several attempts to find some basis for pronouncing a curse, he exclaims out of frustration, or perhaps with a hint of admiration, "What hath God wrought!" And with these words, he confesses to Balak that a heathen prophet is not a match when the power of almighty God is at work.

These same words were used in a dramatic way in the United States about 150 years ago. Samuel Morse was working at that time on his invention which would enable communications to be established between distant points along a single electric wire. In order to demonstrate the potential of such a device, he invited several business dignitaries and government officials to observe firsthand its operation. He stationed these men some 40 miles distant from his laboratory, and at a prearranged time he transmitted the first telegraphic message. The message Samuel Morse chose for this occasion was not the familiar typing class exercise which proclaims: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." No, Samuel Morse's message on that historic day of May 25, 1844 was, "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!”

By choosing this message, it would seem Samuel Morse gave evidence to his personal conviction that the Creator of the world, with all of its attendant physical laws, was worthy of more honor than someone who merely discovered one of those laws and how it could be applied for

the benefit of mankind.

We do not find any other scriptural reference where the exact words of Balaam's exclamation were used, but we do find several individuals who acknowledged that the power of God had worked in a remarkable way.

Perhaps the first one to consider is the testimony of Job as mentioned in chapter 12 of the book bearing his name. "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath WROUGHT this?" Job 12:7-9.

It is well to remember that Job lived within the time frame of the book of Genesis, sometime after the flood of Noah's day. In this discourse of Job, he states that it was common knowledge that the earth itself, and the various forms of life on it, were the result of the power of God acting in creation.

Now we know from the first chapter of Romans that man polluted this fundamental truth, and began to supplant God and to worship the creature more than the Creator. And then that chapter goes on to show the degradation of man as a result of not wanting to retain God in his knowledge.

In our day, creation truths have largely been replaced by the theories of evolution, under the influence of most of the institutions of learning. In Job's day, however, creation under the hand of God was commonly accepted.

Moving across the pages of history about 500 years, we come to the days of the nation of Israel in its ascendancy. David is the central figure in those early days and, as we know, became their much-loved king. We learn quite a bit about David's thoughts, his desires, and his motives from his prolific writing in the book of the Psalms. Notice Psa. 31, "Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast WROUGHT for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." vv. 19, 20.

David knew very well that the earth and the heavens were created by God. He says so in Psa. 19,

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork." v. 1. He knew, too, that God made the inhabitants, for in Psa. 100 he says: "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." v. 3.

What sets David apart is that he discovered that the Creator God delights in communion with His creatures. He learned to confide in God in times of trouble and in times of rejoicing. David discovered that there is a communication line stretching from earth to heaven, that is not subject to equipment breakdowns, as was Mr. Morse's. Besides this, David discovered that there was a secret pavilion to which he could draw aside for these times of communion, completely separate from all outside distractions.

David was not so much impressed with God's greatness—how the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him—but rather with His goodness in wanting to dwell within the limited confines of his heart. And so he exclaims in admiration, "How great is Thy goodness.”

If we traverse a 1000-year period, we come to the early days of the Church. The apostles are still alive. They are preaching the gospel to the salvation of souls. They are teaching and instructing their converts. They are leaving a written testimony that will convey the truth of God to many succeeding generations after they have long left this scene.

It is through these writings that we learn that the power of God was displayed in many remarkable ways in the days of the early Church in order to establish it in a hostile environment. There was a power to unloose the tongues of unlearned and ignorant men to reach out and touch the surrounding nations. There was power to heal the sick with a simple touch of the hand, and the power of an embrace to raise the dead. The Apostle Paul seemed to excel in all these acts of power. It is no small wonder that he is the one to tell of the power of God unto salvation. He certainly felt that power as he lay in the dust on the Damascus road.

What captivated the heart of Paul, however, was the power of God in resurrection. In the first chapter of Ephesians we read: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He WROUGHT in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." vv. 19, 20.

Paul knew that the power that raised the Lord Jesus was going to be displayed again in the Church's resurrection day. Paul knew all of the details connected with that grand event. He taught them to the Thessalonian saints and to the Corinthian saints. He knew every minute detail. He even had a personal preview when he was caught up to the third heaven, but he was careful to state that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. So vivid was this experience, however, that the whole direction of his life seemed to be in anticipation of that moment when he would again enter into those heavenly courts. That seems to be a fair evaluation in view of what we read in Phil. 3:10, 11: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Paul understood very well the spiritual transformation that is to take place at that time, when mortal bodies shall put on immortality, when corruptible must put on incorruption. We might wonder whether Paul ever contemplated the physical significance of this event, whether he understood the engineering principles involved. His use of the word "power" seems to suggest that he did.

Consider for a moment that the power to raise a man's weight to the height of a typical cloud formation in the time of an eye blink is something like 50,000 H. P. And if we multiply this by the number of raptured saints making this journey, we are talking about trillions of H. P. Even the space age engines of our day pale into insignificance in comparison to this grand display of power. No wonder the Apostle was enthralled with the prospect of his participation in this event. But even the great Apostle had to learn that he must wait, just like the rest of us, to personally experience this mighty surge of power.

And now for a final reference, we turn to Dan. 4 where we read about a remarkable experience in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar. He was truly a great man. He was a great military general, having conquered the then-known world. He was a great engineer, having masterminded the building of Babylon with its huge protecting walls towering to a height of 300 feet and having a breadth of 75 feet. He was a great

architect, having designed the hanging gardens which were to become known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. He had one problem, however. It was "I" trouble. We read of it in Dan. 4:30. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?”

Nebuchadnezzar did not know that there was a God who could discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. He did not know that He was a jealous God, not taking lightly anyone who exalted himself to the heavens. As the story unfolds, we find Nebuchadnezzar becomes an unwilling student in God's school. God is the instructor and the lesson is found in verse 32, "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”

So Nebuchadnezzar became as the wild beasts, his hair became like eagle feathers, his nails like animal claws, and every morning his body was wet with the dew of heaven. Nebuchadnezzar learned well and the last verse tells of the great change that came into his life. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase." v. 37. Notice especially verse 2 of this same chapter, "I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath WROUGHT toward me.”

So, whereas the old Nebuchadnezzar liked nothing better than to promenade on the balcony of his palace and contemplate the greatness of what he had wrought, the new Nebuchadnezzar delighted in what God had wrought in him.

These four references to four individuals have highlighted four aspects which should be a part of the Christian experience.

First: There is the outward look which recognizes the physical environment, of which we are a part, as the result of God's power in creation.

Second: There is the inward look which recognizes that the power of God is still acting to change men's lives.

Third: There is the present appreciation and enjoyment of God's fellowship and communion in the secret pavilion of His providing.

Fourth: There is the anticipation of a personal participation in the events of the Church's resurrection, God's grand display of His mighty power.

It is interesting to notice that each of these four aspects can be punctuated, as it were, by those four words which Balaam, a heathen prophet, uttered so long ago: "WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!"

Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith: Volume 4, 1866, Balak, Balaam, and Israel

Now Israel are in the plains of Moab, having only Jordan between them and the land of their rest. But had they a right to enter therein? If the enemy cannot oppose by force, he will try another way, by putting under the curse the people who well deserved it.

Balak sends for Balaam. The grand question in this touching scene is this: “Can Satan succeed in cursing the people of God, so as to prevent their entrance into the land of promise?”1 It is not merely a question of redemption, and of the joy of redemption at the beginning of their course, but in the end, when all their unfaithfulness has been manifested; their unfaithfulness even after the Lord has brought them to himself. Can Satan succeed, then? No.

When Modes, in those same plains, has to say, with regard to their conduct towards God, “You have been a perverse and rebellious people from the day that I knew you,” and, indeed, they had been excessively forward, a most stiff-necked people; do we not know this? Well, God says by the mouth of Balaam, the involuntary witness of the truth, “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.” What a testimony! What wonderful grace! What perfection in the ways of God! God sees aright; he makes no mistake; he speaks the truth according to the perfectness of his infinite intelligence; and it is because it is infinite, that he can see no iniquity in the redeemed people. How could he see any in those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb? Nor is it his mind to see it. In his dealings with the people, he will see everything, —take knowledge of everything; but with the accuser it is the question of righteousness. God only sees this, that according to the counsels of his grace, he has given a ransom; the sins of his people have been atoned for. He could not in justice see those sins. The mouth of the accuser is therefore obliged to confess that there are none, and that there is no power of the enemy against Jacob. What is peculiarly blessed and comforting in this is, that God acts and judges from his own thoughts. From beginning to end he has had thoughts about us; he has done what was needed to reconcile all his ways in the accomplishment of them with eternal righteousness; but he has these thoughts and acts towards us according to them. It is these faith apprehends, accepts, and builds on. Hence joy and peace. While the presence of God, in the midst of an accepted people, to whom a new nature has been given, and his judging all there, secures practically the holiness which he cannot dispense with, or judges departure from it, so as to vindicate his name. But here it is God acting, judging, in spite of all, according to his own thoughts.

Balaam was a sad character. Forced to see from afar off the blessing of God upon his people; when he is near, and actuated by his own heart and will, he sees nothing but the way of error, into which he wishes to drag them, that they may forfeit that blessing, if that, were possible; reasoning upon this ground, that the righteous God could not bless a sinful people. One cannot think of any iniquity worse than that.

We shall say a few words as to his typical character. Let us pursue the history. Balak seeks him. Balaam wishes to inquire of the Lord, either from instinctive fear, or to attach, in the sight of others, the importance of the name of the Lord to what he does. Effectively God does interfere, and even goes first to Balaam. He takes the matter in hand, and has power over the unjust mind of Balaam against his will; for Balaam has no understanding of the mind of God. God said, “Thou shalt not go, —they are blessed.” What is his answer? “The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go.” He would gladly have gone; his heart was set upon the reward of Balak; but he fears before God. The blessing of the people does not come into his mind; he is a complete stranger to the generosity of grace; insensible to the thought of their being blessed of God, of delight in his blessing on his people. Consequently, when there is a renewal of the temptation, he says that he cannot transgress the commandment of the Lord his God; he puts on piety, and, in reality, he was not entirely without sincerity, for God held him close, and, indeed, allowed all this; but, at the same time, Balaam induces the messengers of Balak to tarry and see what God would say further. What did he

want to know more about an Invitation to curse that people who, God had told him, were blessed? He had no sympathy whatever with the thoughts of the heart of God, none with himself: he was governed by the fear of consequences. Otherwise, he would have been so happy in the blessing of the people, that he would have shuddered at the idea of cursing what God had blessed. God, however, will use him, to give a glorious testimony on behalf of his people, whilst, at the same time, condemning the crooked ways of the prophet, for they were indeed crooked. He shows him his perverseness, his folly, to be more stupid than the ass he was riding: but, at the same time, he makes him go on in his way. This meeting in the way does serve to force him, through fear; to utter faithfully what God should put into his mouth. Balaam goes to meet—he does not say what. It is plain (24:1) that he had mixed enchantments with the profession of the name of the Lord, and that he had thus been the enemy's instrument, with the credit of the Lord's name, a deeply solemn case. He was thus going to meet the mysterious power which came there, and Elohim came to meet him. God restrains and hinders on the behalf of his people all power of the enemy, and causes Balaam to say what he wishes to be said. Balaam looks upon Israel from above, and utters his prophecy. This prophecy is divided into four parts. It has Israel for its object; but as to the principle of it, it applies also to the Church. The first announces the separation of the people from the world. "The people shall dwell alone, separated unto God, a people not reckoned among the nations." The second prophecy declares that God does not repent. God has blessed them; shall he not confirm what he has said? The people are justified, and without sin in the eyes of God. God it was who had brought them out of Egypt. This people had "the strength of the unicorn, and the enemy, whom he had sought, had no power against them.

Balaam, seeing at last that God was bent upon blessing, yields to the power of God, goes no longer to the meeting of enchantments, and the Spirit of God comes upon him. The justification of the people being now declared, the Spirit of God can bear testimony to them, instead of confining his testimony to the thoughts and intentions of God. Balaam sees them from above; seeing the vision of the Almighty, he sees the people according to the thoughts of the Spirit of God, as seen in the mind of God from above. The eyes of the prophet are open. And remark, here, that it is neither the anticipation of Canaan, nor Israel in their permanent habitations: Balaam turns his face towards the wilderness and sees Israel abiding in their tents. There the Spirit sees them, and declares the beauty and the order of the people in the eyes of God. The water of the refreshing of God was also always with them there; they were as trees that the Lord had planted, therefore will they be great amongst the nations, a source of power and joy. They drink from the sources of God, and pour out from them abundantly for others. God had brought them out of Egypt; they were the work of God, and the power of. God was to go with them against their enemies. We get here thirdly, then, beauty—a freshness, the sources of which do not dry up, and power (what the Spirit does for the Church). Then, in the fourth place, the coming of Christ, the Star of Jacob, who. crowns the glory of the people. Only, as it comes in the midst of Israel, it is in judgment. With regard to us, it will be to take us hence, —in order to make us participate in the joy of his presence, —to the marriage of the Lamb.

In a word, we set the separation of the people front the world, their justification, their order, their beauty, as planted by God. near the everlasting sources of the river of God, and then the coming of Christ. The prophecy is perfectly beautiful.

It is very important for us to see sometimes the Church from above; in the wilderness, but, in the beauty of the thoughts of God, a pearl without price. In the midst of the camp below, in the desert, what murmurings, complainings, how much indifference, what carnal motives would have been witnessed and heard! From above, for him who has the vision of God, who has his eyes open, everything is beautiful.

"I stand in doubt of you," says the apostle; and immediately after, "I have confidence in you through, the Lord." We must get up to him, and we shall have his thoughts of grace, who sees the beauty of his people, of his Church, through everything else; for she is beautiful; but for this, one would be either entirely discouraged, or satisfied with evil. This vision of God removes these two thoughts at once. We see the final judgment of the ships of Chittim, that is, of the West, north of the Mediterranean, and that of their chief, after he has afflicted Asshur and Eber also. It will be the terrible judgment of God at the end of this age.

A few words more on the position of Balaam.

At the end of a dispensation based on any knowledge whatever of God, when faith is lost and profession retained, this last obtains a renown of which men glory, as now, of the name of Christianity: Satan uses it. Power is sought from him; they go to meet enchantments, because, whilst glorying in the revealed name of God, they seek to satisfy their own lusts, and the importance of the name of God is tacked on to the work of the devil. However, God is acknowledged up to a certain point. They fear him, and he may interfere; but the system is diabolical, under the name of the Lord, with a partial fear of the Lord, and a dread which recognizes him as an object of fear. The people of God are preserved; but it is a very solemn thought, and it is truly the history of the Christian system.

Faithful Words for Old and Young: Volume 15, Spring up, O Well!

(NUMBERS 21:17.)

THE journey is almost over — the wilderness well nigh passed — the need of the rock gone by. And on the very borders of the land we find to Israel are given "springing wells" and a song. They entered the wilderness with a song — "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously," but its echoes soon died away amidst the murmurs and provocations of the journey. At the end, they have another song, as the princes and nobles digged with their staves — confession of their pilgrimage. Yes, another and a pilgrim song, not loud, with timbrel and dance — not of the great things done at the Red Sea — "Is it not said in the book of the wars of the Lord what He did in the Red Sea?" — but a humbler refrain: "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it."

"A little while our Lord shall come." "Home! home of light and glory," we too sing.

Ah! God has a history of our wilderness campaigns. All the victories His saints have achieved over sin and Satan; every struggle and tear in secret, unknown to any but God; trials of faith and patience, found unto praise, and Honor, and glory at the appearing of Christ. All the victories of God's saints are display ed in His chronicles, in marvelous grace He giving them credit for what His sustaining power has wrought: "What He did in the brooks of Arnon" ... "there was not one city too strong for us: the Lord our God delivered all unto us." (Num. 21:14.; Deut. 2:36.)

Meanwhile we have the springing well; and the “song,” spite of groans, tears, sorrow, and failure, is still ours to sing, as we near the end of the journey. The excitement and exultation of the first song may have passed away, as does the blossom from the tree, but precious fruits of the Spirit — love, joy, peace— remain to ripen in the sunlight of His love and presence.

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink... and the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” J. B. M.

Bible Herald: 1877, Near the End of Our Journey

Israel was nearing the end of their journey. We are at the close of our wilderness journey: we are about to enter, as this people were, into the promised inheritance.

Two things are strikingly presented in the chapters before us—the condition of the people, the wondrous and marvelous manifestations of the grace of God. Every step of our journey we prove it, but very markedly at the end, and in a different way. This passage brings before us the patient grace of God. You will observe the people’s determination utterly to destroy the enemies of God. They would have now no quarter whatever for that which was opposed to the people, the purposes, and the counsels of God. Israel vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, “If Thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand then I will utterly destroy their cities.” One of the main charges of God, when Israel had left Egypt (Deut. 7), was that everything that pertained to the people in the land whither they went to possess it, should be utterly destroyed. “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth,”— v. 6-8. Their altars, their pillars, were to be utterly destroyed, and their graven images to be burnt with fire. Every trace of idolatry was to be purged away. What sorrow the neglect of this injunction wrought. O what wretchedness and misery to this present hour, for Israel is still bearing the indignation of Jehovah by reason of their manifold transgressions and their mighty sins.

When they would destroy the Canaanites and their cities the Lord harkened to the voice of Israel, delivered up their enemies into their hand. When the heart was right there was no difficulty. God then became the sovereign actor in the seem, and Israel utterly destroyed the Canaanites and their cities. Now, beloved, it is just at such a moment we get one of these remarkable reactions in the history of the people. The Lord had delivered them from their enemies and from the power of their adversaries. Shall I say they forgot themselves? They forgot God. The present bitter circumstances turned away their heart from Him. They had been promised rest; they had conflict still, they were not yet in the land. Their faith failed. How low we sink when faith goes down “The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. They spake against God and against Moses.” One of the most serious of evils, is this murmuring. They spake against the Lord God. The heart of the people rose in rebellion. How did God meet this sin of His people? We get one of these illustrations here of the wonderful free grape of God. The brazen serpent is brought in. It occurs at the beginning of the Gospel of John. Everything is over as regards this world, and as regards man. The Jew is under judgment. The whole scene by which we are surrounded is regarded as under darkness. “The light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” So it continues, light and darkness, darkness and light. He had weighed men. He could not commit himself to them. He needed not that any should testify of man. He knew all men. He knew what was in man. He knew the whole history of man, and He did not commit himself unto them. In John 3 we get the Lord bringing into the midst of this scene of death and darkness, eternal life. The question of sin must be as truly put out of the way as the question of the enemy. What was the brazen serpent to Israel? God had said to them by the fiery serpents, if you cast me off you shall know what the serpent is. He lets the serpent loose upon them. They are bitten. What is the remedy? The serpent is lifted up, the brazen serpent; lifted up because of sin. The remedy for sin was not to be found anywhere on the earth. Something is lifted up, you must look at that. It is not remedy. It is absolutely another thing brought in. As many as looked on it lived, “it came to pass that if the serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” One great leading fundamental truth, that He who knew no sin, God made Him sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We go forth as those that have been healed of the bite of the serpent.

Verse 10.-And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in Oboth. They set forward. God forbid we should settle on our lees. It is no time, no day for that. The powers of darkness are all abroad, they are mustering their hosts. Israel journeyed from Oboth and pitched toward “the sunrising,” a happy little word for us. From thence they removed across Arnon. “Wherefore it, is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, and at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Arnon, and leaneth on the border of Moab.” From thence they went to Beer; that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, “Gather the people together and I will give them water.” Very touching is this instance of the grace and of the tender pity of God. He knows the trials of his people. However unwatchful and prone to rest upon our oars, after all it is those blessings that come from Himself, that strengthen and refresh us for our onward journey. “Gather the people together and I will give them water.” Here we are, at the end of our journey, not knowing when the trumpet may sound for us to cross Jordan. Without any effort, “I will give them water.” It is very pleasant to the people. “Then sang Israel this song, ‘Spring up’ (ascend, marg.) O well; sing (answer, marg.) ye unto it!” There was a noble and glorious song at the start, at the Red Sea, rejoicing in the victory the Lord had wrought over His enemy. “Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed, Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.” How soon that song had died away. Here is a little song at the end of the journey; a more subdued note. “The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people dug it with their staves.” Here is refreshing for us as we get to the end of our journey. God is not going to do great new things; it is not the smiting of the Rock again, to which He calls us.

If you will use diligence, if you will dig, I will give you water. “Spring up O well.” May the Lord make this a time of profitable instruction, and refreshing to our souls; for His own name’s sake. Amen.

Christian Treasury: Volume 1, Nehushtan

What a peculiar word is Nehushtan. It means a piece of brass. The serpent of brass that Moses made had been kept all those many years from Moses to Hezekiah. He called it Nehushtan.

In the journeys of the children of Israel through the wilderness, we read that, "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." Num. 21:4. Then, "The people spake against God, and against Moses." Num. 21:5. Because of their murmurings, "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." Num. 21:6.

The people confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray unto the Lord to take away the serpents.

Moses prayed for the people and then the Lord instructed him to make a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole. When anyone was bitten, all he had to do was to look at the serpent of brass and he lived.

What saved the people was the faith to believe the word of the Lord, and not that piece of brass.

In the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it." 2 Kings 18:4. So they worshipped that visible, material object and forgot the word of the Lord.

Would men do such things today? Is it possible that the cross could become an object of veneration? Or might a sepulcher or some so-called holy place in the so-called holy land be worshiped?

John's last word in his first epistle is, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Also in 1 Cor. 10:14 we are told, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

Material things contribute nothing to a Christian's worship today. Although we are on earth, actually our worship is in heaven where Christ has gone, "now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. There, "into the holiest," we are invited to, "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Heb. 10:19-22.

