

**"IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS : FOR THIS
IS THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST
JESUS CONCERNING YOU."**

(I THESS. V. 18.)

"In everything give thanks,"
My God, is this Thy will?
Give thanks for disappointments given,
For prayers unanswer'd still!

Give thanks! in vain I've pray'd
That I might useful be,
And by Thy Spirit's helpful aid,
Bring many souls to Thee.

Give thanks! when in the place
Of health and usefulness,
Through sickness Thou hast **paled my face**
With pain and weariness.

Give thanks! if 'twere Thy will
Submission to demand,
I then might bid myself be still,
And bow to Thy command.

But hush, beneath my eye,
I see in words of blood,
"Will He who gave His *Son* to die,
Refuse thee *any good*?"

Give thanks! Yea, Lord, I *do*,
And by Thy help I *will*,
Give thanks! for blessings not receiv'd,
Although expected still.

Give thanks! for mercies given,
Unnotic'd oft by me;
Give thanks! for sins forgiven,
Known only, Lord, to Thee.

Give thanks ! in word and deed,
 For Thy surpassing love,
 That sent Thy Son on earth to save,
 And now to plead above.

Give thanks ! for tender love,
 That our Redeemer show'd,
 Who, in the absence of *Himself*,
 A *Comforter* bestow'd.

Oh ! grant me by Thy grace
 To walk by *faith* alone,
 Until before my Father's face,
 I know as I am known.



FRAGMENT.—“ In everything give thanks.” Is there a lust or a single thing in me that I would try to hide from God? No: I would like His knife to cut, to root up every evil, so that I may bear more fruit.

How apt are we to limit thanksgiving to things that we can understand to be good, but we have to give thanks for *all* things. If we are within the veil and living there, we shall know what it is to give thanks for all that is most contrary to what we should naturally choose. Are there any who have one thing they cannot give thanks for? Whatever that particular thing may be, they have not got into the light of God's presence. If they had, they would know what cause they had to thank God for that very thing, as for all else.

JOHN XVII.

(Notes of a Lecture.)

I notice first in this chapter that there is responsibility, but of an entirely new order; a responsibility which is connected with Christ, and which He has discharged; "I have glorified Thee on the earth," "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world." A responsibility which, in righteousness towards God, and in grace to us, has put us into the same place as Himself. The Word has come down to us; and words have been brought, and we have believed them, and have known surely, as Jesus said, "that I came out from God."

If we think of what was previously given by Moses—the law—it was but the measure of man, come down to the earth, and which claimed from man what he ought to be. A perfect rule for man as a child of Adam. It was connected necessarily with responsibility, but the responsibility of the creature, and in which he failed; God was hidden behind it—He not coming to man, nor man to Him. But under it man fails. Then because of this breakdown, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," but came in when this need was thus made plain. Man failed in Paradise, and failed out of Paradise. He failed upon the question of righteousness by law; and rejected Christ come in grace. If we look at Jew or Gentile, we see Christ taking up *this* responsibility too before

God, and putting away sin for us, by the sacrifice of Himself. He dies and closes up the whole scene in which *that* responsibility was. All is summed up in the words of Jesus, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Another thing is stated in this chapter, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." He came into the world not only as a Man, but as the Heir of promises; and they rejected Him in whom these promises were, as the promised Seed. But He has secured the *promises* by the cross; and also laid the foundation for all the purposes of God in His death and resurrection. He who came, with all the promises of God in His hand, was rejected and killed. Salvation on God's part is the answer to this wickedness on man's. It was not merely that man was a sinner, but all that God would do for a sinner was refused—"Last of all He sent His Son." My soul and conscience are cleared by the very blood which was the proof of my sin and guilt. The purpose which was before the world can now be brought out, for righteousness has come in, and Christ as *man* has got a place in the glory of God, because He deserves it! This is the righteous foundation of the purposes of God; and He is there too in a work done for us.

In this ascended Lord we see the power of a life which has triumphed over death, and all the testimony that now comes to us, comes from thence. The Son is there, and there as a *Man* in righteousness, according to God's own nature. But God is

not merely glorified in righteousness ; but the Father, in love ! “ Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self.” The Father’s name is the spring of eternal life to us in the Son ; and the Son as man has brought it in, and we have received it. It is not what Jehovah had given to the Messiah, but what the Father has given to the Son. “ These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.” He has given the words to us that the Father gave to Him. These are the privileges that belong to us as believers.

