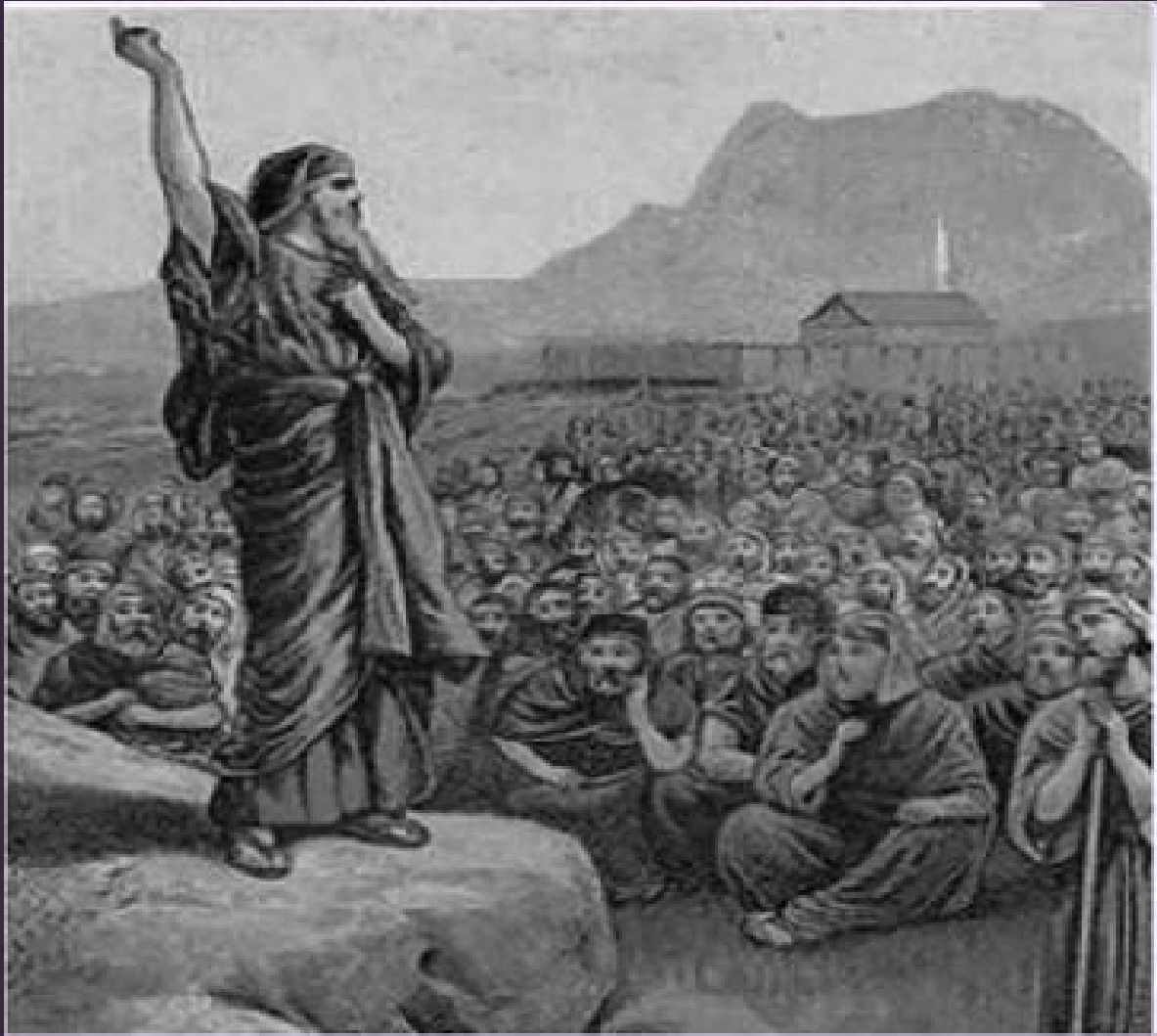
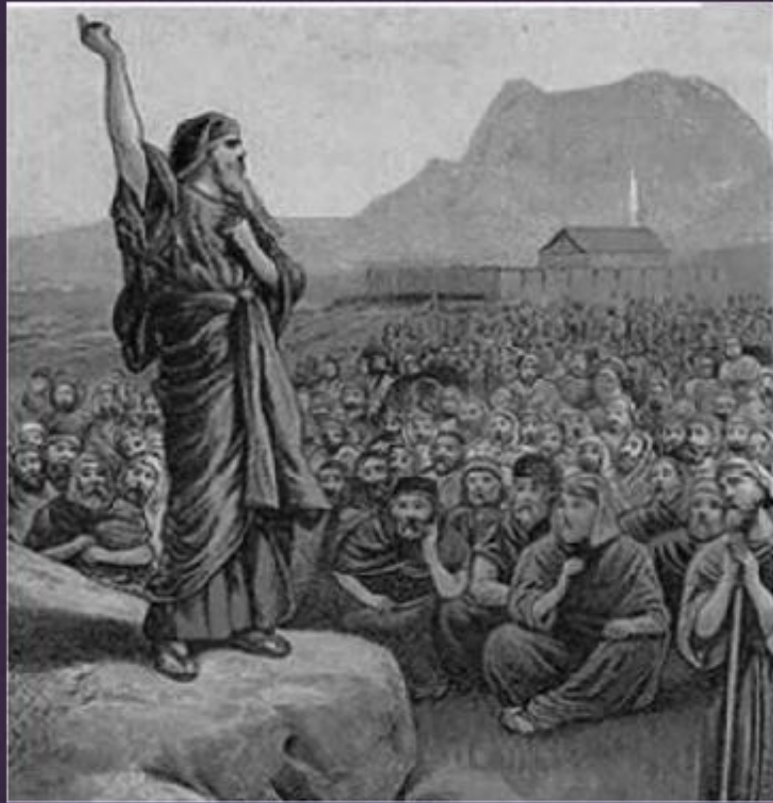


HENRY LAW



THE GOSPEL IN DEUTERONOMY

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DEUTERONOMY

The Gospel in Deuteronomy

by Henry Law

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The Prophet

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." Deut. 18:15

All fullness dwells in Christ. Reader, come ponder—praise—admire—adore Him. Those who know Him, never can commend enough. Ignorance alone neglects—despises—disesteems Him.

The neediest of needy sinners find all supply in Him. He is salvation's overflowing well. He fills all vessels, so that they can hold no more. He is a treasure-house, in which gold never fails.

Let the surface of this truth be touched. You are sin-soiled. Here is a fountain of all-cleansing blood. Wash, and be whiter, than the spotless snow. Satan, and SELF, and life-long trespasses condemn you. Here is Jesus' wounded side, presenting an acquitting plea. Your best obedience is a filthy rag. Here is the righteousness of God—a perfect covering—a glorious robe. Your *heart* by nature is a lifeless stone. Christ sends His Spirit, and the entrance is life. He is a PRIEST, offering His blood—living to intercede—pouring down blessings. He is a KING—ruling above—within—around. He is a **PROPHET**, giving all knowledge—leading in wisdom's paths—diffusing floods of light—teaching salvation's lessons.

It is this latter office, which now claims special thought. Let us approach it by enquiring, what man's state must be, unless rays beam from heaven?

When sin invaded earth, knowledge of God was slain. That lovely plant was blighted to the root. That beauteous column fell a shattered ruin. The mind lost power to fly aloft. Its wings were clipped. The eye was dim to pierce the skies. The wish and skill to

find out God were utterly extinct. Man's intellect—alert to grovel in the dust—could never scale this height. Here mental shrewdness slobbered, as a fool. Witness the silly failures of philosophy's most boasted efforts.

Unless, then, some revelation had been given, God and His essence must have been shrouded in impenetrable night. Man could not dig such a jewel out of his own quarry. He could not find it in his own empty chambers. Along a brief career of blindness he must have gone down to that deep prison-house, where darkness ever darkens, and God is never seen. The world by wisdom knows not God.

The case of need, then, is most clear. But all is met by Jesus. He undertakes to save, and undertakes to teach. The Church's Savior is the Church's Prophet. He is not slow to enter on His work. In Eden's garden, where the light expired, He strikes a new spark. There He is quick to speak of *remedy* and *rescue*—of a woman-born Savior—and His final triumphs. As time rolls on, He adds fresh light. By types, by prophecies, by figures, and by signs, He pictures redemption. He raises holy men, and puts His words into their mouths. He shakes a torch of truth in the world's night. He shows His Calvary through vistas of long time—and so guides many a benighted pilgrim in the path to heaven.

Thus the Prophet's voice is early heard—the Prophet's school is early open. But in appointed time, the Prophet-God must come in person. Moses thus states the fact. "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a **prophet** like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.*" Let us now mark the marvelous fulfillment.

1. Our Prophet shall be of our brethren—one of our house.

Here is considerate wisdom. If He were solely God, His mission must be death, not life. Humanity must perish at the sight. If He stooped only to angelic order, how could He mix with inhabitants of earth? How could we hang upon His lips? But our Prophet truly is

man. He dwelt here as one of our family. He hid His glories in our tent of clay. He trod life's walk, as our very brother. Therefore, with fearless love, we may approach. We may sit down, with Mary, at His feet. We may recline, with John, upon His breast. As the disciples on the way to Emmaus, we may cling to His side. We may confidently disclose the history of our souls. A brother will not scorn a brother's tale. When we seek counsel, He will gladly—fully—tenderly impart. As a near kinsman, He invites, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart—and you shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. 11:29.

2. But more. The Prophet shall not be only man. He shall be man *marked with a wondrous sign*. He shall appear as ANOTHER MOSES. Israel's leader shall revive in Him. As face to face, He shall respond to a conspicuous type.

This similitude must now be traced. The search, amid a mass of profit, distinctly proves, that an omniscient mind pervades all revelation's story. No 'mere chance' could frame a close resemblance between distant men. Infidelity cannot maintain such folly. Christ, then, *foreshown* as Moses, *coming* as Moses, stamps His commission with a divine seal. In Him this type is realized—and in Him alone. For until He appeared, there was no counterpart to Moses. Since He ascended, none such has arisen.

See, how the pictures correspond. **Moses is born.** No peaceful cradle rocks the child. No mother's arms securely clasp him. A tyrant dooms him to immediate grave. He is cast to the Nile's waves.

Jesus is born. He, too, reposes in no tranquil home. No rapturous welcomes greet the heaven-sent babe. In Herod another Pharaoh plots. Massacre casts a wide-spread net to catch Him. Thus He is Moses-like in early persecution.

Moses at the appointed time goes forth from Egypt. Jesus is banished to the selfsame spot, that out of Egypt God may call His

Son. Hos. 11:1. Egypt sends out the human type. The heavenly antitype leaves the same country.

When Moses hastens to avenge his nation, what is his welcome? It is rejection. Derision scorns his claims. Jesus, the mighty Savior, comes. There is deliverance in His heart and in His hand. But His own receive Him not. He is despised and reviled. The cry pursues Him, 'Away with Him, Away with Him!' Jesus and Moses are alike thrust out.

Moses retires awhile. The wilderness conceals him. At last, as the sun issuing from a cloud, he breaks from darkness. Thus Jesus passes many years in deep seclusion. Unknown in Nazareth the God-man toils. Earthly obscurity could not be more obscure.

When Moses shows himself again, astounding wonders prove his high commission. Nature at his command changes its course. Prodigies attest, that God is with him. So Jesus moved as God on earth. He willed, and the blind saw—the deaf heard—the dumb spoke—the dead lived—each form of sickness fled—abundance fed the hungry crowds—the water turned to wine—the sea became a pavement for His feet. In form He stood as man. In power He worked as God.

Moses must die before the people can pass Jordan's waters. He must endure a signal penalty for his offence. And must not Jesus die, before His people can pass heaven's gates? Yes. Their vile sins were all on Him, and on the cross due suffering must be paid. As Moses was at birth—in life—in death—so Jesus at birth—in life—in death, responded.

Moses mediated between heaven and earth. From the mount he brought down God's commands. He offered Israel's prayers. He made intercession and prevailed. Thus Jesus is our great intercessor. He represents His children before God. He represents

our God to us. He gives the Gospel-law. He ever prays, and ever is He heard.

Moses was favored with most close communion. While dreams and visions taught the other seers, God communed with Moses face to face. Thus Jesus in counsel—purpose—will—ever was Jehovah's fellow. From all eternity He was "by Him, as one brought up with Him, and He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Prov. 8:30. All salvation's scheme was spread as a chart before Him.

Such is the resemblance. But the DIFFERENCE is infinite. Moses is but a twilight gleam. Our Jesus is the midday splendor. Moses is a tiny rill. Our Jesus is the shoreless ocean. Moses appears a little bud. Jesus is the full fragrance of the opened flower.

From contemplation of these outward signs, let us now enter within **THE PROPHET'S SCHOOL**—and drink in His amazing lessons. What grand instructions meet us! Behold! His mighty hands draw back the curtain, which hides God. He holds a text-book, bright with saving truth. This text-book is His own cross. **Jehovah** is there displayed as loving sinners, and yet hating sin—just, yet forgiving—righteous, yet pardoning—holy, yet peopling heaven from unholy earth.

The Prophet leads onward to knowledge of **Himself**. He bids faith come, and read His heart. There are the names of all His chosen seed indelibly inscribed. There is love, preceding and out-living time. He shows the virtue of His blood to obliterate the crimson dye—to wash out deepest stains of guilt—so to pay debts, that Justice has no further claim—so to acquit, that accusations cease. Wondrous lesson! It calms the conscience into peace. It kindles the flame of love. It changes the whole heart into devoted service.

He teaches the marvel of **His righteousness**—a robe so bright, that God Himself cannot sufficiently admire—so pure, that angels

are unclean beside it. He assures, that His redeemed may take it—plead it—wear it. He tells of His prevailing prayer—ever encircling the mercy-seat. He teaches faith to hear its constant cry, Father forgive them, for my blood is shed—spare them, for I have suffered—remember the Covenant, and pour all blessings on them.

Lessons are added revealing the **Spirit's grace**. He melts the stony heart. He turns the perverse will. He stills the rebel-passions. He opens the blind eye to see that sight of sights—the Christ of God. He opens the deaf ear to hear the music of that voice—Come unto Me.

The Prophet teaches, too, **the righteous path, which leads to Zion's rest**. He tells, how saints obey and please their God. He imprints the truth, that holiness is evidence of faith—and that the living tree must bear good fruit. Such is a scanty outline of the Prophet's lessons.

Reader, do you eagerly exclaim, I sincerely would be a pupil! Then take up your Bible. Here Christ comes to teach. Throughout it His voice sounds. He speaks in every verse. Make it your constant study. Think every hour to be lost, in which you glean not from it. Draw near with reverence, as to a speaking God. The ground is holy, let no proud thoughts intrude. Approach with prayer, beseeching the Prophet to cause His Spirit to illumine the page. Approach with faith, not doubting, that your soul will thrive. Call on Him to fulfill His office. Tell Him your ignorance and ardent thirst to learn. He will be true. He will instruct you unto profit. All Zion's "children shall be taught of God." Join then the happy scholars of this school. These lessons cast out every care. They are eternal life. They work conformity to heavenly image. *As we imbibe His truth, our souls put on His image.*

You ministers, it is your work to propagate the lessons of this school. Come then to Christ for every thought. Obtain from Him your every word. Let your instructions always echo Him. Sad! when a teacher stands before his flock to *unsay* what the Lord has said—to

contradict His simple verities—to set some fiction in the place of truth—to scatter base coin in the room of gold. Beware! beware! Let all your sermons flow in the one channel, "Thus says the Lord." In every pulpit let the great Prophet's voice be clearly heard.

The Curse

"Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse." Deut.
21:23

This is a dreadful sentence. It shows the misery of miseries—the inmost core of agony—the very soul of anguish—the sting of woe—despair's extremity. This sum of evil is the Curse of God.

When God blesses, sorrow is joy—pain has sweet ease—and burdens lose their weight. Beneath His *smile*, the bed of sickness is repose, and death's approach is welcomed. If He is absent, there is a void, which nothing can supply. But if He *frowns*, what horrors multiply! What shall be said, then, of that *Curse*, which is His uttermost display of wrath! Better, far better, not to have been born, than to meet this. O my soul, whatever be the cost, escape it.

With this resolve approach the text before us. The outside casket may seem rough, but it contains a precious jewel. "He, that is hanged, is accursed of God."

The meaning must be primarily sought. Mark, this is no statement, that criminals uplifted on a cross thereby pass into deeper guilt. There was, indeed, most extreme ignominy in this mode of death. It was the brand of utter loathing. But *man's* contempt entails not *divine* curse. Earth may abhor, while heaven approves. The cross could never be the cause of Curse. A saint might rise to heaven

from that tree. It is not meant, then, that a man, by being hanged, becomes accursed of God.