Let us be sure that we, "worship God in (by) the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3. How easily and quickly the flesh will make an idol! "The flesh profiteth nothing." John 6:63. Ed.

Girdle of Truth: Volume 8, Israel at Meribah

(Num. 20:1-13.)

In the First Epistle of John we are told what God is. " God is light," and " God is love." Here we get these statements illustrated by God's dealings with Moses and Aaron on the one hand, and Israel on the other.

The forty years of wandering were drawing to a close. The thirty and eight years which were to elapse since their rebellion at Kadesh Barnea in the wilderness of Paran, would, ere long, be ran out. The brook Zered, the boundary between, the wilderness and that part of the land eastward of Jordan, which they were to possess, would soon be crossed. And now the fortieth year from the exodus commences with the events spoken of in this chapter, a year so full of subjects of deep interest to the nation at large: during its first month, Miriam died; ere the fourth month had run its course, Israel murmured afresh against God; Moses and Aaron failed in obedience through unbelief, their punishment was announced, and on the first day of the fifth month it commenced to take effect-Aaron died. (Num. 33:38.) The events of their wilderness life after leaving Sinai are soon told. Num. 10:33-xxi. 1 comprise them all. On the part of God, it is a record of patience, grace, and goodness; on the part of Israel, of stubbornness and iniquity, relieved only by their conduct as related in Num. 15:32-36, and their vow to the Lord about the Canaanites. (Num. 21) At chapter x. 33 we read of the ark of the Lord going before the camp instead of in their midst, to find them out a resting place, a three days' journey; a beautiful picture of God's thoughtfulness for the people he had redeemed from Egypt, and was leading by the path He had marked out to Canaan. The first stage on their journey, as given in the itinerary of Num. 33, is Kibrothhattaavah. (Ver. 16.) The first notices we have of Israel's conduct after leaving Sinai, are their complaining at Taberah, and lusting for flesh with the mixed multitude at Kibroth-hattaavah, dissatisfied with the miraculous supply God had provided for them in the manna. We next find them despising the pleasant land, and proposing to return to Egypt, and then madly going forth to encounter the armies of the Arnalekites, against God's express command. (Chapter 13;14) God's authority in the person of Moses having been despised by Aaron and Miriam, (chap. xii.,) we have some of the people now following the example set them. Korah and his company seek the priesthood, (chap. xvi. 10,) whilst Dathan and Abiram refuse obedience to Moses. (Chapter 16:12.) The earth opened her mouth to swallow up the congregation of Dathan and Abiram, and the fire from the Lord consumed the company of Korah. With this fresh in their minds, the people on the morrow are found in rebellion, murmuring against Moses and Aaron, saying, " Ye have killed the people of the Lord." (Chapter 16:41.) To this succeeds the murmuring in the passage before us. Their last great sin in the wilderness is related in chapter xxi. Discouraged by the way, loathing the manna, they speak against God and against Moses. On the part of the people then, we read of little else than rebellion and iniquity; on the part of God, we read of patience that never wearied, grace that never tired, goodness that never failed.

Punishments there were, yet the people remained unchanged. The burning at Taherah, the graves at Kibroth-hattaavah, the death of the spies before the Lord, the slaughter at Horrnah, the awful end of Korah and his company, as well as of the congregation of Dathan and Abiram, and the plague which broke out the next day, failed to make any lasting impression on their hearts. When another occasion presented itself the people murmured afresh. In the midst of this picture of a people's iniquity how the character of God shines out. Those who had refused to go up to the land must wander in the wilderness, and die there, but their children shall enter on the promised inheritance. sad, indeed, must this announcement have been, though less, far less, than they deserved. But, to assure them of the fulfillment of His promise, God immediately afterward gives ordinances for their observance, which could only take effect when their children should have entered the land He would give them. (xv.) They may fail, but He cannot; and though the children, by their perverseness of heart, deserve to die like their fathers in the wilderness, they are brought out of it, and do enter on their inheritance at the appointed time. On the 14th day of the first month they left Egypt, and forty years after on the 10th day of the same month they crossed the Jordan. (Josh. 4:19.) But neither grace nor government makes any permanent impression on the people. Miriam has just died, another testimony to man's sad condition, and the wages of sin; yet, the moment they want water, they are ready, because of this, to give up all hope of the land.

They gather themselves against Moses and Aaron, and chide with Moses,:

" Would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord; and why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." (Chapter 20:4-6.) But why chide with Moses? Was it that he had once before brought water for them from the smitten rock? Apparently their thoughts here, as often before, could not rise above the instrument. They come not to him as the mediator to intercede with God on their behalf. They turn not direct to God in their trouble, but chide with Moses, and hold him responsible for their distress. A distress it certainly was, and a great one; but they turn not to Him who could relieve them. They first gather together against Moses and against Aaron. They next chide with Moses instead of crying to God and asking Him to help them. God is left out of their thoughts as far as looking up to Him. It is man, Moses, not the Lord, that they are thinking of. How often was this the case in their history in the wilderness. At the Red Sea, at Marah, in the wilderness of Sin, at Rephidim, and now in Kadesh, they find fault with Moses instead of looking to God. But iniquity waxes bolder, and they exclaim, " Would God we had died when our brethren died before the Lord." Thirty-seven years had elapsed since that event; for of the ten spies is it said, " They died by the plague before the Lord." (Num. 14:37.) Unbelief working within leads to such thoughts as these. Their brethren had died as a judgment of God. They declare their readiness to have died then. What profit was it to have wandered so long in the wilderness? What availed them all their marches in the desert? The land for which they left Egypt seemed as far off as ever. " Better to have died," they imply " at once," than have dragged on such a weary burdensome existence. Thus unbelief reasons, if it can be called reason; it can only judge by sight. The way was long, but who had made it so? What might have been accomplished in eleven days was taking them near thirty-eight years. (Deut. 1:2.) Better, they thought, to have died at once, better to have died long ago, than suffer a little now to be hereafter abundantly recompensed in the land of delight. Death in the wilderness seems preferable to life in Canaan, if it can only be reached by such a path.

But this is not all. Why in the wilderness at all? Full of this, they accuse Moses and Aaron of having brought them up into an evil place with nothing but death before them, instead of the vines, pomegranates, and fig-trees they expected; and they Were the congregation of the Lord. (Ver. 4, 5.) The Lord's people they now call themselves, yet they look not to him in their trouble. When a difficulty is before them they hold Moses responsible; when they want an occasion against him, it is the Lord's people he is thus ill-treating. How inconsistent man is! What blindness if the Lord was their God, if they were His people, why so faithless? Whose arm had smitten the Egyptians, and broken the chains that bound them as slaves? If He was their God, and they were His, how could Moses and Aaron attempt anything against them and succeed? Had He power over the armies of Egypt, and was He powerless before two of His creatures? Besides, who had brought them out of Egypt? They say it was Moses; their fathers had sung that it was Jehovah. (Ex. 15:13.) Then it was for blessing, now it is for destruction. The Lord's people in the wilderness about to perish for want of water, brought there by Moses and Aaron, as if against their will I " Wherefore have ye made us," &c. (Ver. 5.) What dishonor to God in all this, affirming by their words that there was a difficulty too great for Him; and that two of His creatures could prevail against the Lord Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth! What dishonor, too, to God, in preferring Egypt without redemption to the wilderness with it. Death in the wilderness, life in Egypt—anything seems preferable to their present condition.

To what a pitch of iniquity has unbelief brought them! They are ready to part with all they had in prospect, and to return to Egypt. Freedom with the Lord in the wilderness is worse than slavery with the fleshpots in Egypt. They know not the Lord, they have no conception of what He can do. Unbelief cannot apprehend what resources there are in Him. At the Red Sea we see the same spirit, (Ex. 14:11,12,) indicating that they had no idea of deliverance. All they looked for was death. Thirty-nine years pass away, and we find their children, who witnessed how God had always delivered their fathers, using very similar language. They were truly in a great strait, but God was there. He had a resource they never dreamed of. He had before opened a way in the sea, and delivered them forever from their taskmasters, the Egyptians. But this fails to impress them with a belief in His ability to save them. Fresh difficulties arise, they murmur against Moses, and can see nothing before them but death. The different circumstances bring out the unbelief of their hearts, and show at the same time what Jehovah can do.

There is another phase of unbelief which this history brings out. We may doubt God's power at all to help us as Israel did; or we may doubt His ability to deliver us in any way different from that which He has already made use of. This Moses did. Till they leave Sinai we see him steadfast in his confidence in God. As long as difficulties arose which had never arisen before, he counts on God, and counts truly. He may not know what God will do, but feels assured, when the want is set before Him He will act in delivering power. When, however, a difficulty, similar to that which has been met, has to be solved, he does not understand how God can meet it in any way but the one. What He has done He can do, Moses believed, which the people did not. But his faith fails when a different manner of acting is announced. God delivers His people as He will, varying the manner as He sees fit. This is a truth of deep, practical importance to each one of us.

The waters of Marah were healed by a tree, the waters of Jericho by salt. (Ex. 15:25; 2 Kings 2:21.) At the first contact with the water by the priest's feet, who bare the ark, the Jordan was divided, and the people passed through as on dry land. Elisha, smites the Jordan with Elijah's mantle, and finds the way made for him to pass over. (Josh. 4; 2 Kings 2) Elijah stretched himself three times on the lifeless body of the widow of Zarephath's son, and he revived. Peter spoke to Dorcas, and she lived. (1 Kings 17:21,22; Acts 9:40,41.) The hosts of Israel have water from the smitten rock at Rephidim. The allied armies of Judah, Israel, and Edom find ditches filled with water without wind or rain in the wilderness of Edom. (Ex. 17; 2 Kings 3)

Moses was to learn the resources at the command of Jehovah. When God promised Israel flesh for one day in the wilderness of Sin, he believed He would make it good. But when He promises them meat a whole month, his faith is staggered. (Num. 11:21,22.) But the Lord performed His promise. A wind went forth from the Lord that night and brought quails from the sea; and the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails. So in the passage before us. The rock had been smitten before ere the water flowed out. He thinks it must be smitten again. Do we not know something akin to this in our individual experience? We may trust God to a certain point, because He has acted before. But the circumstances are a little different, and we do not trust Him to act as He will. We would dictate the manner of acting, indicate the way of deliverance, instead of leaving it with Him to originate His plan, and carry out His design. We, thus, practically limit God as Israel did. (Psa. 78:41.)

The people want water. We never read of their wanting manna, after it commenced to fall, till they could eat of the old corn of the land. That never failed throughout their wilderness existence. Food to support life, heavenly bread, was always supplied. They might loathe it, and ask for flesh; but they never had to cry a second time for bread. Not so with the water; that did fail, till God intervening supplied it in His own way. Food for our souls will never fail us; but with the refreshment by the way which the Holy Spirit gives, the case is different. That may stop to make us realize our dependence on the Lord, then it will flow out again. The Spirit may be grieved, then refreshment will cease, till, the soul

being restored, the stream can burst out anew. This the people learn in type, and we in its literal exactness. God knew their thirst, and He would satisfy it. They may murmur against Moses and Aaron; chide with the former, and forget what God has done-He answers all with patience and grace. This is worthy of notice. Before they came to Sinai, as each fresh need was felt, they murmur, and He gives what they want in pure grace. But, after they have promised at Sinai to obey His will, when they murmur again, judgment befalls the rebellious among them. Not so here, He sends them no judgment. They were ready with this difficulty before them to give up the land of promise, and renounce all the privileges of redemption. He bears with them, showing that He is love. He gives them water, and that abundantly. It is no scanty supply: " They drank and their beasts also." (Ver. 11.)

But how can it come out of the rock? At Rephidim the rod of Moses, associated with God's power, as displayed in Egypt and at the Red Sea, is the instrument selected. Now the rod of Moses gives place to the rod laid up before the Lord. (See Num. 17) Moses is now to speak to the rock and the water will flow out. Why this change? What is the use of the rod if he was only to speak to the rock? The Lord would teach a lesson here, not to Israel only but also to us. The rod was the rod which budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds; a mere rod cut off from the root from which it derived its life, apparently dead, yet giving evident proofs of vitality in itself. By it God had settled forever in Israel the question whom He would choose to draw nigh unto Him. This rod typified priesthood, the priesthood of the Lord, as exercised in resurrection. Armed with this they were to present themselves before the rock, and speak to it. That rock, we are told, typified Christ. (1 Cor. 10) Water by the way for His people must come from the Lord, but He must be smitten ere it can flow. Once smitten the rock needs no smiting again, for He died but once, and lives for evermore. But the stream it contains can only come as ministered through the Lord, the priest on high. Without the rod no water could come. Without the Lord no blessing can reach us. It was from the rock the waters came, It is from Christ we have the living water. (John 4) It was in the rock the fountain was. It is in Christ all our blessings are centered; and the Holy Ghost, typified by the water, (John 7:39) sent from Christ, ministers of Christ to our souls. It is the Lord as priest His people need for conveyance through the wilderness till they rest in the land. We see this illustrated in Israel's history. (Num. 27;16-20. 21.)

But Moses disobeys and smites the rock. The disobedience of one does not deprive the rest of the water. God gives that in grace, only the more conspicuous for the failure of Moses and Aaron. He is love. But He is also light. Hence, while giving Israel what they want, acting towards them in grace, He deals with Moses and Aaron in government. " He spice unadvisedly with his lips." The Lord will not let it pass. " And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron. Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Ver. 12.) What a view this gives us of God.

Moses, with whom He could speak face to face, as with a friend, who had been admitted to such close intercourse with God as none before him had enjoyed, and Aaron the saint of the Lord, (Psalm evi. 16) are not allowed to enter that land to which they had so long looked forward. But Israel, rebellious Israel, who " often provoked him in the wilderness, and grieved him in the desert," do enter in. To sinners He will act in pure grace. But His saints, those who are privileged to come nigh, must learn that He deals in government. Perfect grace, perfect holiness-such is our God, and such we see Him here. Aaron indeed had sinned twice before-once in the matter of the calf, and once in the rebellion with Miriam. But Moses till now had been obedient. His faith might be weak before, but He had obeyed the Lord's commands. Here he disobeys, and judgment is immediately pronounced on both. These two who had before interceded for Israel, and that successfully, when the anger of the Lord had been kindled against them, are now the only ones made to feel the effect of disobedience. What a view it gives of His character. He deals in grace, but He acts in government.

This opens up a very solemn question for His people in all times-government in His house. " I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me," He had said before. (Lev. 10:3.) The two who had the closest access to God, the mediator and high priest, are the two on whom the governmental dealings of God here fall- " Because ye sanctified me not." Their faith failed, they disobeyed. Occupied more with the sin of the people and the authority with which he has been invested than with God's grace, Moses exclaims, " Hear, now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" How far below the thoughts of God do His people often fall. God did not upbraid Israel; He did not show His anger. He heard their complaints, witnessed their sin, but acted in grace. How slow are we to learn what He is. But if we fail to sanctify Him, He will be sanctified. Israel strove with the Lord. He gave them water. He is sanctified in them. Perfect in His grace towards Israel, He yet visits on Aaron and Moses their disobedience. He can forgive sin, but He will chasten His children. 1 Cor. 11:30; James 5:14,15; 1 John 5:16; Heb. 12:7-11, tell the same tale. It may be death as here, (see 1 Cor. 11; 1 John 5,) or it may be temporal trouble of some kind, out of which we are delivered, whilst in this life, through the intercession of others. (James 5:15,16; 1 John 5:16.) Miriam smitten with leprosy was healed at the intercession of Moses. " The prayer of faith shall save the sick." Moses and Aaron must die ere Israel pass over Jordan. " For this cause many sleep." " There is a, sin unto death." In this, dispensations make no difference. God's character is the same. He may reveal more of Himself to one age than He did to a former age, but His character is unchanged. If He deals in grace, which far surpasses human thoughts or man's expectation, He acts in government. While forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, He will by no means clear the guilty. He pardoned the iniquity of the people at the intercession of Moses, but dealt with them in government. (Num. 14:20,22.) He does forgive, He does save sinners, but the wheels of His government still revolve; nothing can turn them aside. If admitted into His house we are subject to His governmental dealings in a way, perhaps, of which few are aware. " Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever." Do we admit this? Do we act as if we did? For we are told, " You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos 3:2.)

We should have been disposed to have punished Israel and spared Moses and Aaron. God spared the former, for He is gracious; He visited the disobedience of the latter, for He is holy. Love and light, such is our God. We bless Him that He is love; we should fear Him because He is light. " There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." (Psa. 130:4.) " As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (1 Peter 1:15-17.) Who are we to fear? The Father who has redeemed us with the precious blood of the Lamb, showing at once His grace and holiness. If partakers of the former He would have us partakers of the latter. He may chasten us, deal with us here in government when the question of salvation has been settled, but it is that " we may be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. 12:10.) However great our privilege, however rich the grace of which we are partakers, and free and rich it is beyond man's conception, we are never set free from obedience, we are ever responsible to do His will. We are elected " through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:2.) He delights in grace, He is sanctified in showing it; but His nature, His character, never changes—He cannot deny Himself. We are to be holy because He is holy.

Aberdeen Conference: 2019, Numbers 19:11-22

Reading

It would be nice to continue with numbers 19. There is much that we didn't consider. Would verse 11 be a good place to start? Would that be about right? Numbers chapter 19 and verse 11. He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean 7 days He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the 7th day he shall be clean. But if he purify not himself the third day, then the 7th day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defile the Tabernacle of the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean. His uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law. When a man dies in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent shall be unclean 7 days. And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man or a grave, shall be unclean 7 days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt effer, for purification, for sin and running water shall be put thereunto in a vessel. And a clean person shall take Hyssop, and dip it in the water, sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there and upon him that toucheth a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave. And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the 7th day. And on the 7th day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even but the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, That soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. The water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him. He is unclean. And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water's separation shall wash his clothes, And he that toucheth of water separation shall be unclean till even, and whatsoever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and the soul that touches it shall be unclean until even.

Well, as we mentioned in the meeting, excuse me, as we mentioned in the meeting this morning. The third day, I would suggest, is the full realization of the magnitude of sin in the presence of grace, and it's a very necessary thing in restoration. And that's why the importance of the third day is emphasized here. The individual who was unclean. Could not bypass the third day by excusing him or herself, or by pretending that that purification wasn't necessary. And so it is with you and me under Christianity. I can't bypass the third day and pretend that the sin wasn't all that serious or well, after all, I can remember once. When I reproached a brother for something he had done, and his reply was well, someday you will know the stress and strain I was under at that time. Well, that's not the kind of talk from someone that's reaching the third day. When we reach the third day, we don't blame anyone but ourselves. We don't say yes, I've sinned but and start pointing the finger at someone else. Yes, others may have been an aggravating factor. Others may have been wrong too, and God doesn't pass over that either. But the Lord says to you and me, we are dealing with you. At this point every one of us shall give account of himself to God. And so it's very, very important that we get to the third day. Before we can go on any further and if I try to skip over it or somehow. Get around it, it says Clearly here he shall not be on the 7th day. He shall not be clean. God wants to perform a thorough work of restoration, not simply a shallow 1. And we thank the Lord that there is a 7th day. And that speaks of perfection. The third day in Scripture, I would suggest in a general sense, speaks of death and resurrection. And in that sense, I believe here it is bringing us back to the cross, making us realize that we have, as we mentioned this morning, sinned not merely in the presence of a holy God, but in the presence of His love and grace. And that we have sinned in spite of the one who went into death and rose from the dead, in order that we might be saved, suffered untold sorrow in the three hours of darkness in order to put away sin. But we mentioned yesterday. God never occupies us with sin, except to judge it and then to go on. The Spirit of God never occupies me with myself except to judge sin, and so God doesn't lead me with that awful sense of sin. It's necessary. I have to be brought right down to the very bottom where I realized that I was to blame. And I can't start making excuses by blaming others. But when God gets me to that point. Then how thankful we should be that from that point upward, from that point on, it's going upward to the 7th day. What? Does God want me to be occupied with? The fact that I have sinned so seriously? Does he want me to go on the rest of my life groaning under the awful sense of my sin? I believe that's what it means in Second Corinthians when it says.

We are not. In fact, we could turn to it. Second Corinthians. I think it's chapter 2. 2nd Corinthians 2 And it says in verse 10 Paul writing to the Corinthians about a man whom they had been obliged to put away according to his instructions in the first epistle. And here in the second epistle in verse 10 he says. To whom ye forgive anything I forgive also, For if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ. And here's the verse. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. And up in verse seven he says. Contrary. Why she ought rather. Excuse me? Ought rather to forgive him and comfort him. Lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. I can still remember many, many years ago now visiting a 16 year old girl in a home for unwed mothers. Who's sad to say it had a child out of wedlock? And her parents were believers, but they wanted nothing to do with her. And I remember having a visit with her, and she was the Lord's. And I remember pointing that verse out to her and saying, Satan will whisper in your ear, You have failed so seriously, You have messed up so badly, you have so disgraced the Christian testimony and dishonor the Lord that you might as well just throw it all up and go out into the world. What can you do for the Lord? How can you be a testimony anymore? How can you ever get back and enjoy happy fellowship with the Lord and with other believers? And that's what Satan does. He takes an advantage of us in that way. He gets one advantage over us and getting us to sin, and then he gets another advantage by persuading us that there's no restoration. And so I would suggest in simple terms. That the 7th day is the converse of the third. If the third day is the full realization of the magnitude of sin in the presence of grace, the 7th day is the full realization of the magnitude of God's grace in the presence of our sin. What do we find out on the 7th day? Just what we have in first John 1:00 and 9:00 if we confess our sins? He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. How? Because way back before the cross, the Lord knew that I would commit that sin, and it was all settled at the cross. And so God can come in and forgive that sin on the basis of the advocacy of Christ. And how can Christ be our advocate? Because he has been our substitute already. And so. What a blessed thing it is that God does not leave me with the overwhelming thought of how awful the sin is. I need to get to that point. I can't skip it. But then. Full restoration is a realization that God's grace is far, far greater than my sin. And the enjoyment of his love and grace is still there, even though I have sinned. It doesn't mean there may not be consequences, because serious sins bring down the government of God. They did in David's time. Of course. For him he was fully restored. But there was the government of God, and the richness and glory of repentance and restoration did not take away the government of consequences of the sin. But nevertheless, that didn't affect full restoration.