The first three gospels present Christ to be received by man ; but in John’s the people are called out by grace ; it begins with His rejection—and they are separated from the world, and brought into this place of possession also. “ All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them,” this is the full grace of Christ. The Father’s words communicated to Christ are to bring us into every place which belongs to Christ. This is the revelation of God’s heavenly thoughts through His son, where there can be nothing of responsibility as to man, as when under law—though man is treated by the gospel as a sinner, and needing grace. Christ is the revelation of what a perfect Man is, and what every thing in the world is to God. We are not of it.

When we look at Christ’s person, what do we see ? The Father in His Son ! For it was the revelation of the Father in Christ. The disciple

said, "*Show us the Father.*" The expression of the Father was the living Christ. It was a revelation in the way suited to man as he was down here; for it was seen in the Man who tabernacled with us, that we might associate our hearts with the Father as His was.

"The glory thou has given me I have given them;" again, "The love wherewith thou lovest me." Every thing which He is and has in Himself He brings us into; except, of course, what is essential to His eternal Sonship. The words, the life, the glory, the love, with all the blessedness He has; and, what is not so pleasant to us, separation from the world. But it is a portion with Himself now and hereafter. Moreover, He puts us in His own place of testimony to the world. He was of God in the midst of the world, and this is what a Christian is likewise.

"Sanctify them through thy truth." The word of God comes down (not like the law) and brings *to my heart* the measure and character of what Christ is. The truth, His word, which tells what God is; tells me what I ought to be as a child of the Father. Till *God* is revealed, how can I tell what I ought to be?—but grace and truth tell *me* what the Father is—what the world is: this is Cain's city. What is the telegraph to a man when he is going out of the world by death? But there is something more—"for their sakes I sanctify myself." Not simply a word come down, but a *Man* gone up! Now I get where righteous-

ness takes us, entirely separated from sinners, and gone into the place where my affections are fixed on Him. He is the model Man in glory, and I must purify myself by the hope of being with Him, as He is pure. The work is perfectly accomplished which makes me meet for the same place. The Holy Ghost takes these things and shows them to us. God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit, according to the purpose of God up there. The truth comes down through the rent veil to us, but I get the glory of the Man gone up, and who for our sakes has sanctified Himself.

Another thing is, we should think of His glory and happiness. He expects us to be interested in Him; "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father." So entirely are we one with Him, and He one with us. He brings the love of God, wherewith He is love, into the heart. The Christian is made up from this Christ. The eye that is upon Him sees God's path even through this world. The responsible man has failed, but the Man of purpose was in love and grace below, and is now in righteousness and glory above.

The difficulty is to get a path through the world when all is wrong, and I have got it--got it in Christ. He has met and cleared the sins, and we have put off the old man, and got into the place of the second Man, in perfect acceptance with God.

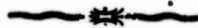
Our responsibility now is to manifest Him in

our mortal body. "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," was His character, and this is ours. We shall find our shortcomings, no doubt; but perfect grace has given us a place with Christ every where, and this must be held in spite of all failure. In truth, it is the recovering power of grace. The Lord gives us to believe in His love—that He has "sanctified Himself for our sakes;" and He expects our hearts to meet and answer His own—blessed place and portion! He sees in us morally, even now, the fruit of the travail of His soul.

DEVOTEDNESS.

Devotedness is a much deeper, and, at the same time, a much simpler thing than many suppose. Most think that if they are earnestly engaged in the Lord's work, and looking to Him for guidance and blessing, this is being devoted; but it is much more. It is having Christ Himself as the delight and resource of my heart, and the bent of my mind towards Him. The highest service we can render the Lord is to *serve His heart*, and that is a service to which few devote themselves. Occupation with Christ, with a view to becoming more intimately acquainted with His character; *Studying Him*, that we may learn what pleases Him, is *very rare* indeed. Many can be found who are occupied *for* Christ, like Martha; few who are occupied *with* Him, like Mary. When

we have reached this, we have reached the foundation-stone of true devotedness. This is the Gilgal where the serving one returns to encamp, and whence he issues like the sun to run his course, and like a giant refreshed with new wine. It is because the saints know so little of this Gilgal in the Lord's presence that there is so much unsanctified activity and really profitless work. If there is zeal and ability, without a knowledge of God's mind where and when to use it, how can there but be a turning to take counsel from nature; and how can we expect that the results flowing from such a source will be otherwise than profitless?