This word describes not malefactors in the mass. It is particular. It has a prophet's voice. It is a Gospel-sign. It eyes exclusively the Crucified Jesus. It only tells the fact, that He, who came to bear God's Curse, should hang upon the tree. It pictures His especial mode of dying. A cross shall be the evidence, that Jesus thereon sustains the law's full threat.

Reader, this brings us to ponder closely the Lord's work. From all eternity it was decreed, that He should bear His people's sins. This is the essence of the covenant of peace. He willingly consents. The guilt is all transferred to Him. Each violation of the law is charged to His account. He stands the guilty one. Thus all His ransomed are released from blame. Their penalties—their curse—are wholly claimed, received, and borne by Him. A substitute suffers all, that they may suffer none.

These are the terms arranged in everlasting counsels. The Savior is to be a substitute. The saved are to be free, because He pays. The law remits no due. It takes all from another's hand. Jesus is a vicarious Curse.

Such is God's grace—such the Redeemer's love—such the simplicity of Salvation's scheme. This text, then, gives a signal mark, whereby the Curse-sustaining Surety shall be known. Already had a typical picture taught the truth. A brazen serpent, hanging on a pole, had shown the Savior hanging on a tree. But here plain words speak plainly. Hanging is now distinctly named. The voice cries, He, who is hanged, is the Curse of God. No doubt remains. It stands announced, that when the true Deliverer shall appear, upon the cross He shall expire. A pledge is given, too marvelous for man's invention—too clear for man to misinterpret.

If this should fail, faith loses her sure ground. If other death makes Christ its prey, Christ takes not the Curse away. The Gospel-fabric crumbles into dust.

But this fails not. Outside the city's gate, the cross is raised. To it the Lord is bound. On it He is upraised, a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men.

But wondrous steps lead to this wondrous end. It seemed, as though it could not be. While Israel's power remained supreme, the cross was not a *Jewish* malefactor's death. If Jesus die, then, by their rule, He will not die with pierced hands and feet. *Stones* will crush. But difficulties vanish before God's decree. The scepter, therefore, passes from the ancient people. The *Roman* law prevails. It must condemn and execute. But, when the Romans slay, they crucify. Hence Christ, sentenced by Pilate, is hurried to the tree. Hence on the cross He hangs. The prophecy is thoroughly fulfilled. And faith, pointing to Calvary, shouts, Our God is true—Jesus completely saves—*"Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse."*

Reader, here for a moment take your meditative seat. But vain the cross, except the Spirit gild it with His light. Therefore send forth the fervent cry, 'Come, Holy Spirit, teach me the glory of Calvary's scene!'

The prominent truth is this. Jesus there hanging is the Curse of God.

Fully to realize the joy of this, we must distinctly understand the Curse. Whence springs it? What kindles this fierce flame? Disobedience is the one cause. If all men loved their God—if His one law ruled in each heart—beamed in each look—spoke in each word—moved in each step—then earth would not have known the name of Curse. The loving child, walking with God, would only bask in smiles, and feast on blessings.

But ah! how different is the case! In Adam's fall the human family pass into rebellion's realm. The fountain-head, being poisoned, only can send evil from it. Hence wrath arises. Hence the Curse thunders.

Reader, make this truth practical. For until ruin be discerned, Christ's shelter never will be sought. Boldly then ask, 'Is this Curse mine?'

Let God reply. Behold His mirror. View yourself therein. Take His true standard. Measure yourself thereby. Produce His faultless scales. There weigh yourself. The Spirit from His lofty throne thus speaks, "Cursed is every one, that continues not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Gal. 3:10.

Oh! solemn word! But it is plain as solemn. Hear it, you sons of men. Sift carefully its several parts. What is written in this edict-book? The terms are brief and exact. They ask for love to God—to man. This is the one demand—and this must reign in every movement of the heart from cradle to the grave. All thought must flow in one broad channel—love. All words must sound one echo—love. All works must have this spring—this course—this end. Exception there is none. This rule's enclosure holds our total race. No rank ascends above it. No poverty descends below it. Gold cannot purchase license. Poverty cannot evade. Talent and learning cannot frame excuse. All, who have breathed life's breath, from Adam's day to this hour—all, who shall breathe, until the Lord's return—are under the distinct command of love. If there be failure in one single thought, the law is broken, and the Curse accrues.

But eyes are slow to open to this giant-truth. Could silly earth be one wide scene of *unconcern*, if this reality were felt? Could giddy crowds thus laugh and sport, if once they saw the hand of Curse upon them?

Reader, perchance you fondly reason, The law is broken, but the Curse will not fall on me. My pleas are many. They will land me on some rock. Well, then, produce your pleas. The law says, 'Give me unsullied love', and points to your defects. You cannot deny guilt, and thereby you allow the Curse to be your due. But you reply, 'I erred in early days, with unformed mind and thoughtless heart'. Be it so—early transgression is transgression still, and therefore you are Cursed. You add, 'but I was sorely tried. Could human nature stand, when so assailed?' The law knows nothing of an extenuating cause. To err—be the occasion what it may—to err is to be Cursed.

But perhaps you plead your penitence—your broken-heart—your streaming eyes—your smitten breast—the floor worn out by your knees. Can penitence recall the past, or undo what is done? It cannot. Offence remains offence, and each offence is Curse.

Do you betake yourself to cries, and humbly supplicate mercy—reprieve—space for reform! Do you say, Let me commence my course afresh—blot out the debt, and let me enter on a new career! It cannot be. Past deeds have earned their wages. The wages must be paid, and they are Curse.

Reader, do not evade this reasoning. Whatever be your age or state, to this point you are brought—in self—by nature—by your own deed—you stand accursed of God. There is no hour, in which love has not failed. Therefore each hour has linked you to the Curse.

But perhaps you ask, 'What is this Curse?' You feel no present wrath. The canopy of heaven is bright above. Shelter, and food, and friends, abound. Unnumbered comforts cheer your path. It may be so. But this present will not be always present. The future is drawing near. Death presses at your heels. And judgment follows death. Then sin's deserts must be received. And the deserts are Curse.

Do you still ask, 'What is the Curse?' Words cannot fully tell. Thought cannot grasp the magnitude. No images can paint the boundlessness of this anguish. But it cannot fall short of this. God puts forth all His might—stirs up His utmost strength—strains every effort—all for one purpose—to assert His majesty—to avenge His broken law—to heap perdition on the offender's head. In brief, **the Curse is Hell**. Ah! what is here implied! *Conscience* is tortured by the undying worm. Remorse inflicts unmitigated stings. *Memory* upbraids with bitterest reproach. The *body* writhes in all intensities of pain. Each sense gapes, as inlet of agony. God is far off. Blackness of darkness thickens all around. Satan insults. Wretched companions deepen the horror by their wails. The woe increases by full knowledge of *eternal hopelessness*. Years will roll on, but misery will be misery still. Ages will follow ages, but respite will not dawn. The present will be ever present, *an infinity of suffering*. Such is an outline of the Curse—just—merited—and sure. It *must* be. The broken law demands it. It *will* be. God's truth declares it.

But why is this picture drawn? The purpose is to endear the tidings of escape. The motive is to magnify the glorious truth, "*He who is hung on a tree*" even Jesus "*is accursed of God*." The desire is, to win all thoughts to Him—the substituted Curse.

With this intent let us return to Calvary. The cross is there erected. The mighty God-man is dragged to it. The nails affix Him, and He there expires. Thus He becomes the Curse of God. Thus the whole vengeance falls on Him. He there bears all the anguish, which would have been His people's doom, if they had tossed forever on flame-beds. No grain of misery is withheld. No pity spares Him. The Curse—the dreadful Curse—the total Curse—in all its boundless length and breadth, pours its whole weight upon Him.

Surely, then, all, who are contained in Christ, may now confront the law. Let it bring forth their guilt. They own the justice of the charge. Let it cry, 'Take my Curse'. They point to Jesus taking all. The plea is

valid. They cannot suffer what their Surety has first borne. They are secure and free, simply because He has endured for them.

Believer, will you not live beside the cross! Can you withdraw your eyes! Read its clear language. Take its rich comfort. Clasp its full joy. Doubt not—be verily assured—that it absorbs your Curse. Drink its deep streams of peace. And bless your precious Lord, who thus vicariously saves. Give all your heart—give all your life—to Him. Is He not worthy! Think, that, without His love, your endless state would have been endless Curse. Think, that, through His curse-bearing death, your present state is blessing—your eternal home is glory.

Jesus Very Near

"The word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it." Deut. 30:14.

Here the Gospel beams forth brightly. This is a picture with Christ in the foreground. Here is a compass needle, pointing to Him—the pole. There is no place for doubt. Cavils are silenced. For the Spirit, who thus speaks by Moses, interprets also by the mouth of Paul. He draws back every veil. He rolls away all clouds; and shows the Lord, as the heart and marrow of this record.

This passage, then, is rich in exceeding worth. As such, it should be studied with exceeding care. Paul thus unfolds it, "Moses describes the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, who does those things, shall live by them." Rom.10:5. Mark, you who fondly dream of human merit. The legal covenant is clearly stated. Fulfill the terms—perform the works—bring an obedience without one blemish—an unbroken whole—and then the recompense is earned.

Then life eternal is won as a rightful due. But if transgression be incurred, the mouth is closed—the plea is gone—reward is forfeited. Who can say, 'pay me, for my task is incomplete! or, give me the prize, although it is unwon! or, crown me, though I am vanquished in the race!' But such is the language of self-righteous men. Can folly be more foolish—blindness more blind! Thus *merit-claimants* grope down this dark path to a darker night.

Paul proceeds to state the contrast. "But the righteousness, which is of faith, speaks this way." Rom. 10:6. Blessed be God! All glory to His sovereign grace! There is a righteousness pure—perfect—wrought not by man, but by Christ. It is declared to be "of faith," because faith's happy sons receive it—wear it—plead it; in it they stand and prosper; by it they mount to heaven. This righteousness is here introduced, as a person uttering a glorious voice "Say not," O anxious sinner, "in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach."

"The word is near you." Do any ask, What word? The answer is, "The word of faith." The Gospel-tidings about Christ; that word, which faith bears—prizes—welcomes—clings to—lives by—that record, from which delightedly it draws strength—peace—joy—comfort—glory.

We here are plainly told, that this word was very near to Israel's sons. Their knowledge was comparatively twilight, but still abundant gleams broke on them from the Sun of Righteousness. Their every rite was Christ, in shadow. He was the soul of every ordinance. He was reflected by the tabernacle in all its parts. The altars stood His graphic form. He died in every dying lamb. He bled in all the flowing blood. He groaned in every victim's groan. The curling incense was His fragrant prayer. The veil portrayed His flesh. The priest in the resplendent robes—in every sacrificial act—

in the uplifted hands—in the grand words of blessing, showed Him, as He ministered below, and as He ministers above. The leper preached the malignity and cure of sin. The true instruction from Mosaic lips was Christ—His grace—His person—and His perfect work. The outstretched finger of each part pointed to Him. A constant voice called to one sight—"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world"—turn to the promised seed—the bruiser of the serpent's head—the great High-priest—the efficacious blood. Leviticus was a mirror, in which our elder brethren might read the full salvation, which the Father planned, and which the Son in due time achieved. Thus Gospel-truth was very near to Israel's sons.

Reader, learn hence to study Moses with mind intent on Christ. Dig in this mine, as miser eager for pure gold. The flowers of this garden all breathe heavenly fragrance. As salt is in each ocean's drop, so Jesus is in each portion of these rites. You lose the prize, except you find Him. Never take only superficial chaff from fields of such rich grain.

But if the Lord was "very near" in ancient signs, is He not more than near to those, on whom the full light shines? Believer, come then and realize your favored state. Bask on your sunny hill. Luxuriate in your abundant pastures. Walk up and down your spicy gardens. To you there should not be a desert-spot. The whole scene should blossom as a rose.

Jesus, indeed, is more than near. He came from heaven—He took our flesh, that He might unite us, as living members, to Himself, the living Head. Nearness has become oneness. The separating wall is broken down. The intervening distance is removed. He asks our hearts, that He may dwell therein. He opens wide His arms, that we may there repose. "Abide in Me, and I in you."

Precious truth! There is no place, nor time, nor state, when faith may not uplift the eye—open the ear—put out the hand—and realize

a present Savior. Friends may depart—death may sever tightest bonds. But He, who ever lives, is ever living by our side. Solitude is not too lonely for His visits. Crowds exclude Him not. The morning and the evening hours—the busy day—the silent night—alike admit Him. Climate is no hindrance. In realms of snow or plains of scorching heat, the Savior journeys and tarries with His faithful servants. The rich man's hall is not above His reach—the poor man's hut is not below it. He, whom the heaven of heavens is narrow to contain—He, whom space cannot hold—He, from whose sight the angels veil their eyes—He, who sits enthroned co-equal on Jehovah's throne, always is "very near" to the poor worms, who take Him, as their all.

Believer, here is your never-failing help. Let some cases, well known in Christian life, lend their aid to make this truth more clear. *Conscience* will often tremble on the review of sin. Iniquities will rise, as spectres from their long-closed graves. They will pass by in terrible array. Their hideous forms will point to torment, as their due. Their taunting voice will ask, 'What hope can dwell in hearts so stained!'

But turn from such terrors to your present Lord. He, too, is "very near," showing His hands—His side. You may there read with open eye the total ransom paid. There is no need of distant wanderings to escape these alarms. The wells of everlasting peace are open at your feet. "The word is very near unto you, even in your mouth and in your heart." It shouts, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow—though they be red like crimson, they shall be white as wool." It adds, "There is redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Who can be sad, with such a volume full of pardons in his hand! Who can despair, while he can eye a guilt-removing Jesus!

When *Satan* ragingly assaults—when he puts forth his utmost might to thrust you headlong into depths of sin—when his ensnaring net encompasses your feet—when the betraying heart

offers the key to let the murderer in—when the weak flesh begins to slide down the alluring slopes—when the world tenders its most fascinating and alluring charms—is there not peril? There is! Sad annals testify, how easily saints fall. But fall not. There is a staff near. "The word is very near unto you—in your mouth, and in your heart." Listen to the sweet encouragements—"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you—draw near unto God, and He will draw near unto you." These mighty rocks are "very near." Set your feet fast upon them, and your stand is firm.

Sometimes *afflictions* roll wave upon wave. Your eye on all sides rests on woe. The dearest relatives are hidden in the grave. Bereavement sits your solitary guest. Pains rack the frame. Vigor and health decline. The nights are wearisome. The days bring anguish. Poverty can scarcely obtain the needful clothing and the daily bread. Your best designs are blackened by suspicions. Reproach and taunt ply their thick darts. Earth seems one widespread desolation. But in these troubles faith faints not. Christ's voice "is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart." A very chorus of support swells happily around—"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack." "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble." Surely these consolations will uplift the head above all threatening billows.

You may be called to *duties*, which surpass your strength. You feel, that you are weak to bear the burdens, and to scale the heights. You fear, that you must yield—defeated—crushed. And truly you must be overwhelmed, if you are alone. But alone you cannot be, while Jesus lives. If only you be really called, you may advance high above trembling. His voice "is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart." Grasp the ready promises—"As your days, so shall your strength be." "I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying unto you, fear not, I will help you. Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel—you shall thresh the mountains, and beat them

small, and shall make the hills as chaff." Who can faint—who will not rather be courageous, with help divine so near!

A trying hour comes on apace. *Death* still exercises universal sway. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." None should think lightly of an event so solemn. Momentous change! Time ceases—eternity arrives. Its accompaniments, too, are humbling. The powers droop. A languid body scarcely holds a languid mind. Beloved friends must all be left. Satan sees his last hope, and therefore musters his whole force to barb his final thrust. He draws with craftiest skill his *farewell bow*. This passage would indeed be dark and perilous, without a Savior "very near." But the believer grasps a reviving word—"Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil—for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff they comfort me."

Jesus, now gone to fit mansions in the heavenly home, then comes to receive His people, that where He is, there they may ever be. He draws the nearer, as the need increases. His everlasting arms are underneath. Thus the cold waters cannot drown. Thus martyrs' fires have been welcomed, and the excruciating stake been rapturously clasped. Believer, dread not death. Hope, rather, that Jesus will be "very near." Expect His presence—and it will be given. Ask His support, and it will surely come.

But after death, what meets you then! To die is to be with Christ. To soar from earthly scenes is to escape the clouds of sense—the mists of partial glance—the darkness of a prison-state. Then faith expires, and eternal sight expands. Then Jesus in very presence is forever "very near."

Surpassing blessedness! amazing joy! perfection of all glory! The very thought is rapture. What must be the full reality! The expectation dazzles. What will be full enjoyment! The Lord—the Lord Himself—is near in all the brightness of His Deity. Separation

never can occur. Nothing can ever part. Jesus—Jesus in seen glory—is now "very near."

Some read these lines, whose conscience warns, that they possess no title to such bliss. Christ is not theirs by faith. They have not fled to Him for refuge. They cling not to His cross. Their hearts have never opened to admit this inhabitant. Sirs! tremble. But why tarry thus? Arise—make haste—draw near. The penitential prayer of faith soon reaches Him—for He is "very near."