That 12 doors where it says that he shall purify himself. With it on the third day, That doesn't mean he took the water and put it on himself, just it just means that he repented. I would see it a little differently. Vern and I stand to be corrected, but. To me it brings out the fact that while in serious sin, others may need to be involved. Yet I have my responsibility to get before the Lord, and in that sense, even as an

individual, I can avail myself of the water of purification. I can go to the Lord. And in being in his presence, realize that. Yes, I can be restored. I may not if I let's. Put it out in Christian terms. If I have sinned in such a way that I have had to be put away from Christian fellowship and from the partaking of the Lord's table, I don't restore myself to the Lord's table. Others have to do that. It takes their discernment as to whether I have reached the third day and then the 7th day, and the Lord can and does use them to administer that water. Purification. But I have appreciated it that it also includes my responsibility to get before the Lord and administer that water too. But. I speak subject to correction. I've never had this chapter taken up in a conference that I've been at before, and so maybe others have different thoughts. So his verse 12 Then connected with verse 19. I would think so, yes, and I wouldn't see myself why both could not go on. If the sin is not too serious, and I shouldn't say too serious, I don't want to let anyone think that sin isn't isn't serious, but God doesn't make every sin alike. He speaks of the greater sin and so on. But. Ted Sester brought that out this morning that you and I can apply the water of purification to our secret sins before they become public, and so this chapter covers a lot of angles. I would suggest it takes us all the way to something that becomes a public sin, but it also applies to that which may not have gone that far and gives me my responsibility before the Lord. But even in a very serious sin. Can't just say, well, I failed so seriously that I guess. I say that because I heard with my own ears a brother say this. He said yes, I have sinned seriously and I was put away from the Lord's table, but there's no one in my assembly that's spiritual enough to restore me. So what do I do? Yeah, that's what he said. This chapter doesn't let him off the hook like that. He can get before the Lord. He can, in that sense, apply the water to himself. Yes, his brethren may have to be stirred up, and maybe his sense of his brethren spirituality was a little warped by the sin he'd committed. So his judgment may have been a little impaired at the time, and we allow for that. But. Even if others are not able to sprinkle the water on me, I can't use that as an excuse not to be restored, at least to the Lord, and then trust the Lord to work in the hearts of my brethren. But I don't like to push it on to you, Brother Don. But what would your thought be on that? And I don't mind if you disagree with me. I won't address it directly. First I'd like to go to another preface and then come to it.

Psalm 19. Psalm 19. And verse 12. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me, cleanse thou me from secret faults. Beat back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. We've talked about being unclean and defilement and secret. Faults and so on. And then public ones and these. There's four points here that show us the progression of what happens in our own souls. In need for judgment, self judgment, and restoration. The first one is who can understand his errors. What David is saying here is a little bit like the apostle Paul, who said I'm not aware of anything in myself. But that doesn't justify me. In other words, we may be going on with something that we're not aware in the light of the Word of God is is not according to God. The fact that our conscience isn't at work, nobody said anything. We're not perfect. Personally conscious of something does not mean that our walk is perfect and clean. And David understood that, as it were, was saying, well, Lord, you're the only one that can look at me perfectly and recognize if there's something of an error in me. And as we read and feed upon the Lord in the word of God, we should become more sensitive and more aware of what is pleasing to the Lord and what is not. And we become enlightened by the word of God and may say, come to a scripture someday, we may have been a believer for 10 years. And we read it and we say, oh, I never realized that before. And we change, we say that I can see the Lord doesn't want that. And that's what's described as the first one, something we're not even aware of. But then the Lord can allow in us, He says, verse 12, Who cleanse thou, me, from secret faults? These are things that we are aware of. In our own hearts, in our own thoughts. The thought of foolishness is sin you. We can sin easily in ourselves without ever saying a word or doing a thing with respect to another person, because our thoughts themselves can be impure and wrong in the sight of God as well as the possibility of something in us that we do that no one else is aware of it. Nobody knows that, nobody sees it, and in yet our conscience, we're aware of it and our conscience, and we recognize it's not pleasing to the Lord and in that way. David recognized that in his own personal life and he says cleanse me. From secret faults. But what then the progression? If there's not that self judgment in something that is the Lord brings before us and in our conscience that we are aware of, then it says keep thy servant back also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. It progresses in US. That we become willful. And we purposely do things that we know when we do them. Are not according to the word and will of God. It's a presumptuous thing to know God's will, and Kanchi with conscious will be against it. And do my own thing. What happens? God says. They get dominion over me, they take control.

I visit. A detention center. Every, well, usually twice a week, but every Monday night, particularly when we're interacting and the kids will say. I made a mistake. That's why I'm here. And they don't. Always call it a sin. Now it's a mistake and. When then some come to the Lord and been saved and everything changes. But the point I'm trying to make about it is this. That will say after that, but I made a mistake. But I don't like this place. I'm never coming back here. In other words, the statement is the. What's being said is I'm not going to do that again. So I don't come here. And then a few months later. We see him and maybe we see him again. At age 18, that's the oldest stage allowed at the detention center. After that, you go to an adult facility. Some kids will be back every so often until they're 18. What it is that they've done has control over them. And if sin is not judged in us, that's where it goes, and it becomes a presumptuous sin. And in God's perfect wisdom, very often He exposes it. And if others know, and then we have numbers 19, and the activity of others involved in it. The 4th one is I shall be innocent from the great transgression. And sin can take on a great transgression character. That puts the consequences of this life to the rest of one's life. Doesn't mean that the soul is not restored. David committed very, very serious sin in his personal life and. Yet the Lord worked in David, and he was restored. In his own soul, although he suffered the consequences both for himself and for his family, and for the Kingdom, as to the consequences of things that David had done. In that way, but in a little more directly connected with what Bill said, I would like to use Job as an example to try to agree and illustrate the point a little more. Others recognize something had gone wrong in the life of Job, and they came to comfort him. And they were very. Real they when they came to Job, they sat seven days with job without saying a word. There was a real desire to help Job in all that had befallen him, and so they started to converse with Joe about it. And the first three friends, None of them were actually directly a help to Job. Because they didn't realize. They tried to help Job from their own perspective, one by experience, another just saying Job, If this happened to you, then you must have done something wrong. And what is it? What is it that you did wrong that God's done this to your life? And so on. But here's the point. The 4th Elihu worked in a different way. Here's what Elijah did was he sought to put Job into the presence of God so that God would deal with Job directly. And even one who seeks to help in the work of purification, the intention of the work is the necessity of seeking to help a soul be brought into the presence of God by the word of God. To the ashes that the Lord may use that to bring about the self judgment. You can't make your brother judge anything. You can point out sin, you can say you did wrong, but you can't change the heart. Only God can truly restore a soul, and God does it by His word, by the ashes in in Numbers 19.

And consequently the work is to bring before the soul that which would direct them. To drill directly with God and see what is done. Not against their brethren, not against the world. That's part of it. But that's only a first step. The real greatest part of the offense is against God and His honor. And it's, I also want to say, part of what the self judgment is, or the application. One of the friends talked to Job and he started to give an answer before he was done. He was no longer talking to the friend, he was talking to God. If you if you trace it out, you'll see every

time it showed the sincerity of Job to get right with God. And finally, when Elijah speaks to him and brings him into the presence of God, it's almost hard. You have to be careful to read it to see where it's no longer a lie who's speaking, but it's the Lord speaking directly to John. And that's the that's the ultimate wonderful work. If one speaking to somebody, they're not after a while listening to what you say to them, but they have been brought to say, the Lord's talking to me, and then you will get the proper judgment in them, God will get the proper judgment in them, and there will be the repentance that comes from it and God's work in restoring them. Completely and to recognize his grace. God's proof. That job had reached, will say, the 7th day. Was after Job said I abhor myself and repent and dust and ashes. The proof of the grace of God? Was God said to Job. OK, now you pray for your friends. You pray for your friends. But what? You know, you're being the ones that set all those nasty things to me and misjudge me and told me this and deal with me that. No, You said you prayed for your friends. He did. And the Lord blessed him. And if we hold anything against those that the Lord has used in bringing out sin. It in itself is an evidence that the work is not complete in US. But when David said against thee, and the only, have I sinned. Was that the third day? That was the work of God and his soul, right? And then they could, And then they could, the 19th verse. That we had a clean person, a sprinkle to the unclean on the third day with that. Yes, I I think we we have it here in the take it, keep it in the context of the chapter. When if I can find it quickly, but what you see is. Um. Let's go to verse 18. A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkled upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touches the bone, and so on. What it's saying to us is. If I sin against God. There's going to be effects, whether they're aware of it or not. In others. It doesn't mean that they're going to nest this and if my own communion with the Lord has been broken. Death, Separation of the communion at that point. Then my very presence and conversation and whatever is going to have a negative effect on others, whether they know it or not. And in that way David was saying to the Lord against thee and thee. Only have I sinned, because he was recognizing that was the root between himself and God, even though we recognize, and he did too, that a lot of others were affected by it. But it starts with.

And it ends with in terms of the need for restoration. If. I am restored properly to God. Then all other effects will take the right place, and I will cease to defile others, and God, in His grace and mercy may work with others, so that the effect of that uncleanness that I have brought into others lives has affected it. One very simple illustration of it. Suppose I'm a father and I have unjudged sin in my life. Who's who's suffering? The most immediate ones to suffer is my wife and my children. They may not know anything about it, but they're suffering. They're suffering because of the unclean condition of my soul robs me. Of the mind of the Lord, for the needs of those that I am interacting with and may be dependent upon me. So what happens if I get to a point in sin in my life and I never get to the third day? Suppose. The spirit of God through the word of God doesn't reach my heart. And. There's no restoration and I go on. With this unjudged sin. How long does the Lord deal with that? Is it what we get in first, John? Chapter 5 where it says there is a sin unto death. And he also says there's a sin not unto death. Does that have a part in the play there? Or where I'm not reached by his grace and I go on without reaching the third day? I would say so, yes, that it can come to that. And of course that's the Lord's. Decision, if we could say it reverently, to make that call. The illustration has been used of an ambassador to another country and, if he behaves so badly and so poorly, represents his own country's interests. It is an unusual for the authorities to recall him, and in principle that can happen with a Christian, and it does happen. Unhappily, of course, there are those who have. Gone all the way to their deathbeds and reached the third day on their death beds. And there are those who will not, if I could use the term, reach that day until the judgment seat of Christ. Because of the judgment seat of Christ, when my life is reviewed, I will have his thoughts about what I said and did during my pathway down here. And so everyone will in that sense reach that third day, and there will be the full enjoyment of the grace of God in eternity. But. I will have to admit it the judgement seat of Christ. That I that I was I was wrong and I won't have any problem doing it because the old nature will no longer be there and I'll have his thoughts about it. And so it's sad, but it's sometimes dear believers go to be with the Lord, never having really dealt with sin and. We just have to leave that where it is. Well, isn't it true that faithfulness, the Lord's faithfulness to us, will not allow his child to go on? Indefinitely in this life without some type of government dealing with them. Or if needs be. They go. There's a sin under death and they fall asleep in the north. Rather than have the child of God continue in disobedience, the Lord does take him home. Is that not true? I've seen that myself. Yeah. I would only say let's not be quick to pin that label on a brother who's taken home and make the judgment in our own souls that that's why the Lord took him home. Far better to leave it with the Lord. But it does happen. The Lord said. Many are sick and weak among you, and many sleep. Most definitely. Paul gives us an answer to that question. One other question arises in connection with the third day and the 7th day and. In as much as this may be the last reading meeting.

It should be taken up and there have been a lot of questions about this. In First Corinthians 5, when an individual has to be put away from fellowship with the Saints and from taking part in the Lord's table, the scripture is pretty clear, Paul says. By inspiration not to keep company, and with such an one know not to eat. We all recognize that. The question has arisen. Let's consider the case of someone who unhappily is in that position. What is our responsibility relative to what we have been taking up in this chapter? How should those in the local assembly react toward that individual, and is there a point at which they can reach out to him, or should they be reaching out to him right from the very beginning? How should we handle that? We know, of course, that when a very serious sin has taken place. Paul, as an apostle, could deliver that individual to Satan. I would question whether we have that authority today. But the Lord can do it, and what is really being done is for the individual who has chosen in that sense Satan as his master, and who has chosen to act as if he were part of Satan's world. God says in order to be cured of it, you'll have to be put out there and see what it's really like. And then we learn through sad experience that the pleasures of sin are only for a season and that Satans world is not so nice after all, and it's meant for our good and for our repentance. But I just asked the question, where do we go from there as to the responsibilities of others? Because we know all too often Saints with the best of intentions take matters into their own hands and say well. He or she is repentant, so I feel free to socialize and eat with them, and sometimes that causes confusion. How do we deal with that? Who doesn't that deal with it in the 5th chapter of First Corinthians? It's. It says, But now I have written unto you not to keep company. If any man be called a brother, be a fornicator or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer or a drunkard, all of these things are would. Keep him from fellowship. Or an extortioner. With such a one know not to eat. That is no social fellowship. That doesn't say show them love, it says no show social. What is so? I don't know. What bothers me is what's so difficult about what that says. It's like somebody said, what don't you understand about No, what don't you understand about no social fellowship, you know? But sometimes we just want us to see it, so it's difficult to for us to know what it means. No social fellowship. It's and that's it's really a problem in the day in which we live. But OK, Verne, now you've been asking questions, let me ask, does it mean no contact with the individual whatsoever? I think, I think if you if it's an assembly decision that you ought to have the permission of the assembly. To do it and I so I think that's what it is. I mean, I don't think you should take it on your own. You cannot as an individual. Resend the, the, the. Decision of the assembly which is bound in heaven and is bound on earth. The Lord is bounded. The assembly binds it and you as an individual have no authority to unbind it or to meddle with it. That's that's the way I see it. But. I mean, I just, this is the word of God and and it's not the way. It's not the way I feel. I feel like I would like to throw my arms around him. And I have to admit that when I was a young man, I love those people. But I knew what the

scripture said and what these brothers were telling me, and so I had to act like I was mad at the brother so I wouldn't shake his hand. Well, that was all wrong, of course, but.

Still, I should love him. It shouldn't affect my love for him. Should it? I think he's a brother. I shouldn't. I should love him, but I circumvent. The government of God, if I go on my own and show him social fellowship, and that's what turned this man to the Lord. But if we don't do this, we circumvent God's government in his life. To bring him to repentance. And that's what the whole the whole thing is not to get rid of him, but to bring him back. At what point was the Man in Second Corinthians chapter 2, verse 7 next week? What point in his restoration? When the assembly brought him back into fellowship, wasn't it? How do you decide if somebody is repentant enough? You get 10 different opinions. What would that be? Would it be in this? Principle. The 15th verse, I suppose, of the second chapter of First Corinthians. It says. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. So there is spiritual judgment. We're not saying that, you know. The the brothers in the assembly should have some spiritual judgment to understand when there's repentance in a man's life. I think the problem today is, is that when a one is disciplined either. Silenced or put out of an assembly, he really doesn't have the effect that it did in Corinth. At the time when this person was put out of fellowship, he had nowhere else to go and he was really out there alone. But today. It seems like the discipline that is imposed on one who should be disciplined. Is so watered down that it really doesn't have the effect anymore that it did then because they have families, they have friends and people say, oh, you've been wrongly treated and where you're going to be your friends and you you can just are they just leave and go to a Church of their choice or whatever it is. Doesn't have the effect anymore because of the condition of what we are in today in the church. Am I right? Well, what would it mean then? That God has to write the book again? No, absolutely not. Well then it's just simple. Here it says. Yet all. With such a one, no not to eat. So either that's still good or we have to. I mean that's that's how I that's how the individuals should act, not what that individual does. But our responsibility is to act upon the plane. And I and I emphasize that on the plane, Word of God. It doesn't make any difference what you think. What you think is not important at all. It's what the word of God says. This book that we have in our lap gets what God said. And if it's not, you know, when I was first, when I first heard the gospel of the preacher said, he said, if this is not the word of God, this is one of the most. Wicked things that was ever perforated on on the on on mankind. Let's throw it out the window. But if it's the word of God, then this is this is what? This is how you get life. And so it's the same way today. The word of God is not recognized as the word of God. It doesn't have the weight in our life. We read it and then, but I think. Yes, you hit it. I think there's a maybe a bigger question for that many of us.

Have to experience and. You know, this is the word of God. And and 1St Corinthians 5. I believe I have to apply that to all Christians. So if I have a man that I'm doing business with and he professes to be a Christian and he's living in sin. Absolutely. I don't feel that I can eat dinner with them. Absolutely. Because this is the word of God. It doesn't matter what I think about it now, I think. The Cape, You know what I think doesn't really matter, OK? I get that. Where the difficulty comes in is when someone, I think that there's a room full of people that we want to submit to an assembly decision, OK? But what happens is a lot of times the person that's under discipline doesn't want to come anymore. And so they don't frequent the assembly, and maybe they never come back to the assembly meetings. And then three years later, we run into them in the grocery store or we see them at the health club or whatever else. And we're a young person and they're our friend and they're not going on in that anymore and they're going to the church next door. Now, how do I deal with that? Because they're not a fornicator. They have. You know. I would hope they have taken care of that with the Lord, but they, for pride or whatever reason or bitterness, have not come back to the assembly. They they. Just have not made it right with. Never came back to assembly. Don't maybe even think that the Lords in the midst do not think there's any. Authority there in the assembly to put them out in the first place, and that was between them and the Lord. So they're not. Where I where the question is for me and I want to submit myself to the word God is the person was put out for fornication. OK in my example here like in first printing 5, but now they're not going on in that. They're never going to be received back in their mind because, I mean, they could be, but they don't want to be. So now do I treat them as a fornicator in my example, three years later and they're going on, you know, at the church next door, and I see them every day. Do I keep shunning them? That's where I myself don't see the scripture on that and. I would like some help on that. So that's me. Good question. If it's a dumb question doesn't have to be answered today, it's a good question. I'm pretty clear on if they are in the assembly and you know, I I think scripture is very clear on that. But I think more most of the time you know this. What my example is, is generally how it flows out. Few comments. First Corinthians chapter 5, verse one. It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you. This is presumptuous. Great transgression sin. For which numbers 19 would apply as to the matter of restoration? The Saints in Corinth had no revelation, no instruction, no First Corinthians written for them to know what to do. In the matter that was they were facing. But Paul, who speaks to them, says in verse two you're puffed up. And have not rather mourned a right spirit in the presence of God. Will respect and mourn if there is that which is contrary to the honor of the Lord Jesus. Even if it doesn't. Necessarily know what to do about it, and Paul rebukes them for it, he said. You should have mourned. And you should have mourned that the person that did such a deed was taken away from you, from among you.

They didn't know how to do that, but they should have had an inner sense in their souls that what has been done is a dishonour to the name of the Lord Jesus. And such a one should not be in his presence. And to be in the assembly and to sit down in the name of the Lord is to be in his presence and he said. You should have felt that. Paul in verse three says. And I'm not there physically, but in spirit I'm with you, and I have judged concerning this matter, concerning this deed. That in verse four, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that's the authority, because that's the name in which they were together. It wasn't their own name. They didn't take a name of a church or this or that. They were specifically identified with the name of the Lord Jesus. When ye are collectively, ye are not individually, ye are not a few brothers are, but you are all identified with this sin. That is dishonouring the Lord when ye are together. And my spirit will be with you. And what is the power for it? The power of our Lord Jesus Christ? For what purpose to deliver such a one unto Satan, that is into Satans power, into Satans realm, outside the protective care of the assembly itself? For the destruction of the flesh, For what purpose that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus? Not that that's the purpose. That's the reason why the Lord wants that action taken for a good purpose. And so he says. Verse six know you not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. That person's presence among you is leavening everything. Is that making everything unclean is allowing the working of evil, even though it's not overt in everyone else Levin works internally in something without explicitly being seen. Is leavening the whole lump, and so I'm not going to try to go through the whole chapter, but. When he says in verse after such an action is taken. He says first of all, verse 9. Not to keep company with fornicators. And then he says in verse 11, I've written to you not to keep company. And with such a one not to eat. It's important to recognize that there are other ways of having contact with people than having fellowship with people. And there is the work that the Lord engages souls in, and we see it in numbers 19. And I'll turn to it to connect it to this which is not keeping company with a fornicator when one goes to them. As directed in a pastoral way from the Lord to seek to bring that soul to repentance or to self judgment. But having said that, one has to understand these words. And there's a character of the interaction and if it's social, which eating is the character of that or even other ways not. Oh, I didn't eat with them. We just went to the gym

together or something like that. That's fellowship. That is explicitly against what is said here, but before going back to the Old Testament in Second Corinthians chapter 2, where you have the restoration. You see something else that I think is important and that is. Verse. 6. Sufficient to such a man as this punishment which was inflicted of the many, so the contrary wise, you ought to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye should confirm your love toward him.

