

JORDAN AND GILGAL.

Jordan represents death, but death looked at rather as the end of human life, and the token of the enemy's power, than as the fruit and testimony of the just judgment of God. The passage of the Red Sea was also death; but the people were as having (in type) part in the death and resurrection of Jesus, for their redemption, and setting them free for ever from Egypt, their house of bondage—that is, from their place in flesh, and thus from all the power of Satan, as the blood on the door-posts, had from the past judgment of God.

It is important *first* to see Jesus alone in life and *in* death, there we have the thing itself in its perfection. It is equally important then to know that God sees us as having been there, that it expresses our place; that God sees us *in Him*, and that it is our place before God. But then there is also our taking that place, by the Spirit, in faith and in fact. The former was the Red Sea: as to death, it was Christ's death; Jordan (is) our entering into death *with Him*. The Red Sea was deliverance from Egypt; Jordan, entrance into Canaan subjectively; that is a state suited to it in spirit, as Christ when risen, *for us by faith only of course* as yet, as risen with Him.

The Red Sea was the condemning sin in the flesh, in Christ in death for sin; and so deliverance, when known by faith. Jordan goes further, for it brings

us, as risen with Him, into the state that makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Redemption, complete salvation, purchased by the precious blood of Him, introduces the Christian into pilgrimage. With God, he only passes through the world as a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: still, this pilgrimage is but the life down here, although it is the life of the redeemed. But there is the heavenly life, the warfare in the heavenly places, which goes on at the same time with the wilderness journey. When it is said, at the same time, it is not meant at the same instant, but during the same period of our natural life on the earth, and by heavenly life I mean *living in spirit in heavenly places*. Actually Christ was divinely there (when down here): we, as united to Him by the Holy Ghost.

The Jordan, thus, is death and resurrection with Christ, looked at in their spiritual power, not as to their efficacy for the justification of a sinner, but as to change of position and state in those who have part in them, in order to the realization of life in connection with heavenly places into which Christ has entered. The passing as a moral being out of one condition into another, out of Egypt into Canaan, the wilderness being dropt as another thing. The Red Sea and the Jordan, in this aspect, unite in one. Now every true Christian is dead and risen in Christ, the knowing and realizing it is another thing. But the word of God sets Christian privilege before us according to its real power in Christ.

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The Ark of Jehovah passed over before the people, who were to leave the space of two thousand cubits between it and them, "that they might know the way by which they must go; for they had not passed this way before." Who indeed had passed through death to rise beyond its power, until Christ, the true ark of the covenant had opened the way? Man, whether innocent or sinful, could do nothing here. But Christ has destroyed all the power of death for His people, so far as it is the power of the enemy, and the token of his dominion. It is now but the witness of the power of Jesus. It is indeed death; but as we have said, it is the death of that which fetters us.

But if we are introduced into a new life which is on the other side of death, by the power of the Spirit of God, as being dead and risen in Christ, there must be the remembrance of that death by which we have been delivered from that which is on this side of it, of the ruin of man as he now is, and of the fallen creation to which he belongs. Twelve men, one out of each tribe, were to bring twelve stones from the midst of Jordan, from the place where the priests feet stood firm with the ark, while all Israel passed over on dry ground. The Holy Spirit brings with Him, so to speak, the touching memorial of the death of Jesus, by the mighty power of which He has turned all the effect of the enemy's strength into life, and deliverance from what could not enter into heavenly things, and has laid the basis for our having part in them.

This memorial was to be set up at Gilgal.

The power of resurrection life takes all strength from Satan. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." In our earthly life, the flesh being in us, we are exposed to the power of the enemy, though Christ's grace is sufficient for us. His strength made perfect in our weakness. But the creature has no strength against Satan, even though it should not be drawn away into actual sin. But if death has become our shelter, causing us to die to all that would give Satan an advantage over us, what can he do. Can he tempt one who is dead? or overcome one who having died, is alive again? But if this is true, it is also necessary to realize it practically. "Ye are dead, . . . therefore mortify." (Col. iii.) This is what Gilgal means. Nay, we are always to bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus, may be manifested in our body. Colossians iii. is God's declaration of our position. Romans vi. exhortation to take it up in faith. 2 Corinthians iv. carrying it out in practice in the inner man. (Coloss. iii. 5-17). The matter in hand is not yet the taking the cities, the realization of God's magnificent promises. *Self must first of all be mortified.* Before conquering **Midian**, Gideon must cast down the altar in his own house.

