

Messenger and Visitor

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Editor.

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Crossing Jordan.

The story of the crossing of the Jordan by the Children of Israel, as related in the book of Joshua, was an event attended by dramatic and miraculous circumstances, and naturally has occupied a prominent place in the traditions of the people. It has also appealed strongly to the religious imagination of the Christian church, and, whether considered as a historic event or as a symbol of spiritual experience, it has been the object of frequent allusion in Christian preaching and devotional literature. For the most part Jordan has been regarded as a symbol of death and the crossing of the Jordan as a passing over from the conflicts and trials of the earthly pilgrimage to the rest and rewards of heaven. There is perhaps no reason to find fault with such a use of this significant incident in Israel's history. Canaan was the promised land of the Israelites, the goal to which they had been looking forward through all the years of the wilderness pilgrimage, even as the glorious and incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven, is the promised land of the Christian. And the crossing of the Jordan in full flood was, as death is to the Christian, a necessary and, as it might well seem in the prospect, a perilous condition of entering the promised inheritance. So we need not wonder if Christian hymnists have sung of Jordan's cold and stormy flood as a symbol of death, and of Canaan's fair and fruitful land as indicating the heavenly rest that remains for the people of God.

But perhaps it is not the most natural or most helpful use of this Scripture to make the crossing of the Jordan significant of death and of the entrance of the Christian into his heavenly inheritance. It is evident that the promised land into which the Children of Israel were entering was not to be for them, for a long time to come, an asylum of peace and rest, but rather a great battlefield where they must either conquer or perish. It was a most strenuous life to which they were invited by their warrior leader. They might indeed look forward to a day of assured triumph and of peaceful possession of this goodly land, but the rest and the triumph must come through unswerving loyalty to their God and their leader, and courageous battling with strong enemies. Their crossing of the Jordan signified not only their faith in the fulfilment of Jehovah's promises, but their acceptance of the conditions on which that fulfilment depended. It was a final and irreversible commitment of themselves to the leadership of Joshua and to the service of God in this new enterprise. Like Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, it was a decisive and irrevocable act. To fail now would be to fail utterly.

What then is the practical value to us of this story of the Israel's crossing Jordan? Is not the lesson that of Consecration? It is an advance step of great significance, the opening of a new chapter in life. It is a forgetting of the things that are behind and a reaching forth unto those that are before. Egypt now lies far behind. There is no harking back to the land of flesh pots and bondage. The wilderness too is behind. It has had its day, it has wrought its work upon the chosen people. Israel is no longer a rabble of slaves, vacillating between sublime hopes and dastardly fears, between the worship of Jehovah and base idolatries. Israel is a people now, with the discipline of Sinai in its sinews, with the blood of freedom in its veins. Rude still, indeed, and imperfect are these people, but rugged and ready and in some measure fit for the work which awaits them beyond the Jordan. And is it not thus that God deals with the individual life as well as

with his people as a body? He takes the man up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, then sets his feet upon a rock, then establishes his goings, puts a new song into his mouth, and finally enables him to say—"I delight to do thy will, O God, Yea thy law is within my heart." Every really Christian life has its Egypt and its wilderness, its Sinai, its Jordan and its promised land. Not, it may be, just in the same order that we find them here in the records of Israel, but these things are not merely matters of history or of ancient tradition, they are matters of vital experience to the Christian. There are still promised lands to enter and to conquer in the name of God and under the leadership of the greater Joshua—the Captain of Salvation. And there are Jordans to cross in order that the Christian may fully commit himself to the cause which he has espoused and follow his leader to victory or to death. Such an experience comes in conversion, when one, having heard the authoritative voice stirring his deepest soul—"Choose this day whom ye will serve," makes the irreversible choice, enlists in the army of the Lord and marches with the militant host to possess the inheritance which God has promised to his people. Or it may be that again in his experience, farther on, he comes to some place where he hears the voice of God calling him to a new forward movement in his name. It may be "a call to the ministry," or it may be a call to some service into which he is not to be inducted by any imposition of human hands, but which is as truly a ministry of God as if endorsed by all the ecclesiastical authority in the world. And then, after having stood for a while shivering on the brink of his Jordan, he advances in the path of faith and duty, to find the waters parted as of old, and he passes over in the name of God, to fight with Canaanites and to win for himself and for others an imperishable inheritance.

Our reflections upon this topic would be left unpardonably incomplete if we failed to note particularly what was the essential ground of Israel's hope and confidence in crossing Jordan to undertake the conquest of a country possessed by peoples so numerous and so strongly entrenched. Though they were prepared to do what brave men could in battle, their confidence must be supremely, not in themselves or in their strength, their discipline, their armor, but in their God. It is the symbol of the Divine Presence in the host, and the promise of the Lord to be with Joshua even as He had been with Moses, that gives the commander courage to lead the host of Israel into that hostile Canaan. And the presence of God with men is no less a truth today, no less an inspiration to faith and courage and no less an essential condition of success, than in the days of Moses and of Joshua. It is vain to cross Jordans and to undertake the conquest of Canaans unless the Ark of the Covenant accompany the host. It is vain to think of winning promised lands except through the presence and the help of God. On the other hand all things are possible to those who march with God.