The Tribe of Reuben

"Let Reuben live and not die—and let not his men be few." Deut.
33:6

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. From him one section of the Jewish nation sprang. One tribe called him their father. When these words were uttered by Moses, the patriarch Jacob had long been numbered with the dead. But his descendants had reached Canaan's border—a mighty portion of a mighty people.

Let every father, who reads this, reflect *what multitudes may flow from him*. He may be seed of a vast forest of immortal plants. From him, as center, wide circles may expand. Children's children may be a swelling stream. By prayer, then, let him bequeath to each this Reuben-blessing. Let his lips often ask, that each may live, an heir of grace—that none may die the death of never-ending woe.

Recall the day, when Moses thus spoke. His eager wings were spread to fly from earth. His noble race was run. His valiant fight was fought. His place—so profitably filled—must now be vacant. The people—served so long—must see his face no more.

God in His providence calls faithful men to guide, and teach, and rule His flock. When His designs are ripe, He brings them forth, as the fit instruments. But their allotted course must have its end. Their longest space is brevity. While they are spared, let their good help be prized. Let them be honored—for honor is their due. Let them be loved—they are entitled to affectionate requital. But they go hence. All flesh is grass. God alone, never fails.

But of the men, who have done service in their day, where can be found the peer of Moses? He has pre-eminence, which few have reached. He has renown, which outshines every fame. His life was a grand blessing. His parting words are blessing. Living and dying, he is a tree, whose branches drop good fruit.

He long had toiled for Israel's welfare. And now his closing eye looks with intense affection on each tribe. He sees by faith their vast inheritance of mercies—and his last breath delights to draw the chart.

In this we have the very spirit of Salvation's Captain. Jesus left heaven—assumed our flesh—dwelt on this earth, that He might bless. When the redeeming price was paid, He ascended in the attitude and act of blessing. And from His throne, His glory-life is ever the self-same employ. He is one eternal—unfathomable—ever-flowing blessing. As from the sun light only streams, so from Him one flood of good descends.

Believer, pause at this point, and meditate your high distinction. You, too, are filled, that you may be enabled to dispense. You are enriched, that you may help. Doubtless, exalted station and vast talents enlarge the hands of usefulness. In this respect all may not stand on the same vantage-ground. All are not called, as Moses, to rule tribes. But all may strive to follow him by living a blessing life—by dying a blessing death.

Let us draw nearer now to his amazing legacy of blessing. The first view shows the last testament of Moses, as enumerating earthly treasures of honor—excellence—pre-eminence—abundance.

The happy tribes are here endowed, as rich, renowned, and mighty upon earth. Splendor and prowess are their promised crown. Their sons are to surpass in arts and arms. Their fields shall wave with all luxuriance. But beneath this outward mantle, faith sees the inner form of better and more lasting gifts. The farewell words begin, indeed, with time-estate; but they conclude not there. They are a ladder set on earth, but mounting to the skies. These images have wide-spreading meaning. The truth, which runs throughout, looks to eternal good. The real substance is not of the earth, and earthly—it is of heaven, and heavenly.

Thus, of the eldest, it is said, "Let Reuben live and not die—and let not his men be few." We instantly are led to remember this tribe's exposed position. It stands a frontier-barrier. Thus it lies open to the onset of invading foes. There is then danger, that it may soon be trodden down—that hostile attack may lay it low—that it may dwindle and become extinct. But let Reuben live—live a vast host. The blessing, at first, seems a shield against diminishing catastrophe.

But this is only the first fold. As we unwrap the words, the better portion is discerned. This is the surface; as we descend, a mine of richer ore is found. This is the shell—a precious kernel is within. A life is intimated longer than temporal—even reaching through eternal time. A death is here deprecated, worse than the body mouldering in dust—even soul-ruin. The multitudinous increase here mentioned foreshows the innumerable throng around the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Thus the true significance of the Reuben-blessing unfolds a threefold joy.

1. Life for evermore, and heaven won.

2. Death abolished, and hell escaped.
3. The expansive circle of the countless congregation of the saved.

Next we must banish far the narrow thought, that this inheritance was limited to Reuben's tribe. It is no by-gone wish. Far otherwise. It stands a wide-spreading oak, beneath which saints of every age may happily repose. It flows a ceaseless stream, from which God's sons may ever drink. Reuben's hand plucked the earliest produce, but still the flower blooms, the fragrance sweetens, and the ripe fruit courts our touch.

Behold, then, here is the heart—the mind—the will of God, to all the chosen seed. Here is no partial legacy only to the elders of the house. Succeeding children may claim it too. We have this explanation recorded by the Spirit's pen. The Gospel principle is, "If you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. Faith here obtains a key—and by it enters the spiritual treasury of ancient promise. The blessings are all free to all the family of God.

Believer, now draw near. Hear Moses' voice, as if addressed directly to yourself. It tells the blood-bought portion of all Christ's family. It shows your vast inheritance—your golden wealth. To every one the legacy is left, Let this man live, and not die. Of the redeemed it is immutably decreed, Let not their men be few.

Come, then, and with appropriating faith review the wondrous gifts. Life—soul life—first shows its head. "Let Reuben live." How grand this mercy! *All men are spiritually dead-born*. Sin entered with a murderous hand. It planted deep its dagger in the inner man. Knowledge of God—love of His name—delight in holy communion—sweet fellowship with heaven—the happy worship of unsullied praise—the blissful gaze on the Creator's smile, and all the circle of pure joy, were buried in a deep grave. The soul became a total wreck—a withered tree—a dried-up stream—a wilderness of weeds—a starless night—a chaos of beclouded thought—a rebel's camp—the

shattered home of misery—the region in which death reigned. The eyes were dim and saw not God. The face was turned away. Each step led downward. The hands were lifted in defiance. The mouth was opened to blasphemy. Man was a dying body holding a dead soul. He moved an unmixed evil—a sin-spreading pest. All this is sad—but there are sadder things behind. This is tremendous woe—but deeper woe comes on. This is dark night—but darker shades will deepen yet. This is full wretchedness—but still the cup may hold more drops.

This fleeting scene must end. The earthly mansion must be left. Death comes. It drives poor sinners to their final home. And what is that? Reader, shrink not—withdraw the darksome veil. Look down into the dread abode. Ponder the lost in their low cells. Hell is their everlasting doom. Do not think that hell is the mere phantom of a brain-sick thought. It is no fable fondly framed to scare weak minds. It is a near reality. It is a gigantic certainty. It is the sure conclusion of a godless life. It is the gulf, to which transgressing streams rush hopelessly. And it is not far away. It gapes before the feet. Another step may plunge the ruined into this abyss.

But what is hell? Ah! reader, may you never know. It is described by what is absent—what is present.

The *negative misery* declares, that God is not there. It is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. 1:9. Where God is absent, there is no light—no joy—no pure repose of heart. But in that darkness God is never seen. Therefore all is one blank of dreary wretchedness.

The faithful word moreover brings to view mountains upon mountains of *active torment*. From this immensity of agony let one element be drawn. The tender Jesus thus describes the end. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather, out of His kingdom all things, that offend, and them, which do iniquity—and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and

gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13:41, 42. Fire shows pain's uttermost extreme. It has a pungent sting, maddening with all that is most hotly fierce. Hence hell is agony in all its might. Wailing denotes the bitter grief. Gnashing of teeth proclaims the deep remorse. And, as the suffering proceeds, it swells. There is no distant ray of possible relief. Forever will the smoke ascend. Forever will the anguish burn. Forever will the misery endure.

Eternal is hell's night. Such is it to lack life. Such is it to be heir of death.

But hearken, you, who through rich mercy yet inhabit earth. A voice cries, "Let Reuben live and not die." There is a Savior, who delivers from this death. There is a friend, who bestows heavenly life. Jesus appears, and on the cross endures the death, and by His righteousness brings in new life. The Father fully satisfied, says of each true Reuben, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." Let him not die, but live.

But what is this life? Believer, you must enter heaven to know. We read—we speak—we meditate—we hear of heaven; and bright and lovely is the prospect. But what thoughts—what words can estimate the actual bliss! Sin and temptation are outside forever. God and the God-man are there clearly displayed. There is no cloud—no veil—no distance—no separation—no departure. The ransomed, ever happy, ever hymning praise, float on wide oceans of delight.

And are there *many* joying in this joy? "Let not his men be few." The Father's love—the Savior's grace—the Spirit's tenderness are large, and embrace many. A great multitude, whom no man can number, shout hallelujahs round the throne.

O my soul, seek to inherit Reuben's blessing. Give up all for heaven. It will immeasurably repay each sacrifice. The door is not yet barred. Press to enter in. Take it by violence. Jesus is the way. Walk in it. Jesus holds the key. Flee unto Him, and He will open wide the

gates. He has spoken, and it must be—"Him that comes to Me, I will in nowise cast out." John 6:37. Many of Israel's true children there rejoice—will not you be among them? Draw life and energy from the patriarchal promise, "Let Reuben live and not die—and let not his men be few." Rest not, until you can say, "Through grace, I live—through grace, I shall not die—through grace, I have my lot among the sons, who are not few."

The Tribe of Judah

"This is the blessing of Judah—and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah; and bring him unto his people—let his hands be sufficient for him—and be a help to him from his enemies." Deut. 33:7.

Judah is the royal tribe. To it the throne, the scepter, and the authority belong. It is the cradle of the nation's kings. This is great honor. But its main glory is its connection with the God-man Jesus. He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." A maid of Judah bears the wondrous babe. In Judah's house, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, puts on our flesh. Hence expectation eagerly surveys the blessing cast into its lap. Surely signal favors will deck the tribe so signally exalted. Surely the mercies in his crown will have transcendent luster.

Let us now turn to listen. These sounds go forth—"Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." One fact is instantly made clear. Judah is loud in prayer. That must be uttered, which is to be heard. Mute lips gain no reply. The silent tongue arrests no notice. Judah's voice then encompasses the mercy-seat. In spirit and in cry he often visits heaven. The opening words stamp him, as a praying tribe.

Prayer is the heart-home of each child of God. This is the first sign of new birth. This draws his morning-curtain. This wakens with his earliest thought. This is the atmosphere, which his soul breathes. This is the staff, on which he leans. Thus every act begins—proceeds—and ends. This bolts the evening door. This is the pillow, on which the head reclines. Trials—temptations—troubles—and life's countless ills, here find their refuge. When sins prevail, here is relief. When dangers threaten, here is sweet shelter. When mercies beam, they beckon to this sunny hill. Each place, and company, and time, promote this gainful traffic. The child of grace lives, as Judah, crying unto God "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah."

But **what** is prayer? The question is not vain. Many are prayerless, who seem prayerful. All glittering tinsel is not gold. It is not a vain attitude—nor repetition of unfelt words. It is not copious phrase. It is not the uplifted eye—the outstretched hand—the bended knee—the prostrate form—the smitten breast—the heaving sigh—the falling tear. All these may be, and yet no prayer.

It is reality, not external show. It is the soul in earnest wrestling with God. It is the inner man's intensest agony. It is a mighty grasp clinging to Jehovah's strength. It is a struggling effort. It is the heroic cry, "I will not let You go." It is divine in origin—in confidence—in plea. The Spirit from on high kindles, and fans, and cherishes the flame. The covenant of grace is its strong rock. Standing on such vantage ground, it boldly shouts the name of Jesus and never shouts in vain.

But is not such prayer rare? O my soul, what is the answer of your secret hours? If you hang down a conscious head—pause, and take shame, that you are not more Judah-like.

Think of the **motives** calling to this exercise. A mercy-seat stands ready. An open path invites. The door is never shut. The golden scepter courts your touch. Calvary gives you an unfailing plea. Commands impel you. It is sin to hesitate. Promises, too vast to

measure or to count, come forth in crowds to fill your hands. All blessings wait to be received. In this art, misery learns to smile—peace flows into the conscience—weakness becomes strong—faith matures—and every power to do and bear expands into a vigorous tree. Whatever be your age—state—frame—need—circumstance, be wise, and pray. Pray more. Cease not. Faint not. Judah's Son—the glorious Jesus—is your example, model, lesson. On earth, His life was prayer. In heaven, His intercession ceases not.

Mark, too, what rich **encouragement** pervades the first note of this blessing. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." Fear not. No prayer was ever lost. It is the Spirit's voice within. God will not turn away. It sounds a name, which must be heard—all heaven will listen with delight. It is the child's entreaty—the Father's heart will melt. Grace is no grace—truth fails—and mercy hardens into flint, if this cry prospers not. If all the annals of all saints were spread, as an open page, their testimony would be this, true prayer will speed.

But this text belongs primarily to Judah's story, in which we read prayer's mightiest exploits. Mark *David*. We have a volume of his prayers. And with expiring breath he witnesses, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God—and He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry entered into His ears." 2 Sam. 22:7. Call *Solomon*; he begs, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge." 2 Chron. 1:10. Was he not heard? "Wisdom and knowledge are granted unto you." Go to *Abijah's* day. "When Judah looked, behold the battle was before and behind—and they cried unto the Lord." Instantly "the men of Judah gave a shout, and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah." 2 Chron. 13:14, 15.

Proceed to *Asa*. The Ethiopians—a thousand thousand—threaten to destroy. The king sends forth this arrow—"Lord, it is nothing with You to help, whether with many, or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God, let not man

prevail against You. And then the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah—and the Ethiopians fled." 2 Chron.14:11, 12. *Jehoshaphat* used well this weapon, and thus repelled the myriads of Ammon. *Hezekiah* thus wrestled against the Assyrians. An angel was sent forth to help—and the vast host became a pile of slain. He thus contended against malady—and sickness bloomed to health. 2 Chron. 32:21, 24.

Jesus, this tribe's high pride, when on earth, gives the like witness—"I know that You hear Me always." John 11:42.

Believer, lift up your eyes. Pierce heaven with faith's keen gaze. You see your *Jesus* by the throne. What is His employ? He prays for you—for all His needy flock. And is He heard? Yes—every petition is success. He asks and gains all that His blood purchased—all that the covenant secures. Here is the spring of your soul's being, health, and prosperity. You thrive—you prosper—you prevail, because your mighty Advocate mightily pleads. Your inward life is proof, that His intercessions triumph. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." Judah's voice is ever heard.

The blessing thus continues—"And bring him unto his people." The tribes were often called to war. The quiet hearth must then be left. Their feet must tread the tedious march. But in these cheering words they catch the hope of safe return. Here seems a promise, that their corpses shall not strew a distant land—but that a peaceful home again shall welcome the victorious troops. This primary message floats upon the surface.

Believer, there is, moreover, something here for your support. You have a home. It is not this polluted scene. It is far off—in peace—in light—in purity—in heaven. And you shall safely reach it. The way may be both rough and tedious. But advance. The end is sure. Waves and storms may threaten to engulf the bark; but you shall enter the haven. The hill may be a wearisome ascent; but you shall gain the summit. Pluck this assurance from the word, "Bring him

unto his people." The Lord's hand led you out from the world. The Lord's power will bring you to the company of the saved.

It is not altogether a strained thought, which applies these words to Jesus. He has a people, and greatly do they need His coming. This blessing seems a pledge of His arrival. The good Shepherd's flock is widely scattered. They wander far on hills, and valleys, in every land, and every climate. Some pant beneath a tropic sun. Some shiver in perpetual snows. A watchful eye sees all. And in fit time each is approached. Jesus Himself draws near. He wins the heart. He enters in. He takes the throne. He shows His smile. He melts the rock. He turns the enmity to love. He sits a conqueror in a once rebel camp. All given by the Father come to Him, because He comes to them. They follow, because He calls. They run, because He draws. He opens out His arms—and then they flee quickly to the shelter. Thus faith finds an accomplishment of the words, "Bring him unto his people."

It follows—"Let his hands be sufficient for him." Judah was called to work and war. But there is comfort in each struggle. His hands shall not hang down. His vigor shall not droop. His energies shall still suffice. Is the task heavy? His strength shall bear unto the end. Is the fight long and fierce? He shall hold out.

Believer, to you each day brings burdens. Act faith, then, on this heaven-sent support—"Let his hands be sufficient for him." So long as work remains to be performed—so long as conflicts last, your streams of power will not be drained. Their fountain cannot fail. David's triumph will be yours. "He teaches my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by my arms. I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them, and turned not again, until I had consumed them." 2 Sam. 22:35, 38.

Here, too, again **behold your Lord**. Were not His hands sufficient for Him? Hell arose with all its hosts—kings of the earth, and godless men conspired. But He strode over them to victory.

And still His arm is strong as Deity in your defense. It is most true, that you require unlimited aid. But you have it all in Him—your ever-present sustainer. If for one moment His hands fail, you sink. But rejoice—give thanks. His hands are braced with all sufficiency.

