

its directions, we shall surely find at length that every step of our career has both conduced to lead us to and prepare us for the happy land, which the Lord our God giveth us.

It is, however, peculiarly important to remark, that as the pillar did not shew the Jews their entire course at one view, but only step by step; so providence leads us onward in a state of habitual dependence on his aid. (Our impatience often wishes to see the way made plain far on before us, and because we have not our wish we think the Lord has ceased to guide us; but he thinks best to show us only that portion of our path which we ought now to tread, and when we have trodden that, still another stage shall be pointed out to us. He never fails to give us the direction, if we are willing to improve it.

A second benefit secured to Israel by the pillar was *protection*. Scarcely had they left their house of bondage, ere their cruel tyrant "made ready his chariots, and took his people with him, and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them;" pursued after them, and overtook them as they were encamped by the Red Sea, determined utterly to destroy them. It seemed that their ruin was inevitable. But "the angel of God which went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these, so that the one came not near the other all the night. And it came to pass that in the morning watch, the Lord looked unto the hosts of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians;" and on the following morning Israel "saw them dead upon the sea shore."

Thus does our Lord's good providence interpose between us and our adversaries. Sometimes we see its interference: when our opponents, temporal or spiritual, have risen up against us, and we have begun to think our case quite desperate; its timely interference has repelled them, and given us a triumphant rescue. But we have doubtless been the objects of its protecting care, more

frequently than we have known our obligations: the assaults were invisible, and the deliverance unseen; but they were not on that account the less real or important. It is because of its perpetual defence that we have advanced thus far in safety, and its faithful and almighty aid will still secure us till we pass this world of danger, and wave the victor's palm. The design of our Lord's appearing was "that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all who hate us; and that we, being delivered from our enemies, might serve him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives." We "are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." So that we may boldly say, "the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what men can do unto me." "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid. When the wicked, even mine enemies, came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be comforted:" that "the Lord is my banner."

*Rest* was a third blessing which the pillar brought the Jews. They could not be always travelling, and yet how could they tell amidst the dangers and desolation of an unknown wilderness, what would be a suitable place for them to sojourn in? Therefore, says Moses, "the Lord their God went in the way before them, to search them out a resting place to pitch their tents in, in fire by night, and in cloud by day." "In the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. As long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, they rested in their tents, and when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle, many days then they journeyed not."

And does the providence of Jesus afford us no repose? Far otherwise. If we yield ourselves and circumstances to its arrangement, it often not only suffers, but requires us to intermit our toils, both temporal and spiritual, and to enjoy delightful antepasts of that eternal rest, which remaineth for the people of God. "He maketh us to lie down in green pastures" of invigorating relaxation; "and leadeth us beside the