

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

"Be thou strong and very courageous." – Joshua 1:7.

THESE WORDS of Jehovah to Joshua upon his succession of Moses, as the leader of Israel, were used on the occasion of the entrance of the children of Israel upon their new life after they, as the people of God, had crossed the Jordan. They would still have battles, more now than before, and perhaps more than they realized, they needed strength – they needed courage. The basis for their strength and courage was the promise of God. God had declared to Abraham that He would bring his seed into the land of Canaan, and would give it to them for a possession. Those who believed this promise would need a large measure of strength and courage.

God had sent Moses His servant to deliver them from Egypt, and to bring them as His people to the land which He swore unto their fathers should be theirs. It required a good deal of courage to come up out of the land of Egypt; and God had manifested His favor to them in the wilderness, by the blessings which came to them when they were faithful and obedient, and by chastisements when they failed and were disobedient and rebellious. Now they were entering upon the realization of the promises whose fulfilment had been anticipated. "Be strong, be courageous," they were admonished by Jehovah through Joshua. They had come into the Promised Land, and now they must war a good warfare against their enemies. God had not promised to give them amicable possession; they were to fight and conquer their foes.

As Israel was a typical people, so theirs was a typical warfare. It would have been terrible if they had thought that all those people whom they were commanded to destroy were thus to drop into a Hell of torture unending! If the Israelites were told to be strong and

of good courage in sending their enemies into such a hell, it would be a horrible thought! But when we perceive that the penalty of sin is *death* and not *eternal torment* and that "hell" is the condition of death, we view the matter in a different light. Whether men die by the sword or by pestilence or by consumption or by accident, it is merely the fulfilment of the Divine sentence upon the whole race, which will continue to be fulfilled in God's own time and way. This gives a different aspect to the whole matter.

HOPE FOR THE AMALEKITES, HITTITES, ETC.

The wickedness of the Amalekites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, etc., had come to the full. They had had some opportunities, some light, and the sinful course they had pursued should now come to an end. They, and all others that have gone down to the grave in ignorance and sin will, when Messiah takes His Kingdom, come forth to resurrection possibilities and better, more favorable conditions. And as they in the past have had an experience with sin, they will in the future have an experience with good, and an opportunity to decide then between right and wrong, good and evil. We hope that there will be some of those peoples who will have profited by their experiences in the past, and will choose the good when the contrast is before them and the blinding influences removed.

ISRAEL'S ENEMIES TYPICAL

The children of Israel represented Spiritual Israel. The enemies which they destroyed represents the enemies of the Church. In the case of the Church, we have come from a state of sin and degradation into harmony with God. With some this may have been a very prolonged journey, and with others it may have been shorter, because of greater faith and obedience. We reached the place of special blessing when we made a full consecration to God – we there entered into rest. "We who have believed do enter

into rest," says the Apostle Paul. And this rest which we enter seems to have been typified by this "Promised Land" of Canaan.

But when we enter into this rest of Faith we find certain powerful enemies that must be conquered. These enemies we find entrenched in our own bodies. In the typical peoples who were the enemies of Israel, those who were entrenched in strong fastnesses the Israelites found it very difficult to dislodge and destroy; it was much **[R5510 : page 231]** easier to destroy others. So far as we know, the Israelites were long, long years – centuries perhaps – in thoroughly conquering the land and their enemies. It was not until the time of King David that these enemies were thoroughly subjugated. And so it is with the enemies in our flesh – we should war a good warfare against them. We must make no concessions to the flesh; all these enemies are to be exterminated – fought to the death.

The result of this warfare is death; either the death of the New Creature, or the death of the old creature. If the New Creature fail to overcome, he will be exterminated – he will die the Second Death. Jehovah, in using the words of our text, is speaking more to us – the Spiritual Israelites – than to Joshua and the Natural Israelites; that is to say, we may make a still deeper application of His words than could fleshly Israel. But we cannot conquer in this fight alone. The Apostle Paul exclaims, "When I am weak, then am I strong," meaning, When I realize my own weakness and cannot **[R5510 : page 232]** successfully battle alone against the flesh and its infirmities, then am I strong in the Lord. I could not fight a good fight of mine own self. He realized the fulfilment of the promise of the Lord: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in [thy] weakness."

Surely this is the experience of all of God's "little ones." And the realization of this leads us to look to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord, in order to strengthen our heart and

to renew our endeavors, that we may be strong and of a good courage, and that finally by God's grace we may come off conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.

TRUE COURAGE VS. SPIRIT OF BRAVADO

Let us be of a *good* courage! There are various kinds of courage: One kind is born of egotism and self-reliance, another kind results from a spirit of recklessness, which fails to take a proper estimate of the difficulties to be encountered. But *true* courage, the courage which the Lord's Word enjoins upon His people, and which all Spiritual Israelites are to seek to possess, is a courage which, while carefully noting and realizing the trials and difficulties before them, and recognizing their own insufficiency, looks to the Lord in faith for the needed assistance, trusting in His precious promises. This enables them to be strong and courageous in the presence of difficulties, dangers and obstacles which would appal those who are trusting merely in their own strength.

It will be noted that our Motto-text for this year – 1914 – is along this same line, and is a part of verse 9 of the chapter from which the text at the head of this article is taken. This will be a momentous year – a glorious year! Then let us all "be strong and very courageous" – strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Greater is He who is on our part than all they that be against us! Let us put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand in this evil day.

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