The blessing thus concludes—"Be a help to him from his enemies." All the true sons of Judah are thus made more than conquerors. What are they in themselves? There is no image weak enough to show their weakness. Their strength is feebler than the tottering reed—the wind-driven dust—the storm-tossed chaff. But all their enemies—countless in number—principalities in might—cannot destroy. And why? Only because the Lord of Hosts is with them—the God of Jacob is their refuge. Jehovah-Jesus is their shield and sword.

Reader, such is Judah's blessing. Let not the picture be a blank to you. See what rich clusters hang from this tree's boughs. See what wealth sparkles in this mine. Do you not long to share these mercies—to repose beneath this shade—to feed in these sweet pastures—to drink of this deep stream? Read it again. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah; and bring him unto his people; let his hands be sufficient for him; and be a help to him from his enemies." Mark the *praying tribe addressing a prayer-hearing God*. Mark the safe convoy to their home. Mark their sufficiency for every need. Examine well this chain of good. Can you desire, can you conceive, a happier lot? And may it not be yours? Did ever any ask, and not receive? When sinners knock in penitence and faith, the portals ever open. A blessing God—a blessing Savior—a blessing Spirit are at hand. Let not indifference turn scornfully away. Take Judah's God, as yours—and Judah's heritage will surely be bestowed.

The Tribe of Levi

"Of Levi, he said, Let Your Thummin, and Your Urim be with Your holy one, whom You tested at Massah, and with whom You contended with at the waters of Meribah—who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him—neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children—for they observed Your word and kept Your covenant. They shall teach Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your law—they shall put incense before You, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon Your altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands—smite through the loins of those who rise against him, and of those who hate him, that they rise not again." Deut. 33:8-11.

Levi was peculiarly the Lord's. This tribe toiled not in military service. Its happy hours revolved in *holy* duties. Its life was round the altars. The tabernacle was its charge, and its employ looked always unto God.

Thus it appears *a ministerial type*. We see in it the pastor's portrait. It represents that heaven-born, heaven-sent band, which stands apart to deal with man for God.

This is life's highest privilege—earth's grandest dignity—honor, which angels do not share—glory, which drives all other heroes into shade. The greatest minister is our greatest man. His words achieve the noblest triumphs on the world's stage.

What then, will Moses' lips pour forth, when Levi's tribe comes for its blessing? Reader, draw near to hear! Spirit of God, draw near to teach!

Choice servants are addressed—therefore, choice gifts will be bestowed. Levi's outline is first drawn. Three bold characteristics are displayed. These threefold marks are, holiness—acquaintedness with trial—impartial zeal.

1. The tribe is HOLY. "Let Your Thummin and Your Urim be with Your holy one." Holiness! What is it, but the image of our God—conformity to Christ—the stamp of heaven upon the soul. It is God living in the heart—moving in each step—breathing in each breath—heard in each word—pervading the whole man. It is the Spirit's presence, saying, let there be light, and there is light—let there be love, and there is love—cleaving sin's roots, and they decay—sowing pure seed, and it bears fruit. It is an upward course—leaving the world behind—eschewing evil—hating what Jesus hates—panting to be godlike. It is that lofty state, which springs from reception of the Gospel. Truth sanctifies. Error is darkness in mind and life. Christ seen—Christ loved—forms the new man. So, too, it is happiness without alloy. The holy man alone is happy. All sin is misery. Departure from it is the path of peace.

Servants of Christ, seek holiness. Let this crown sparkle on your brow. From head to foot let this robe clothe you. Inhabit earth as Zion's citizens. So will your life preach louder than your lips. So will your walk have magnet-influence, attracting unto heaven. A holy shepherd wins a holy flock.

2. Next, Levi had conflicted with TEMPTATION—"Whom You tested at Massah, and with whom You contended with at the waters of Meribah."

It was one of Israel's darkest days, when the camp murmured, because water failed. We lack clear evidence, that Levi was not tainted with this guilt. But from this mention, we take hope, that he stood firm, when others fell. But whether he resisted or gave way, the temptation put him to the test. Massah proved him. Meribah sifted his principles.

All Adam's sons live tempted lives. Satan is not yet chained. There is no place—no heart—which he infest not. His wily crafts exceed all power to count. And his wrath increases, as the time grows less. But the Lord's ministers are his especial hate. Against them every dart is

hurled. For them all snares are laid. And why? Their fall brings many to the dust. The sheep will wander, when the shepherd strays.

But still his weapons often wound himself. For frequently temptation proves to be a purifying furnace, and a brightening file. The tempted lose their dross, and gain more brilliant polish. So, too, it is *a school of discipline*. Here ministers drink deeply of experience's cup. They thus become expert to sympathize with others' woes—to open out the adversary's arts—to point to strongholds of defense—to stay the slipping feet, and to pour balm into the stricken soul. Thus trials give ability and skill. Satan uses them; and the result is injury to himself.

3. Levi has, too, the praise of honest ZEAL—"Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him—neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children." These words again remind of dreadful evil in the camp. Moses was absent in the mount. The impatient people ask for gods to lead them on. A golden calf is made. They worship it. The air echoes with festive noise. Moses in haste comes down, and cries, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Ex. 32:26. They draw their swords. They rush to vindicate the cause of God, They spare not friend nor relative. No ties of kindred or of blood screen from due vengeance. Where they find sin, there they deal death. God gave the zeal, and braced their nerves, and smiled upon their deed, and thus applauds it.

You ministers, mark this. Your office calls you to reprove—rebuke—condemn. Evil is evil, wherever it is seen. You must stand *flint-like* before all the world. If relatives and friends transgress, they must be boldly checked. You speak for God. You must be honest, fearing no man's face.

Levi, thus portrayed in threefold character, then receives a sixfold blessing.

1. A grand **distinction** first appears. "Let your Thummin and your Urim be with your holy one." The message is distinct. Let Levi ever stand a priest before his God. Let the breast-plate, with its mysterious contents, ever gird him. These contents, though shrouded in some mist, intimate *perfection* and *light*. At once we see the foremost ornaments of ministerial life.

PERFECTION! Nothing inferior may be sought. The walk may have no stain. The garments must be purely white. The keen observer may detect no fault. Oh! what vigilance—what care—what prayer are needed! Lapses in those who guide, produce extensive ruin. Lord, lead Your servants in a perfect way! Be a protecting shield around! Adorn them beauteously with every grace!

LIGHT! Father of lights, be their light! May they forever dwell beneath Your rays, and, as reflecting mirrors, scatter radiance around! May they go forth, as champions clad in armor of light! Thus may true Thummin and true Urim ever be the glory of those, who are ambassadors for Christ!

2. Next, "They shall **teach** Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your law." Here is the pastor's solemn dignity. He occupies a pulpit-throne. Thence he announces the decrees of the eternal kingdom. The flock sit round to hear God's judgments—to receive God's law.

Preacher, take heed. Your volume is heaven-inspired. Add not—it is impiety. Detract not—it is sacrilege. It is not yours to frame a system or devise a code. Your message is prepared. Your text-book is divine. Read and proclaim. Let all your teaching flow in one clear stream—"Thus says the Lord." The Gospel committed to your trust is God's glory—His wisdom in the highest—the transcript of His mind—the mirror of His love—the power, which drives out darkness, softens hearts, gives new birth to dead souls, breaks Satan's chains, snatches from hell, uplifts to heaven, converts bold rebels to devoted friends, and plants a paradise in the world's waste. Then **PREACH THIS WORD**—only—clearly—fully. Be faithful. Be

distinct. Signs of salvation will then surely follow. The seed of truth is never lost. It has an innate life. It is impregnate with divinity. Who can destroy it? Truth long since would have died, if Satan or man's hate had power to slay.

3. **Honors** are added. "They shall put incense before You—and whole Burnt-sacrifice upon Your altar." They shall cause *sweet savor* to ascend. The Gospel-savor is the sweet merits of Christ's fragrant work. They shall pile victims on the altar. The Gospel has but one victim—the God-man slain.

These words are as a trumpet-voice to warn each minister. The pulpit stands his golden altar, from which precious fragrance should never fail to rise. Sermons should all be redolent of Jesus's worth. Each utterance should be, as curling incense, filling heaven and earth with joy. The pulpit stands, too, his brazen altar, on which victims bleed. The congregation should be led to sit around the cross. The dying Jesus should be the one grand sight—giving Himself a willing offering, that guilt may thus be cleansed, and sins obliterated, and debts paid, and curse removed, and God appeased, and hell's gates closed, and heaven's throne won.

4. It follows—"Bless, Lord, His substance." Levi had no allotted lands. "I am your portion, and your inheritance," said God. Num. 18:20. The tabernacle-offerings are their supply. A special maintenance is their lot. Special servants are specially sustained.

They must be well fed, whom God thus supplies. Let then no faithful pastor fear. He may not have—he covets not—abundance of earth's pelf. But the barrel will not fail. The cruise will still suffice. In God he has incalculable wealth. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup—you maintain my lot." Paul testifies, "I have all, and abound—I am full." Phil. 4:18.

5. It is encouragingly added—"Accept the work of his hands." Smile, Lord, when Levi thus draws near. Turn not from the prayer, the

service, and the praise, which he presents upon Your altar.

Here is the joy, the hope, the strength, the victory of the faithful servant. He knows, that truth proclaimed by life and lip—in public and in private—cannot but prosper. The Gospel-sickle reaps not in vain. Harvests of saved souls will be brought in. Heaven's garner will be filled. He will present before God's throne children begotten by his words—jewels drawn by his efforts from nature's quarry, and polished as pillars for the palace of the King. The labor is not in vain. The Lord accepts.

6. Lastly—"Smite through the loins of those who rise against him, and of those who hate him, that they rise not again." A Korah—a Dathan—an Abiram rose to assail. But their defeat was signal. They died not the common death of men. The gaping earth devoured them. Numb. 16:32.

So faithful ministers must always expect the adversary's rage. They foil him most. Therefore he most desires their ruin. As against Christ—so against them—he marshals his whole force. But while he mightily assails, Omnipotence protects. While his many legions harass, an infinity of love defends. Thus they hold on. Thus they hold out. Thus they will ever bloom, like Aaron's rod, until the last saint is gathered in. Their teaching voice will sound on earth, until the hallelujah is full-toned above. They go on conquering, for Jesus fights beside them.

You ministers, turn not from Levi, without many a solemn thought. There is no *work* like yours—so holy—so exalted—so godlike! There is no *help* like yours. Jesus, who sends you, goes forth by your side. There are no *hopes* like yours. The brightest crown is that, which sparkles with redeemed gems. Bless God—take courage—work. Uplift the cross with prayerful hands. Preach the true Christ. Live the true life of faith. Then Levi's full inheritance will raise you high. How high, God only knows! Christ's fellow-workers will not be low among Christ's fellow-heirs.

The Tribe of Benjamin

"About Benjamin he said: "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders." Deut. 33:12

Benjamin! Thoughts of love are quickly kindled by the very name. Affection folded Benjamin in its embrace. He closed the line of Jacob's sons, and thus no younger rival moved him from his fondled place. He was endeared, too, as the expiring Rachel's child. She died, when he began to live. Thus, all the feelings, which have softest sway, enshrined him eminently in his father's heart.

When then this tribe appears, our minds anticipate much tender favor. And it is so. A designation of endearment is adjoined—"Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord."

Reader, here pause. A wondrous truth refuses to be put aside. Give it glad welcome. Listen fully to its cheering tale. Imbibe the precious draught of its delight. Let its sweet fragrance perfume all your hours. The truth is this. The name pertains to every member of God's family—"Beloved of the Lord." Each child of God is loved, as a Benjamin, in heaven's palace.

What! loved of God! Love is the soul of feeling. It is the blazing of the heart in warmth. It is a current of resistless strength. It places a dear object above self. It is intense desire for fellowship. It weeps, and joys, and thrives, in unison with another's sorrow and delight. It is the strongest impulse of the breast. It holds the rudder of the life. It is the principle, which many waters cannot quench, neither can floods drown it. Song 8:7.

Is there such feeling in the realms of light towards inhabitants of earth? Yes, truly. Each of the heaven-born seed is loved with perfect love by the Triune Jehovah.

The FATHER loves—and writes His loved ones in the book of life—and chooses them to be the spouse, and crown, and glory of His Son—and sends His Christ to buy them out of ruin's grasp—to cleanse their filth in efficacious blood—to fit them to dwell, as partners of His throne.

JESUS so loves, that He puts on our flesh, and takes the place of the condemned, and bears in His own body all the just penalties of sin, and undergoes the uttermost of wrath, and drinks the very dregs of anguish. Attend Him through His painful walk on earth—approach the garden-mysteries—stand by the shameful cross mark all the signs of infinite distress—hear the deep groans wrung from His agonized mind. The language of these sufferings reveals, how much, how truly, and how constantly He loved. Next raise the eye of faith, and see Him now at God's right hand. Whence those incessant prayers—those mighty pleadings—that watchful eye—those outstretched hands—that life devoted to one cause? His present acts repeat, that He still loves.

The SPIRIT loves. It must be so. This feeling draws Him to a sinner's heart. He ever finds that spot all ice—all death—all enmity to God. But still He enters in, and works a saving change. He exerts renovating might. He creates new life, and light, and holy powers. He discloses the activity, the vileness, and the end of sin. He thus stirs up the trembler to flee unto redeeming arms. He gives him faith to take the title-deeds of heaven. He leaves not, nor forsakes, until grace expands into full glory. Such is the Spirit's work. And is not every part a manifest display of love?

Thus God is love. He never was, and never will be, but one ocean of eternal love. The truth, then, is most clear. Each real believer ever

was, and ever will be a Benjamin. His is the title, "Beloved of the Lord."

Believer, ponder the value of this fact. Its preciousness exceeds worlds upon worlds of treasure. Our present scene is full of change, of coldness, and of hate. Friends die, or kindly feeling withers. A frown may freeze, where smiles were used to cheer. But here is our solace. We look above. Heaven's love knows no eclipse. In that unfailing brightness we forget surrounding gloom. Here, too, we find a mighty magnet drawing us to holiness. We must love Him, who so loves us. We cannot love God, and not desire to please Him. Hence His pure law becomes our true delight. The slavish chains fall off, and willing service is our joyful walk. Sense of God's love thus cheers and sanctifies.

Through this prelude we approach the BLESSING assigned to Benjamin. It proves, that God's love is a vast treasure of gracious gifts. It shows a threefold front. It strikes a triple cord. It brings the pledge of safety, constant shelter, and fellowship with God.

1. Safety. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in *safety* by Him." Survey the picture. It is lovely in repose. We seem to see a child without one care seated securely by a parent's side. No anxious fears disturb. Undoubting trust spreads its calm influence. A Father, strong and watchful, is at hand. An arm is ready to defend. The happy son knows it, and confides.

The image tenderly depicts the true believer's blessed state. He sits in peace beside his God. Faith's wings have borne him upwards. His heart and thoughts have settled in a tranquil realm. The restless wanderings of former days are past. There was a time, when he was tossed about on stormy waves. He wandered hopelessly in search of peace. But now he rests in God. His home is by his Father's side. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him."

This seat is safety. For think, how high it is upraised! It is with God. What foe can now assail? Satan's darts are very many, and impelled with mighty force. His arms, too, have exceeding skill. But these are heights above his reach. The arrows from his strongest bow have but restricted wings. The shafts fly not to those lofty seats, where God's dear children cluster. They dwell in safety, for they dwell by Him.

A tender voice is ever heard, "Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel—I will help you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer the holy one of Israel." Is. 41:14. Again it sounds, "I give unto them eternal life—and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." John 10:28, 29. Each tranquil Benjamin may realize, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31. They dwell in safety by Him.

2. Constant shelter. This is a sweet phase of safety, and this is thus graphically promised—"The Lord shall cover him all the day long." The warrior is sheltered, whom a broad shield surrounds. The sword may deal fierce blows—the spear may roughly thrust—all weapons may attack. But the assaults touch not. He stands unhurt. The inhabitants of a well-built house are protected. The hurricane may rage. The hail may beat. The rain may pour down floods. But the roof spreads a sheltering defense. The strife of elements is warded off. So when the feathered mother spreads her sheltering wings, the hawk may soar above—the gathering clouds may menace—but the downy refuge covers. The young birds nestle free from harm.

Thus for each Benjamin a constant refuge is provided. He needs it. No warrior is more sorely pressed. The whole artillery of hell seeks his destruction. No traveler is more exposed. Satan outside—the world around—a treacherous heart within—assail his path. No

infant bird is more beset with perils. A preying beak is ever ready to devour.

But he defies this multitudinous array. How is it? Is he not weak in self. Yes. His strength is feebler than a bruised reed. Alone he cannot face one single foe—much less the myriads of earth and hell. Here is his shelter—"The Lord shall cover him all the day long."

It would have been abundant favor to have given some shield—or to have raised some roof—or to have spread some wing. But mercy provides more for Benjamin. The Lord Himself is the constant covering. The Lord, whose arms are infinite, ever hides him in Himself. "Our life is hidden with Christ in God." Who, then, can injure? "All the day long" the enemy may watch. "All the day long" the shelter protects.