FRAGMENT.—“ Casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you.” Take your heart full of cares, and get into the presence of the God of peace in heaven, what will be the effect? Will they remain in you there? What are they? Only *outside things* connected with self. Can you find one sorrow of one individual believer from Abel downwards, of which you could say, that sorrow was not in connection with the God of peace? Not that He is the sender of sorrow, but the God of peace, sitting in heaven and causing everything to work together for good to us, taking flesh into the account, sweeping the very ground of the heart, taking strength from the strong, causing pulsation to cease. But is anything terrifying

when we get into His presence? No! All is peace in the presence of the God who counts the hairs of our head.

FRAGMENT.—That one thought, asking in everything, “What will be for Christ’s glory?” is impossible to us if the question of our salvation be not settled. How can I be thinking what is for Christ’s glory if I am pondering as to whether He has perfectly saved me? Job’s heart was not happy in God, and all that came upon him tore his heart to pieces. Paul was happy in Him, and let all outward things go on as they might, the inward joy in God was not disturbed; nothing took him by surprise.



MEDITATIONS ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

(Continued from page 180.)

What Characterizes God’s Witnesses in the Day of Ruin.

(Chap. vii. 1-14.)

In chap. vi., we have seen the servant prepared for the work for which God destined him; the verses which we have just read show us the characteristics of God’s witnesses in a day of ruin.

In the days of the nation’s moral prosperity under Joshua, when it was a question of going to

war, all Israel went up to battle, and the unity of the people was thereby strikingly manifested. The first conflict at Ai (Josh. vii. 1-5), the only exception to this rule, resulted in the defeat of those who took part in it. In a time of declension, it is otherwise. When all the people went up with Gideon, Jehovah said to him : " the people that are with thee are *too many* for me to give the Midianites into their hands," for the danger was that Israel would *vaunt themselves* against Jehovah, saying : " Mine own hand hath saved me." At such a period God takes special care to repress the pride that would attach credit to man in a work which belongs exclusively to Himself. Christendom in the present day boasts of the number of its adherents, under the impression that it sees therein a factor in the work of God. If any work is wrought of Him, she attributes it to herself ; and, like Laodicea, prides herself in her resources : " I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

This then is the first characteristic of God's testimony in the midst of ruin : fewness of numbers and absence of display.

In verse 3, we find the second characteristic : " Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead." Moses had formerly given this command to the children of Israel : " What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted ? let him go and return unto his house, *lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart* "

(Deut. xx. 8). The same passage (vs. 5-7) teaches us that those who were fearful and afraid, were those who had *something to lose*. A servant of God is full of courage for his work, when he has nothing to lose here, because the excellency of Christ has made him despise what the world values. Alas! what numbers of fearful there are in our days, even as formerly, when: "there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand." God wants undivided hearts for the accomplishment of His work; hearts that have nothing to lose, that are afraid of nothing, and who cannot exert a baneful influence over those who have gone out to the war unentangled with the affairs of this life. The twenty-two thousand came in for the spoil, but were unequal to the effort required to get it. Those that are fearful will profit by the testimony, but have not the qualification necessary to maintain it.

We come now to a third characteristic of the witnesses. God tested them in order to bring out if they realized that *all is loss* for those who would win the battle. "He brought down the people unto the water." Will they bow down upon their knees to drink, or lap of the water with their tongues, as a dog lappeth? Some seek their ease, and enjoy to the full those blessings which Providence has placed in their path; others, having as their sole aim to gain the victory, do not allow themselves to be diverted from their object, but, tasting the water by the way, only find therein what in-

