

OUR CONQUEST OF THE ANTITYPICAL CANAANITES

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

JOSHUA records these words of Jehovah God, spoken to him at the time when, after Moses' death, he took command of Israel. The Israelites had then had their forty years' experience in the wilderness, and were just about to cross the Jordan and take possession of the land of Canaan. Joshua had become Moses' successor. The people had learned many lessons in their wilderness experiences; and now that Moses was dead, they looked to Joshua as their leader.

Joshua expressed his inability to serve in the place of Moses, through whom God had signally manifested Himself. But the Lord assured Joshua that He would bless him all the days of his life, even as He had blessed Moses. Joshua had been found faithful in all his experiences. He was one of the two survivors of the wilderness experiences who, when starting out from Egypt, were over twenty years of age. Because of the faithfulness of Joshua and Caleb, the Lord had promised them that they alone of all the adults who left Egypt should enter the Promised Land. The others had died in the wilderness, save Moses and Aaron, Aaron dying in Mount Hor and Moses a little later in Mount Nebo, before the people crossed over Jordan.

The Lord's exhortation for Joshua to be strong and very courageous was in connection with the instruction that the Israelites were to take possession of the land of Canaan and destroy the inhabitants of the land. This command of God has been a stumbling-block to many. They have supposed that the Bible could not be of God when it bears such instructions. They have felt that it would be an act of injustice for the Israelites to go in and possess Canaan. What right, they say, had Israel to kill those

people and take possession of their land? It belonged more to the people who already possessed it than to anybody else. To invade their country, destroy their lives and confiscate their lands and their possessions would be very unjust. The course of Israel is held up as an illustration of the "land-grabbing" disposition of the natural man, which has seemed to grow stronger century by century, notwithstanding the increase of civilization and his professed appreciation of justice.

This is the view that many take, and much to their own injury; for they do not understand the matter they discuss. When we say that they do not understand the matter, we do not mean that they are people of inferior mind, but that they have not taken God's viewpoint. From any other than the right viewpoint, the whole course of Israel in this matter must seem to be unjust and ungodlike. From the right viewpoint, however, the matter is seen to be reasonable, just and righteous altogether. The sins and abominations of these Gentile people were such that their destruction was a very desirable thing. God had a great surprise in mind for this land of Canaan, which they inhabited. Moreover, the Jewish Age was an Age of Types. Both Israel and these corrupt Gentile nations were typical. **[R5706 : page 179]**

CHRISTIANS TO BE NON-RESISTANT

In the present Age, the Lord's people are not to take possession of either the persons or the property of others. They are not to destroy life under any circumstances. They are not to battle with any kind of carnal weapons. They are to be non-resistant. We are not of those who would defend the course of the professed Christian nations of modern times along these lines. As Christians, guided by our Master's example and instruction, we should seek to do good to all men as we have opportunity, and to leave them in peaceable possession of their homes, their property and their liberties. There is a great difference between the Divine Law of

Love, which is the motive power operating in the true children of God today, and the law of selfishness, under which the masses of mankind – including the vast majority of nominal Christendom – still operate, and will continue to operate until the New Dispensation shall be fully ushered in by Divine Power.

Nevertheless, seeing that the true Church is separate from the world in the Lord's Plan and His dealings, we can look with comparative equanimity upon the overriding of justice and equity by the kingdoms of this world, and may realize that the Lord, especially at the present time, is taking advantage of their natural disposition toward warfare and conquest and empire-building. He will cause the wrath of man thus to work out certain features of His Plan which will prove later on to be for the blessing of the whole world, those now in their graves as well as those yet living.

Not being able to see behind the veil into all the gracious purposes of our Heavenly Father, and not being wise enough to know how these purposes could be carried out, the peoples of the earth are groping on in darkness, thinking they are managing their own affairs, not knowing that a **[R5706 : page 180]** Mighty Hand is so directing the affairs of nations that His own glorious designs shall be outworked in all things, not knowing that nothing can thwart His purposes. The Lord's people occupy largely the position of spectators in respect to the course of this world – its policies, politics, conquests, its frantic efforts to carry out its selfish projects. – John 17:16.