But the believer is more than sheltered from these perils. He is, moreover, covered from the condemning eye of God. His life must always be a mass of sin. What hateful filth defiles him! But this may all be buried from God's sight. O my soul, ever realize the covering robe, which Jesus wrought and offers. It is righteousness—perfect—spotless—divine. This He delights to cast around you. Adorned with this, you fearlessly may meet Jehovah's scrutiny. No blemish can be found. This imputed beauty makes you fairer than angelic purity. Put on by faith this precious mantle, and then sing aloud, "Blessed is he, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Ps. 32:1.

3. Fellowship with God. Benjamin's lot has this especial blessing. "He shall dwell between his shoulders." The shoulders are the borders—the outward coasts—the confines of the land. Thus, "they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west." Is. 11:14. Here, then, it is pledged, that Benjamin's land shall just contain God's earthly courts. What the Lord says shall surely be. Therefore in appointed time the Temple, that hallowed structure, rose on the mount, which skirted this tribe's line. Such is the literal

fulfillment. This promise, then, in its first sense, assigns the position of the consecrated house.

But the grand import of this word is spiritual. The Temple is the symbol of a present God. In it true worshipers drew near. In it God met the souls, which sought Him. The pledge, then, of this dwelling in Benjamin's domain promises access to God. It pictures prayer ascending—answers returned—constant communion. And is it not the saint's delight to have this heavenly union! This is his constant feast—he dwells in God, and God in him—he is one with God, and God with him.

This fellowship is based in Christ. He is the connecting link. He is the Mediator. He has a divine hand, which touches God. He has a human hand, which man may touch. Thus He unites the holy Father and the holy flock. This communion is very paradise. It is the foretaste of heaven. It passes beyond the veil, and penetrates the inner sanctuary. Faith, leaning on Christ's arm, lives in this happiness. With filial confidence it brings each trial—trouble—sorrow—need—affliction—doubt—distress, to a Father's ear. And God is near to cheer—to bless—to wipe the weeping eye—to soothe the wounded heart—to raise the drooping spirit—to send the pilgrim singing on his way. As the Temple was in the lot of Benjamin, so God is in the midst of Zion's sons. "He shall dwell between his shoulders."

Reader, do not you long to be an heir of Benjamin's large portion? Do you not feel, that it must be the crown of bliss to be thus safe—thus covered—thus free to heavenly communion! This becomes yours, when you are one with Christ. Is such your case? If not, why linger in peril, an unsheltered outcast? Draw near in faith. Wrestle in prayer. Invite Him to come in. He will not hesitate, and His entrance brings Benjamin's triple blessing—safety—constant shelter—fellowship with God.

Joseph

"Of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of Him, who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him, who was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of wild oxen; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth—and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." Deut. 33:13-17.

This blessing is an overflowing stream. Gift follows gift, as if beneficence left bounds behind. Treasures are scattered with unsparing hand. The grant seems to say, 'Take, until no more can be received.'

Joseph is the tribe thus signally enriched. He sparkles as the brightest jewel of his father's house. His early grace—his persecuted youth—his rescue from the pit—his firm resistance of enticing evil—his prison-sufferings—his exaltation to be a prince in Egypt—his call to be a savior to his house—with all the tender incidents of his affecting tale, are verdant spots in the first Bible-pages. He lived no common life. No common blessing passes to his seed.

While faith, too, journeys by his side from scene to scene—from early hatred until knees bowed before him—from the low dungeon to the lofty throne—it quickly sees *a living type of Jesus*. The varying lights and shadows graphically show the Lord. Hence it is no surprise, that special honors crown him. The lips of Jacob gave him

an exceeding share. Gen. 49:22-26. The lips of Moses add new stores. It is fit, that those who trace out most of Christ to men, should stand pre-eminent in heavenly favor. Hence Joseph enters on this goodly lot.

His CHARACTER is first described. This claims, then, primary regard. It is a simple portrait. All is comprised in this one praise—he is the "**separated** from his brethren." He differs, and because he differs, he is cast out. He will not walk in evil ways. And evil men despise him. He loathes their vices, and they loathe his grace. He cannot live, as one with them. And they conspire, that he shall live no more. But while the wicked frown, God smiles. While scales of enmity are full, the scales of recompensing favor far outweigh.

Reader, while you survey this feature of God's child, ask, 'Is your likeness here?' Do not forget, that two families inhabit earth. In principle—in taste—in habit—in desire, they are as separate, as light from darkness—cold from heat—pole from pole—life from death. There is the serpent's seed. There is the heaven-born race. There is the world. There is the little flock of grace. There is the broad road. There is the narrow way. There are the sheep. There are the goats. Hence the importance of the question, Have you escaped from nature's thralldom? Do your feet tread the upward path of life? Do you belong to Belial, or to Christ?

Be wise, and ascertain your real position. Rest not a slave among slaves—a worldling among worldlings. Tarry not in the doomed plain. Come out, like Joseph. He was separate. And did he lose thereby? Let his blessing now give reply.

The BLESSING is so worded, as to exhibit the fullest measure of earthly fertility. All causes, which concur to multiply and ripen fruits, shall lend their congenial influence. The land shall blossom, as an Eden. The canopy of heaven shall pour down softening rains. The gentle dew shall ever sparkle in refreshing drops. Springs from beneath shall permeate the clods. The annual and the monthly

produce shall periodically bloom. The ancient mountains shall supply their tribute. Their caverns shall be rich in ore. The lasting hills shall slope luxuriant in olives and in vines. Joseph shall know no scarcity or dearth. Its borders shall abound in "the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof." The corn shall widely wave in golden wealth. The grass shall spread its verdant carpet. All cattle and all flocks shall browse. Thus earth shall bring her every treasure—and Joseph's sons shall feast at nature's overflowing table.

Such is the superficial view. Thus the first aspect shows abundance of terrestrial goods. But these strong images are bright with higher significance.

Surely this is a vivid scene of better wealth. Our precious Bible—the book of every age and climate—often culls *nature's* field to impress *spiritual* ideas. Things visible portray invisible possessions. This principle leads us to look from the outward landscape, and to seek deeper lessons for the soul.

The parallel is quickly found. Obvious illustrations soon occur. For instance, the heart is often parched and dry. But Jesus can sweetly soften. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass—as showers, that water the earth." Ps. 72:6. Each morning opens on a scene of need. Each morning finds supplies. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Hos. 14:5. The roots of grace are planted on a flinty soil. There must be constant nourishment, else the leaves wither. Fear not, believer, "You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Is. 58:11. "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer. 17:8.

The inner man, once profuse with every noxious weed—where thorns and briars raised their fruitless heads—when cheered by

heaven-sent rays, smiles as a garden, blossoms as a rose. The promise stands, "I will plant trees—cedar, acacia, myrtle, olive, cypress, fir, and pine—on *barren* land." Isaiah 41:19. Then precious crops of *holy words*, and *holy works* in due succession come. Then fruits of godliness ripen in turn. *Faith* stands a noble tree. *Hope* raises high its richly laden boughs. *Love* scatters fragrance all around. Clusters of *righteousness* bear witness, this is the vineyard of the Lord—the field watered by grace—filled with the Spirit's seed—and cherished by heaven's brightest beams.

Believer, turn not from this spiritual landscape, without the thought, 'Is your soul thus?' The test of state is always one—"By their fruits you shall know them." The word is true, "He who abides in Me, and I in Him, the same brings forth much fruit." John 15:5. Do you thus abide in Christ? Do you draw fertilizing sap from that rich stem? Do you sit ripening beneath the sunny smiles of God? So only can your heart be Joseph's fertile land.

Joseph has more than promise of this large prosperity. There is **assurance of divine good will**. This is his crowning blessing. He inherits "the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush."

Observe, how Moses cherished to his last hour that early revelation of his Lord. He can look back on much, and close, and dear communion—but that display is still most splendid in the retrospective view. No time can dim its luster.

Believer, what can obscure on memory's mirror your first clear view of Jesus! What can deaden on your retentive ear the voice, which first assured you of His love! Your heaven began, when you had evidence of His good will. Cherish this sweet assurance. Open your eyes more clearly to discern it. Clasp tight your hands around it. Through every day—in every day's concerns—think, what high favor hovers round you! From all eternity good will regarded you. To all eternity it will warmly burn, and through all time it will remain your guard. It was good will to undertake your full redemption.

It was good will to leave heaven's glories in your service. It was good will to live and die in your behalf. The low estate—the sufferings—the groans—the agony—the cross—the streaming blood—the death—the grave—all manifest good will. And now this favor enriches you with daily grace. It will not fail, while life endures. It will watch by your dying bed. It will receive your fleeting breath. It will present you faultless before the Father's throne. It will rejoice over you, while endless ages roll. Nothing can quench—nothing can part from—"the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush."

Joseph's blessing still flows on. Distinctive evidence, that he is the heir of good will, follows. Thus it abounds. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock." He shall stand stately—beauteous—strong, as the prime offspring of the herd. He shall move the admiration of the plain.

Here, again, the deepest truth is spiritual. Where shall we find the glory of the human race? It can be only in the realms of grace. There is no loveliness in this world's slaves. They are polluted—tainted—marred by sin—crippled in power—impotent for good. But when the Spirit leads them to a Savior's blood, and thus obliterates each filthy stain—when faith puts on the robes of divine righteousness—when power from heaven renews the nature—when they receive the lineaments of Christ—when they reflect the God-man's image; then weakness and deformity are followed by strength and beauty—then this grand pledge is fully redeemed—"His glory is like the firstling of his bullock." Deut. 33:17. It is ever true, that each Joseph is made strong in a Savior's strength, and beauteous in a Savior's beauty, and moves among his fellow-men, the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Again, Joseph **shall do valiantly**. His prowess shall crush every foe. His conquering power is thus described—"His horns are like the horns of wild oxen—with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." Deut. 33:17.

Thus faith's life is one triumphant conflict. Who can recount the adversaries checking the upward march! But opposition is in vain. There is a Captain, who implants courage, girds up the loins, and cheers His followers onward, until the everlasting palms are waved, and everlasting hallelujahs sound. The blood-washed troops prevail, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Lastly, **his numbers shall exceedingly expand.** "They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." The child of God often mourns his solitude. He seems to be as a lonely cottage in the deserted vineyard. Is. 1:8. But when the total flock is gathered in—when the whole body is complete—when Jesus brings the collected sheaves to heaven's garner; then how vast will be the circle upon circle of saved souls! *The ransomed multitude is numberless. The death of Jesus gives birth to countless life.*

Reader, think of *the world's tinsel gifts*—weigh Satan's wages, as earned in time, and paid in the eternal world. Then turn and contrast the blessing, which "comes upon the head of Joseph—and upon the top of the head of him, who was separated from his brethren." Shall this bright crown be yours? Jesus's hands bestow it. Seek it. Ask it. None seek—none ask—in vain.

Ah! wretched worldling, when will you be wise! Come and display your treasure. Your best is but a fading flower—a fleeting shadow—a tottering reed—a failing brook. And how long can your hands retain it? How long!—You startle. You tremble. You turn pale. How long! It perishes, while you strive to grasp it. What will then follow! Hell is at hand to answer.

Happy Christian, show your treasure. You produce Joseph's portion—abundance of all grace. How long! A bright eternity is the measure without measure.

The United Tribes

"Moses said this about the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar: May the people of Zebulun prosper in their expeditions abroad. May the people of Issachar prosper at home in their tents. They summon the people to the mountain to offer proper sacrifices there. They benefit from the riches of the sea and the hidden treasures of the sand." Deut. 33:18-19

Two tribes come hand in hand. They are descendants of one mother, Leah—and they inherit neighboring lots. Here they are colleagues in a common blessing—and drink, as fellows, of one enriching cup.

It is a lovely sight, when brothers are co-heirs of grace. The Gospel-records brighten with such pictures. Andrew and Simon are united by more than kindred-ties. John has a fellow-laborer in James, his parent's son. Jude, and the other James, born of one father, are newborn of one Spirit.

Do not these instances exhort each pious brother to seek especially a brother's good? Do not they bring the animating hope, that the door of success will open readily to such loving touch? Let then no gracious brother rest, while any son of the same mother treads the downward path. In prayer—by gentle example—by winning counsels, let him persevere, until union be cemented in one center—Christ. God wills the effort. Will He be slow to bless?

How great, too, is the gain! For where is treasure like a brother plucked from the quarry of the world, and placed a jewel in the diadem of Christ! Sweet is the walk, when such move side by side to one eternal home.

Another thought stands at the threshold of this case. The younger ranks before the elder. This cannot be without design. The same occurs, when Jacob's dying lips address them. Zebulun precedes. Issachar, the first by birth, gives place. Similarly Jacob's right hand

rests on the younger, Ephraim. Manasseh has inferior honor. And other instances occur.

Reader, learn hence, that **God sits supreme upon His throne.** He holds a scepter swayed in love—in wisdom—and in sovereign will. He raises one. He places others in a lower grade. Here showers of grace descend. Here the dew falls in tiny drops. We see the fact. We know, that there is purpose. But we trace not the origin of these decrees. In humble reverence we bow and we adore. All must be wise, and just, and right. The day draws near, when clearer light shall show consummate skill. The structure of the Church will then appear wondrous in perfection. Each part is fixed by an unerring hand.

Let us now heed **THE BLESSING.** The first word sounds, "Rejoice." This ever is our Gospel's note. Joy is the gift, which Jesus's hands extend. This is the feast, to which true ministers invite.

When will a blinded world unlearn that silliest of fictions, that ways of faith are cheerlessness and gloom! Let faithless men be honest, and they must confess, that their career is restless care—keen disappointment—and self-wrought vexation. They pluck the thorn—not the flower. They feed on husks—not on rich fruit. Their cup is wormwood—not the vine's juice. Their present is distress—not peace. Their future is dismay—not hope. How different is the new-born heart! There constant joy keeps court—joy in the Lord, who washes out all sin—who gives the key of heaven, and title-deeds of endless bliss, and pledge of a weight of glory, and strength for the journey, and triumph at the end. The mandate is not an unmeaning word, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4.

But Zebulun has his peculiar place—so, too, has Issachar. Their calling differs. Zebulun's line extends around the coast. His ships traverse the seas. His commerce is across the waves. While Issachar

reposes in inland scenes—and dwells in meadows and in valleys. His life is rustic tranquillity. But whether in turmoil or in peace, joy is the heritage of both. "*May the people of **Zebulun** prosper in their expeditions **abroad**. May the people of **Issachar** prosper at home in their **tents**.*"

They have the happy knowledge, that all their labors are in appointed course—they go out, or they tarry, under heavenly directive, and therefore with glad hearts.

This leads us to observe, **how varied are the stations of man's calling!** How diverse are positions! Some reign in palaces—some toil in cottages. Some feast at plenty's table—some pine in poverty's contracted cells. Purple and splendor deck a Dives—Lazarus lies a beggar at the gate. Some work at looms—others in fields. Some climb the mast—others handle the spade. Some exercise the mental powers—others strain the muscles of the body. Some soar in literature's highest flights—some crawl unlettered to the grave. Some guide a nation's counsels—others are instruments to execute these laws. Some are exalted to far higher work. They are ambassadors for Christ. Their office is to tell aloud His wondrous love—to rouse the slumbering—to feed Christ's flock—to uplift thoughts from earth—to spread soul-renovating truths—to build up saints in their most holy faith.

But perfect wisdom rules these varieties on life's stage. No being enters or recedes, but in accordance with God's will. He speaks—they live. He speaks—they die. Entrance and exit are in His hand. At His decree all kings, all beggars, breathe and expire. Both times and stations are allotted by His mind. He raises to the pinnacles of earth—or veils in seclusion. He leads to walks known and observed by all, or hides in garrets of obscurity. Let then the child of God live, rejoicing in his day and lot. No change would be improvement. He best can serve his generation, and advance his soul-concerns, by working cheerfully in his assigned position.

Believer, when you distinctly see the beckoning cloud; when you set forth, or rest, submissive to clear guidance; banish fears—cast out all doubts—lift up the happy head—clap the exulting hands—rejoice—give thanks. A heavenly Father cannot set you in wrong place. A loving Savior cannot lead you in wrong paths. A gracious Spirit cannot endow you with wrong gifts. All is well. Look up and follow, and, as you follow, sing, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out—and Issachar in your tents."

Next, there is WORK, in which these tribes concur. They are described as **zealous to bring others to know God**—"They shall call the people unto the mountain—there they shall offer the sacrifices of righteousness." These words exhibit missionary features. We seem to see them mourning for ignorance, and longing to impart truth—hating darkness, and yearning to infuse light; loving the one true God, and ardent to call the wandering to His fold—the heavy-laden to His rest—the worshipers of stocks and stones to Zion, the Gospel-mountain.