Editorial Notes.

—In connection with the celebration of Principal Caven's Jubilee, which takes place on Oct. 7th, there is a movement among the Alumni and students of Knox college to raise funds for the erection of a Caven memorial, in the form of a library and museum building for the College. The amount required is \$30,000, and a strong effort is being made to have it all pledged before or at the time of the Jubilee celebration. This will be a fitting recognition of the valuable services of a man who has given to Knox College 36 out of his 50 years period of service in the ministry of the church.

—"Any business institution would be wrecked in one year," says the *Presbyterian* of Toronto, "were its travellers and representatives to imitate some who represent Christianity and moral reform, and tell their would-be customers that business was dull and that the firm was in deep water. There are times when the sternest and justest facts must be squarely and frankly faced, but that should not be done before the world. For this one reason at least let us drop discouragement out of our programmes and hearten ourselves and our neighbors with the assurance that this is God's world and not the devil's, and that no word of faith ever returns void nor is any labor of love mispent."

—Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, London, recently contributed an article to the *London Times*, entitled "A Generation in a City Pulpit." In the course of which he says: "In the last 33 years I have seen enough dead

theories, exploded nightmares and discarded hypotheses to make a full-sized cemetery. They have gone the way of all the earth. They flamboyantly entered the world as an amateur military band, and coughed their way out of it as a squad of consumptive tramps. Whenever a preacher has a new and sparkling theory in religion I know that the first nail in his coffin has been driven."

—Lord Halifax is the most prominent lay representative of the Romanizing tendency within the Church of England, and as his public utterances have indicated, earnestly desires union between the Anglican communion and the church of Rome, the Pope maintaining his supremacy. In a recent newspaper controversy with Dr. Clifford, in reference to the English School Bill, Lord Halifax has professed that he desires union with the Church of Rome as he desires union with Nonconformists. The *British Weekly* points out that the statement is utterly misleading. It says:—"Lord Halifax regards the Roman Catholic church as a church, nay, as the church that possesses the true Primacy of Christendom. He regards the Nonconformist bodies as no churches at all. He thinks their orders are no valid orders and that they have no right to administer the sacraments. He would unite with them if they would submit to reordination, but only on that condition. Why should he make such difficulties of going through a similar process himself? But the truth is that the doctrines of 'economy' and 'reserve' are carried so far by men of his type that one never knows where to find them. It is the difficulty of Newman with Manning. Newman summed up a correspondence with the words: 'I can only repeat what I said when you last heard from me. I don't know whether I am on my head or my heels when I have active relations with you.' What we can see very clearly," the *Weekly* adds, "is that the friends of this Bill in the Church of England judge it prudent to say as little as may be of their alliance with Rome."

—Intelligence of the death of Rev. Ralph Hunt, which occurred at Jamaica Plain, Boston, on Wednesday last, came as a very painful shock to his relatives and many friends in these Provinces. During the past year Mr. Hunt had been ministering as acting pastor to the James St. church in Hamilton, Ont., and his work there had been richly blessed. For some time he had hesitated about accepting a call to the pastorate of the church, but eventually had done so, and had gone to Boston to spend a short vacation before returning to his work in Hamilton. Just before the time set for his return, he was taken ill with typhoid fever. A fatal termination was, we believe, not anticipated by his friends, but pneumonia supervened and carried him away. The remains were brought to Dartmouth, N. S., to be laid to rest there beside those of his parents. Mr. Hunt was the youngest son of the late Rev. A. S. Hunt, formerly Superintendent of Education for Nova Scotia. His brothers are Dr. Lewis Hunt of Sheffield, England, Johnston Hunt Esq., of Halifax, and Aubrey Hunt, Esq., of the Hospital for the Insane, Dartmouth. The sisters are Mrs. Judge Savary of Annapolis and Mrs. (Rev. Dr.) Chute of Wolfville. Mr. Hunt was educated at Acadia and Newton. His first pastorate was with the church at St. Stephen where he was greatly beloved by his people and largely blessed in his ministry. This was followed by a fruitful pastorate of twelve years with the Jamaica Plain church, Boston, and there, among those who loved him, he died. After a period of rest on account of impaired health, Mr. Hunt had taken up work in Hamilton. There he had won a large place in the affections of the people and a future of great usefulness seemed opening before him. Gentlemanly in bearing, genial in nature, kindly and sympathetic in spirit, the personality of our departed brother was most attractive. He was a man greatly beloved by his friends, and there are many who will feel that in his death they have sustained a sad personal loss. He had very earnestly consecrated his talents to the service of Christ, and his taking away at a comparatively early age seems a sad loss to the cause he so faithfully served. To the relatives so deeply afflicted in this sad bereavement, we extend heartfelt sympathy.

The Forward Movement Collection.

DEAR MR. EDITOR:—Kindly suffer a further word about the collection. In some quarters of the country the twenty-eighth of September—the day set for the special appeal—was a rainy day, and very unfavorable for the special purpose. In Wolfville, the day being thus unpropitious, the taking of the offering was simply postponed until a later Sabbath. Probably in other places the same course was followed.

In such cases, doubtless, every care will be taken that the special interest do not suffer by the postponement. Where the collection may have been proceeded with, but

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