Verse 10 To whom ye forgive anything I forgive also. It's very important principle. You don't individually take up a he's restored with an individual. The assembly collectively does it. And the apostle Paul was saying to whom ye forgive anything. Did he judge the man was right with the Lord? Yes, he did. In fact, he was speaking to them about the fact that if they didn't act, the man might become overcome with ever over much sorrow. He personally had judged that the man was should be restored to his place in the assembly. But at the same time he didn't act individually in it. He didn't go to the man and say I know you really love the Lord. He didn't act as a in a pastoral way and tell him he was restored. But the assembly is just a little slow to get on the same page. No, that's wrong. That's contrary to what it says here. It says to whom ye forgive anything I forgive. Also, I'd like to also turn to Leviticus or back to numbers. To our chapter. Verse 18 A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in water and sprinkle it upon the tent. An application, The assembly. Upon the vessels, upon the persons that were there. We say. The unjudged evil in an assembly affects the whole. It leavens the hall. There's not only a work in the individual, but there's a needed work in the assembly. Because the effect that uncleanness and defilement has on everybody here is the application of it to those who are still within as we use the as the expression is used in the New Testament, but it also has another. Verse 19. And the clean person shall sprinkle it upon the unclaimed. And that has application to the soul after they have in New Testament been put away from the table of the Lord, There is still a place, without violating the know of social fellowship, to take the word of God. And apply it to an individual, perhaps first seeking to bring them to judge their sin and repent of it, and have the light of the word and the ashes. Brought as Elijah did in a wonderful way, bringing Job to where he repents of himself. And then there's a further instruction in Leviticus. Chapter. 14. In chapter 16 we have a character of sin called Leprosy that has its of that character where there's putting away or putting out. It's another chapter that has to do with some of these same subjects. The law of the law of the leper and so on. But it says when it comes to the restoration in chapter 4. And verse two, it says, This shall be the law of the leper. In the day of his cleansing, he shall be brought unto the priest, and the priest shall go forth out of the camp, and the priest shall look. And behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper, there's also a priestly work in judging whether or not. The work of repentance and restoration is a complete one. And has actually taken place, and it's a matter often of spiritual discernment. And the priestly function is to if you will go outside the assembly, outside the camp, and when they have been told that such a person has, someone might report this person is really sorry for what they did and so on. There is a place for the priest to go outside and see. And make a judgment as to that, and if that, judgment.

Is brought to in the New Testament application to the assembly, and it's on the mouth of two or three witnesses to establish it. Then the assembly together can act for the restoration of the person. And so there isn't at all both individual activity. There is things that are only for the assembly, but there is also. In these principles, there is work that is done outside the context of the outside the assembly itself. That the Lord uses in His ways of bringing about repentance and then the Restoration. Our time has pretty well gone Dawn, but could you comment on what? On the question Ted Sester brought up, what about an individual who perhaps we crossed paths with? Maybe a couple of years after they've been put away and we know them and it's obvious to us that they're no longer in the sin, but they are not coming back to the local assembly and seeking restoration. How should we behave in that situation then? Well, there's two kinds of people we have to deal with in the world and the. 1St. Question is, is there a profession of Christianity in them? And if there is not, Paul says if it's a matter of eating. If I went and ate in the cafeteria with people I worked with at work and there wasn't a matter of of association. Then it says you'd have to go out of the world. You would have to leave the world because you can't have interactions with people of this world with that are not. But what changes is if that person has a professed relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now take it not Ted's case, but another one. Suppose I'm having, I'll say as I have experience. I worked in a I worked in an office, and in that office there were numbers of people that said they were believers. And I went to the management and I said, may we use this room at our lunch hour to be together, to have Christian fellowship together. And they said yes, you may. And so we had our lunches together, and we enjoyed the Lord together, and read the Word together, and so on. They had no. Well, eventually some of them did, or a number of them that were also at the Lord's table that worked the same place eventually. But at at that time the question was, and it happened, someone was. Committed adultery. Could they continue and be part of it because they weren't associated with the assembly? In my own soul, no. The same principles apply. They could no longer eat with us. That was even though it wasn't part of the assembly, the principle still applies. And its identification with the name of the Lord Jesus. In that office with that room. And what went on in that room? And so. But it didn't mean that for that person who had committed adultery that there was no effort made outside the context of that room to seek to bring the word of God to bear upon their conscience, to judge their their adultery. And I think that there is application to what Ted says. Without necessarily. Going to mixing with them, there's still a way to seek to have strengthened them in the Lord. His point was that suppose someone is part of a local assembly that we would feel is gathered to the Lord's name and we're in fellowship. And they are put away. And then we meet them two years down the road and they are no longer going on with that sin. They, in our conversation with them, it's fairly clear to us that they are no longer involved in that sin. But as Ted said, they're going to the church next door or something like that, and they have no intention of returning to the local assembly to be restored to fellowship.

What then? I'll answer it two ways, Bill. I'll take Harry Hayhoe's statement sometimes, he said. If you suppose yourself into a situation, you have to suppose yourself out. But having having said that been in it though, I I understand. But but having said that, I think I would go back in that case to 2nd Corinthians chapter 2. And say. That I'm sorry, First Corinthians chapter 5. First Corinthians chapter five, I would go back and say. To in verse four deliver such a one unto Satan that for the destruction of the fest to be safe. I don't think if a person has been gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe personally by my own faith, that's where the Lord is present in the midst, I can ever stop short of seeking that person's restoration to that place. But the moment I take the position that they have no interest, I have changed that. If I want to take up a relationship that stops short of what is, I believe in the heart of the Lord Jesus. And if I actually believe the Lord Jesus wants that person sitting in his presence to remember him in his death, and I take any activity without that as the end. Objective I stop part short of the heart of the Lord. So whether it's two years, five years, 25 years. So would it be right though for that individual? I know we're going overtime a minute or two, but this is important. Would it be right to encourage that individual to go back to the local assembly and at least? Bring their repentance before them and to. Let them know that they're no longer continuing in that sin. I think we are going to end up keeping going maybe longer than we should. I remember a case in which a girl got away from the Lord, got away from her parents she had been. In fellowship. Later on, she started to write some letters. Of repentance. And those letters of repentance. But she start she joined the church and some I think spiritual man in the church that was trying to mentor her or help her on in her spiritual life recognize that she. Was. He believed she owned her past life. She owned her sin. And she could realize that she couldn't find peace. Because of not having been. Recognized her

own judgment that was placed upon her by the assembly, and so he communicated and said, Is there any way? That she can be set free. In her soul. And I just say I don't have a verse that specifically supports it, but what happened was. There was. A judgment made that there was repentance. And the repentance was communicate that fact that that judgment was made. Was communicated to her, even though in it she did not ask and was not asking to be restored collectively. I say this with tears. That's almost 20 years ago. And she and her husband are presently he never had any association with the assembly. That was before she was married.

Her husband and she have gone to the parents and reconfessed in the last year, in fact in the last few months. She's and they're not content where they are and though I believe the Lord has been working on her for 20 years to bring her back to the Assembly. 238. 238. We are. So long he remains free, breathing the House of Lords with all the sleep for my life.

Aberdeen Conference: 2019, Numbers 19:7-10

Reading

May not have been here yesterday. We were taking up. Recovery and Restoration as. Brought before us in type in numbers 19. So perhaps we could go on with that this morning. Numbers, Chapter 19. And I would suggest we're ready for verse 7. Right. Numbers, Chapter 19, verse seven. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, And the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and lay them up without the camp in a clean place. And it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of separation, it is a purification for sin. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the strangest soldiers among them for a statute forever. He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean 7 days he shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the 7th day he shall be clean, but if he purify not himself the third day. Then the 7th day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the Tabernacle of the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean. His uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law. When a man dieth in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent shall be unclean 7 days In every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man or of a grave, shall be unclean 7 days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin and running water shall be put thereunto in a vessel. And a clean person shall take Hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there and upon him that toucheth a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave. And a clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, on the 7th day, And on the 7th day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean. And even but the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation. Because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. The water separation hath not been sprinkled upon him. He is unclean, and it shall be a perpetual statute unto them. And that he that sprinkleth the water's separation shall wash his clothes. And he that toucheth the water separation shall be unclean until even, And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean, And the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.

If you ask a question, if you should get an answer. So I asked the question, what does it mean for the red heifer? Well, I hope I don't spoil it, but I think it speaks of the humanity of Christ. Read Really is the the root word is man, and man was made of the earth, and the Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he become a living soul. He was that was innocent humanity. When man fell, he became fallen humanity. When the Lord Jesus was born, he became holy humanity, but humanity. And so I really speak. It speaks of the Lord I believe as a real human. The Lord was not only deity, he was a real man human. He was God as though he was not man. He was man as though he was not God united. Those two natures were united to form one Christ. That's important because there is a doctor and a foot that he just put on humanity like a coat that he was not a real man. He was a real man. There was a man, there was division caused. There was a man's said that where man gets the idea. That there were two natures united to form one person. I know not. That's heresy. The Lord was a real man as we speak. At the right hand of the Father. Is a real man. He wears our nature on the throne. That is so wonderful. God took the Lord Jesus. The Son of God took humanity into his person. He's identified with us. A creature. He's not a creature, but he's identified himself with a creature in the sense that he's taken humanity into his person. There's a man sitting at the right hand of the Father. In the Godhead too. So I just wanted to bring that out. So when you when the the Jew even today and I heard this not a month ago that if there was one. Gray hair. In that red heifer it could not be used. And there wasn't in the Lord. He was perfect, holy humanity. So I just wanted to bring that out. Thank you. Just let me say this too. It was a heifer. And what does that speak of? It was it was a female and female in scripture speaks of subjection. This is another beautiful truth. The Lord came of his own volition. Nobody made him come. And take humanity into his person. He did it because he wanted to fulfill the will of his father. And so he did it. He didn't have to do it. We're sitting here because of the sovereignty of God. You don't deserve it. You didn't choose him. He chose you. You don't have a thing to do with it. God chose you. And so. It's a wonderful thing to think that he took. Our nature into himself. And he did it, you know, and he did it. He subjected himself to the greatest humility. People called him a drunk, a wine diver. They spit in his face. They hung him on a cross. They pulled. They plucked the the hairs right out of his face. They smacked him. They whipped him, and he took it all. He submitted to it all to have you with him. He hung there, the most modest man in all the world. Naked before a jeering crowd. Isn't that beautiful?

And so here in verse seven I would suggest we have. Something very important brought before us. There was a priest here that had to be involved in. Arranging for all of this. And there was one in verse eight who burned the heifer. There was one in verse 9 and 10 who gathered the ashes of the heifer. And later on in the chapter there was one who administered and sprinkled the water of purification. All four of them. Were unclean as a result of that. What does that teach us? It teaches us that while in the administration of things. In and translating it into Christian terms in the administration of things in the Assembly. Dealing with sin is sometimes a necessary thing, but I am defiled by it just the same. Now, it wasn't the process of recovery that the defiled one had to go through. It took him seven days to be clean. But the priest and the man that burnt the heifer, the man that gathered the ashes, the man that administered the sprinkling of the water, of purification, all of them, as it says here, had to wash their clothes, bathe in water, and be unclean until the even. Contact with sin always defiles. I hope I say this very humbly, but in my experience I have sometimes seen. Those in local assemblies who were perhaps the least spiritual, wanting to get involved in dealing with actions of discipline and so on. Even the most spiritual ones in the assembly if they have to deal with sin and in some cases

have to deal with some of the. Sordid details of it in order to be faithful to the Lord. We all still have an old, sinful nature that responds to that. And so we need to be on guard. There needs to be that, as it were, washing of our own clothes, bathing ourselves and realizing that that sin. Even though we have just had to investigate or talk about it as a defiling effect upon us. One more point, I don't know if others have seen this, but it's certainly very true. And we say it as a warning. There are Christian books out there which you can buy, which are often written to detail some of the things that have happened in foreign lands and in various lives of those who have been. Unbelievers and then who have been brought to the Lord? And it has saddened me to see how frequently. Some of the awful details of things that they did and things with which they were involved before they were saved, are printed in those books. Why do they do that? Because it sells books. It sells books. People buy that kind of a book because our old sinful self likes to read it. Even a man of the world commented, And this would be at least. Oh, probably close to 70 years ago, if not 75 years ago, when he was talking about an individual or a group of individuals who were psychopaths. That's a psychiatric term for those whose conscience in Christian terms, is so seared that it seems to have very little concern for doing some of the worst things. And the comment was made by a secular individual in one of the big newspapers of the United States. It might have been the New York Times. It said everybody deplored what those people did, but they said put it all down on paper so that we can read about it.

And his comment was We are all psychopaths at heart. And so I say that to point out just briefly, not to dwell on it, how that it was very necessary for those who of necessity had contact with sin. In purifying and helping the individual who needed to be recovered and to re restored. They too had to recognize the potential defilement from that sin and to deal with that before the Lord. That's why I say it. And again, not to dwell on it, but in a local assembly, it's far better if as few as possible have to investigate something and be involved with all the sad details because it's defiling. Excuse me, excuse me? Should that be taken up in a brothers meeting where you take up the gory details, but it shouldn't never be brought out to? All the others in the assembly went, how do you do that? Then you take up these things, but you don't bring out all those things if there needs to be some discipline. And a brother, another thing is a brothers meeting. It's it's become practice to have everybody there who's in in fellowship, young man, who should never be there when something's being discussed that is egregious. It only defiles them, but then when you have because the brothers meeting has no power to discipline or do anything. They can only suggest it's the assembly, isn't it that that makes the decision. You have to bring it out to the assembly. Then what do you do? You don't bring out the gory details, do you? No, but the sin should be stated before the assembly. But the details don't have to be brought out. What do you say, Don? Maybe a little repetitive, but I think it's important enough to repeat if necessary. When I made unclean. And I have a nature. In me that loves unclean things. And if I'm exposed to it, my nature responds to it. And the consequences? The word I'm defiled by it. And it's important to recognize that we live in a world system designed to appeal to my sinful nature. And as a result of that, if I'm a young person or I'm an older person, it doesn't matter. When I pick up my cell phone, when I take my computer and I go online, I'm only one click away from my defilement. And the even the news manner in which news is presented today is in general in a defiling way. Even the competition among those who want to tell me what's going in the world today, the very nature of their business is to be the one you want to see and look at and they're very well aware of what makes people use them versus someone else's media and in it is designed to appeal to sinful flesh and. The consequences it is. Very, very easy to become defiled. And as has already been stated in the principle, because I have a fallen sinful nature, the very occupation with what is sinful. In its nature defiles me. And that's important to recognize, because there are many things in Scripture. Set your mind on things which are above. Not on things which are on the earth. Why? Because you're setting your mind on something that's pure and undefiling and satisfying to not the flesh, but to the new man.

And so I would just suggest. Before you think you have to see the news, ask the Lord. Do I have a needs be? Is it necessary for me to carry out my life today? Do I need to know? This, that or the other? Because it is in general a very ready, willing and able to defile. And Satan, who knows exactly by experience, doesn't know everything, but he has a whole lot of experience, more than we do, knows how to just make his take that first little step. Of well, this this is all right. And so we take the first step. But then that only opens the door to the next one and the next one, and there is also an addiction. That is developed in us, where we become under the control of that which we feast on, and so it's a very easy thing in the world in which we live with instant communication. To be constantly exposed to that which has in its nature defilement connected with it, and here in this chapter, even those who have to deal with. That which defiles. Are made unclean because they're dealing with that which their whole nature, their sinful nature responds to. And so I just say. It more warning to myself perhaps, than to you. It doesn't matter what age we are, we're never exempt because our flesh never changes. And God has made a a provision. To be kept. But it's never. Involves as it says later in the chapter. The vessels were to be covered and not open because just to have an open vessel, that which was unclean had access to the vessel and so were to be vessels with lids. In our in our care, in our activity and we, each one of us need to be conscious as the choices we make and even say, Lord, if I'm occupied with this song. That activity and so on, am I going to have something which will appeal to my flesh? And respond to it and cause defilement. Someone raised the question yesterday between meetings. Not that he didn't know what the word meant, but he said. I wonder if there are some who are wondering exactly what constitutes defilement. Because here in this chapter. What constitutes defilement is connected with death in some way. Isn't it a dead body? Or even a grave, or a bone or something of that nature and a man that dies in a tent. It all has to do with death. And I would suggest that in a simple way, we all remember that verse from Romans 6, The Wages. Of sin is death and God's word connects. Sin with death, we are dead in trespasses and sins according to Ephesians 2. And so this, in our chapter concerning death, I believe, is a picture to us of what sin is and what the world is with which we are surrounded. Yes, we live and move in this world. We have to we do get our feet defiled just by walking through it. But what is defilement? It is the allowance in my life. Of anything. That is sin. I can't stop, for example, a wrong thought from a lighting on my mind. I still have an old sinful nature. I have a besetting sin this way or that way, and I suddenly find that my thoughts turn that way. But I don't need to relish that thought. I don't need to turn it over and over in my mind and let it go down this rabbit trail and that rabbit trail. I can immediately act on what we find in Romans 6 and say.

That isn't I anymore. I have a new life in Christ. That old sinful self has no rights. I don't fight with it. I don't get upset about it. I just turn away from it. Turn towards something that occupies me with Christ and with something better. But supposing I let that thought reverberate in my mind, then eventually as man. Is whether he's saved or lost as men think. So ultimately they act and the thoughts that we allow to mature in our minds and reverberate in our thoughts. Are eventually going to translate into actions as Don was bringing out maybe small ones at 1St and then larger ones. As time goes on, the world gets involved. We decide that the world isn't as bad as the word of God says it is. After all, you can have fun out there and there are pleasures in sin for a season and so on. And eventually we are in, as we say over our heads and then we need this chapter, the truth of it. So I would suggest in a simple way that's what defilement is and I am not only to avoid it in my own mind, but I am to avoid as Don has been bringing out. Contact with it. As we all pretty much have to have computers today in order to do our work at school in order to communicate pretty well. Necessary. But I don't have to allow everything that pops up on my screen or everything that's there, even the news media, to occupy my mind in such a way that it starts taking me down those wrong paths. Well, not just. An

honest question. Some of these things go to 14. The 14th verse. It says this is the law when a man dieth in a tent. You can't prevent that. I just what? And it says all that come into the tent and all that is in the tent shall be unclean 7 days. There's other things. The 13th bird whosoever toucheth a dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself to file at the Tabernacle of the Lord. And that soul shall be cut off from Israel. What we said yesterday, that there was probably 600,000, who knows 38 years who were going to die in the wilderness, he said. All those who had brought back an evil report would die. So let's get out. It averages out to 40 people a day died and somebody had to bury them. What's? What's the difference? We have to be occupied with that. What? What's the difference? We'll all try to answer that and maybe others have some thoughts, but. It seems to me that yes, there are occasions in our lives when we are exposed to sin. For example, when I was in university I worked in a big company in the city where I live and some of the men who with whom I worked and some of the bosses that I had. Use rough language sometimes filthy language. Times. You tried to get away from it, but sometimes you were there in the office and you couldn't help but overhear somebody telling a dirty joke on at the next desk or something like that. Things like that we are exposed to in the world in which we live, and I feel for my own soul that. That is really what is brought out here. That is, there are things to which you and I are exposed all the time. In our lives. But I would only say, and this is only the way it comes through to me, the tent seems to me to imply something more. Because people lived in a tent, seldom would it hold one man, and so it implies something more. And I believe it points out what we might call corporate defilement. Where? If there is, for example, evil in an assembly which is not judged whether doctrinal or moral, evil. God looks upon everyone in that local assembly as being defiled by it. It's not that they can say, well, I'm not the dead man or I wasn't the man that touched him.

Everybody in that tent was affected by what happened there and it had to be dealt with. There had to be purification. So that this chapter has many different facets to it, dealing with an individual, dealing with contact in the world. Dealing with what might happen in a local assembly. It covers a wide variety of defilement and I would suggest the application depends on the circumstances, which we're talking about. In the New Testament. That helps, that helps. Trying to understand it's important to know what death is. In its character and its nature. James James Chapter 2 Says the body without the spirit is dead. And the root thought in death is separation. And so when one spirit is removed from one's body by God, that person is physically dead. The body without the spirit is dead, and there's a separation between the body and the spirit and the soul at the time of physical death. The second death, which is a death of judgment, I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and those who were not found written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire. And it says, this is the second death. Because it's not the physical death of the separation of the spirit from the body, but it is the eternal separation of a soul. God. And that's the worst part of what we call hell or the lake of fire is that eternal separation from God. But when there is death in the physical sense in this chapter is using it in the physical sense to bring out a moral lessons to us? When a body is separated from the soul and spirit and there's death, the process. Of corruption immediately starts when the Lord Jesus was told of the imminent death or the sickness of Lazarus and he came. Lazarus had been dead 4 days and put in the grave and he went there and Martha says to him, but he's been dead for days. The idea was you don't want to open it up because the corruption. That is started is 4 days alone. And that's the nature of sin. When I sin, it separates me. From fellowship with God. Not in the eternal sense. If I'm a believer, it's as we use the expression, it's a loss of fellowship, but it is connected with death in that it is a separation. From my relationship enjoyed with my God. And consequently, there are certain things that we become occupied with. Some in this chapter of necessity, but God in himself can have no fellowship with them. Because of his own holiness. He abhors sin and in no way does he compromise himself to have an association with it. And consequently, if I'm identify if I'm occupied with it, it brings in that separation. That is connected with death and is described in its general sense in this chapter, and in fact I think the most frequently used word in the whole chapter, if you added up all the words, is probably the word unclean. And that makes the unclean has the sense of in that thing I am not fit. For the presence of God. I well remember as a child it was a rule. The rural household that everyone of us as children had to come to the dinner table with our hands clean. We had to have washed before we came and sat down to dinner and sometimes. My mother would say to us individually, Donald, have you washed your hands? And you know what happened? If I appeared without them washed, I was sent off to do it.