Grace had made them to differ from the world around. Revelation had taught them the way of life. They had received Christ-shadowing ordinances. Their worship was not degraded rites of ignorance. Their altar and their victims were typical of the sin-removing Lamb. Their services were bright with God's own truth. Thus, with burning hearts, they called the people unto the mountain, where they offered the sacrifices of righteousness. They would not know, and love, and serve, alone.

Believer, catch hence a gale to fan the fire kindled in your soul. Each child of God—in heart—in lip—in life—should be a flame of enterprising zeal. Is he enlightened—called—selected—converted—pardoned—comforted—sanctified—saved—only that SELF may live? Away with such unworthy thought. Let the low slaves of Satan, let poor paltry worldlings, shiver in the freezing atmosphere of SELF. Let their desires, with unplumed wing, hang heavily around their ease—their profit—their indulgence—their debasing lusts. But let

faith soar in higher regions, and break forth in grander efforts, and spread in more ennobled work. Surely its sympathies should grasp the total family of man! Surely its love should travel round the circuit of the globe! Surely its cry should ever call poor sinners to the cross!

Awake, then, arouse; be up, be doing. What! shall souls perish, while you sleep? Shall hell enlarge its borders, while you loiter? Shall Satan push on his triumphs, and you look on indifferent? Shall superstition thrive, and you be silent? Shall ignorance grow darker, and you care not? Forbid it, every feeling of pity—tenderness—humanity—compassion. Forbid it, every thought of a soul's boundless worth. Forbid it, all the unutterable wonders wrapped in the name, eternity. Forbid it, every pious wish to snatch immortals from undying woe—and to upraise them to undying bliss. Forbid it, all your love to Jesus' glorious name—all your deep debt to His atoning blood—all your delight in His appeasing cross. Forbid it, all your hope to see His face in peace—and sit beside Him on His throne—and ever bask in heaven's unclouded sunshine. Forbid it, your deliverance from hell—your title-deeds to heaven. Forbid it, your constant prayer, "Hallowed be Your name—Your kingdom come—Your will be done." Forbid it, your allegiance to His rule—the statutes of His kingdom—the livery, which you wear. Forbid it, His awakening example—His solemn and most positive command. Forbid it, every motive swelling in a Christian heart.

Up, then, and act. Soul-death meets you at each turn. The world in its vast wideness perishes untaught. The spacious fields are neither tilled nor sown. The many millions are heathen—and therefore rushing hell-ward. Help, then, the missionary cause. You may—you can—you should. The need is for men—for means. Can you go forth? Let conscience answer. If not, you yet can pray, and give. Write shame—write base ingratitude—write treason to Christ's cause on every day, which sees no effort from you for the heathen world.

Read not in vain how Zebulun and Issachar subserved this cause. They called the people to the mountain. They strove to increase the sacrifices of righteousness.

The blessing adds, "*They benefit from the riches of the sea and the hidden treasures of the sand.*" God will enrich them. Their traffic shall collect plenteous store. They trade for their God, and their trade shall be full wealth. Who ever lost, who worked for Him!

Remember, that all gain is gainless, if unconsecrated. *The worldling's bags have holes—his barns soon empty—his coffers have no locks.* Treasure laid out for God is laid up in safe keeping.

Believer, come then, restore to God what He entrusts to you. It will be paid back. But with what interest? God only knows. And on what day? When the returning Lord shall reckon—when the applauding voice shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant—enter into the joy of your Lord." Matt. 25:21. But now you may have happy foretaste.

Will any put these humble lines aside, without much inward search? Let it not be so. Let every heart enquire, Lord, am I Yours? Is my inheritance among Your chosen flock? Do I lie down in their fair pastures? Do I draw water from their wells of life? Am I Your Zebulun—Your Issachar? Is my life a clear testimony, that I serve Christ? Do I show, that I am alive by many infallible proofs? Acts. 1:3.

If not, oh! let the prayer be heard, 'Lord, make me Yours, and keep me Yours forever. If other lords have held me in their chains, may the vile bondage cease. Accept me, worthless as I am. "Draw me—we will run after You." Fit me—enable me—and my whole life shall be delighted service. Supply me with the oil of grace, and then the flame of glowing toil shall blaze. A Zebulun and Issachar in privilege will always be a Zebulun and Issachar in zeal.

The Lion Tribes

"Of Gad he said, Blessed be he, that enlarges Gad—he dwells, as a lion." "And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp." Deut. 33:20, 22.

Moses said this about the tribe of Gad: "Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad's territory! Gad is poised there like a lion to tear off an arm or a head.

Moses said this about the tribe of Dan: "Dan is a lion's cub, leaping out from Bashan." Deut. 33:20, 22

Our God omits no mode to impress holy lessons on His children's hearts. At one time *simple precepts* manifest His will—and plain injunctions guide to duty's path. Now, nature's volume lends *similitudes*. We learn to avoid evil—to seek ornaments of grace—from objects open to our sense.

There is much wisdom in this figurative teaching. It speaks a language known in every climate. It introduces thoughts alike familiar in the scholar's hall, and in the poor man's cottage. It strikes a note, which every class, and state, and grade have ears to hear.

Examples throng the Bible-page. Thus *lambs*, which innocently sport, are chosen, as fit emblems of meek humility and gentle patience. The *serpent's* subtlety supplies the pattern of intelligence—"Be wise, as serpents." The *dove* adjoins the model of sweet inoffensiveness—"And harmless, as doves." The *eagle's* lofty flight teaches, how faith should soar on high—"Those who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength—they shall mount up with wings, as eagles." Is. 40:31. To inculcate courage, and a noble front, the *Lion* shows its form. And that the lesson should take deeper

root, two Tribes illustrate it. Gad "dwells, as a Lion." "Dan is a Lion's cub."

Believer, this picture has a voice—at all times needed—and not least so in our compromising day. Hear it. And may the mighty Spirit help you, while you listen, to put on strength, as a belt, and courage, as a heroic panoply! The Lion is the forest's **KING**. He moves pre-eminent above all beasts. He is as monarch among lower tribes. Superiority is his conceded right.

Such is the Christian's stand among earth's sons. It is a mighty word—"He has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Rev. 1:6. It is a glorious title—"You are a chosen generation—a royal priesthood." 1 Pet. 2:9.

The mass of human race reach not this rank. They raise not this elevated brow. They show not this princely demeanor. Their tastes are groveling and vile. They only care to sip the vulgar cup of time and sense. Their sin-soiled garments and polluted feet prove, that they wallow in defiling mire. Even liberty is unknown. The clash of heavy chains attests their bondage. Satan drags them—and they must obey. The world gives laws—they tremblingly submit. They crouch the slaves of many an insulting tyrant.

Believer, you only are the freedman of the Lord. You have found liberty in Christ. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:36. You serve a Prince, who calls His subjects to be kings. You are a royal citizen of heaven. Then live as heir of glory. Walk Lion-like in holy majesty of grace.

We thus are led to mark the glory of this kingly animal. It is his strength and courage.

1. Strength. His sinews are as iron. His limbs are braced with might. All, who resist him, fall an easy prey. To him to fight is victory. Assailed, he vanquishes. Assailing, he subdues. Throughout

the plain—the forest—and the hill, there is no power, which can match with his.

Here, again, is the believer's image. He is endued with inward prowess. But this is not poor nature's gift. All enter life alike—feeble in heart, in spirit, in resolve. All are the victims of an enervating sickness—sin. This plague weakens, as a palsy. It undermines the total fabric. The inner man, under its touch, is worthless, as a tottering reed—a broken bow—a quivering leaf—the empty chaff—the bubble's froth.

What has sin done? Ruin follows in its rear. Through it, the vessel, once so noble, crumbles as a wreck—the tree, once so stately, lies low—the fortress, once so strong, is robbed of gates—spoilers may enter—none drives them back.

Believer, I appeal to you. You alone are able to reply. Are these dark colors darker than the truth? Look back. Let unregenerate days tell their sad tale. What was your unconverted state? Had you ability to vanquish evil? Did you present indomitable front against the enemy's attacks? Did you stand firm, as adamant rock, against the lashing surges of iniquity? Conscious memory and downcast shame confess, no strength was in you.

This is the common case throughout our race, until help comes from heaven. How easy is the proof! How sad! Take any worldling. A temptation meets him. A gilded bait allures. A sweet indulgence opens its inviting arms. What follows? The silly moth is caught. Pleasure whispers, 'Come and partake'. Desire acquiesces. Nature surrenders. No godly principle forbids. Conscience is mute. Thus yielding frailty proves, how frail is man. Thus Satan leads his crowds down misery's downward slope. Quickly—easily—they glide along. The rolling pebble has no power to stop. The sinking vessel has no buoyancy to rise. The downhill torrent is incapable of turning.

Here is the one reply to the inquiry—'*Why is this world such a wide sea of evil? Why do earth's multitudes roll so easily to hell?*' Satan assails and wins. The weak heart weakly yields. The mind—the passions—lack firmness to resist. Thus the strong foe takes strengthless man a captive at his will.

Believer, I look again to you. Is such your present case? I mark the grateful adoration of your soul. I hear your praises swelling to the skies. I see your eye sparkling with thanksgiving love. You testify, "Once I was feeble, as feebleness can be. Weakness is a weak description of my nothingness of power. But now I am made strong, and all my strength is in my Savior's arms, and by my Savior's side, and through my Savior's help, and from my Savior's Spirit. He now works with me—in me—for me. And so I work and prosper. He is my battle-axe—my bow—my spear—my sword. He nerves my muscles. He fortifies my breast. He frames my armor, and He girds me with it. He bids me to go forward, and He Himself precedes. Thus my poor worm-like heart becomes in Christ a Lion. If I sink not—if I prevail—if I subdue—the power is His—the grace is His—to Him I give the praise, and on His brow I place my victory's crown."

But you deny not, that the fight continues to be very fierce. Temptations have not ceased to tempt. The world remains the world. Flesh still is flesh. Traitors still dwell within. Satan still hates. His wrath increases. With craftier stratagem he marks his opportunities, and lays his snares. There is no day, when allurements spreads not some net. Woe would be yours, if Jesus were not ever near. But He is near, ministering real strength. Thus you hold on. Thus you hold out.

It is a miracle of grace, when thus the little flock gains trophies, "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." It is divine empowerment, when thus experience shouts, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Aid from heaven is supplied, and then the old serpent flees. Victory comes, because the Lion of the tribe of Judah helps. Wonder of wonders! In Jesus' might, the

weakest heart—the feeblest will—with Lion's strength, beats back all hell.

Believer, ever remember, then, where your true power lies. Take not one step, approach no work, except armored in a Savior's grace. Appalling instances record, how saints have stumbled, when they have ventured forth alone. Abraham flinched. Noah sinned foully. Jacob stooped to fraud. David tumbled into filthiest mire. Peter acted a coward's part.

Seek not excuse for such vile falls in nature's frailty, or in evil's power. Nature is frail. Evil is mighty. But here is the fault—Faith did not grasp the ready sword. Prayer did not ask the ready aid. Learn from these instances to meet Goliath in the name of God. And then fear not. You will stand Lion-like in strength.

Does any poor sinner, pierced by many a wound—bemired by many a fall—tottering at each step beside a precipice's edge—read these lines? Sir, turn not from the encouragement of this Gospel-truth. You yet may obtain strength to trample down your perils and your foes. You live. Your many wounds have not brought death. In these present words another warning meets you. Is not this the Savior's call? Come, then, and join yourself to Him, and all His might is yours—and you will triumph with those, who, through His blood, have overcome. *Cease to grovel a crushed worm. Become a Christian Lion.*

2. Courage. Lions to their strength add courage. They never know timidity. Valiantly they face all danger. Fearlessly they rush to the attack. No multitude of beasts or men alarm them. As power is in their limbs, so bravery fills their hearts.

This quality again portrays the child of God. *When heavenly commands are clear, unflinchingly he obeys.* He confers not with flesh and blood. Despite all threats, he steadfastly advances. His

only fear is, lest he should fear. He only trembles, lest he should tremble.

See the *three captive youths*. The tyrant menaced. They stood alone against an empire. What! shall they yield? No, rather, welcome the furnace—the agony—the flame. They failed not God. God failed not them. He made them bold as Lions. And their fame lives among faith's heroes.

See *Daniel*. Command is urgent. Shall his knees leave their beloved employ! Shall he address a worm, though king, in prayer! The thought is keener torture, than the Lion's teeth. With open window bravely he worships. His courage conquers. The lions' mouths are closed. The tyrant's heart is turned.

See, too, *the Baptist*. He fears not Herod's might. Fearlessly he drags to light the darling sin. He chooses truth and prison, and death; rather than unfaithfulness and ease. Where he sees error, there his mouth is open to reprove.

Believer, let it be so with you. What though falsehood's guise be specious—and high authority endorse it—and brilliant gifts commend it—and pliant worldlings fondle it—and gilded honors follow in its rear—if the cup holds one poison drop—if statements swerve one hair-breadth from Gospel-truth, then, with Lion valor let your voice scare the traitor. Thus Paul resisted Peter to the face.

So, too, *courageously confess Christ*. This often needs a martyr's spirit. When friends desert—and the world sneers—and blight descends on prospects—and Gospel-truth seems linked with trouble—it needs a Lion's heart to testify, 'None but Jesus—none but Jesus!' But thus the Apostles, menaced with near death, preached Christ more fully and more clearly. Their hearts were faith. Their faith was courage. Their courage was success.

A noble army of confessing saints beckon us onward in this path. Ignatius moved with a Lion's heart to meet his grave in lions' jaws.

May his bold words be cherished, while the world endures! "Now do I begin to be a disciple of my Master Christ." Luther stands with Lion's courage re-echoing Paul's resolve. "None of these things move me." In this grand spirit he exclaimed, "Though there were devils many as the tiles on the roofs of Worms, I shall go forward."

Come, then, believer, be you, too, as a Lion for your Lord. Boldly devise great plans. Heroically act them out. Let neither earth nor hell intimidate. Your cause is good. Your call is from God's throne. Your help is sure. What promises encourage! What triumphs are at hand! Only be very courageous. Be not a coward in the camp of Christ—for Judah's Lion expects Lion-followers.

Gad dwells as a Lion. Dan is a Lion's cub. Will you be less?

The Last Tribes

"Of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren; and let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be." Deut. 33:23-25.

Naphtali and Asher now appear. They are the last in order—not the least in favor. Their blessing proves again the truth often stated, that *the treasury of God is a vast mine*. It bestows much—but much ever remains. The sun has poured down floods of rays on a long train of generations, but the streams cease not—the fountain is not impoverished. The elders of faith's house have been most plenteously enriched, but we may still as plenteously obtain. Store upon store—wealth upon wealth—grace upon grace—still fill the

heavenly coffers. There is no end, no limit. Full hands are ever open to dispense. Abundant gifts in ages past still leave abundant gifts for present and for future days.

My soul, if you are poor, it is not because God's blessings fail. Let faith not cease to bring its empty vessels, they will not cease to be supplied. "He gives more grace." Jam. 4:6.

Mark, how Naphtali's rich portion confirms this. This tribe is "satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord." Possession of the west and south is also granted. Their lot is fixed in fertile and healthful spots. The goodly fruits, which crowned their baskets—the choice position of their lands—their sheltered valleys—their inland sea, fulfilled this promise. Nurtured, in nature's richest lap, they reveled in favor and in blessings.

But the possession thus granted seems to hint at nobler gain. When Jesus put on our flesh, and trod our earth, this tribe was chosen as His frequented home. Here stood Capernaum—the scene of His most mighty works. Here He displayed the brightness of those glorious deeds, which testified divine commission. Here the God-man moved—healing disease—allaying pain—soothing deep misery—reviving drooping hearts—uttering pure wisdom—fulfilling the long line of prophecy—lifting high the Gospel beacon. This was surpassing honor. This was privilege exalting to the very heavens. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord," your eyes were privileged to see incarnate Deity.

Believer, come now and trace in **NAPHTALI'S** distinguished lot, the features of your happy case. Is not this picture drawn, that you may realize your plenteous treasures? You, too, are "satisfied with favor." You, too, are "full with the blessing of the Lord."

"Satisfied with favor." You once were dead in trespasses and sins. You moved a living carcass with a lifeless soul. Your every step was hellward. Your every moment hurried you towards endless woe.

Your life was ignorance—rebellion—slavery—disgrace. But now the darkness is dispersed, and true light shines. You see the cross. You use the blood. You stand in a new world of spiritual delight. You are a new creation of thought—affection—hope—desire. You live for God—to God—with God—in God.

But whence the change? Did it result from nature and your own resolve? Did rolling years beget this wisdom? Oh! no. You owe the whole to sovereign grace. God, of His own free will, looked down with favor on your ruined soul. His favor gave you, as a jewel, to His Son—and gave His Son to be your uttermost salvation. His favor sent the Spirit to make you one, by faith, with Christ. Thus all things are yours. Child of grace, do you not rapturously sing, I am indeed a Naphtali, "Satisfied with favor!"