Were we to take a hand in the affairs of the world, on either side of the great questions with which they are grappling, we would surely be working contrary to the Divine Program. The Lord does not purpose to give the victory now to either party in the strife. We are to be separate from the world and to give our thought and attention, our sympathy and interest, to the affairs of the Heavenly Kingdom; and while our voices, if ever raised at all

on such questions, should be raised on behalf of justice, mercy and peace, yet we can view with great composure whatever events and changes may take place in the world, knowing that our Heavenly Father has all power to overrule these matters to His own praise and to the ultimate good of mankind.

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

But the world tells us that we are too peaceable. They say that mankind could not get along without a certain amount of warfare. We answer that no one can understand God's methods except as he is guided by His Word, by the Spirit of the Truth. God's dealings are different in different ages and for different purposes. These seemingly conflicting presentations of God's will are perfectly reasonable and harmonizable from the proper viewpoint.

Let us see. Back in Eden, the sentence, "Dying thou shalt die," was pronounced upon Adam because of wilful disobedience to the Divine instruction that a violation of God's command would bring death. After the fall, mankind gradually became more and more estranged from the Lord. Many of the angels, who then had access to earth with powers of materialization, fell from their holy estate. Mankind became a prey to these angels who "lusted after strange flesh." (Genesis 6:1-4; Jude 6,7; 2 Peter 2:4, Diaglott.) This condition of things was finally overthrown by the great Deluge of Noah's day.

But in time the world again became very sinful. Then God made selection of one man from amongst mankind; namely, Abraham. He promised that if Abraham would walk in His ways, He would guide Abraham's affairs to his good and make of him a great nation and would bless his seed. And so we have Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God's special servants. The descendants of Jacob, God took into covenant relationship with Himself during the days of Moses. Under Moses as their mediator, God promised to be their God and to recognize them as His people. If they would

be loyal to Him, He would bless them. If they should be disloyal to Him and go over to the idolatry of the neighboring nations, then He would punish them for their sins and give them chastisements; but He would not forsake them.

The peoples of Canaan were in a very degraded condition morally. They had progressed so far in sin that it was no longer advantageous that they should continue in possession of Canaan. The Israelites were to drive out these peoples – and they were to be destroyed when necessary. There were certain nations which God especially commanded Israel to utterly destroy. – Deuteronomy 20:10-18.

When thinking of this command of God, we are to rid our minds of the superstitions of the past. These people who were to be slain did not go into eternal torment, but into death, into Sheol, Hades, the tomb. This would be an unconscious sleep. Those who perished by the sword are still asleep; they are not in pain, not in anguish of any kind. They are merely cut off from life until the general awakening time; for God has made a provision whereby those people may return to life, may be called forth from their sleep. All the blessings of everlasting life God has made provision for through Messiah. Messiah is to have a Kingdom; and this Kingdom is to rule the world in righteousness (see Psalms 96, 97, and 72), blessing not only the living, but also those who have fallen asleep in death. (Isaiah 25:6-9; Hosea 13:14; Romans 14:9; 8:20,21, Diaglott.) Many Scriptures declare this in unmistakable terms. Indeed this is the tenor of the entire Word of God. The Divine Plan runs like a golden chain through the whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments.

This great Messiah, who is yet to bless all the race of Adam, must needs be their Redeemer, and thus the Owner and Deliverer of the people, as the Scriptures declare. Through His sacrifice for man He has obtained the "keys of Hades and of death," as He tells

us. (Revelation 1:18.) He gave His life as the offset to Father Adam's life. This purchase price has not as yet been applied for the world in general, but will be applied, we believe, in the very near future. The Millennial Kingdom of Christ is for the very purpose of giving all of Adam's children, not previously enlightened, as well as Adam himself, a full opportunity for everlasting life, after having had experience in the nature and results of sin.

From this broad viewpoint, we see that with these peoples of ancient Palestine – the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, etc. – it was a blessing that they died at the time they did. Vile and debased in morals, they were no benefit to themselves or to others. It was all the same whether they died by some kind of disease – consumption, pneumonia, cholera – or in some other manner.