Before I was by my mother, considered clean to sit down and enjoy the fellowship of the meal. And so it is in coming into the presence of God. And if you or I come into the presence of God, unclean. We are defiling his bill at use the application the tent, because the Spirit of God, who will have no fellowship with uncleanness, is hindered in His operations, and instead of being able to occupy with Christ and Himself, there is more the necessity of the occupation of the identification. Of that which is unsuited to the cleanness of his presence, that it be judged and removed. And that's the principle on which some of these verses, when they speak of death, and why, were unclean in the presence of death. Can I suggest a couple thoughts as to these ashes? We've talked at length about the uncleanness, but in verse. Verse 9. The ashes are gathered up and put in a clean place. And verse 12. There's the application. Of these Ashes and I just have enjoyed the thought. Of the ashes that there's no heat. And there's no fuel. And again, that takes us back to the enjoyment of the cross. All God's wrath against our sins. Was completely. Let's put it like this. Somebody said one time that of all the offerings that the fire consumed over the years, the Lord Jesus on the cross was the first offering that consumed the flames. There is no more heat. There is no more rat against our sins. And also the thought of the Ashes. There's no more fuel. God's not dealing with our old nature anymore. It's been set aside at the cross. If I am defiled or I allow sin, he's dealing with me, the new man. Stop that stuff. Resist it. Walk with me. He's not dealing with the old man. There's no heat. And there's no fuel in the Ashes and that is the basis of recovery. That's where we start, if we've gotten away from the Lord, is to get back to the cross. Lemoyne Smith told me 50 years ago. He said. It's the cross that saves us. It's the cross that keeps us and it's the cross that restores us. And it brings in our affections too, doesn't it, Randy? And that's why it's so important. To get hold of what we have here. Those ashes were laid up. As you say, the fire had passed through, the heat was gone, the fuel was gone. But what was left? The memory. The memory. And so you and I have the memory of the sufferings of Christ. Which the Spirit of God would bring before us when we are to be restored. We can get into what the third day and the 7th day mean in a moment or two, but. Those ashes bring before us the memory of the sufferings. My heart, my affections, must once more be engaged with Christ in order to think that. Here I am. And as was expressed in prayer and in what we have had before us. The Lord Jesus Christ came down into this world, went all the way to Calvary's cross, suffered. In a way that you and I will never understand, in those hours of darkness and for what reason, to glorify God, as to sin, but then, as far as you and I are concerned, to make us fit for God's presence.

And when I sin, what am I doing? I am. You might say. Adding to those sufferings of Christ. Now, does that mean Christ has to suffer all over again? No, of course not. Because God with his foreknowledge knew ahead of time that I would commit that sin, and that's why I can be restored. But at the same time, here I am doing that which caused. Untold pain and suffering to my blessed Savior, and when that gets hold of my soul, that is really what brings me to real repentance. When I have sinned initially, usually the reaction is what in our English language we call remorse. I am upset about the consequences of it. I'm upset because other people may know about it. I am upset because of what it may

have done to my life. Family or to other people whom I know and love. But I have to get right to rock bottom. And as you say, Randy, go back to Calvary's cross and realize that I have indulged myself in that which ultimately caused the pain and suffering in those three hours of darkness. I believe that's what the ashes would bring before us. May I take a few minutes? I not used to doing something like this, but I'd like to talk especially to the children here that they kind of understand the concept of why we're reading this. I wasn't here yesterday. But we're going to go through this story kind of rapidly again and then. Talk about the application we're making. There was a priest and he was supposed to go and find. A female, you might say. A cow. That had never had a baby yet. An innocent animal and they would take it. And they would. He would have a person kill that innocent. Big animal and the blood would come out and they would do things with his blood. Before the the Tabernacle. Then another person. Would take that dead cow and put it on this altar. And they would burn that whole cow. Everything. The horns, that the skin, even every part of it, would be burned and the smoke would go up. And all that would be left would be ashes. And. Listed all over No, it wasn't over. They would. Another person would come and they'd scoop up the ashes. And they would save these ashes. Now everybody, as we've talked about it, everybody that was concerned with this, the priest got defiled, the person that killed the animal got defiled, the person that scooped up the ashes got defiled. And then what would they do with these ashes? They were saved for when somebody got defiled. That they would take some of these ashes and they would put them in water. And they would sprinkle it on the person that had got defiled. Or we're going to call it sin. And they would remember that that cow. Had to die. So that they could be made clean. The cow didn't have to die again, over and over again. It was just one time. But the person had to keep getting clean over and over again by taking those ashes. Putting them in the water and. Verse 12 it says they were supposed to do it themselves and verse 19 says.

A clean. Person shall sprinkle upon the unclean the third day and the 7th day, and on the 7th day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes and bathe himself, and shall be clean at even like was mentioned the person that got defiled. It was a process of seven days, but the person that put the sprinkled the ashes, that touched the ashes that put them on, the person that was unclean, they were defiled to until the even. And the application is. That we need to remember the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And apply it to ourselves for. Present. Feeling clean? And I'm going to read a couple verses in one John, the application of this. One, John. One. And verse 7. It's talking about fellowship. With the Father and with the Son in verse 7. And if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. Now here's the part. And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son. That's God's son cleans us. From all sin, that is the application of that cow that died. We're going to call it the red heifer. A heifer is a cow that never had a baby yet. Perfectly clean. The innocent one that died. Cleanses from all sin. But if we say that we have no sin. We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, that's what happens when someone says I've sinned and I need to apply the. Work of Christ on my life. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That is, when someone feels completely clean, even if they've sinned, even if they've been defiled, they can say Christ has has died and I can be clean. I can feel comfortable. I can have fellowship. If we if we say that we have not sinned, we make him, that's God a liar, and his word is not in US. Now the next verse. My little children, I hope you children are listening. These things I write unto you that you sin not. But, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. If we sin there, there is a way to get back, a way to have peace, and it's the application of what Christ has done. And the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ there on the cross as the fire of God came down on him and burned everything up, and all that's left is the memory that that. I want to say senesis. What is ashes? What ashes? We are the ashes. Mixed with the water. Applied to our lives. By ourselves and by other people that even get unclean by helping us out.

There are two things. Two sets of things. That get burned up. In verse 4/5. We have the heifer. Now so burn the heifer in his sight. Everything of the heifer. The skin, the flesh, the blood, the Dong Auburn. That's not all. Or 6. These things are cast into the midst of the fire in which the heifer is being burned. Peter Wood, The Hyssop, the Scarlet. Cast into the midst of the burning of the heifer. In verse five, it's as we've had multiple times. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. The perfect, sinless holy One. And identified and put into the same fire. Is everything that we are in the flesh and everything that inspires us to do. What's wrong? The pride of man and so on. That motivates us to our activities in the flesh. And both are burned together, and the consequence of the burning of both and commingled in that way is ashes. And it's important for us when we're judging ourselves. As is necessary in purification. God takes the water of the Word. And brings our souls into the memory. Of that which took place when I. In my sinful flesh. Had to be the Lord Jesus to himself to take my place and to be identified with my sins and with what I am in my nature. And the consequences of that in death. And ashes. And so it is that when job. Was being worked on by the Lord for his blessing to bring out to job something in himself that was not. Holy and pure before God. Joe was made by God a righteous man, and because he was a righteous man and he knew it. He took the credit for it. Cedar wood. And he wanted, he said to God, I'm not going to give up my righteousness. And he then charged God and said, you've put me in dust and ashes. When Job got to his third day, if you will, and his 7th day, he said. Instead of saying God, you put me in dust and ashes. Or another way of saying it, I don't deserve what's happened to me in my life and so on. He turns it around and he says I abhor myself. And repent. In dust and ashes, and that is what the water of the word does in the applying. To our souls it brings us to that memory and that self judgment. Where we would say with Job, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. He was a man who had life, that is, life with God. It wasn't the point at which Job was saved, as we would say. Even though that word doesn't quite apply that way to Joe, but. The way in which he would say he had life with God. But he had to judge himself into that which was separating him from fellowship with God. And so it is with us, we the Lord, when there's something in us that we have done, we not only have to get into the Lords presence, but we have to get into the why. The reason why we did it not just the thing we did, but why did we do it.

There are people who said in the word of God I've sinned. But what we have in this purification process goes beyond just the act itself. I saw a picture of man in the flesh, said to Samuel. I've sinned. Judas, after he denied the Lord, he said, I have sinned. But in either case was there the flying of the of the ashes, if you will, to the person? Neither one we will find in glory. But for us, we have to go through a process where God takes his word and we're taken to the Word, and the Spirit of God uses that word. To bring to us that activity that makes us. Judge what we've done and what we are that did it. And then we can again have fellowship with God in purity and truth. In that connection, it doesn't hurt to repeat what we said yesterday, and that is that if we would remember that the cedar wood Speaking of man in his greatness, the hyssop Speaking of man and his weakness, and the scarlet Speaking of human glory, if we remembered that all of that had been dealt with at the cross. We would not fall into sin so easily. As Dawn has pointed out, that was burned up too. And if all of those things were kept in mind, it would be the antidote to our getting into the situation where we need the application of the water mixed with the ashes. And so John 13 would be something that we do a daily, but this actually is. Unique thing. It's not something that you would think but would be needed daily, but maybe in the life of someone during his lifetime. Is that right? I mean this is not something like John 13 where you you walk through the world and you get your feet dirty and you need them cleansed at night by the word of God. That's daily, but this is not something daily. This is something that is kind of unique. Yes, it's the same principle as we mentioned yesterday, but it carries us all the way so that we would have ministry to know how to deal with very serious sin. And I thought it was very apropos what Brother Dan Brimlow brought out and that is that in

verse 12 The individual was to purify himself, but then later on we find it was necessary. For another to sprinkle the water of purification. And so there are OK, there are sins in our lives that. We can sprinkle the water of purification on ourselves and in that sense. It doesn't have to involve somebody else, a happy thing, if that's the case, and there are other things which, as we pointed out yesterday, have to come to the attention of others because. Speaking in New Testament terms, we are so far away from the Lord that we are not in a fit state to sprinkle the water on ourselves. And so both can be involved. And of course, even if someone else is involved, I personally am responsible if I am the one that's defiled, to get into the Lord's presence, to look to him and to. Repent and get back to where I realize how serious that sin is in the sight of the Lord. And that's really, and I know our time is we only have a few minutes, but that's really what the third day is, I believe. Scripture brings in the seven days as perfection of restoration. But combining what we have said in the last half hour. The third day is if we could make it in a very simple phrase. The full realization in God's presence of the magnitude of sin in the presence of grace.

Now that is in the presence of holiness as well, but I believe this chapter would take us deeper than that. It's one thing for a man to sin for me to sin against a holy God. That happened in the Old Testament, but it's another thing for you and for me to sin not merely in the presence of holiness, but in the presence of love and grace. That is, we have by grace seen all our sins, if we're truly saved, dealt with it Calvary's crops. And we have seen the awfulness of what sin is to God in those three hours of darkness. We have seen the one who went through all of that in order that we could be saved, so that we have sinned, not merely in the presence of holiness. But in the presence of love and grace. And so the third day is the full realization in God's presence of the magnitude of sin in the presence of grace. That can take time 3 days as symbolical. I can well remember, and this dates me a little bit. I can remember our late brother Paul Wilson ministering on this back at a conference and I can nail the date right on. It was in 1962. And he said I have seen times when it took 15 years before the 3rd day was reached. Sad to say, I have seen cases where it took longer than that and so. The third day it may take a shorter while, it may take a longer while, but it does take some time. We don't recover rapidly from a serious sin. There needs to be time for the Lord to work in our hearts and consciences. There needs to be time for the Lord to bring before us the reality of what we've done in His presence. And it doesn't happen in a serious sin overnight. We get a wonderful example of that and Peter, don't we? Where we all know what Peter did. As they led the Lord to trial. He says here in John 22 on Luke 22. Excuse me. And. And and verse 60 And Peter said, man, I know not What I'll say is immediately while he's yet spake the crew. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. That was the look of love. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and how he had said unto him before the **** crowed, Thou shalt deny me thrice. And what did Peter do? Well, the the heart was engaged then, wasn't it? Because the Lord looked on him with that look of love. And Peter went out and wept bitterly. And that's just what you were talking about, didn't? He realized the impact. Of what the Lord was going to go through on his behalf at the cross. And we see later on the 7th day when. The Lord after resurrection. Met with the disciples and he took Peter aside, didn't he? He says, Love us out, me more than these. And Peter had to confess. Thou knowest all things, thou knowest I love thee. And then he got the Commission, didn't he feed my sheep? Beautiful example of what you were saying. I just want to recap something that was already said. I want everybody to listen. Everybody knows what I'm talking about. I don't need the graphic. If you have secret sin in your life, I have had secret sins. The best. Way to stop having that secret sin is to look at the cross. And to know that the Lord Jesus suffered for that sin. That is the best way to stop that sin. I want to read a song. That many of us know, I think it pretty well says what we need to say. The name of the song is how deep the father's love for us.

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that he should give his only son to make a Wretch his treasure. How great the pain of searing loss. The father turns his face away. As wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory. This is the verse. Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power nor wisdom. But I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart. His wounds have paid my ransom. Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart. His wounds have paid my ransom. If you're stuck and you have a secret sin and you confess it. And you cannot stop and you find yourself doing again. Look to the cross and think the Lord Jesus. Suffered for that sin. That is the strongest force of motivation, to look at that cross, to stop what you're doing. Finn destroys. It destroys families. It destroys barrages. It destroys. You need to be scared of sin. It's like a bomb. If we had a bomb, we'd have a bomb squad in here. Sin destroys. It's terrible. It's volatile. It's serious business. That's what we're talking about here. Just one final remark, Ted. I think that's excellent. If we would deal before the Lord in His presence with those secret sins that no one knows about, we wouldn't have to have someone else sprinkling the water of purification on us down the road when that sin becomes public, would we? Maybe we could just say this. Sometimes when we've sinned, we listen to the lie of the devil, that somehow God's mad at us, somehow he doesn't want us anymore. In Proverbs 2813 it says he that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsake at them shall have mercy. And I just want to say, dear beloved brothers and sisters, that mercy starts coming the moment we turn it is true. Bill, that restoration does take time because as Don was saying and others have said, there's when something like that happens, there's something wrong in us. The sin, it's not just an act, it's it's who we are. It's so important to realize that God loves us and He's on his way in mercy right now. The moment we turn to him, if we confess, if we own it and we're just naked before him, we just say, Lord, you know all about it. You know all about it. I'm all yours. And justice, That's what Job had to come to. No defense, no justification, Lord you know, and justice be cast, as it was already shared so beautifully upon him, upon the cross, in mercy. He comes in for us and it's beautiful. He loves us. He wants us back. Don't listen to the lie of the devil that says God doesn't want you anymore because it's not true. It's a lie. #71 in the back. 21 with your finger. Oh my say you're closer. My name.

Aberdeen Conference: 2019, Numbers 19:1-6

Reading

Romans 13 and verse 11 And that knowing the time that now is high, time to awake out of sleep. But now is our salvation nearer than when we believe. Let's look to the Lord, my gracious, loving God and Father, how we marvel at such grace and long-suffering that we are here once again. To be over thy precious word. And we thank thee that I precious word, can minister for each and everyone's need here Thou knowest our hearts, Thou knowest our weakness. And we just cast ourselves on the Blessed Lord, we thank you for the land in which we live, that we can come here without any hindrances. We realize, Lord, that there are so many of thy people. Who are being persecuted and under such great trials. Not only. For their faith in thee, but as through poverty as well. How rich we are, but we thank for the riches of the grace that we have in thee. Oh, what a marvelous prospect that we have to look forward to, to see the face to face, to hear that voice. Blessed Lord, may

our hearts be filled. With thyself as we take up thy portion, we commend ourselves to Thee, Lord, and pray this and thy worthy and precious name, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Best A somewhat unusual chapter for my brethren's consideration. Over the past little while. There have been a number of questions brought up, not just to me, but to others. Concerning failure and restoration and how it all takes place. And coupled with that. How an assembly is to deal with? Serious failure and restoration. And we know that although we don't get our principles from the Old Testament. We often find New Testament principles illustrated for us in the Old Testament. I was wondering if the brethren would consider our taking up numbers 19. It's a chapter that brings before us restoration. After defilement and failure and. I would suggest there is a very real message in it for our souls today. Sometimes restoration is poorly understood, sometimes we don't carry it out very well individually. Sometimes, sad to say, and I speak to my own heart, we don't carry it out very well collectively. In seeking to restore others. And I wonder if it would be profitable for us to consider that chapter. The silence implied consent. Numbers, Chapter 19. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying. Speaking to the children of Israel, that they bring the a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke. And you shall give her unto Eliezer the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face. And Eliezer the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the Tabernacle of the congregation 7 times. And one shall burn the heifer in his sight, her skin, and her flesh, and her blood. With her dung shall shall he burn, and the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop and scarlet cast it unto the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh. In water. And afterwards he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place.

And it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of separation. It is a purification for sin. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them For a statute forever. He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean 7 days he shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the 7th day he shall be clean. But if he purify not himself on the third day, then the 7th day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defile the Tabernacle of the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean. His uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law. When a man dieth in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent shall be unclean. 7 days in every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever touches one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man or a grave, shall be unclean 7 days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt Hartford. For purification for sin and running water shall be put there unto you in a vessel. And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him the touch of the bone, or one slain, or one dead, or grave. And a clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day and on the 7th day, And on the 7th day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be unclean. And even but the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that shall shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. The water separation hath not been sprinkled upon him. He is unclean, and it shall be a perpetual statute under them. That he that sprinkled the water of separation shall wash his clothes. And he that touches the water separation shall be unclean until even, and whatsoever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and the soul that touches it shall be unclean until even. Perhaps we could make a few remarks just to set. Shall we say this the the? Scripture in its place here. We read in the New Testament that. The Lord Jesus in John 13. Washed His disciples feet and showed them how that that would be necessary continually throughout their pathway through this world. Inevitably, we contract defilement by walking through this world. And also when we get to Ephesians, Paul reminds them of the. Washing of water by the word. We know, and at least I trust we know that. The application of the blood to wash away our sins, if we could say judicially in the sight of God. Is necessary only once We never read of more than one application of the blood of Christ. But here the emphasis in this chapter. Is on purification. Not in the sense of saving us from the penalty of our sins, but rather restoring us to communion. And so the emphasis here is on. And we'll go into the details later, but the emphasis here is on the water. Mixed with the ashes which were applied to the individual that was defiled in order. That he might be clean. We know, of course, that self judgment is a necessary thing in each one of our lives, and all of us can go to the Lord. Hopefully as soon as possible after we sin and get right with him. But here it anticipates, if we could say it, a more serious situation where the defilement was such that others needed to be involved.

In applying that water of purification. And so we see here, I believe, the responsibility of others, and we can apply it to the local assembly and to pastors who have the gift from the Lord for that. To be the ones to be a help in restoring one who has sinned. And so there is so much in this chapter I would suggest that bears on that subject and I believe it can be very profitable for us in going through it and seeing how the various types apply to the time in which you and I are living. In 38 years, 600,000 people died, didn't they? So it was 40, about 40 deaths a day. So this was something that needed to be applied every day, didn't it? Touching a dead body. And the Word of God recognizes, doesn't it, that sometimes that was necessary. They couldn't avoid it. A man touching a grave or touching a dead body or whatever it might be, even a bone, something that perhaps had been aged for years. But the point is, wherever the defilement came from, it was there, and it had to be atoned for. I shouldn't say atoned for, but it had to be recognized before God. And purification applied, didn't it? But before we get into the details of purification. What is noticeable at the beginning of the chapter is that they had to provide a red heifer. And what is important to notice is that it was without spot. Verse 2 Wherein is no blemish and upon which never came yoke. What a picture of the Lord Jesus. He was the only one who ever walked this earth, the only man that ever walked this earth. Who was absolutely without spot, and wherein was number, blemish, and who was never under the yoke? You and I are under a yoke because of sin. But here was one who never had to be under that yoke. And as we see the Lord Jesus going through this world, he was the one who could touch the leper without being defiled. He was the one who could touch the dead body without being defiled or touch a grave. Or put his hand on those who were seriously diseased. If any other had done that, an Israelite had done that. He would have had to go through this purification, but here was one who came in absolute perfection, who was never under that yoke of sin, and because of who he was, could touch the leper, and say, I will be thou clean. But the leper typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. And we find that that heifer had to go into death as the Lord Jesus did. And I know what's going on here, but it's beautiful to see the type here of the Lord Jesus Christ in all his perfection, and that leper has to be brought out. Without the camp, that was the place where the sin offering had to be burned. And that leper or that heifer, I should say, had to be brought out there and had to be killed. And it's bloodshed. Before there could be water purification. What a picture of the fact that first of all. That blood had to be shed from a perfect victim, one who was without blemish, one who never came under the yoke, and then after that the water purification could be provided.