vigorates them for their service. It is said of the Lord, "He shall drink of the brook in the way" (Ps. cx. 7). When He thus drank, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," the scene of His agony and death (Luke ix. 51). There is nothing that so trammels the action of the Christian in his testimony, as taking his ease, and settling down in the enjoyment of the earthly blessings which the providence of God bestows upon him, instead of simply tasting them by the way. The Christianity of the present day, boweth down upon the knees to drink; it gives thanks, it may be, to God, but sees, in the earthly blessings, the object and end of its piety; whereas, the witnesses for God, just take as much as will enable them to continue on their journey. These three hundred, who lapped the water as a dog lappeth, drinking what the hand carried to the mouth, were not only the devoted, but the humble ones. They remind one of the poor Syrophenician woman, who, when compared to a dog, replied, "Yes Lord," happy to be dependent only on His grace (Mark vii. 28). God wants devoted yet humble witnesses.

These men took in their hands their trumpets, symbols of testimony, but they also took their victuals (ver. 8). We cannot overcome without being fed, of which Israel was a proof under the terrible yoke of Midian who left them without sustenance.

Before the engagement, Gideon himself was called to undergo two personal experiences which

strengthened him for the victory (vs. 9-14). In the first place, that, in himself, he was no better than the twenty two thousand fearful ones. "If thou fear to go down," said Jehovah to him. Did he reply: I am brave, I have already sounded the trumpet in every direction to assemble Israel to battle? No, he accepted the humbling truth. Then God placed him before the enemy, which lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and traced his portrait by the mouth of one of them. This mighty man of valour was compared to a cake of barley bread, coarse and homely food, and this was "the sword of Gideon!" Fine sort of a sword wherewith to smite this multitude! But, in reality, the sword of Gideon was "the sword of Jehovah" (ver. 20), and it was therein the power lay.

Gideon learned to know himself, but God also revealed to him the moral state of the enemy that he was called to encounter. It was *a vanquished foe*. "For into his hand," said the Midianite to his fellow, "hath God delivered Midian and all the host" (ver. 14). May we have a better understanding of this truth in connection with our three enemies, the flesh, the world and Satan. The flesh is crucified, the world is overcome, Satan is judged. This fills us with courage before them. Gideon realized all these things and worshipped.

What testimony consists in.

(chap. vii. 15-25.)

The passage we have read is a reply to the question: In what does the testimony of God consist, and what does it do in a day of ruin? Full of joy and confidence, Gideon returned to the camp of Israel. "Arise," said he, "for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." Then, dividing the three hundred men into three companies, "he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers." These three things represent the principles of God's testimony in the struggle with Satan and the world.

We find the use of the trumpets detailed in Numbers x. 1-10. They were the voice of God to communicate His mind to the people on four important occasions: they gave the signal for gathering the people together; for the journeying of the camps; for battle; and also for the solemn feasts or worship. That which the sound of the trumpets formerly represented for Israel, we find in the present day, in another and very precious way, in the word of God. By it God speaks to us; it is that which regulates and directs the gathering together, the walk, the warfare, and the worship, of the children of God. How much these things are forgotten in our day! It seems to the majority of God's children that Christianity consists only in taking the gospel to the unconverted. It was

otherwise that Gideon understood the testimony of faith. He began where God begins (Numb. x). "He blew the trumpet, and Abi-ezer was gathered after him" (chap. vi. 34). He was the bearer of the divine voice for the gathering together again of Israel, who had been scattered by their own failure. Brethren, have we at heart in this day, the gathering together of the children of God? Let us then take the word of God, let us make its voice heard in the ears of the saints who have been unaccustomed to hear it. Let us show Christians that their being gathered together is the purpose of God, the purpose of the cross of Christ, as well as of the energy of the Spirit in the world. Let us show them that it is the enemy who has scattered us, and that the great opposition to his power is the gathering together of the children of God apart from the world, and we will have the joy of having laboured for that which the word calls "good and pleasant!" (Ps. cxxxiii. 1).

The trumpet also sounded for *the march*, for which there can be no other directions than the word of God affords us. The relinquishment of this standard has been the sole cause of the divergences of the walk of the children of God. Why should we not walk in the same path if our hearts were all equally subject to that word which furnishes us with unerring guidance for each step?