"Full," too, "with the blessing of the Lord." Happy state! The Father ever lives to bless. Jesus ever reigns to bless. The Spirit ever works to bless. The morning dawns, that blessings may descend. The day goes on, that blessings may proceed. The clouds, which seem to portend storms, bring showers of blessing. Life is a blessing, while it lasts. Death is a blessing, when it comes. *Trials—afflictions—losses—temptations—are blessings, because they wean from earth.* When time is left behind, and eternity reviews life's journey; then will the truth stand prominently out, that each saint's cup was "full with the blessing of the Lord."

But Naphtali's distinction was, that **Jesus chose it as His earthly dwelling.** Believer, have not you similar delight? Your soul is Jesus' home. He, whom no heavens can hold—He, to whom infinity is a mere speck—scorns not to abide within you. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." You may always realize His present smile. You may always hold sweet communion. You may ever whisper to His ready ear, and catch the joy of His replying voice. You may always lean upon His arm, and rest upon His breast. Christ dwells in your heart by faith.

Moses looks on from Naphtali to **ASHER**. His is the final blessing. It is largely bounteous. It seals again the truth, that *God delights to scatter favors with unsparing hand*. It has a voice still calling believers to a treasure-house, where they may ask with open mouth, and take with open hand.

"Let Asher be blessed with children—let him be acceptable to his brethren—and let him dip his foot in oil. Your shoes shall be iron and brass—and as your days, so shall your strength be." Deut. 33:25.

Out of this crowded diadem only the last sparkling gem can be examined. But is it not a jewel far exceeding this world's boasted wealth! "As your days, so shall your strength be." This promise intimates the fact, that days will vary. As in nature, clouds screen the sun—and storms descend—and tempests rage—and hurricanes sweep fearfully—and rapid changes come—so is it in the life of grace. The morning brightness often gives way to mid-day gloom. The mid-day gloom brings in evening wildness. The skies are now serene—we look above on one expanse of clearest blue—now the scene varies, and thick darkness frowns, or forked lightning darts its angry shafts. Faith has no lofty seat, which trials cannot reach—and no seclusion, which distress cannot invade. But it has a rock, from which no foes can shake—the rock is Asher's blessing, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

Strong in this pledge—bold in this might—safe in this safety—confident in this security—impregnable within this fort—happy in this happiness, faith feels, "I shall not be injured, or destroyed. Days may be dark and sad; I may be sorely buffeted; but strength shall be enough. All earthly props may fall, but I shall stand. All human friends may flee, but I shall not be left alone. All trials may in turn assail, but they shall not prevail. Satan may hurl each dart, but a strong shield shall ward them off. All snares may be most craftily laid, but they shall not destructively entangle. The world may use its every enticing art, but I shall be enabled to escape. It may mutter its threats, but I have a sufficient refuge. I may be tempted—persecuted

—wronged—but not cast down. I often may fear. I often may see a yawning precipice before my feet. The ground may tremble. But I am safe. I hold a saving promise—"As your days, so shall your strength be."

Faith can fly back, and commune with the elder saints. It hears from all the self-same story. We had a course through stormy seas, where billows tossed, and rocks were sharp, and quicksands opened their engulfing jaws. But our barks rode triumphant to the haven. As our days, so was our strength.

Jacob speaks of an outcast life—and many enemies—and overwhelming griefs—and lonely tremblings—and inward fears—but still strength was built up. He held on to the end. He testifies, The Angel redeemed me from all evil. David presents a painful chart. What cruel hate of men! what thirstings for his blood! what foul assaults of Satan! what stumbles! ah! what falls! His soul-life often seemed trodden in the dust. But he revives. Oil of grace supplies the flickering lamp. The heaven-lit flame never expires. Others are bound, and dragged to torturing flames; but they survive. The menace cannot overcome. The fire cannot consume. Their day is very terrible, but strength endures. Others are cast a prey to angry beasts, but their peace is as a placid lake. The outward scene is wild affright, but their souls never quake. The Lord is with them, and their strength abides.

View Paul and Silas in the inmost cell. Their wounds are smarting—the dungeon is deep—the chains clash heavily. But inward comfort flows in full tide. Thanksgivings swell. They loudly sing, and bless a loving God.

Mark the heroic calmness of the early preachers of the faith. Threats and imprisonment are their lot. They feel, as men; but they rejoice, as saints. They neither faint nor fail. They sit unmoved amid an earthquake of alarms. As their days, so is their strength. It is Paul's glad acknowledgment—but not Paul's sole experience

—"Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Martyrs and confessors press forward to give like witness. They joy in anguish—they embrace the stake—they hug encircling flames. They find, that days are often terrible, but never without needful strength. Was Stephen left without support, when, with angelic look, he kneeled down, and, praying for his murderers, amid a shower of stones, fell tranquilly asleep?

The whole bright throng around the throne attest the same. They passed through many perils—sorrows—fights—but heavenly strength braced their loins—sustained their hearts—fanned their desponding spirits—and made them more than conquerors. From every lip one testimony sounds. The word is true, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

Believer, tremble not. Take courage. Go forward. You may be young, and a long course may open to your view. Foes must infest it. You have no promise, that trials will not come. Satan spares none. He grants no Sabbath of repose. But face the worst, bold and serene in Christ. Hold fast the staff of grace. Trust and fear not. Trust and pray always. Trust and plead this word. It is not Asher's only. It is your portion. You will surely find, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

You may be worn with malady, and tottering down the valley of years. You may dread Jordan's waves, and the cold touch of death. But clasp the promise. The greater need brings the more large support. How many tremblers have gone triumphantly to rest! *Christ's love exceeds all hopes*. His merciful fulfillments surpass each pledge. He cannot fail. He cannot disappoint. Come what may—this will be true, "As your days, so shall your strength be."

But faithfulness must add, that these rich mercies are not Israel's portion only. Those who are Christ's, possess, and claim, and use, and joy in them. They, who reject Him, see but a casket, which they

open not. Their days have trouble without strength. Their future will have misery without end. Let not such turn from Naphtali and Asher until they share what Naphtali and Asher gained from God. The blessings of these tribes may yet, through grace, be sought and found.

Eternal Spirit, mighty source of light and inward life, give Your help! Open each eye to see the beauty, riches, blessedness, and glory of God's heritage. Stir up each heart to wrestle, until the word is heard —"Great is your faith, be it done unto you, even as you will."

Israel's God

"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun (Israel), who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in His majesty."
Deut. 33:26

This is the fervid exclamation of a soul acquainted with its God. The tongue would adequately praise, but language fails. Struggling efforts cannot do more than say, *"There is no one like Him."*

For one moment strive to estimate the worth of this attainment. Other knowledge is but darkness beside this light. All discoveries of art and science are low as dust, contrasted with this pearl. Let the expanded intellect take wing, and soar through all the skies above. Let the celestial orbs be counted in their course. Let the earth's depths be traced. Let hidden wonders be brought forth to view. Let history tell the annals of the past. Let literature spread her storied page. Let keen investigation scrutinize the intricate machinery of the human heart. When all is learned, which mental power has ever grasped, what is the total worth, compared with understanding of our God!

Other knowledge vanishes with time—and time is but a tiny speck. This knowledge is ever growing through eternity. It has an endless life. Other acquirements bring no inward peace, and heal no conscience-wounds, and gladden no dying beds. This removes every fear and spreads a holy calm. As is the value of the soul saved, such is the value of God truly known.

Reader, as you would live in bliss forever, obtain, then, this prize. But search for it aright. God is revealed. He may be seen. But only in the Gospel-mirror, and in the face of Christ. Here only, the concealing curtains are withdrawn. Here only, can distinct display be found. But here the sun shines forth in perfect beauty and unclouded glory. Here every attribute appears in proper place, in just proportion, in blended harmony. The cross is the truth-showing text-book. Come then to it. The Spirit helping, while you gaze, you will take up the song, "*There is no one like the God of Jeshurun.*"

Look up—behold the wondrous testimony. First, characters of glowing light announce—"God is love." This is a truth established only here. Read through creation's volume. Evidence, indeed, of mighty wisdom and preserving care abounds. Elaborate effects prove the consummate *skill* of the fabricating cause. Arrangements to promote happiness are clearly, largely, and benevolently made. But this fair picture has a reverse. Hurricanes and tempests sweep the earth. The storm destroys. The pestilence extends its desolating scythe. Disease preys almost upon every frame. We pity the feeble limb—the moody wanderings of unsound thought—the sorrowing parent—the bereaved child—the mourning widow. We turn from tears, and misery, and crime, and ask with a disquiet sigh, "Are these the orderings of perfect love?"

Approach the page of **providence**. It is a wheel moved by an unseen hand. Its constant motion asserts constant agency. But its results perplex and puzzle. Today events cause happiness to overflow. Tomorrow witnesses a flood of woe—affliction—loss—

distress. We doubt—we hesitate—we cannot surely say, "This ruling power is love."

We hear the proclamation of **God's law**. We listen eagerly. But awe and terror meet us. It speaks, indeed. But all is the sternness of inflexible decree. Give unimpaired obedience. Bring righteousness without one flaw—one speck—one stain. Show a whole course of strict compliance with strict terms. Then life eternal is secured. But if there be transgression—then take the curse, and perish everlastingly; for heaven's doors are closed, and wrath is the fixed penalty. Offence must reap its wages, where pardon never comes, and fires never quench, and anguish never ceases. What child of Adam's blinded race can commune with the law, and thence conclude, that God is love?

Now place beside these doubts the exhibitions of the cross. There God surrenders His own Son to shame—to agony—to death. He lays on Him the crushing burden of His people's sins. He puts a cup of infinite woe into those blameless hands. He bruises the innocent, that He may spare the transgressor. He slays the guiltless, that He may release the guilty.

O my soul, gaze on this fact. Feast on its consolations. Mark well its story. You need not die, for Jesus dies. You may escape hell-pains. A substitute suffers in your place. No punishment remains. The storm breaks on a substituted head. The vials hold no wrath for you. Your gracious Lord exhausts each drop. But this Savior—so sufficient—so complete, is God's free gift. What, then, is this giving God? Surely you shout, He is perfect love. The cross unravels every doubt. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Again, **mercy** is a sparkling attribute. God is rich in mercy. His ever-enduring mercy reaches unto the heavens. But where is the proof? We find it at Calvary. For what is mercy, but tender love sympathizing and relieving misery, and longing to bring ease? And is not this the trumpet-language of the cross? Christ thus expiring is

surest evidence, that God's heart yearns to relieve wretchedness—to chase unhappiness away—to introduce delight and peace.

God also reigns upon a throne of **grace**. But the cross alone establishes this truth. For what is grace, but love looking with favor on undeserving worms—on lost ones, whose whole desert is punishment—on criminals, whose silent lips can urge no plea—whose downcast heads confess deep guilt. Grace finds at Calvary an open door, and free opportunity to enter on this noble work. There it pardons, and receives, and saves, and snatches from hell the rebels, who are nothing but iniquity. Faith sees this clearly in the wounded Jesus, and cries, God is all grace. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Is **justice** God's essence? Is it so interwoven with His being, that an unjust God, cannot be truly God? Now justice sternly asks, that every debt be fully paid, and no demand be set aside? The cross shows God in all the majesty of unsullied justice—in severity, which yields no right. He there exacts each due. The sad transgressions of the chosen race are countless in number—boundless in magnitude. Each is an incalculable debt. Before the cross the scales are brought; and a Substitute appears, who more than satisfies. He is supremely able, for He is divine. He pays a death, in value, far exceeding thought. Justice cries, "Enough, I am content—Enough, the whole is paid—Enough, no shadow of a claim remains—Enough, the score is all wiped out."

Sinner, you cannot enter heaven, if you retain one sin unexpiated. Justice immovably forbids, and rightly bars the gates.

Believer, no charge remains against you, because your Surety has infinitely paid. If through eternal ages you had lain in hell, you might have been forever paying a debt forever great. Jesus by His one offering clears all away. *Now Justice has become your ablest advocate*. That attribute, once so severely adverse, stands your prevailing friend. God is just and you are justified. Faith reads a full

receipt in Jesus' pierced hands, and intelligently joins in the song, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Holiness, too, is a main pillar of God's government. Unholiness in Him would overthrow the throne of righteousness, and lower heaven to hell. But holiness abhors all evil. It cannot look upon an unclean thing. It frowns iniquity to boundless distance. The impure cannot face it. Where, then, can the sinner hide? His sin-stains exclude him from the sight of God. If he should venture near, a holy voice is heard, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." But at the cross our God is holy, and the sinner saved.

How can it be? Behold the problem solved. Sin is the dire offence. Let sin but vanish, and holiness is no longer hostile. Its opposition ceases. But the all-cleansing blood from Jesus' wounds obliterates each mark of guilt. It changes filth to loveliness—deformity to beauty—impurity to snow-bright luster. Holiness beholds the blood-washed multitude. It finds no speck of sin in them. Therefore it gladly clasps them to its pleased embrace. At the cross, this holiness, without receding from its loftiest ground, smiles on transgressors, and welcomes them to God's all-righteous throne. This is one of Calvary's wonders. Faith clearly sees it—and exults—"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Moreover, God must be absolutely **true**. His word cannot be shaken. Now truth has clearly spoken. Its edict raises a gigantic prison round the sons of guilt. Its sentence links them to eternal death. How then can they escape, who thus are doomed? Come to the cross and witness. Jesus presents Himself. He asks, O truth, what is your claim? The answer is distinct. Whatever my lips have uttered, without one slightest failure, must be done. All, who have sinned, must take the death denounced. Jesus complies. He lays down life for each of His redeemed. In Him, His seed all undergo the uttermost of truth's threat. No tittle is relaxed. Truth remains true, and a vast multitude ascend to heaven. The cross thus

magnifies this attribute. Faith knows this, and again exclaims, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Another scroll surmounts the cross. It writes the praise of everlasting **wisdom**. If any ask, where is wisdom's greatest work; let him come here and read a scheme, which reconciles seeming impossibilities. There was a task, before which all created minds could not but hide their baffled heads. *Mercy* asks pardon—*Justice* demands payment. *Grace* sues for life—*Truth* must have death. *Love* must admit—*Righteousness* excludes. But God appears, leading His Son to the accursed tree—and all are satisfied—delighted—honored—magnified—exalted—glorified. Not one is tarnished—not one is set aside. Here is the brightest blaze of wisdom. The word is true, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Cor. 1:24. Again faith shouts, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

The real believer adds his individual praise. He can bear witness, how this incomparable God has sent His Spirit to add personal experience of these truths. He can record, "This God was once unknown by me. I lived without Him in the world. But now the mists are gone. I see Him saving even me in Christ. I claim Him, as my own. He is my Father. He has brought me to His home—the bosom of His love. I find Him to be all that Scripture states, and glowing saints relate, and my enormous need requires. I find Him to be more. For words from angels' lips cannot tell out half that sea of grace, on which I float to glory. And now my straining effort is, to learn more and more. With this desire I meditate and pray at Calvary. The more I *see*, the more I *love*. The more I *love*, the more I *praise*. The more I *praise*, the more my heart expands. The more my heart expands, the greater is my *peace and joy*. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun." How precious is this sight of faith! How precious will be the sight in heaven!

Happy the soul, whose glad experience thus responds, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun." Reader, is this blessedness

your own? Be well assured, that life is a poor blank, until you know the peerless God. Let this study be your chief concern. The Spirit waits to reveal Jesus—and in revealing Jesus, to show Jeshurun's God. Be not destroyed for lack of saving knowledge. Be not blind amid abounding light.

God's Israel

"Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! and your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places." Deut. 33:29.

Moses thus speaks—and then on earth his lips forever close. Just as his spirit spreads enraptured wings—just as he enters into perfect light—he seems to pause, and take a farewell view of Israel's camp. He now must leave the flock, for which he long had watched—the vineyard, in which he long had toiled—the children dearer than his very life. But he well knows, that they are God's especial care—loved above all nations of the earth—bound in the bundle of distinguishing grace. Hence, joying in their joy, and fervent in their hopes, he cannot check his overflowing heart. His spirit thus finds vent, *"Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! and your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places."*

These precious words are obviously, in their first sense, the portion of those tribes, whose feet now stood on Canaan's confines. But the treasure is not theirs exclusively. Such thought is far too narrow. Here is each true believer's lot. This heritage descends to all faith's

sons. It may be claimed by all, who to the end of time, trust in Christ Jesus—bathe in His blood—put on His righteousness—and are the temple of His Spirit. Happiness—perfect—heaven-born—heaven-sent—is their sure property. Here are the pastures, in which they all are privileged to feed. Happy are you, O child of God, who is like unto you!

Believer, you, then, are invited to draw out the fragrance, which these delicious flowers present, and to luxuriate in these pastures of delight.