Master, was Matthew 11? Is that a different yoke? Take my yoke upon you. Yes, I believe so. Tell us the difference. Well, here I believe the yoke is the result of sin. With the Lord Jesus, you and I need a yoke to keep us in the pathway of faith. And the Lord Jesus says I have walked that pathway. I know if we could say it reverently, that is what the pathway is like. I know the difficulties of the way because he felt from without. Every possible. Effect of sin that a sinless man could feel going through this world and so. We are in the yoke, as it were, with him, but it's not a yoke in that sense because of sin, although sin ultimately is the reason for the need of it. But rather we are in the yoke with him because he has been through all the difficulties of the pathway down here, and so we walk it with him. But the yoke in this chapter, I believe, is that which is imposed upon us as a result of sin. Would you agree with that, Don? Yes, I do. I agree with that. All fellowship with God. Has to be. On the standard of his own nature and character, God can't have any fellowship with us on any standard which is less than what he is himself. In holiness and in love as well. And as a result, the matter of restoring has to be done in a manner which is consistent with the character of God. And that's why Numbers 19 isn't in the beginning of Leviticus. Because in Leviticus it has more to do with the the offerings, our attempt to do with approach to God and war with what we would call atonement. But here it has to do with maintaining the relationship into which God has brought us as His children, applying it to us as believers. And. It has to be maintained on the very nature of what God's own holiness and character is. It's important to see that because the world in which we live. Constantly is adjusting. Its what it expects for fellowship among people downward to accommodate man wanting to have his own will and nature and character. And so governments constantly give up the practice of maintaining righteousness and truth to accommodate. Man's will to do what he wants to do, when he wants to do it, and have everybody else accept him on those terms but in. Very direct and important contrast to that we lose everything really in our fellowship with God if. We attempt. To deal with sin on any other foundation than His own holiness and His character of maintaining His love with righteousness and holiness. And so immediately here the red heifer is brought in. Because the work of the Lord Jesus not only is important for atonement, but it is also has aspects to it that are important for maintaining the relationship between our self and God. Is this a more serious thing than? Getting your feet dirty. You know, like in in John 13 with just the washing of the feet. This is it talks about a third day and a 7th day. Is it something more serious? Than just normal being defiled by walking through the world. I would suggest that it's the same principle. But it contemplates a more serious situation. As I said earlier, and I think we all understand it, self judgment is absolutely necessary, isn't it? If we are going, as Dawn has said, to have fellowship with the Lord in our Christian walk, I constantly must be judging evil thoughts that keep coming to my mind.

Uh, even if I haven't sinned in the strict sense of the word. As Dawn was mentioning a moment ago, when we walk through this world and we have to live and move in this world, we're constantly rubbing shoulders with those who are adjusting their standards of right and wrong and adjusting their ideas of morality, which is the same thing, right and wrong, And then pretending that instead of there being absolutes of right and wrong, well, everything's relative. And times have changed and so on. And so we get our feet dirty, even if there isn't what we might call over sin. But here I believe it goes further than that because, as I said a moment ago, they are. The the situation involves others here who are involved in applying the water of purification which I would suggest is it helps us to understand the process. Of restoration as it occurs when serious sin has been committed. It may not go that far, but it shows us how it can be dealt with if it does. And so I would suggest that it has a voice not only to the one who has sinned, who has become defiled, but it has a voice to those who are. Perhaps being used of the Lord in the process of restoration. And that's an important thing. Very, very important thing. I hope I don't say this with any degree of. Pride. I hope it isn't taken the wrong way. But. Allow me to say that I have had the privilege, and I do say a privilege of visiting a number of assemblies. Practically all of them in North America at one time or another, and a good number in different parts of the world. And I hope I don't go around or any of us that travel and kind of make an assessment of assemblies as to the level of spirituality and all the rest of it. But if I want to know how an assembly is going on before the Lord. There are two criteria which in my own soul, our spirit, are Scriptural #1. I want to be at the remembrance of the Lord in that Assembly #2, and it applies to what we're taking up. What's their track record in restoring someone who has failed and perhaps has had to be put away from fellowship? That means far far it chokes me up, but it means far far more. Then how well the scriptures can be expounded, or even how well the gospel can be preached, important as that is. How well? Does the. Worship ascend to the Lord on Lord's day morning when we remember the Lord. And how well do we do in seeking to restore one who has urged seriously? And I just suggest to my own heart and to all of us, we need to take that to heart. In our daily lives, yes, the holiness of the Lord must be maintained. As Don said, God doesn't. Consider a fellowship with him on any standard other than his own standard of holiness. Do we reach it in our personal walk? I don't think any of us would want to stand up and say we do. But God never holds out any other standards short of his beloved Son, And that's why the red heifer is mentioned here. No spot, no blemish. And so on. But then it shows us how God not only. Brings us into a position. Where we are without spot before him because of the blood of Christ, but how He maintains us in that fellowship in our Christian pathway through this world?

The difficulty. Is. I think expressed in verse 9 where it says a man that is clean. If there's defilement of a character that it becomes known. It's not a secret fault in the heart of the individual where there's self judgment that can be applied. But if if we keep using the expression of a more serious character, that requires, as according to this chapter, the involvement of others. Be it in the home with the parents, with the children perhaps. Or a husband and a wife relationship? Or if it be associated in some way with the character of the assembly. Then the necessity for the work falls on a clean person. And very often, if my own personal communion and fellowship with the Lord has something in it, that in my heart I know is not clean. Whether I think about it or not. There is. You might call it a disqualification of oneself to be involved in the process. And very often a weakness in an assembly. Manifests itself because there is not that liberty before the Lord. Of others to participate in the process of restoration. The moment something is going on in one's own soul, there is some measure of fear. And that fear is connected with exposure, and consequently it's a serious matter to maintain God's holiness. And participating in the maintenance of it in a public way, because often there's a sense in one's own soul of something that I use the expression one feels disqualified from participating. How can I help here when I know I need to judge myself in some way? And that's why this chapter is. Very challenging really to try to apply. But it has to be applied according to God's word. Would Galatians 6 What would that Would that apply here It says, you, which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, lest thou also be tempted. Wouldn't the man know that he was capable of the very same thing? It's not so much a sense of self occupation with being capable. As it is. With not having something on one's own conscience, that is a hindrance. If one doesn't have a something on one's own conscience, then there's liberty to be not thinking about self, but being occupied on what's due to the Lord. And to be occupied with what's the good of another individual. And restoration is always for the good. Of the individual. So it isn't that we're taught to examine ourselves before we become involved. That isn't really the idea, but rather if there's something on my conscience then I don't have liberty before the Lord to be involved with the need that's perceived in the life of another. I would only say though, Vern and I know Don would agree with this too, and that is the attitude and spirit in which we seek to restore. Always ought to be that in Galatians 6 and one that is there ought to be the recognition, as you say, that my own heart is capable of just as much or worse, and in that sense. Just to carry on the thought that Don was bringing out If there's sin on my own conscience. I may not feel very

capable of restoring someone else, but we all know this. But it bears repeating the sad character of the human heart. Naturally, if it knows the sin on its own conscience, is to be able to go on the attack and judge someone else in order to palliate the fact that I'm guilty too, and how many there are who have.

Sad to say, and I speak, I trust, with tears who have been. Disqualified from seeking to help restore someone. But are all too ready to step forward and be quite forthright and vocal in administering discipline because. It gives my heart somewhat of a sense of satisfaction that someone else. Possibly is a little worse than I am. The only other comment too to be made, and this is not original with me. It dates a long way back. But I remember our brother Harry Hayhoe laying it on to us very forcefully that. If one is in a sin, such as is named in First Corinthians 5. That requires the assembly to act in putting him or her away. It is not the case of one being overtaken in a fault, as it mentions in Galatians 6 and one he made this comment. He said any one of us can be overtaken in a fault. Let's use an example. Supposing I'm out in the world or wherever and someone says something to me or does something to me, and I could speak very sharply to that one and perhaps even. Use some very rough language because my temper was suddenly aroused. It would be a good thing if my brethren helped restore me. But if I get to the point where I do something such as is named in First Corinthians 5, I've had to run a lot of red lights to get there. Not because I'm not capable of it, but I believe the Lord would keep us. But if I fail to judge thoughts, then thoughts translate into actions if I fail to judge. Sinful actions that perhaps are not so serious than one by one they'll get more serious until I do something that needs assembly intervention. And so I just make that remark. I I think it's important to recognize that. I've heard that one Gray hair disqualifies this animal. It has to be read. But what does red mean? And that it was a female. I was hoping someone else could have a thought on that, because I don't. Well, there's some homework for us, but the important thing is to see here that in verse 4. The blood had to be shed and sprinkled before the Tabernacle. Seven times. How beautiful that is the perfection, 7 being the number of perfection. The perfection of the work of Christ in bringing us into the position we are in now. This is a type Israel had to repeat that sacrifice. Not this particular one, but they had to repeat that sacrifice of the shedding of blood over and over and over again. Why? Because there was only a covering of sin, never a cleansing of sin once and for all, the word atone simply means to cover and properly. Translated, that word never occurs in the New Testament. The only time I think it does occur is in Romans 5, and there the Darby reads reconciliation instead of atonement. Atonement means to cover, but it doesn't cleanse and so that blood atoned for sin in the Old Testament. But there came a time when the true sacrifice came in the person of Christ, and that's typified by this blood that is sprinkled 7 times.

So that that blood never needs to be repeated. How beautiful that is. And again we emphasize it. May you and I never doubt the perfection of the work that Christ did on Calvary Cross, and the value of the blood of Christ in the sight of God the Father, which has forever cleansed us from all sin, what a place we have been brought into. And so that comes first. Because when it comes to you and to me, it was the from the Lord's side there flowed blood and water. The blood had to be applied first in order that we be cleansed. And then there is that moral cleansing which maintains us before God in a walk that is suitable for him and suitable for fellowship with him and with his beloved Son. But first of all that blood is shed and sprinkled before the Tabernacle seven times. There always has to be a dealing with God before there can be a dealing with man. And so we have that principle in this chapter when there's a matter of restoring. The first activities that are involved have to do with. Those things that are presented in the presence and sight of God, and in connection with His tent of meeting where man comes into His presence. And so it is when there is this work to be done. One involved in it has to be in the presence of God, and brought in one's own soul into the sense of the seriousness to God. What has taken place and what needs to be made right before him, and of course, the only ground on which anything can ever be made right. The foundation of it always, even in fellowship, is based on the work of Christ at the cross. Which provides the foundation on which our fellowship with God. Can be established. But also can be maintained, but Even so when it comes to the activity itself. The first activities before the water of separation is applied to the individual in separation. There's first those things that are done in the first verses that have to do with bringing the matter before God. It's not how do I see it, It's not how do you see it. But we have to say, how does God see it? It's not whether it's good or bad or a little bit bad or something like that in our eyes, but rather God has established in His word the differences we were talking about, differences of things as to their seriousness, seriousness, and so on. And the desire of the heart should be How does God see this? How does He view this, and what does it mean in His sight? And that's so important, isn't it? Because. It's anticipating, I know, but when we get down to restoration. It is important that the sin be viewed. In the light of God's holiness. Man, as we know, measures sin. By comparison with his fellow man, and by its effect on his fellow man. And so man measures sin by himself. First Corinthians tells us that those who compare themselves with themselves are not wise. And so it's important to to recognize that but.

When it comes down to restoration. It's important that that sin be repented of not in the sight of man so much, although that enters into it, but in the sight of God. We hasten to say, of course, that. I don't believe anyone of us this side of the glory will ever have a perfect sense of sin according to God's holiness with an old, sinful, fallen nature. I don't believe that we will ever have a sense of sin in keeping with God's presence down here. But because we have a new life in Christ, I believe that God would have us to enter into what it was. For his beloved Son to go to Calvary's cross to shed his blood, to bring us into that position. And we will see a little more of that later on, because the true sense of sin comes when I realize that I have sinned. In the presence, not only of the holiness of God, but in the presence of the grace and love of God. There's a difference. It's one thing to sin in the presence of a holy God, and that's important. But more than that, I have sinned as a believer in the presence of the grace and love of God. And so we will get to that when we talk about purification. But I need to recognize first of all. What it was for that sinless, spotless one, never under the yoke. To have been made sin for me, his blood shed, and then what happens to the body of that heifer? Burned says. In verse 5. The heifer burned in his sight, burned there, completely Speaking of the sufferings of Christ at Calvary's Cross. Everything burned there. Everything burned up the awful fires of the judgment of God. Felt by our blessed Lord and Savior in a way that you and I, I say it reverently, I don't believe will ever be able to understand what it was for Him to go through that awful judgment at Calvary's cross in those hours of darkness. We can, in a small measure, understand the sufferings of the hands of man. And other men have been crucified. Other men have had. Scourgings done, and mockings and various things that the Lord Jesus had. But in those hours of darkness there was a judgment typified by the burning here that no man I don't believe will ever be able to enter into. Does that apply? The question was for those that may have not heard it. Does this have a reference to the first chapter of John's first epistle? Does does that apply here? I would suggest it does. In verse six it could read since. We say we that we have fellowship with him or or rather verse seven could say but I did, I'm wrong verse. Verse seven could read, but since we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin. That's Christian position. But then the maintenance of it is in verse 9, isn't it? If we confess our sins? He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

An unbeliever could read that ninth verse and be saved through it. It's a general statement, but I believe it also applies. To restoration. Verse 7 is Christian position every believer. Comes to the Lord Jesus and accepts him. Is under the shelter of the blood and walks in the light, but

then. What happens? We lose fellowship by sin, and then there's the need to confess it and be restored to communion, isn't it? Verse four of the chapter. The first thing that's done after the red heifer is. Put to death. And we've already had that before us, the picture of Christ and his death. And his perfection and his death without spot and blemish. The very first action in the next verse is. Eliezer the priest takes the blood and sprinkles it directly before the Tabernacle. Of the congregation or in the new translation, the tent of meeting. That is, it establishes the principle that holiness becometh thy household Lord forever. This was the place where the children of Israel came to meet the Lord and to come into His presence and come before him. And so the very first thing was to establish. That that blood. Was applied before the tent of meeting. So that the people would have the consciousness of the one whose presence they were approaching. And to approach on the ground of the work of Christ and the holiness of God connected with that work. And so if one approaches on any other terms than that. It is not consistent with what is due to God's honor, God's glory. And so it's the very first thing, even before the individual's case is taken up, that that which is due to God be established and be established, you might say at the door. The very reason why? Sometimes. Someone has to be put away from the Lord's presence, collective presence. When is for the sin that has come in and the defilement that's come in? But when it's a matter of restoration and coming back into his presence, there's the need to be reminded of the grounds on which we come into his presence. And that's first. Then takes up the matter of the people who do it, and then the individual himself. And it's noteworthy that one other thing is done. In connection with the burning of the heifer. Verse 6 The priest is to take cedar wood. And hisset and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. I hope it's OK to speak this way, but this has been. A real voice, if I could say it to my own soul, because throughout the Old Testament cedar, the Cedars of Lebanon, for example, are always a type of man in his greatness. Man in his greatness. But Hyssop was a little plant that grew out beside the wall, very, very small. A very, very little significance. Man in his weakness. And Scarlet is always a type of human glory. And we might ask, why would the priest have to take all those things and throw them into the fire there, Speaking of the cross?

I believe it would show us. That if you and I, as Don has been saying. Recognize the holiness of God, and the character of the one with whom we have to do into whose presence we have been brought. Into relationship with whom we have been brought. If we were to go back to Calvary's cross. And we were to judge ourselves in the light of what went on there. All human glory, all occupation with self. Would be dealt with in our own minds and it would be the best preventative from failure that there could be. You might say, well, I can understand why cedar would have to be thrown in, because after all, man in his greatness, that's nothing but pride. But why Hyssop? Hyssop, you'll remember, was used later in the chapter to apply the water of purification. It had been used prior to this and most of the children here could tell us this. It was used to apply the blood on the door way back in Egypt. Speaks of man's weakness. But the point is this. Satan does not care whether you and I are occupied with ourselves in pride in our greatness or pride in our weakness. They are. They are flip sides of the same coin. We sometimes, when I was young, used to speak of people who had an inferiority complex. Nowadays the term is low self esteem. What's the difference between low self esteem and high self esteem? Pride in its flipped form. Man can be occupied in himself for what he is, in his greatness or what he thinks he is, or can he? He can be occupied with himself in pride, because he isn't what he'd like to be. And Satan does not care if I'm occupied with myself in my weakness or my greatness, as long as I'm occupied with myself. And true Christianity is not to be occupied with myself, either in a positive or negative way. But rather not to be occupied with self at all. The only time the Spirit of God occupies you and me as believers with ourselves is to judge sin, to judge self, and then to go on and be occupied with an object outside of ourselves, with Christ. And so the cedar and the hyssop both had to be thrown into the fire, and so did the scarlet. And I just suggest, and I speak to my own heart, that if I did that, if my heart really saw what happened at Calvary's cross. I would judge those things when my own soul before I needed to have the water. Excuse me, before I needed to have the water of purification. Now, does anyone of us do perfectly? No, but I believe that's why these things are mentioned here. True holiness entails my going back to the cross of Calvary first and foremost, and recognizing not only what. I am, which is important, but recognizing the awful judgement that was necessary to put that sin away. And that is the, shall I say, the greatest, if I could use the word stimulus to self judgment that there is to get back to Calvary's cross. So in Hebrews 13 the verses. 11. Bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

How does that connect with our portion? I've had enough to say for a minute. You have a thought on that, Don. I don't think it applies to our chapter. It's a different thing. That's my simple answer. It it applies to a different it's it's put in Hebrews 13 for a different reason. To take on a different subject. And it's it's, I don't think it's intended to be part of the subject of repentance and restoration. It's setting aside of Judaism. As a means of approach to God and the Lord Jesus. Himself. Within the context of the Jewish system was not accepted. He was rejected. In that way, and so in the matter of atonement, it's recognized that. What he did, even though he was perfect in his life as a Jew, what he did, had to go outside of the system itself. And the Hebrews of to which this book was written, if they were to be identified with him, had to be identified with the place he had been put in, which was outside the camp. And here, outside the camp, is where the defilement is it. Where the defiled were outside the camp. I should say. And so in that sense, we do see this red heifer taken outside the camp to be burned. And in that sense, I believe. You could tie it into the sin offering, but the emphasis here, while it brings in the precious blood of Christ in tight and the terrible judgement that was there, you might say that is brought in and we don't mean in any way to. I don't like to use the word belittle but the whole. Thrust of the passage is restoration to communion, and so that is brought in simply to show what was necessary for the approach to God and what was necessary to bring a man into relationship with the Lord in the 1St place. But then the main body of the chapter is connected with. Purification. Which was, of course, necessary to keep an Israelite. In communion with the Lord. And as Don pointed out, that's why this chapter is not in Leviticus. In Leviticus, the thought is approached to God, whereas Numbers is the wilderness book, isn't it? It brings us through the wilderness. And so the wilderness is the place where the temptations occur, where the sin occurs. Where the difficulties and problems come in and where it's necessary to have that water purification applied, no type is perfect, of course, because here we are talking about Israel, and those sacrifices for the shedding of blood had to be repeated in the wilderness as well, or should have been repeated. How many times they were is open to question, but they should have been repeated. So the type isn't perfect. But it's in a wilderness book where you get the instruction as to purification along the way to restore to communion. At a good breaking point.

166. 166. Free.

Numbers 18:8-13; Luke 15:1, 18-24; John 1:1-4. In type, in parable, and in clearest declaration we have brought before us God's thought of Christ, not only as the way to the Father, but as the sustainer, the food, the source of joy to us when brought there.

In the beginning the word to Pharaoh was: “Thus saith Jehovah God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness” (Ex. 5:1). Moses' call was different to that of Abraham; the latter was called out from his kindred, etc., but he never had to face the prince of this world in the same way as Moses had. In type Moses had to go straight to Satan, not only that God's people should be delivered from his power, but also that they should hold a feast to Him; to be merry with Him; but it could not be in Egypt. A three days' journey in the wilderness must precede, signifying, we might say, death and resurrection. Then follows the glorious gospel story. The first thing that stands in the way, of their salvation is their sins. The Israelites were no better than the Egyptians. From Ezek. 20 we learn that they were worse, and God is no respecter of persons: judgment must fall on all alike. But His love provides a way which prevents their sins from being a hindrance—the blood of the Lamb “What! my sins no hindrance?” No; if under the shelter of that blood; but there is more than that. In their blood-sprinkled houses they could feed on the roast lamb, whose blood was their protection; but that was not the feast in the desert. There was no joy, no making merry in Egypt—it was not a feast to Jehovah!

The next thing was the power of the enemy. Are you afraid to meet that in the worst form, the power of death? Israel went through it in figure; they crossed the sea in safety, in security, “by crystal walls protected”; saw their enemies dead on the shore. But what followed? According to Psa. 106: “Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. They soon forgat his works” (vers. 12, 13). What could be a better song than they sung then? “Truly they were a delivered people if any were,” someone may say, and so they were. But their joy was only temporary, they soon forgot. Yet they were brought to God. “I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself” (Ex. 19:4); but they had to learn deeper lessons at Horeb. And have we learned them? Are we satisfied with positional blessing? Is that all, indeed? After they had chosen the law, and the blood had been sprinkled on the book and all the people, Moses goes up to receive that which figured how their relationship could be maintained—the tabernacle, priesthood, ordinances, etc.

The prodigal son brought back from the far country was in conscious relationship when his father's kiss was on his cheek, when the best robe was on him too (not only reconciled, but clothed, decked in all the beauty of Christ). And was not that enough? God says no; there is more. That fatted calf, that had been long before the father's eye, must be enjoyed by both. “Let us eat and be merry.” Here we see how the parable exceeds the Old Testament type in the revelation of the love of the father's real warm embrace; yet the full truth as now revealed since Christ's death and resurrection transcends both.

The apostle John, who in his Gospel had said, speaking of the Word made flesh, “We beheld (or, contemplated) his glory,” now in his Epistle repeats “which we have looked upon,” or contemplated. Thus had he communion in the enjoyment of the Savior, and now writes: “that ye also may have communion with us” (the apostles), and “that your joy may be full.” Is not this to be wisely merry? And Peter, too, how wonderfully he speaks of joy! In the midst of tribulations, persecutions, heaviness, he says, “wherein ye greatly rejoice"; but when he speaks of the Person, “whom not having seen ye love,” he says, “Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” The first is connected with the hope of the inheritance which, however blessed, is beneath us; the latter with a Person infinitely above us.

Going back to the type, Aaron and the priestly family (twice, at least, we are distinctly told we are a holy priesthood) were to feed on that given to God—the most holy things. And there is averse there which is a puzzle to many (Num. 18:10): “In the most holy place shalt thou eat it.” We who now believe are brought so nigh (nearer we could not be) into “the holiest” (Heb. 10:19), to feast on that which delights God. The oil beaten, the wine pressed, the wheat bruised—all speak of Christ.