Should any one ask, Why did God choose to have these ancient peoples die in battle instead of by disease? The answer is that the peoples inhabiting the land would be a constant menace to the morals of the people of Israel. They were not only idolatrous, but practised licentious rites, divination, etc. Furthermore, God purposed that the land should be put to a far different use. He had a great Plan, in which it was His design that Canaan should play an important part. The land and its inhabitants were to be typical of God's dealings with Spiritual Israel in the Gospel Age. The type in which the land of Canaan was designed of God to figure could not be carried out without the expulsion of these heathen, or their destruction.

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL EXPELLING THE CANAANITES

Is it asked what type was here shown? We believe that the expulsion and destruction of these sinful nations by Israel was a type of how the people of God today, Spiritual Israel, are to take possession of their human bodies. We are, as New Creatures, to

conquer, to destroy, these tendencies of the flesh which would enslave us. If we do not overcome and destroy them, they will overcome and destroy us. We are to vanquish the evil propensities, evil habits, vices, thoughts, desires, which have inhabited our minds, and are by our new wills to take entire control and fill the place of the former occupants with holy, pure thoughts, desires, ambitions, purposes, habits.

These human bodies are now the property and possession of the Spiritual Israelites, the New Creatures in Christ. There is to be no peace between the New Creature and his flesh. We are to take warning from Natural Israel in this respect. Failure on their part to drive out **[R5706 : page 181]** and destroy their enemies completely, as God commanded, was a source of constant trouble and ensnarement, and a cause of much idolatry and sin to Israel. And their experiences "were written for our admonition." Our warfare against spiritual foes must result in the utter destruction of the fleshly mind, and will also mean the death of the human body.

This warfare of Israel against their enemies may also be a picture of conditions in the Millennium. During the Millennial Age the world, under the guidance of Christ and the Church, will be brought into a condition which will fit them to have possession of the whole earth. Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Sin and the curse of Adamic death now resting on the world will be destroyed, together with everything contrary to righteousness. All **[R5707 : page 181]** these things belong to the reign of that "strong man" who has so long oppressed the world. Christ, the Antitype of Joshua, will then be in control, and will show man how to exterminate these things of sin and thus eventually come into possession of the earth, the Eden of God, and each man be a king, a sovereign.

While the Natural Israelite was to be a man of battle and to take possession of the land of the enemy, we are not to see in this fact anything that was not in it. For instance, it was not the Israelites who were to say that they would go up and possess the land of Canaan. It was God Himself who was to give them possession. Nor are we to think that God was negligent of the real interests of these Gentile peoples. He declares that their iniquity had come to the full. It was no longer profitable at that time that their lives should be prolonged. Thus we see that justice was not infringed upon in giving the Israelites that land for an everlasting possession. This had been previously foretold by the Lord; but the testimony of the Lord, at the time the promise was made, was that it would not then be an appropriate time for its fulfilment, but that there should first be a dark time, until the iniquity of those nations had come to the full.

BATTLE OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL TODAY

Coming down to the Gospel Age, we see that the Spiritual Israelites have had a great conflict. It is a warfare against the whole world – no warfare so mighty and so momentous has ever been waged. Yet the conflict fought by the Lord Jesus and His followers has not been a fight with guns or other carnal weapons. We have today millions of people in great camps intent upon destroying one another. They are being goaded on by their rulers. There may be here and there a Christian among them, one who has truly given his heart to God; but these are the exceptions. The great mass of the world acknowledge that they have taken no such step as consecration to the Lord. Yet they are instructed by their rulers that they are God's people and are fighting His battles.

According to the Bible, only the saintly, only those who have taken the specific steps laid down by the Master for His disciples, are Christians at all. All others professing to be Christians are merely imitations – "tares." Through a study of the lives of saints

of olden time true Christians are enabled to see more clearly the mind of God, the will of God, for themselves. They gain from the lives of Moses, Joshua, the Prophets, and other faithful ones of past ages lessons of faith, of courage, of zeal. They are instructed that all these Scriptural records are meant as types and as admonitions for the Gospel Church; and they are thereby warned, strengthened and encouraged.