What is the first element of this **HAPPINESS**? What is the richest savor in this cup? What is the sweetest music in this note? What is the brightest jewel in this crown? It is **salvation**—salvation realized. "Who is like unto you, O people saved." Saved—so that sin can no more injure, and self no more destroy, and Satan no more claim—saved, so that soul-misery is infinitely distant—saved, so that God is your Father—heaven is your home—a throne of glory is your high seat—and hallelujahs are your eternal song. Is not this happiness? This joy at once uplifts from earth. Let clouds of trial gather—let billows of affliction toss—let persecution, threats, and sneers assail—the heart, which clasps assurance of salvation, sits high above all other troubles. There is no darkness, where this true light shines. "Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, O people saved!"

But assurance of salvation is not firm, unless it rests upon a mighty rock. This rock is here displayed. It is the Lord—the Lord Himself. It is Jehovah, strong in omnipotence—"Saved by the Lord!"

Mark well, **salvation is the Father's will**. He writes the book of life. He frames the covenant of grace. He cannot change. He cannot be diverted from His plans. None can obliterate His fixed decrees. They must be saved, for whom He purposes salvation. Saved by the Father is sure salvation.

Mark next, **salvation is the work of Jesus**. He comes, able and qualified to save to the uttermost. He rescues captive souls from Satan's grasp. By his blood He puts out the penal flames. By His strength He shatters every fetter. By His own right hand He tears down the gates of hell—and clears away all hindrance. He sends His angels to be guards. He causes all revolving providences to bring good. He never leaves His happy flock, until the crown is won. They must be saved, for whom He thus works out salvation. Saved by Christ is sure salvation.

"Saved by the Lord." No man could help himself. United companies could bring no aid. The hosts of the angelic world are vain to take away one sin. Jesus alone is able to achieve such work. Alone He undertakes. Alone He consummates. Alone He finishes. Thus the true Israel is "Saved by the Lord."

The eternal **Spirit** speeds on the wings of love to lend His aid. He opens blinded eyes to see the glories of the cross. He shows the grace and beauty of the dying Lamb. He melts the stony heart to love the precious Lord. He makes the sinner one with Christ by faith, and so an heir of God. Saved by the Spirit is sure salvation.

This salvation, then, is a sure Rock. Its summit towers above the heaven of heavens. Its deep foundations cannot be uprooted. It stands secure—complete—immovable. Nothing can detract from it. More cannot be added. He must be happy, then, whose feet are set upon this stable ground. The word is brightly true, "Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord!"

But perhaps a sigh is heard, 'Will not mighty **foes** strive to destroy this happiness?' Foes, indeed, are strong and many. There is SATAN, hating with terrific hate, and aided with the countless troops of hell. He comes on, armed with tremendous weapons, each barbed with venom, each directed with consummate skill, each urged with super human force. Can he be happy, who hourly stands in such a fight?

There is the WORLD, too, now smiling with seducing arts, now bitter in sarcastic sneers, now menacing with poverty, contempt, disgrace, and countless ills.

The FLESH, too, is a restless plague—an Achan in the camp—a viper nurtured in the breast—a traitor hidden in the recesses of the heart, ever willing to betray—ever ready to suck life-blood. There must be danger in such a combat-field—and danger disturbs happiness.

But what, if the **defense** is so impenetrable—so wide—so near—that none of these attacks can prosper? What, if a covering shield averts each point? Then the calm warrior will dwell in blissful peace, fearless of real hurt.

Now view the fact. Is not a shield prepared for every child of faith? And that shield, is it not the Lord Himself? Yes, the word loudly sounds—He is "The shield of your help." He screens. He shelters. He protects. He keeps unharmed, uninjured, and unwounded. Adversaries, therefore, must be infinite in number, more than omnipotent in strength, before they can prevail.

Believer, realize this sure defense. Go forth, brave to encounter every conflict. Shielded by God, you are as safe, as if the heaven of heavens were your covert. Behind this panoply you may smile at the battering rage of the incessant shower, and sing "Happy am I, saved of the Lord, who is the shield of my help!"

But Zion's warriors are not happy in security alone. They covet trophies. Laurels must crown their brow. Now to be conquerors they need offensive weapons. They must give wounds, and smite, and overthrow. Their hands must wield a sword.

Happy believer! as you have God for a shield, so, too, a **sword** is sharpened for your use. It is not of the earth. It is framed by no human skill. It is from heaven. Therefore it is resistless. It is the Lord Himself. Therefore it is all-conquering. He is "the sword of your excellency." Know then your power. Face each opponent.

Advance to the assault. Deal heavy blows. Spare not. The mighty God strikes with your arm. And when He strikes, each giant-adversary must fall low.

Happy are you, so screened! Happy are you, so equipped for victories! What, though hell's troops move on, proud in their boastings, swelling in wrathful words of menace! It is added, "They shall be found liars unto you." Their arrogance shall be, as empty bubbles. Their vaunting pride shall pass, as the passing wind. Their threats shall vanish, as the smoke. They may accuse—they may insinuate a host of doubts—they may suggest, that God will fail, and your soul perish, before the conflict end. But these vile whisperings are false. The fight will gloriously end. Your feet shall crush their necks. The Spirit of truth, by Moses' lips, sounds these grand words—"Your enemies shall be found liars unto you, and you shall tread upon their high places."

Reader, I trust, that you now are well taught, where happiness alone can dwell. Its home is with God's Israel. It is the portion of the chosen race. It is the heritage of those, who know and love the Lord. Under the shelter of His wings, His people rest encircled with these joys. Let such open their eyes to view their happy state. Let them receive with faith the countless pledges of their God. Is it not said, "He, that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!" Rom. 8:32. Is it not said, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:21-23. Is it not said, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads—they shall obtain joy and gladness—and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Is. 35:10. Only believe, and become happy in this happiness. "Happy are you, O Israel." Only believe, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Faith ever sings, and happy is its song.

Reader, this tract would sincerely detain you, while it makes a final effort to impress your heart. Pause, then, and say, is happiness your lot? Do you arise with morning light to joy? Do you move joyously throughout the day? Is joy the hand, which bolts your evening door? Your head hangs down. A sigh tells a sad tale. Your feet have not attained this happy ground. How is it? You have sought happiness, but you have sought it, where it never grows. The **world**, perhaps, enticed you. It showed a panoramic view of glittering honors—tinsel wealth—vain titles—empty bubbles of applause—and fading flowers of visionary peace. You toiled long in the pursuit; and now, wearied—worn-out—desponding, you confess, the world has been a miserable cheat.

Perhaps a more refined bait has allured. Perhaps science and literature's page have courted. For a while you have found interesting converse with brilliant thoughts, and lofty flights of intellect. But still you are not happy. There is a void. There is distress. Conscience is restless and disturbed. The heart finds no repose on such a pillow. The bark cannot cast anchor on such sand. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit." Alas! you are not happy.

Know, then, you never can be, while apart from God. Listen. Turn not away. Cast not aside these lines. Is it too late? You live. Jesus still lives. The living word still cries, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Be, then, persuaded. Approach the cross on bended knees—with suppliant lip—in deep humility—with earnest prayer. Confess your need. Avow your willingness to be Christ's. Place your whole soul and heart in His redeeming hands. Wrestle with Him. Let Him not go, until your burdens fall, and peace swells like a rising tide. He can bring back to God. He can assure of pardon. He can reveal His pierced hands and side. He can bestow the title-deeds of life. He can admit you, as an adopted child, to the high family of grace. Then you will fully feel, how true are Moses' last words, "Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency! and your

enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places."

Holy Spirit, use these humble lines as seed of happiness, now and ever, to each reader's soul!

Pisgah

"Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah." Deut. 34:1.

PISGAH is crowded with instructive thoughts. The scene is *solemn*, because death appears, and a wondrous life finds here a wondrous end. It is *holy*, for God Himself attends the dying saint, and closes the dying eyes. But its main interest is the marvel of the distant prospects thence discerned. Moses ascends the mount. God meets His faithful servant. All the beauties of the promised land are spread, as a map, before him. And then he is translated to the heavenly reality. What annals record similar events!

My soul, with reverence open this treasure-house of profit. Great Spirit of all light descend, for without Your rays, even Pisgah must be dark!

Moses lived long. He passed a spacious sea of trial. He trod a tedious course of trouble. His sighs were many. His spirit was often pained. But the last step came, and landed him in glory!

Believer, mark this, and gird up your loins. You, too, may experience a stormy voyage through many billows. But each wave wafts you nearer to your haven. The last will break—soon—very soon. And then, where will your sufferings be? Behind—immeasurably distant.

What will be around—before you? Peace—joy—glory. Live, then, assured, that the end approaches. The hope of rest makes all disquietudes to fade away. *Burdens seem light, when borne for a brief space. Earth's longest sorrow cannot be long.*

Moses goes up with ready step to die. God cheers him with an outspread prospect. With telescopic glance he is enabled to survey all the extent of Canaan's lovely land. "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land, which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto your seed. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there." Deut. 34:4.

As we thus read, two thoughts arise.

1. God's promises are stable as Himself. His word must be. He said, "I will give it:" and hands now take the gift.

Believer, watch against UNBELIEF. Hew it to pieces. Tread it to powder. Give it to the winds. Let no shred survive. It is shame, and it is folly. It mars your peace. It keeps out floods of joy. Place your foot firmly on the Word, and rise above all doubts. God's promise, surely, steadily advances towards fulfillment, as the sun to its appointed rising.

Add Pisgah to the many proofs. The goodly land, so often pledged, lies at its base. The happy tribes now reach their lots. So, too, a rest is promised to the saints of God. There was no failure to Israel. There will be no failure unto us. Jesus has entered as the forerunner. He holds possession in His people's name. The keys are in His hands. He beckons forward. He soon will give the welcome. The prize is sure to faith.

2. But Moses may not cross the borders. Why? Thoughts of the heritage had often cheered his heart. His mind with eager wing had often speeded towards this Canaan. It would have been sweet joy to have reposed, after long journeyings, in this land. His lips would have been loud in praise, while witnessing the people settled

in their expected homes. But this cannot be granted. He may behold from Pisgah's summit. But his feet may not enter.

Why? Sin is the cause. If there be misery, and shame, and disappointment, these bitter streams may all be traced to sin, as the sad source. At Meribah his faith had failed. Provoked, he spoke and acted in unholy haste. His angry words—his blows inflicted on the rock—dishonored God. He erred in presence of the host. And God must manifest displeasure. Moses is loved—pardoned—saved. But he suffers. *His death on Pisgah stands as a beacon, warning of sin's precipice.*

Children of God, beware. Be ever on your guard. Watch prayerfully your spirit, thoughts, and words. We move in midst of wide-spread nets. Our feet soon are entangled. And then there must be injury. We may repent, and bitter tears may flow. We may be mercifully snatched from everlasting pains. We may gain heaven. But still there always is a sorrow in sin's trail. Let this example settle deeply in your minds. Moses through sin may not cross Jordan.

This fact is perhaps expressive of another truth. The hands of Moses brought the tables of the Law. He was its mediating channel. But this covenant can never convoy souls to heaven. It is weak to open those bright gates. It is feeble to ascend that lofty hill. Be taught, all you, who seek acceptance through the code of Sinai. The effort to fulfill these terms is fool's play. It cannot prosper. It will surely fail. None enter, with one stain of guilt. None enter, without righteousness, as pure as God is pure. But the Law never can remove stains. It never gives a covering for offence. It therefore admits not to God's presence. It never leads to the celestial rest.

Reader, whatever be your age or state, whatever be your privilege, one thing is surely true, you are black with countless sins. Turn, then, from the broken staff of moral guiltlessness to Jesus. He meets your every need. Leaning on His arm, you may pass Jordan's

waves. Safe by His side you may attain true Canaan's joys. Pure in His righteousness, you may stand welcome before God.

But Moses on Pisgah not only warns—he also **encourages** to rapturous meditation; he leads us by the hand to precious thoughts. His eye thence traverses a wondrous circuit. Aided by superhuman power, he roams along the grand expanse of Israel's portion. From plain to plain—from valley to valley—from hill to hill, he wanders in entranced delight. What beauty—what fertility—enchant him! He sees the earthly home, so worthy of God's chosen sons.

Believer, is there no Pisgah, from which you, too, may gaze? There is. It is the Gospel record. You should by frequent step ascend this hill. You should release your mind from the poor grovelings of earthly things. You should seek elevation for your heart in this chart and picture of the coming bliss.

Jesus invites you to this Pisgah. Without Him, indeed, your daily walk must be in a squalid marsh. Apart from Him, your horizon is confined—and hope has no watchtower of survey. But join yourself to Him. He will conduct you to a lofty seat, and open out a clear prospective of your sure heritage. Seated by Him, your eye may feast on promised mansions. He has indeed bought a rich country for you. And He gives the Gospel as the graphic map.

The Spirit, too, delights to meet you with enlightening aid. He will give power to apprehend this new Jerusalem; to count the towers; to go round the buttresses; to mark the palaces. He will confer that telescopic eye of faith, which scans the valleys, the plains, the mountains, of your Canaan.

Bright, indeed, is the prospect. It reveals that glorious home, which is the recompense of Jesus' blood. But what can be a recompense for divine merit? *We estimate things by their price.* The price, which He presents, is infinite. The equivalent, which He wins, is heaven. This, then, must be a treasure beyond thought.

Again, *think by whom these mansions are prepared*. Eternal love suggests their plan. Infinite power executes. Therefore they must be infinitely perfect. Nothing can be absent, which can contribute to pure ecstasy.

But Jesus dwells there now, intent on their completion. They are wondrous words, "I go to prepare a place for you." His grace is an ocean without shore. Here it flows out in ceaseless employ. His might is boundless. Here it finds full exercise. *Heaven, then, must be the concentrated blaze of all the happiness, which Jehovah can contrive and form*. My soul, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail. Reader, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail.

Neglect not, then, the truth, that in the Gospel we are led to a Pisgah, whence we may survey this home. Let no one say, the prospect is so dazzling that mortal gaze cannot rest on it. True! the reality cannot be known by flesh and blood. Bodies, until transformed into the likeness of the Lord, cannot become inhabitants. True! heaven in all its blessedness exceeds our present thought. To know it fully, we must enjoy it for eternal ages. But still we are encouraged to look forward from our Pisgah's heights.

Believer, strain, then, the eye of faith. Look, look again. No, never cease to look. There you behold a flood of glory upon glory. There cannot be improvement. Sin is outside. Temptations have no place. Tears no more flow. Sighs are no longer heaved. Satan and his legion are afar in utter darkness. The world has passed away. There is no longer any fear of grieving God, or falling short, or bringing shame to Christ's all-glorious name. Righteousness and peace are the streets and highways. Eternal safety forms the battlements. Eternal praises sound from all the inhabitants. Eternal glory sparkles on each brow. Eternal pleasure breathes around. Each happy saint drinks a cup—so *full*, that it can hold no more—so *pure*, that it cannot be purer—so *deep*, that everlasting ages cannot exhaust it. My soul, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you

cannot fail. Reader, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail.

But when you thus contemplate heaven, especially observe what is **its chief joy**. It is God—all—God—everywhere—God manifest, and gazed on with undazzled eye. It is Jesus ever near—and seen without an intervening cloud. Here on earth, oftentimes He is hidden, because sin interposes, and distrust brings mist, and other scenes attract, and indolence deadens the soul. In heaven there is no darkening medium. It is eternal vision, and eternal adoration, of Jehovah, clearly displayed—intensely and entirely loved.

Believer, will you not, then, mount Pisgah, and let thought revel in anticipating views? Such meditation is heaven on the path to heaven. It is a foretaste, before earth be left.

Close not this humble volume, without deep resolve. Vow in the spirit, to consecrate some portion of each day to searchings for heaven in the Gospel-page. Become knowledgeable of your sure estate. Be not a stranger to your near country. Often go in, perusing your own Canaan. And may God meet you, as He met Moses! May He enlarge your sight to see—your heart to love!

It is true wisdom to cultivate this Pisgah-meditation. Thus **strength** is revived, and muscles are nerved to fight and persevere. The combatant gains vigor, the racer presses on, when he beholds the crown of victory almost reached. Think much of heaven, and you will soon be there.

Thus **sanctity** progresses. Can he love sin, whose soul is ever conversant with purity? Can he be won by siren-notes of earthly pleasure, whose ears are ever drinking in the hallelujahs of the saved?

Thus **cares** grow light. Can his head hang down, or his breast sigh, who is by constant thought an inhabitant of the realms of bliss?

Thus **death** is welcomed as the friend, who comes to change long-cherished hope into reality. Thus **Jesus** more and more is prized and loved. We bless Him in proportion as we feel, that heaven is the purchase of His grace, His work, His blood. When we say, He earned it—He bestows it. Then we add, 'To Him be hourly praise—for Him let every moment toil.'

Happy they, who gather such rich harvest on Pisgah's summit! Spirit of God, strengthen my sight for such delightful gaze! Spirit of God, use these poor pages to attract pilgrims to this mount!

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