The trumpet called to *battle*; and here we arrive at the circumstances of our chapter. The testimony of God is inseparable from conflict, for it

not only consists in gathering together, and the march, but in an attitude openly taken in opposition to the world, the enemy of God. We have to proclaim boldly that we are—without any possible compromise—in a struggle with the world. The conflict has two purposes: to put us in possession of our privileges (which is the subject of the book of Joshua), and to deliver the people of God who have been brought into subjection to the enemy through their own unfaithfulness, which is the way it is looked at in the book of Judges. In Joshua all Israel were to go up to the conquest of Canaan; here, the struggle is reserved to a certain number of witnesses, champions of Jehovah, for the deliverance of His captive people.

The trumpets sounded for their *solemn feasts*. The word of God alone, defines and regulates worship. We merely allude to this subject, as this is not the place to go into it.

The empty pitchers are a second factor in testimony. They were, doubtless, some of the utensils which had contained the victuals of the people (ver. 8); and though now empty and worthless, Gideon, taught of God, knew how to utilize them for His glory. 2 Cor. iv, 1-10 makes obvious allusion to this scene. The apostle Paul speaking there of the position he was placed in as a witness before the world, says, he was "for the manifestation of the truth," and to bear "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (Rev. vers.) before men. He then adds: "But we have this treasure in

earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (ver. 7). An earthen vessel, such was the "mortal flesh" of the great apostle of the Gentiles. Empty pitchers represented what Gideon and his warriors were *in themselves*. The lesson which their leader had just learned in the camp of Midian, the three hundred had also individually to realize. Like Paul's earthen vessel, these empty pitchers were only fit to be broken. When God raises up a testimony, He only glorifies Himself in instruments which He has broken. He carried His gospel to the nations by a Saul whom He had previously cast down in the dust on his way to Damascus, and glorified the excellence of His power in a Paul whom He continued to discipline to the end. "Troubled on every side," said the apostle, "yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. . . ."

Of what use were these empty pitchers? To hold the *lamps*, the third and most important element in testimony for God; to carry within them this treasure, the divine light, in order that, as the apostle says, "the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 10). If, in testimony, the trumpets represent the word of God, and the pitchers ourselves, what are the lamps but the life of Jesus, the light of Christ. The first two elements only serve to make the

third manifest amidst the surrounding darkness. Gideon's men blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers (vii. 19), and the light shone out all about them. It is the same with real witnesses: "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake;" it is God Himself who takes care to break the vessels, "that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 11). It does not say: the life of *Christ*, but that of *Jesus*, the life of that Man whose path through this world was one of holiness. We are called to represent down here *the Man Jesus, walking as He walked* (1 John ii. 6), and it is in that that our testimony consists.

There is not a single Christian in the world who cannot be the bearer of these three elements of testimony for God. How is it then that so few are found? It is because these three principles that God requires are lacking. The trumpet must be sounded, the pitchers must be broken, the lamp must not be put under a bushel. Are we taking our ease down here, having all we need in the world, loved and respected of men; have we never had any of the apostle's experiences, tribulations, perplexities, persecution, cast down? Ah! if not, we are wretched for we have nothing. God has not accounted us worthy to bear a single ray of the light of Christ before the world. Happy those who are broken! "Blessed . . . blessed," as the Lord said in Matt. v., adding: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven."

The three hundred, standing every man in his place round about the camp, cried : " The sword of Jehovah, and of Gideon ! " The world is put to rout by this simple cry ! Bear testimony to Christ, live Christ, taking no account of self ; let the two-edged sword of the Lord be your weapon : all the power of Satan and of the world will be unable to resist you. Occupied with their glorious task, neither Gideon nor his companions were in danger of sitting down under the tents of Midian, which the judgment of God was about to overthrow ; for they found their security and strength, notwithstanding the broken pitchers, in the trumpets of Israel whose notes were so penetrating, and in the lamps of God whose light was so bright.

It is an encouraging fact that testimony begets testimony. The three hundred were employed to reunite the people. The men of Israel were gathered together and pursued Midian (ver. 23), and all the men of Ephraim came together and joined in the pursuit and shared in the spoil. We shall see this result if we are faithful. Let us be witnesses for Christ, and we shall awaken zeal in those who are His. May that time soon arrive in which, when Jesus comes, He shall find, not only some hundreds, but, a people who are all witnesses, who have fought, held fast, and overcome for Him !

(To be continued, D.V.)