The Lord's people should not feel strong in themselves nor boastful, but, on the contrary, very humble and very insufficient – just as Joshua did. All of God's children are to realize their insufficiency in their own strength. They should feel that God has called them to a great work, and that they would make an utter failure unless the Lord gives His blessing. They are to look to the Lord and to receive His promises into good and honest hearts, believing that these promises are theirs, so long as they are loyal and true to Him. Thus doing, they may be strong, very strong; they may be very courageous.

SHINING EXAMPLES OF THE PAST

We have noted the courage of our Lord Jesus Himself, with a whole nation against Him! It has been thus with all His faithful followers – most of them the poor of this world, who have had very little wealth or influence or honor of men. The true people of God throughout the Gospel Age have been a humble class, yet they have been very strong and courageous. The people in the days of the Apostles "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" and had learned of Him. Those disciples of Jesus had seen His readiness to lay down His life in the Father's service. They had seen His courage when He was facing death of the most cruel kind, when He said, "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" And so we who have followed the Master since then have taken note of the spirit which our dear Lord

manifested at all times, under the most trying and crucial experiences; and it has proven a wonderful inspiration to us.

The faithful ones have all along as a rule been little known in the world. They have not usually been of the great, the learned, the rich. In the past there may have been some prominent ones, some of noble birth, who were saints of God, living up to what light they had in their time; but they were the exceptions. We know that there have been many true saints who have lived quiet, uneventful lives, yet who have seemed to live up to all the light they possessed and to walk with God until they fell asleep in death. The world has generally ignored these saints of God, even when they were not actively persecuted. We cannot surely know who are entirely loyal and sincere at heart; but we may be sure that "the Lord knoweth them that are His." – 2 Timothy 2:19.

COURAGE IN THIS "HOUR OF TEMPTATION"

Coming down to our own day, there never was a time when more strength of character and more courage were needed than just now. The iniquities of the whole world, and especially of so-called Christendom, have now about come to the full; and all present governments are about to be swept away, to make room for the glorious Kingdom of God under the whole heavens – the glorious Reign of the King of kings. All the ecclesiastical systems of today, calling themselves the Church of Christ, are arrayed on the side of error and are battling against the Truth and its advocates. So we need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Whoever starts out to battle in his own strength against this stronghold of error will be sure to be defeated. But if he goes in the strength of the Lord of Hosts, and has Divine direction as to what he shall do or say, he may well be of good courage. Many earnest hearts are now asking for the Bread of Life, they are

captives in Babylon or are famishing out in the "field," the world. These need our assistance.

Our strength will be tried – our hold upon God and upon the Truth, and our courage in defending the Truth. These will surely be put to the test; for Babylon is opposing our way. God will not have any in the Kingdom who [R5707 : page 182] have not faithfully endured. Yet in meekness let us seek to instruct those who oppose themselves to the Word of the Lord; and let us look for the hungry and thirsty ones.

We do not know in what form some of our trials and tribulations will come. But we who are living in this "evil day," yea, in the very close of this day – in the final "hour of temptation" – surely need to have on the whole armor of God. We need to have our loins girt about with *Truth*; we need the helmet to protect our minds, our intellects, from the shafts of error; we need the breastplate of righteousness; we need the Sword of the Spirit – the broad two-edged Sword; we need the sandals of "preparation of the Gospel of Peace." We need all these to overcome the Canaanites in our own breast, and to overcome all the surrounding obstacles.

Thus armored and furnished, we may indeed come off "more than conquerors" in the great conflict, which is daily increasing. We shall conquer "through Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood." Let the promise of the Master be our daily inspiration: "To him that *overcometh* will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne."

"Arise, then, O Army of Gideon!
Let him that is fearful return;
Jehovah wants only the zealous,
Whose hearts with the love of Truth burn!

"Your sword is the 'Sword of the Spirit';

Your lamp is the light from His Word;
Your pitcher, this poor earthen vessel
You break at the voice of your Lord.

"Is your light burning bright in your pitcher?
Doth your trumpet give forth *certain* sound?
Soon the Sword of the Lord and of Gideon
The enemy's host will confound.

"For sure is the victory promised,
And great is the peace He awards;
Then 'stand' in your place, all ye faithful –
The *battle's not yours*, but *the Lord's!*"