And note, other people, other Israelites were gathering in that harvest—there is a double aspect. It was the “best” of that which was gathered that the priests were to eat. The apostle Paul says to Philemon: “The acknowledging of every good thing which is in you” (ver. 6). Do we see any good thing in a brother or sister? “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if any virtue, and if any praise, think on these things.” Not on the bad things. We are not to go with saints going wrong, but may we indeed rejoice in all that is the fruit of the Spirit in them!

4.

John 7:37-39; 13:13-15, Eph. 3:14-21. In the preceding remarks we were presenting, not a gospel address in which we might look at the Lord Jesus as “the way, the truth, and the life” (“no man cometh unto the Father but by me”), but Himself as the food of the believer now brought to God. So now we may continue our subject by the light of the scriptures immediately before us.

We have already seen how in the Old Testament type the priests were not only brought to God and suitably clothed for that place, but they were fed, abundantly fed. In Luke 15 the father did not say “Let us be merry” until he had said, “Let us eat.” Now we may consider not only that on which we are to feed, but the abundance of it—enough and to spare. Right through, God's purpose has been (as He said to Abraham) “I will bless thee and make thee a blessing.”

What have we then in these scriptures? John 7 opens with the Feast of tabernacles. There were seven Jewish feasts of the year; as to three of which, Jehovah said they were to gather round Himself. He was to be their center. The Feast of tabernacles was the last of the feasts, and in it we have two things; firstly, millennial blessing, corn and wine, the types of earthly good, and, secondly, dwelling in booths, all together, rich and poor, meeting on one common platform. It was a scene of fullest earthly joy. We do not read of it being kept till the days of Solomon, when the people were dismissed “glad and merry in heart” (2 Chron. 7:8). There was full earthly joy and happiness, and religious happiness also, infinitely more than all the “P.S.A.'s” rolled into one could ever effect. But earthly happiness is not heaven. Men see just the opposite of this now—massacres, murders, cancers, operations. What is the root of all these? Philanthropy may cut off the branches and seek to alleviate the symptoms, but it is only like the man who tried his hand on the thorns and thistles, ignoring the cause of, them all. Abel was wiser—he covered the root with the blood of a victim.

“In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus (who had not sanctioned the feast, His time of display not being yet come) stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he concerning the Spirit which they that believe on him were about to receive” when He was glorified (John 7:37-39). Yet meanwhile did He give the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life to those who had received Him. That woman, out of whom He had cast seven demons, says at first, “They have taken away the Lord.” Anyone might say that, but when the angels question

her she says, “They have taken away MY Lord.” Can we all say so? So Paul said “Christ Jesus MY Lord,” as before, Thomas had also said, “My Lord and my God.” So, again, the woman of Samaria, receiving the living water, could not but testify of Him to her neighbors, “Come, see a man... is not this the Christ?” John 6 gives us the incarnate Christ as the “living bread which came down from heaven,” the Giver of life, of which a man must “have eaten,” to “live forever.” But there is also the constant eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood, i. e., Himself in death, the death of the cross, if we are to abide in Him and He in us (vers. 54-56). In fine, Himself in His life, death and ascension. It is a perversion of the scripture to make this chapter speak of the Lord's supper, for eating of it can never give life. The next chapter (7) points to Him glorified and the Holy Ghost given. See also chap. 17, “Now, O Father, glorify thou me along with (not from) thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” He was one with the Father, Jehovah's Fellow, His Son, and He is glorified along with the Father, sharing the same glory and affection as in the past ages. As man, too, is He glorified, and the glory given Him He gives us.

If in John 7 we have the streams flowing out in this barren empty world (a noisy one, I grant, but a drum is that; open it and see what causes it, it is empty), in chap. 13 I am in company with my fellow Christians. How am I to treat them? As Christ treats me. Perfect in Him before the Father, I am yet likely to be defiled outside. I need cleansing. Oh, what a story, a Christian's is, of feet washing! After the first week or so of newborn joy, do things get dim and the joy fade away? Is it not because the Lord was not sought for to sustain and keep right? But see how He intervenes and washes the feet and brings the wanderer back! And this is how I am to act towards my fellow Christians, “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.”

Now for a brief word on Eph. 3 In the first chapter of this Epistle we find God's purpose, predestinating, choosing, receiving us into favor in the Beloved. Then I am told that all things are to be put under Him as Head— “Head over all things to the church.” The church is to share His glory with Him, to reign with Him. Yes, that is all very sweet, but do you say, I cannot see why God should tell us all this? Why? Because you form part of that church—you are going to reign with Him And before reigning comes obedience. We must learn to obey before we can rule. You are told what is coming in order that now you may have no will but His. “To Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus throughout all ages” —not merely the future ones, but the present. If there is but one other with me (in this state of confusion), I am responsible to glorify Him in the church, to own Him as Head, and carry out His word. It is the affections that He wants, “that Christ may dwell in your heart” —the will and the heart both subject to Him. Thus, whether in the world among our fellow believers, or in the church, may we be not only “blessed,” but “a blessing!”

Bible Treasury: Volume 13, Priesthood, Our

Num. 18:1-19

All the children of God are priests. Peter speaks of a double priesthood of Christians (1 Peter 2:5-9), of a holy and of a royal priesthood: spiritual, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; royal, to show forth the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The apostle makes allusion there to Christ as being Priest according to the order of Melchizedek who will come thus to manifest His excellencies and His power. Being royal priests we are called to bear testimony to this power as being children of light in the midst of darkness.

All the character of priesthood which is in question here (Num. 18) is grace. After the murmurs of the people of Israel (Num. 16:41) God took away the rod from the hands of Aaron, whose election showed grace (Num. 17:5), to conduct the people Himself across the desert. “And it shall come to pass that the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom; and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.” The love of God is greater than the sin of the people: without that they would never have been able to cross the desert. The rod of Aaron is thus the complete manifestation of the grace of God. It is not a question here, as to our priesthood, of our personal relationships with God; for we are already under grace by the death and resurrection of Christ. To be able to understand my priesthood, I must be convinced beforehand of my position under grace.

God, without ever sanctioning sin, permits it in the case of some, who failed to learn otherwise, to show that His grace is greater than sin. He puts these persons, spite of their sin, in relation with grace. Grace here consists in the development of love in the midst of evil; but the foundation of all is ever the individual conviction of the state of grace. The standing of a priest means to be in the midst of evil in relation with the grace of God. The perfection of Christ's love is to be occupied with His people in whatever state they may be. He would that God should be glorified, and thus He carries everything on His heart. In this position grace is manifested more powerfully than the evil. In the midst of evil the priest may glorify Him in grace; and it is a great privilege to be the vessel of this moral glory which is manifested in the midst of evil. The angels desire to sound the depths of such grace as is shown thus powerful in the midst of evil. (1 Peter 1:12.) Naturally God manifests already His glory in heaven because of the purity of all that surrounds Himself; but the denizens of heaven cannot otherwise understand how God can manifest His glory in the midst of evil. Our position is in the midst of evil, the tent of the meeting-place in the midst of the people, where God Himself dwells in the midst of a people miserable and sinful. There has God set His priests. The Holy Spirit ever kept in activity by the love of God brings home the want of holding fast the grace of God in the midst of sin and for it. As a priest of God the Christian has the power of God's love in presence of evil.

Two things are to be remarked here, responsibility and grace. According to responsibility all that which hinders the soul from being in relation with grace is a sin also of my priesthood, and therefore sin against the sanctuary and my priesthood. The priests who draw near to God ought to speak of God's love in presence of sin and of sin in presence of God's love.

All the tribe of Levi is joined to the priesthood, and there is found the tabernacle of witness, the tent of the meeting where God manifests Himself. The church has this position. The world has rejected God in Jesus. The church is the tabernacle of the testimony, the epistle of Christ before the world, and this far more than the priesthood in Israel.

Verse 5 sets forth the responsibility of these priests; verse 7 sets forth their position and ours. The church, as a testimony, ought to carry the wants of all on the heart for the blessing of God to be in and on the church.

In verse 8 we see that the priests were anointed, as we are with the Holy Ghost. (Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:27) Thus have we the unction from the Holy One, and God is He who has anointed us, and also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. How many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen unto the glory of God through us.

The priest was to eat, but only in the most holy place, in the presence of God Himself. It is only on Christ in His presence that we can nourish our souls. If I carry the wants of the church on my heart, then it is impossible not to feel the grace of God, to be able to carry those relations to God and of God to us. It is only when I understand the riches and the fullness of the grace of God in Christ that I can approach God about evil. It is only in communion with Him, in the possession of peace, in the presence of grace that I can thus draw near.

Verses 11-15. All belongs to the priest's house as to a family. It eats the fruits of the land, on which the eyes of Jehovah rest continually, the land of promise. In all the whole house rejoiced, and with all the whole family was nourished,

But the priest has not this position only; he is also anointed. It is a delight to rejoice in the promises that are accomplished in Christ, which are accomplishing, and which are to be accomplished in Him. The Holy Spirit gives joy as well as the bread of life; but what is still more is to find the fullness of grace in the midst of evil before God, and occupied with wants.

It is now for us to ask ourselves up to what point we are suitable for carrying on our hearts the wants of the church and the love of God; up to what point we nourish ourselves in the presence of God, and we own the riches of grace, of God's love in Christ.

The Remembrancer: 1896, Ribband of Blue, The

(NUMBERS. 15:37-41; COLOSSIANS. 3:1.)

UM 15:37-41{OL 3:1{Let me say a word on the Lord's instituting a blue ribband to be worn by the Israelites on the fringe of their garments. No Christian would suppose that this was unmeaning; or if it conveys a divine lesson, that it is not our business to seek to understand it; and more than this, to act by the grace of God accordingly.

As to the general meaning of the " blue," which we often find in this book of Numbers, there cannot be any doubt about it. It is the color of heaven and the appropriate witness of a heavenly character. We have white used commonly for the representation of purity, as crimson or scarlet is the image of the world's glory; and the ribband of blue being the heavenly color, the thought connected with it is very simple, though of immense practical importance. The Lord would have His people, even in the commonest things of daily life, to present the constant testimony before their own as well as others' eyes, that they belong to heaven. The effect of this we shall find to be mighty over the soul. It is not enough for us that we should simply abstain from that which is evil, or that we should cultivate godliness. No person born of God could doubt or deny our obligation to holiness, and that the children of God are bound to abstain even from the appearance of evil. But supposing all this, and that each wore his garment ever so undefiled, would this be the ribband of blue? Does it not mean the reminding our souls from day to day of the place to which we belong? The outward raiment was used to set forth that which is displayed before people-our character and ways. What God, as I think, intended by the blue on the fringe, was the intermingling in the most ordinary ways of daily life the constant token that we are heavenly, and not merely that we shall be there by and by. If we, as it were, put heaven off, making it purely a hope for the future, would not this be for the Israelite, not to wear or look upon this ribband of blue? For if we are merely treating heaven thus, we might be led to say, " We may be earthly now, but we shall be heavenly by and by when we get there." But the effect of our souls taking in the truth which this type teaches is that, while we are on earth surrounded by difficulties, heaven is before our eyes and hearts. -Otherwise we shall be in constant danger of acting simply as earthly men—godly, I will suppose, and kind and truthful; but all that is totally short of God's will concerning us. Even to serve Christ, blessed as it is, is not the same thing as being heavenly. All that might have been, and indeed in many cases is, true in beloved saints of God, where the blue ribband is forgotten. What answers to the type, and gives it us far more fully, according to the power of the New Testament-no longer merely the shadow, but the very image—is the truth we have in Col. 3 We are there addressed as those who belong to heaven; but, of course, still upon earth, which gives rise to all the difficulties of the path of faith. There will be no difficulty in walking rightly when we are in heaven; but the fight and victory is by faith now. We are so apt to judge by the feelings of our hearts, so easily led away. And what can strengthen us against ourselves? Let us hearken to what the Lord says here: " It shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them." Is it not remarkable that the blue fringe should be used of God as an incentive to obedience? The very fact that our souls begin each day with this memorial before us is no small thing. Supposing that we have in our business or in anything else, to do with men, what is it that will preserve us by the grace of God? What an encouragement to us! What a remembrancer that we belong to heaven! " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Were this before us, there is nothing, small or great, that the Christian would not do according to God; there would be a felt link with heaven, and not merely a matter of necessity or of character, which is below a Christian. Of course a Christian will be honest and godly, hut if I make character or necessity the reason why I do a thing, I am not walking as a Christian at all, but like many a man who is the enemy of God and His Son. Doing it as a matter of duty does not lift you above self and present things. Nay, supposing I look at the Lord simply as one strengthening me in my daily duty, it is quite true; but it is not the full measure of the truth. I may lower the Lord to be my helper upon earth merely; but that is not the ribband of blue. But if my eyes are raised from the earth, and fixed on Christ in heaven-if I remind myself that my present association is with Christ in heaven, and that God looks for me to walk worthily of Christ now above myself, being one with Him who is there-in this you find, I conceive, the great truth that answers to the figure. And this the Lord here connects with remembering all His commandments and doing them and walking holily. He had brought them out of Egypt that they might thus walk according to Him, and that they might be His people and He their God. How often, alas! we walk merely " as men." But if we do not rise above that standard, we are not walking according, to that witness of heavenly things which the Lord set forth in type to Israel. We shall find that the power of being heavenly, is according to the measure in which our souls enter into Christ there.. It is not a question of correcting this or that, or of beginning one thing and another, but of heavenly things in Christ separating our hearts from things on earth. When we look from heaven, as consciously of it, and work from heaven downwards, earthly things soon dwindle, and the praise of their disappearance returns not to ourselves in any way, but to Christ. Thus He Himself has all the glory, whatever good thing there may be wrought by the Spirit among the children of God.

Edification: Volume 5, "A Ribband of Blue."

THE children of Israel were instructed in Numbers 15:37-41 to put a ribband of blue upon the fringe of the border of their garments, so that they might continually be reminded of the commandments of the Lord, and not seek after their own hearts and their own eyes.

What a constant reminder this ribband of blue must have been. Carrying it about with them, wherever they went, how continually must it have been before their eyes! Cannot we learn a salutary lesson from this?

It can be applied to every circumstance of life. We, as Christians, are not called upon to wear an actual ribband of blue, but we may well constantly remind ourselves of whose we are and whom we serve, that we may maintain our true character and never let questionable associations be allowed.

There is a great need for this. For these are days of great spiritual sloppiness, of world-bordering, of accommodating oneself to the spirit of the age. We are told on every hand that the times have changed, and the Bible and Christians must accommodate themselves to the changed times. It were well if the changed times were accommodated to the Bible. We need the Word of God to govern us as much as ever.

The ribband of blue sets forth in symbolic setting the truth of the heavenly walk of the Christian. Blue is symbolic of what is heavenly. Blue is the color of the sky, and the Hindu word for heaven is simply blue.

Christians belong to heaven, and need to exhibit a heavenly walk. Just as God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, so we have to remember that we are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. Twice He reminded His Father of this in the memorable prayer of John 17. Again we are reminded that “our conversation [literally citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20, 21).

If we carried about with us what the ribband of blue signified — that is, our heavenly calling and character — we should be very careful where we went and what associations we allowed. We should not want the cinema, nor would the cinema want us.

It is having the spirit of this that leads to holiness, to the sowing to the Spirit, and not to the flesh. In this lies our happiness and safety.

A. J. Pollock.

Simple Testimony: Volume 20, Is Your Eye on the "Ribband of Blue"?

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and, do them. 15:38, 39.

THIS is a most interesting and instructive scripture, full of significance for us. Not that we are called to dress in a peculiar garb, or to wear fringes or ribbands. Christianity is spiritual, and deals with the inward work of God in the soul, producing practical and visible effects in the character, life, and ways of God's saints. And where it is not the case, that man's religion is vain. But if we need no "ribband of blue" round our garment to-day, yet surely the life of every Christian should be colored by that which it denotes. As another has aptly put it, "The heavenly principle must enter into the minutest details of life, even in those that are nearest to the earth, if we wish to escape the serious evils which bring down the judgment of God.”

Blue, as has often been remarked, is the heavenly color, and Christians are heavenly even as Christ is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48). They should live a heavenly life on earth—a life according to the, holiness of God, separate from all that is worldly and all that is not according to His mind. The Ephesian epistle sets before us our position in the heavenlies in Christ now (Eph. 1, 2.), and the Philippian epistle the practical walk of heavenly saints on earth. (Alas! how far we come short!) From beginning to end of the epistle to the Philippians there is no mention of Satan or sin; "the flesh" is only brought forward that we may have no confidence in it (Phil. 3:3,4), while joy and rejoicing in the Lord, with suffering here, are presented as our appointed portion till He come.

As the Israelite looked upon the blue ribband round the border of his garment, he would remember his position of favor among God's people and his responsibility to obey all the Lord's commandments; and his eye and his heart would be kept from many snares. But where there was forgetfulness of Jehovah's institutions he was exposed to the enemy's wiles, and fell a prey to his own lusts.

So is it to-day. The "stranger" has been brought into blessing and highest heavenly privilege. We who were afar off, poor sinners of the Gentiles, who believe the blessed gospel of God, are found in His assembly. The border between the Christian and the world should be distinctly seen by every eye, and it is so where there is true spirituality. What a testimony the Church of God would have been if the precept of the "ribband of blue" had been hid in every Christian's heart! Alas! we, like Israel, have allowed our hearts and eyes to go after other things. To use a figure, the color of the ribband has almost entirely faded away. The Church and the world have shaken hands, and the Church has fallen, more or less, to the world's level. Blessed is it indeed when saints wake up to their high calling and responsibility, and when the heavenly color is manifest in whole-hearted obedience to the revealed will of God.

The Lord has brought us out of this Egypt world, and we are passing through a moral waste where all is defiling on account of the presence of sin. Our only safeguard is to carry the deep significance of the "ribband of blue" in our hearts. So we shall be preserved day by day, and walk well-pleasing to our God. What can be more lovely in His sight than an assembly of His saints characterized by heavenly-mindedness?

In our Lord's day the scribes and Pharisees had made broad their phylacteries and enlarged the borders of their garments. They had not forgotten the "ribband of blue," but had misused it. They enlarged their borders that the eyes of other men might behold them, but their own hearts were far from the true meaning of the ribband. They were self-occupied, loud in words, and busy in works, but their words were vain and their works were to be seen of men! Alas! how many to-day follow in their steps!

But there was One who had a border to His garment whose eye and heart never wandered. The Son of God walked as man on earth, a heavenly stranger. The border of blue was ever a perfect line of demarcation between Him and a sinful world. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). He remembered to do all the commandments of God.

And how blessed to see the healing virtue of Him, whose "ribband of blue" never faded, in this ruined world! A poor woman sinking rapidly into the grave, who had spent all her living in view of a remedy, came behind Him and touched the border of His garment, and immediately she was made whole (Luke 8:44). One touch was enough. And so it is also to-day for the healing of any sin-sick soul who believes on Him.

May the Lord in His grace give each reader of these lines to learn the deep significance of the "ribband of blue." We belong not to this world. Heaven, where Christ is, is our home. We are but passing through a world steeped in sin, and there is no preservation from its corruption and defilement unless our eyes and hearts are governed! so to speak, wholly and solely by the ribband. Is your eye fixed upon it?

E. H. C.

Things New and Old: Volume 1, Encouragement in Difficulties

Numb. 13:26; 14:9.

“And they told him and said, We came into the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great, &c.....If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us,” &c. Numb. 13:27; 14:8. The Lord does not conceal from us the difficulties which are in the way, but rather bids us count the cost. Our eyes, on the one hand, are prone to light on the difficulties, and forget the blessings; or, on the other, to see only the blessings, and be blind to the difficulties; but God would have us see both. The spies were to tell of both; had they not done so, they would not have declared the truth. They were to tell of the giants and the walled cities, as well as of the fruits, the milk, and the honey. They carried a cluster of grapes, so great that two bore it between them (a magnificent exhibition of blessing and of plenty); but it was not received as a counterpoise; it did not relieve the spirit of the people from the arduousness of taking possession of the country. They are in distress and dismay; there is no doubt of all they would have to pass through in taking possession; and in one sense, it is right that they should be alive to it; right, so far as to be aware of the danger; but there their unbelief came in, and there was their sin.

Two men stilled the people; some discouraged them, but two were enough to establish the truth. They were well able to go up. But why? What communication should have strengthened their hearts? What will strengthen our hearts, and give us confidence, that we may feel we are able to get practical possession of our land? All blessings are laid up for us in heavenly places; but how are we to overcome the strong and walled cities? Caleb says, “If the Lord delight in us,” &c.

That is the whole question; not whether the land is good or bad, but whether the Lord delights in them or not. Beloved reader, that is merely the legal form. “If” is conditional, and does not apply to us. The truth is that the Lord does delight in us. It is this that our souls must dwell on, for how much do our blessings and our deliverances depend on this. I may say that I do not know what he delights in me for; but so might Caleb have said. There was power in his word, “If the Lord delight in us but how much greater in what we have to say, ‘The Lord has proved to us that He does delight in us.’” In Psalm 16, which treats of resurrection, referring to Christ, who has gone up on high for us, we read of the saints, “In whom is all my delight.” Should not this drop as honey and the honeycomb into our souls—that the Lord Jesus, the Holy One of God, takes pleasure in us? And why? For three reasons:

1St. Because we are His own.

2ndly. Because of the abundance of His service towards us, and the great cost at which He has gained us.

3rdly. Because with us alone He has sympathy. Let us divide these reasons, that we may see more clearly the grounds of His delight in us.