Remark further, the wilderness is not the place where circumcision is carried out, even though we may have been faithful there. The wilderness

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is the character the world takes when we have been redeemed, and where the flesh which is in us is actually sifted. But death, and our entrance into heavenly places, judge the whole nature in which we live in this world. But then, consequent upon our death and resurrection with Christ, it is practically applied and circumcision is the application of the Spirit's power to the mortification of the flesh in him who has fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 10-12). Therefore Paul says, (Phil. iii.) "we are the circumcision."

Our Gilgal is in verse 5, Colossians iii: "mortify, therefore." It is not "die to sin." Mortify is active power. It rests on the power of that which is already true to faith. "Ye are dead, . . . mortify, therefore." This being the standing, it is realized. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead," said the Apostle, (Rom. vi.) when speaking on the same subject.

This is the practical power of the type of the stones brought from Jordan. They are a symbol of our phase, being the result of our death with Christ who was dead. But we are raised up together with Him, as having died with Him. But there is another aspect of truth. We were dead in sins. He came down in grace where we were, on the way, so to speak, atoning for our sins. God has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. All that He did was for us; and now, associated with Him in life, united to

Him by the Spirit, I am also sitting in, not yet with Him, in the heavenly places. I appropriate to myself, or rather, God ascribes to me, all that He has done, as though it had happened to myself. He is dead to sin, in Him I am dead to sin. Therefore I can "mortify," which I could not do as being still alive in the flesh. Now, circumcision being the practical application of that which we have been speaking, the death of Christ to sin, to all that is contrary to our risen position, "the body of the flesh," we remember the death of Christ, and the mortification of our members on the earth is accomplished through grace, in the consciousness of grace. Otherwise it would be only the effort of a soul under law, and in this case there would be a bad conscience and no strength. This is what sincere monks attempted; but their efforts were not made in the power of grace, of Christ and His strength. If there was sincerity, there was also the deepest spiritual misery. In order to mortify there must be life, and if there be life, we have already died in Him who died for us. The stones set up in Gilgal were taken out of the midst of Jordan, and Jordan was already crossed before Israel was circumcised. The memorial of grace and death, as the witness to us of a love which wrought out our salvation, by taking up our sins in grace, and dying to sin once, stood in the place where death to sin was to be effected. In that He died, He died unto sin once: and we reckon ourselves dead to sin. Christ dying for sins in perfect love, in unfailling efficacy, and His death

to sin, gives us peace through His blood as to both, but also enables us through grace to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and to mortify our members that are on earth.

In every circumstance then we must remember that we are dead, and say to ourselves, "If through grace I am dead, what have I to do with sin, which supposes me to be alive?" Christ is in this death in the beauty and the power of His grace: it is deliverance itself, and introduction morally into the condition in which we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. As to the glory, as running the race down here, the Apostle says, "I follow afer, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." But that is another subject. Thus, in being dead, and only thus, will the reproach of Egypt be taken away. Every mark of the world is a reproach to him who is heavenly. It is only the heavenly man who has died with Christ that disentangles himself from all that is of Egypt. The life of the flesh always cleaves to Egypt, but the principle of worldliness is uprooted in him who is dead and risen with Christ and living a heavenly life. There is in the life of man, alive as such in this world, (Col. ii. 20), a necessary link with the world, as God sees it, that is, corrupt and sinful: with a dead man there is no such a link. The life of a risen man is not of this world: it has no connection with it. He who possesses this life may pass through the world, and domany things that others

do. He eats, works, suffers: but as to his life and to his objects, he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. Christ risen and ascended up on high, is his life. He subdues his flesh, he mortifies it, (for in point of fact he is down here), but he does not live in it. The camp was always at Gilgal. The people, the army of Jehovah, returned thither after their victories and their conquests. If we do not do the same we shall be feeble, the flesh will betray us, we shall fall before the enemy in the hour of conflict, even though it may be honestly entered into in the service of God. It is at Gilgal the monument of the stones from Jordan is set up; for if the consciousness of being dead with Jesus is necessary to enable us to mortify the flesh, it is through this mortification that we attain to the practical knowledge of what it is to be thus dead. We do not realize the inward communion, (I am not speaking of justification), the sweet and divine enjoyment of the death of Jesus for us, if the flesh is not mortified. It is impossible. But if we return to Gilgal, to the blessed mortification of our own flesh, we find there all the sweetness, (and it is infinite), all the powerful efficacy of this communion with this death of Jesus, with the love manifested in it. "Always bearing about in the body," says the Apostle, "the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal body." Thus we do not remain in Jordan; but there remains in the heart all the preciousness of this glorious work, a work which

the angels desire to look into, which is for us, and which Christ in His love appropriates to us. We find Him with us at Gllgal, a place of no outward show or victory to attract the eyes of men; but where He who is the source of all victory, is found in the power and the communion which enables us to overcome.

ANSWER TO SOME QUESTIONS ON GUIDANCE.

What was it you meant by the sentence in a tract "God will not be a mere director?"—*Answer.*—As a general truth we may surely look for guidance, and to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. What I said as to this, was not that God would not direct us, but that, as the general principle, it was not independent of spiritual understanding, that if I were directed right, even in every act as a Roman Catholic, by their confessor, called their director, I should lose by it, it would save me being in a spiritual state myself—though, surely, a more spiritual person might help me because he was so. That God did not mean our perception of His will to be independent of our spiritual state, though He can, of course, lead any, at any given time. Psalm 32 speaks of this also. "If our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light." But this is always true, that He makes everything work together for good to them that love Him. He overrules as

well as rules. I will suppose for a moment you were not led of Him in going to England, which I do not the least say, as I know nothing of it or your motives, but suppose the case. He makes you know what the world's giving you up is. He overrules it. Supposing you had had a tide of blessing, you would not have felt this in the same way, you would have tided it over the shoals at flood. I remember saying to dear captain W——, that our giving up the world and the world giving us up, were two very different things. It is the latter tries all the elements of self-importance which lie much deeper rooted than we are aware. There may be some little sacrifice in giving it up, but we have a sufficient motive, but what motive for being despised? It is really our glory, for Christ was, but then He must be all, and that is saying a good deal. We are poor feeble creatures without a stable centre, what would be so, has to be broken, and Christ take its place. I do not speak of failure, but what we go through. He was the despised and rejected of men. Nor does He seek insensibility to it, but superiority over it, by His being all—and that is blessed, that only lasts. It is the production in us of what is eternal joy and capacity for it. And, now to your special enquiry, more in detail. There are many points to consider.

(I had asked if we might not purpose (as Paul, in Acts, 19,21), in the spirit (after prayer) to go here or there, and do this or that).

Answer.—First, I believe this casting on; depen-

dent seeking His will ; spiritually, I believe a privilege, though connected with the ruined state of the Church. He cannot cease to guide us, or where should we be? but He may not, and does not manifest His action with a fallen as with a fresh and nascent church. He never does so. "We see not our tokens, we have no prophets any more." "There is none to say how long." Yet Haggai says "My Spirit remaineth among you as when ye came out of Egypt." I believe faithfulness, in such a time, special privilege. "Hast not denied my name" does not say much, but when this happens all around, it is a great deal, and great grace to be kept. You cannot be expected according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that *by them*, thou mightest war a good warfare. You came out with a true heart to some one who loved you, and seek souls for Him all right, and great grace given to us, but there was no "separate Me Barnabas and Paul," which, though present grace must after all sustain, still was a source of strength "by them." I don't believe it is any loss, but it is different and he that has the secret of Christ while he will not limit his power, yet will know the difference and enter into it. "Thou hast a little strength," and there were pillars when God built His temple. We find they were forbidden to go into Bythinia, sought to go into Mysia, the spirit suffered them not, they were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, and then by a vision in a dream were led into Macedonia. Now I would not the least deny that God can by His

Holy Spirit suggest to us a special place of service. I do not doubt He may ; but it is not an open manifestation as that which we here read of. I repeat, I believe it a privilege to be thus cast on the Lord's heart, if we only trust it, but it is a different thing, and there is imperfection in us, which affects this question, even an apostle had to learn this. A great door was opened at Troas, "but I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother," he leaves it. "In Macedonia my flesh had no rest, without were fightings, within were fears." He was sorry even he had written an inspired epistle which really wrought as such with power in producing its effect, as in blessing to this day, but here there was trust. It is quite the contrary to the English translation, "causeth us to triumph," the word means "leads us in triumph," and the savour of Christ for life or for death, spread by him whether at Troas or Macedonia. He trusted in Him who led him where He pleased, and that by His anxieties, as by his spirit. He could not say he was right to leave Troas, and all was distress in Macedonia. It was love to the Corinthians ; and God comforts them that are cast down, that is His way. And this is the picture I get of this great and noble heart, sent as he was openly by the Lord Himself and the Holy Ghost. He was a man and must learn it, and that the power was of God, and so must dear——perhaps as cast down, but any way as led about in triumph, for it is as true of you, God is as faithful as to you, as He was as to Paul.