1. We are His own. (Read Eph. 5:29-32.) Why should He not love His own? “No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.” “We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

2. It cost Him so much to gain us. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. His heart was set upon the Church, as the pearl of great price, for which He sold all that He had, in order to possess it. The more we expend on any object the more we love it. There is not a parent who does not love that child most who most demands his care. And so Christ, having already possessed Himself of us by His continual service for us in the heavens, exercises (if I may so say) His own love to us, and wins ours to Him. “He that is forgiven much, the same loveth much.” The more that a soul feels the Lord dealing with it, even though that dealing be in discipline, the more assured may that soul be that He delights in it. Where I expend much, the more averse am I to see the object of my expenditure go to ruin.

Cannot our souls rejoice in the consciousness of this? It is a wonderful thing, but so it is.

In 2 Sam. 15:25, 26 there occurs a remarkable instance of how the soul grasps this idea when under severe discipline, because that is the time, above all others, when nature would say, “Now He does not delight in me.” The sword is falling on David in the most painful way; he is stripped of everything that belonged to his mighty state; he is going forth to bear the judgment and retribution for an open evil. “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” His restoration entirely depends on the Lord’s favor. His words are, “If he say, I have no delight in thee.” His whole future rested on the question whether or not God delighted in him; and so afterward, when recounting the mercies of the Lord, (2 Sam. 22:20,) David could say, “He delivered me because he delighted in me.” And if this could sustain David’s heart, how much more should it ours, to whom the truth is delivered in such a different way: for with us the Lord’s favor is on no conditional ground, but one of firm assurance—His dealings with us being all the result of His delight in us. The Queen of Sheba says to Solomon, “The Lord delighted in thee.” (2 Chron. 9:8.) That was giving him glory.

If your soul is traveling in a dark and lonely path of discipline, what is to bear you up?” “The Lord delighteth in thee.” If it be to inherit the glory, yea, all that the heart can wish for, it is because the Lord delighteth in thee. It was the Lord’s own joy in the matter. He is “rich in

mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.” His mercy is the result of his love, not the cause of it.

3. There are none else but such as we are, with whom He can have sympathy. Where else can He find it? In this world? No. With angels? No. What does an angel know about the exercises of Job, or of the Psalms, or the Canticles? what about the path of Christ? The voice of the sufferer down here, in this sin-stained world, touches a chord in the heart of Christ which none other can; because He knew what it was to travel in such. “Ye shall leave me alone,” expressed His bitterest sorrow from man. Where would all our doubts and fears be if we realized that He has no other delight here below?

Heb. 10 practically embodies the truth which Caleb taught; there we see our Great High Priest, not only announcing the fact that He delights in me, but following it up, standing in the heavens for me; bearing the difficulties of those who are laboring to take possession of the same spot.

“Hold fast your profession not because of what is there, but because the Son of God is there. He cannot come down to labor again here; but He can and does lift up the saint, and deliver him from the difficulties with which he is beset. Caleb said, “He will surely bring us in;” and far more assuredly may we say so, in spite of all the discouragements. There is nothing that can really establish the heart like this. “The Lord delights in me.” What confidence! What calmness it gives! It was the steady lamp that illumined David’s gloomy path, and the ground of his song of praise when he was delivered from his enemies. So then, while traveling on to the realization of our possessions, we can say, “Go on, for He will surely bring us in.” He will teach us the folly of our corrupt hearts, but, at the same time, will sustain them through the trouble with the assurance that He delights in us.

It is this that He gives as the true counterpoise to trouble, not the blessings which He permits us by the way, which people so often speak of as the balance for their trials. No, that will not do; we must learn not only that “He will surely bring us in,” but that He will do it because He delights in us. May the Lord teach us more practically to know His grace and His love through a deeper intimacy with His heart.

Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith: Volume 2, 1864, Would God That All the Lord's People Were Prophets

“There ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad andMedad do prophesy in the camp.”—Numbers 11:27.

ELDAD they said, and Medad, there

Irregularly bold,

By Moses uncommission’d, dare

A separate meeting bold!

And still whom none but heav’n will own,

Men whom the world decry,

Men authoriz’d by God alone,

Presume to prophesy!

“My Lord Moses, forbid them.”—11: 28.

How often have I blindly doneWhat zealous Joshua did,

Impatient to the rulers run,

“Enviest thou for my sake?”

Moses, the minister of God,

Rebukes our partial love,Who envy at the gifts bestow’d

On those we disapprove:

We do not our own spirits know,

Who wish to see supprest,The men that Jesus’ spirit show,

The men whom God hath bless’d.

“Would God that all the Lord’s people, were prophets, and that the Lordwould put His Spirit upon them.”

Shall we the Spirit’s course restrain,Or quench the heav’nly fire?

Let God His messengers ordain,And whom He will inspire:

Blow as He list, the Spirit’s choice

Of instruments we bless;

We will, if Christ be preach’d, rejoice,

And wish the word success!

Can all be prophets then? are allCommission’d from above?

No! but whomsoe’er the Lord shall call

We joyfully approve.

O that the Church might all receive

The spirit of prophesy,

And all in Christ accepted live,

And all in Jesus die?

To Every Man His Work, Is It I or Is It the Lord?

" And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in Thy sight, that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou swarest unto their fathers?... I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in Thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

(Num. 11:11-15.)

Here we find the spirit of Moses crushed beneath the ponderous responsibility which devolved upon him, and he gives utterance to the anguish of his heart in these accents.

In all this we see Moses evidently retiring from a post of honor. If God were pleased to make him the sole instrument in managing the assembly, it was only so much the more dignity and privilege conferred upon him. True, the responsibility was immense; but faith would own that God was amply sufficient for that.

Here, however, the heart of Moses failed him (blessed servant as he was), and he says, " I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." But he was not asked to bear them alone; for God was with him. They were not too heavy for God. It was He that was bearing them; Moses was but the instrument. He might just as well have spoken of his rod as bearing the people; for what was he but a mere instrument in God's hand, as the rod was in his?

It is here the servants of God constantly fail; and the failure is all the more dangerous because it wears the appearance of humility. It seems like distrust of oneself and deep lowliness of spirit, to shrink from heavy responsibility. But all we need to inquire is, has God imposed the responsibility? If so, He will assuredly be with me in sustaining it; and having Him with me, I can sustain anything. With Him, the weight of a mountain is nothing; without Him, the weight of a feather is overwhelming.

It is a totally different thing if a man, in the vanity of his mind, thrust himself forward and take a burden upon his shoulder which God never intended him to bear and, therefore, never fitted him to bear it. We may then, surely, expect to see him crushed beneath the weight of it. But if God lays it upon him, He will qualify and strengthen him to carry it.

It is never the fruit of humility to depart from a divinely appointed post. On the contrary, the deepest humility will express itself by remaining there in simple dependence upon God. It is a sure evidence of being occupied about self when we shrink from service on the ground of inability. God does not call us to service on the ground of our ability, but of His own; hence, unless I am filled with thoughts about myself, or with positive distrust of Him, I need not relinquish any position of service or testimony because of the heavy responsibilities attaching thereto.

All power belongs to God, and it is quite the same whether that power acts through one agent or through seventy; the power is still the same: but if one agent refuse the dignity, it is only so much the worse for him. God will not force people to abide in a place of honor, if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there. The way lies always open to them to step down from their dignity, and sink into the place where base unbelief is sure to put us.

Thus it was with Moses. He complained of the burden, and the burden was speedily removed; but with it the high honor of being allowed to carry it. " And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest to be elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone."

(Num. 2: 16, 17).

There was no fresh power introduced. It was the same Spirit, whether in one or in seventy. There was no more value or virtue in the flesh of seventy men than in the flesh of one man. " It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (John 6: 63.) There was nothing, in the way of power, gained; but a great deal, in the way of dignity, lost by this movement on the part of Moses.

In the after part of Num. 2, we find Moses giving utterance to accents of unbelief, which called forth from the Lord a sharp rebuke. " Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee or not." If my reader will compare verses 11-15 with verses 21 and 22, he will see a marked and solemn connection. The man who shrinks from responsibility, on the ground of his feebleness, is in great danger of calling in question the fullness and sufficiency of God's resources.

This entire scene teaches a most valuable lesson to every servant of Christ who may be tempted to feel himself alone or overburdened in his work. Let such a one bear in mind that, where the Holy Ghost is working, one instrument is as good and as efficient as seventy; and where He

is not working seventy are of no more value than one. It all depends on the energy of the Holy Ghost. With Him one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him seventy men can do nothing. Let the lonely servant remember, for the comfort and encouragement of his sinking heart, that, provided he has the presence and power of the Holy Ghost with him, he need not complain of his burden nor sigh for a division of labor. If God honor a man by giving him a great `deal of work to do, let him rejoice therein and not murmur; for if he murmur, he can speedily lose his honor. God is at no loss for instruments. He could, from the stones, raise up children unto Abraham; and He can raise up, from the same, the needed agents to carry on His glorious work.

Oh! for a heart to serve Him! A patient, humble, self-emptied, devoted heart! A heart ready to serve in company, ready to serve alone, a heart so filled with love to Christ that it will find its joy-its chief joy-in serving Him, let the sphere or character of service be what it may. This assuredly is the special need of the day in which our lot is cast. May the Holy Ghost stir up our hearts to a deeper sense of the exceeding preciousness of the name of Jesus, and enable us to yield a fuller, clearer, more unequivocal response to the changeless love of His heart!

Eastern Manners and Customs Illustrating Various Bible Passages, Eastern Manners and Customs: "The Fish Which We Did Eat in Egypt Freely"

" The fish which we did eat in Egypt freely."-Num. 11:5.

The word translated freely in this verse really signifies gratuitously. It is rendered for naught in Gen. 29:15; Job 1:9; for nothing, Ex. 21:2: nothing, 2 Sam. 24:24; and the French Bible gives it " sans qu' il nous en coutat rien." Even in the present day fish is so abundant in some parts of Egypt, that it is to be had for the asking, that is, literally given away. A missionary long resident in Egypt has recently written:-It was my privilege a little more than a year ago to make a week's ramble through the field of Zoan,' and the land of Goshen.' All Europeans who have traveled in Egypt know that they, as wearers of hats' are expected by the natives to pay at least double price for all they get... We ate fish freely, both in the sense of abundantly and gratuitously. We did not beg them, nor did any one seem to think of asking us to pay for them. It is true, not of the whole land of Egypt... that men may eat fish gratuitously, but only of the eastern section of the Delta-the land of the sojourn of the Israelites."

Christian Truth: Volume 35, Grace

Read Numb. 10:1-10

What is it that we need first and most if the life that lies ahead of us, if the Lord will, is to be fruitful in the things that are pleasing to God? How are we to fulfill the relationships of life, and in them adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things? What is it that lies at the basis of all spiritual life and service, and without which we can only fail in every sphere of life? With the exercises that come to most of us as we face the future, we may well ask such questions as these; and if we do we shall find that there is but one answer to them, and it is this: What is needed first and most and continuously, and without which we know nothing of the art of Christian living, is THE FULL AND UNRESERVED ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT WE BELONG TO GOD. Without this we build without a foundation, we waste our energies, and live unreal and useless lives. Now if we belong to God, His claims are paramount; since He is God, that must be so, but the fact that He has redeemed us gives Him a double title; and for our blessing as well as for His glory we must own His claim and obey the word, "YIELD YOURSELVES TO GOD."

This great and indispensable truth is remarkably illustrated for us in the use of the silver trumpets. They figured largely in the everyday life of Israel, for never a day passed that they did not make their appeal to that people. They were blown on God's behalf for people to hear, and they were blown on the people's behalf for God to hear. It must be noted that they were made of silver. Every Israelite that was numbered from twenty years old and upward had to bring half a silver shekel as an offering to Jehovah-no more and no less. It was called atonement money. It was the acknowledgment on their part that they belonged to God who had redeemed them by blood and power out of the bondage of Egypt for His own pleasure, and the silver thus offered was devoted to the service of the sanctuary; and of part of it these trumpets were made (Exod. 30).

When the priests blew long and loud upon these trumpets, they proclaimed to the uttermost limits of Israel that the people belonged to God; that He had redeemed them and had rights over them that could not be challenged. They were to hold themselves at His disposal. It mattered not with what they were engaged, God's call was imperative, and their own pursuits must take second place, must be abandoned in fact, and that immediately at the time the silver trumpets sounded out their assembling call.

Let us give attentive ears to the truth that the silver mouths of these trumpets proclaim, for their story has been written for our learning. Do we not hear the sound of them in the New Testament in such words as these in 1 Cor. 6:19, 20? "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE," and again in 1 Pet. 1:18, 19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In clarion tones these words call to our souls. Yet there is nothing discordant in their sound to him that has ears to hear and a heart to understand; for they do not only tell of an insistent claim but of a great love, a love that paid the price and shed the blood, that it might possess us righteously and without a rival.

The words themselves are pure like silver, for "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psalm 12:6. And obedience to the words of the Lord purifies the soul; for we read, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (1 Pet. 1:22). For practical and continuous purity of heart and life we must keep the great fact that we belong to God before our souls. It is the word of God to us morning by morning. The silver trumpet of His Word proclaims His redemptive rights over us, and the way of blessing for us is to respond in a glad subjection to His will.

1. Calling the Assembly

The first use to which these trumpets were put was "for the calling of the assembly." The tabernacle was the God-appointed center for His redeemed people in those ancient days, and from that center His words went forth, and to it He summoned them when He would. That was the shadow, the picture; Christ is the substance, the reality. And if we are obedient to the Word of God, Christ will be our one and only center. Hear then the call of the silver trumpet of the Word in this respect. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10:25. "This do in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11:24. If lethargy of spirit has come over us, or if indifference of any sort has crept into our hearts in regard to these matters, may the words of God awaken us from it! And let each of us take heed to himself and not be influenced by another, for "the manner of some" must not affect us, but the Word; and the appeal that the Word makes is a personal one.

Suppose that when the priests at the tabernacle blew upon the silver trumpets calling the people together to hear the Word of the Lord, they were so engrossed with other matters that they did not heed the call. Suppose that Judah had a quarrel with Benjamin, and they considered their quarrel to be of more importance than the call of God, and so did not respond together to it. Suppose each tribe had made a center for itself, with its own laws, creed, and regulations. Suppose some were too busy with domestic, commercial or personal matters to hear the summons. What then? Would God be indifferent? No! The call would continue until some were aroused by it, and from first one tribe and then another there would come forth those who felt and owned God's claim. And there they would stand at last in the God-appointed meeting place, where He could speak to them and commune with them. Not many, we will suppose, only two or three when compared with the multitude of the people, but obedient to the call of God and united in that obedience! Would the Lord despise them? Would He refuse to say to them what He would have said to the whole of Israel if they had been there? We may be sure that the Word would not be less rich, or the meeting less blessed because not all were there. And so it is and will be as long as God's Word abides; and those who obey it, though but two or three, will prove how faithful He is to it. He cannot deny Himself.

2. The Journeying of the Camps

The people were pilgrims in that great wilderness, and they were not to settle down and make their home in it. They were traveling to Canaan, and they needed to be reminded of the fact. So when the time came for them to pass on, an alarm was blown; the trumpets kept them on the move, and this we need also. How soon we can stagnate and sleep and forget our heavenly home and calling! Yet God is gracious, and His Word awakes us to renewed spiritual energy. It blows an alarm and says to us, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. 3:2. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 1:13. In such words as these do we hear the silver trumpets sounding an alarm, lest we should mind earthly things and forget our high destiny and our Father's house. For these two purposes the trumpets were blown on God's behalf in those times of old, and for us in these last days the word comes to us saying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear," and "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only."

3. When in Conflict With the Oppressor

Then the priests had to sound the silver trumpets on behalf of the people that they might he remembered before God. They had to do this when they were in conflict with their foes, for they had foes to meet, and they were never by their own prowess equal to them. And God made them that way, that they might in times of stress depend upon Him. They could not do without God. He was their refuge and resource and strength. When they blew the trumpets in the day of battle it was as though they said, "0 God, we are Thine, for Thou hast redeemed us; undertake for us against the oppressor." And God ever responded to their appeal. And will He disappoint us if we take up this stand in faith? Let us test Him and see. How fierce are the struggles in which some Christians engage! They desire to do right and be overcomers when sore temptations beset them; they yearn after the victorious life, but they seem to yearn in vain; hope and disappointment have alternated in their experience, and the outcome of it is that, finding the foe too strong for them, they are discouraged and ready to give up the fight. Let all such learn to use the silver trumpets. Let the great fact that they are redeemed of the Lord get a firm hold upon their souls, and let them tell it out to God. Let their cry be, "O God, I am Thine; full of failure I am, often defeated I have been, yet I am loved by Thee, and redeemed by Thee, and at so great a cost; I cannot fight this battle; fight it for me; my foes are Thy foes, and Thine are mine; I hide in Thee and own that only through Thee can I be more than conqueror."

The Christian life is not a life of ease. It is not described in the Word in the language of the bedchamber, but of the battlefield. The world, the flesh and the devil are opposed to us if we belong to God. If we lose the sense that we belong to Him, we cannot prevail in the fight; but when we blow the trumpets before Him, then will the word be fulfilled, "Ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." Numb. 10:9.

These sons of Jacob were to acknowledge God in all their circumstances. Whether they were exalted or brought low, whether they prospered or suffered adversity, whether they rejoiced or wept, the redemption note had to be dominant. And how else shall we be kept from independence of God when things go well with us? We are safe in the days of gladness if we rejoice before the Lord and own Him as the giver of every mercy, and if we hold ourselves and His gifts for Him, the Giver to whom we belong. And we are comforted and sustained if we call upon Him in the day of sorrow. If we blow the silver trumpet and say-

5. At the Beginnings of Their Months

The beginnings of their months spoke of the constant changes in this life. At every change it is our privilege and our safety to depend upon God and to do His will whose we are. "Ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." Jas. 4:15. No change in our circumstances ought to be contemplated, much less completed, without the use of the silver trumpets. "0 God, we belong to Thee; guide us in all our ways," should be our cry. The young man entering business, young Christians forming friendships, associations, new relationships, should let the great fact that they are bought with a price control them, and pour out the joyous notes of this blessed truth in the Lord's ear. Thus will they be spared many sorrows and preserved from great disaster. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Pro. 3:6.

6. Over Their Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings

With these sacrifices the people approached

unto God. The burnt offering was a type of our

worship, and the peace offering of our fellowship; our worship which has Christ, the beloved Son of God who went into death, as its subject, and our fellowship which finds its life and its food in Him also. But we cannot approach to God for worship except as redeemed by the blood of Christ. Vain and presumptuous is the notion of the modernist that he does not need this; "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." And the blood that has redeemed us gives us boldness before God, so that we can in holy fellowship unite in worship before Him, His redeemed ones. Hence we sing the new song unto our great and blessed Savior: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

"I AM THE LORD THY GOD," is God's final word in the instructions given for the use of these trumpets. He can brook no rival. He must be supreme. For His pleasure He has redeemed us, and His will for us is good, perfect, and acceptable. It is not against us, but for us. It is against all that could do us harm, and has nothing but blessing for us; and as we own Him and live as those who belong to Him, as we daily, hourly, blow the silver trumpets, we shall prove that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

The Springing Well: Volume 5 (1902), Our Bible Lesson Column

Golden Text. — “And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.

“And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai: and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.”—Num. 10:11-13. Read Num. 10:29-36.

Reading on the Lesson. Journeying to Canaan.

IN the third month of the first year the children of Israel came to Sinai, and on the first day of the first month of the second year the tabernacle was erected and accepted by God and filled with His glory (Ex. 19:1: 40:17, 34). Now, just fifty days later the cloud lifted, and they journeyed from Sinai to the wilderness of Paran. Whether it was the tabernacle and its erection, or the priesthood and the sacrifices, or the journeying through the wilderness, nothing was done, and no step was taken except as God commanded or guided by the pillar of cloud and fire. On the part of Moses and Israel it was simply a matter of obedience. Concerning the cloud and its guiding: and their obedience, see carefully Numbers 9:15-23.

29. “Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.” Thus said Moses to Hobab, the son of Raguel, or Rauel, or Jethro, the father of Zipporah, Moses’ wife (Ex. 2:18: 3:1). The Lord had truly spoken good concerning Israel—as in Ex. 6:6-8, that wondrous sevenfold “I will,” beginning and ending with “I, Jehovah.”

30. “And he said unto him, I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land and to my kindred.” It is difficult to many believers to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the visible treasures of this world, yet Jesus and His sufferings now, with eternal glory hereafter, is the program for the Christian.

31. “Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.” It looks as if, for the moment, Moses was forgetting God and His cloud and His unerring guidance. So unstable is man, even at his best.

32. “And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us the same will we do unto thee.” Moses now talks more correctly, for we are fully authorized to offer all the riches of God’s grace and glory to all who will accept Him through Jesus Christ, but we are not authorized to seek either help or guidance from those who are not His.

33. “And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days’ journey, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days’ journey to search out a resting-place for them.” This was infinitely better than the eyes or the wisdom of Hobab. How could Moses forget, or seem to, that God had led them out, and would surely lead them all the way?

34. “And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day when they went out of the camp.” The cloud was the visible symbol of the Lord’s presence with them, and He by it was their guide, their light, their shield, their oracle, their avenger, their covering (Ex. 13:21: 14:19, 20, 24-28: Num. 9:15-23: 10:34: 14:14)—in fact, all they needed for all their journey.

35. “And it came to pass when the ark set forward that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.” David, by the Spirit, afterward embodied this in at least two of the Psalms (68:1, 2; 132:8). In Josh. 3:13 the ark is called “the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth,” and before it Jordan was dried up and the walls of Jericho fell down.

36. “And when it rested he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.” Thus, whether on the march or at rest, the great reality of Israel’s life was Jehovah in their midst. In proportion as they realized this and acted accordingly they prospered, but when they forgot Him they failed. It is so with us. He says, “Lo, I am with you always,” and when we believe this, and thus realize His presence (for the only way to realize anything in the spiritual life is to believe it) and count on Him, we have joy and peace and victory, but when we forget His presence we fall.

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