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But surely, beloved brother, we may ever look to be guided by His eye, led by His spirit suggesting the right thing to do, and place to go to, only that our state has a great deal to do with our ascertaining it. "The spiritual man discerneth all things."

And God is full of grace, Paul, if he could not succeed at Antioch, had revolation to go up to Jerusalem—I know not that at this moment I have more to say to you only that Paul (Acts, ch. 19.) was not, I believe, bound in the spirit, but *in spirit*, his own. It was the overruling hand of God upon him, not the actual guidance of the Spirit of God. God so ordered it for His own divine purposes. Morally, Paul was not going for testimony, but with collections for the saints.

A LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER,

There is nothing surprising in your experience, in a case in which there is a tendency to fall back upon one's self, and when the conscience is really engaged in it. It does not appear from what you tell me, that you were much exercised before being brought to believe. In such a case experience has to be passed through after conversion. In my own case, I went through deep exercise of soul before there was a trace of peace, and it was not till after six or seven years that I was delivered.

Now, when there is not at first the experience of

what one is, and there is much turning in on one's self, we must pass through it; and if there is carelessness Satan uses it to throw everything into uncertainty, to make us ask if we have not been deceiving ourselves, to give us the idea that we have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, a very common experience, although the thought even is not found in the word. But it is always in such cases that one has not given up connecting the state of the soul with the question of acceptance. Now any one that does that is under law, and he who is under law does not believe himself to be already lost. He may accept this as a truth and in relation to his guilt; but that means that we have deserved condemnation, so that we dread condemnation; and it is quite another thing from believing that we are already lost. *When we connect our state with the question of acceptance, a better state would get us out of the difficulty.* The law always supposes the possibility of a state which would give peace, of a "salvable" state. Now, such a state does not exist. If we are already lost it is no longer a question to be resolved. Moreover, this condition may be prolonged, because if one is not in the presence of God, we do not openly and really come to the consciousness of our state, and this must be in order to have solid peace; *for no state, either existing or hoped for, is the righteousness of God.*

When this work is complete, we give up looking within ourselves in order to solve the question as to whether we are in the favor of God, though not in

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We are accepted in the beloved, the righteousness of God in Him. He appears in the presence of God for us; we have the consciousness of our relationship, we cry Abba, Father, in the same relationship with God as Christ, in divine favour. We seek to keep close to God, to our Father; we seek not to grieve the Holy Spirit; we seek to please Christ and not to displease Him; all this according to the relationship and the favour; "the elect of God, holy and beloved." The affections have to do with the relationship, not our judgment *as to* the relationship with the affections. "Thou shalt love," that is always law. It is not, "God so loved." We are made perfect in love by dwelling in Him; and, "we love Him," not, we ought to love Him, because "He first loved us." Love for a superior, consists in a deep consciousness of His love which binds the heart to Him, and makes us feel how little (when the ought comes in) we love Him as we ought to love Him.

We feed on Christ: we judge ourselves as to all that is not pleasing to Him, we desire to be devoted to Him because we owe ourselves to Him. Save this judgment of self, and watchfulness, always necessary, we think of Him and not of ourselves: by judging ourselves we ward off what is evil; By thinking of Him we make progress. We have the consciousness that nothing separates us from Him, from the love of God *in* Him. I draw a conclusion, a just and holy one (Rom. v.,) that if I am recon-

ciled by his death I shall be saved by his life.

Yea, we joy in God ; and if I say too, God is for me, nothing shall separate me from this love, fully manifested in Christ—that is where I am. What happiness! This is the joy now which will also be ours forever. Let us exercise all diligence, all watchfulness : let us watch and pray, that we may not be deceived by the enemy ; we need this. There is all the more need of it if we have been *at a distance* from God, in order that we may *acquire renewed strength* in His love. But when we have done with ourselves, as having no good in ourselves, we no longer look for it. Only we must get there ; then we know that by the cross of Christ, we have done with sin in the flesh, for it has been condemned and judged there as a whole. Then we think of love and of God instead of thinking of ourselves ; we feed on the Bread which came down from heaven, we become attached to Christ, we feel that He is precious, that He is *everything* to our souls. But, I repeat, we are occupied with what is in Him, not with what is in ourselves. That is far better.

“ Herein is love with us (see margin) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world.”—1 *John* iv. 17.

“ To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”—*Ephesians* i. 6.