

THE BLESSING
OF MOSES
THE MAN OF GOD.

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THE BLESSING OF MOSES THE MAN OF GOD.

“**T**HIS is *the blessing* wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death” (Deut. xxxiii. 1).

In bringing this scripture before our readers, our desire is to occupy them, not with the blessing of Israel, but with the Man of God’s purpose, His Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Consequent upon His death and resurrection, during the interval of Israel’s scattering on account of their sins, God’s glorious Son, seated at His right hand, is now blessing another people called to a far higher destiny. We shall further endeavour to show how strikingly the blessing of Israel by Moses foreshadows the heavenly and spiritual blessing of this favoured company, Christians—the church—who are associated with Him in this glorious purpose of God. Jesus, the Man of His purpose, blesses the favoured heavenly people in view of and after His death, which brought infinite glory to God’s great Name. Therein a righteous basis was laid (the question of sin being met and settled) for God to come out in all the unhindered outflow of His love, and to make known, by the Spirit sent down, His marvellous counsels of grace and glory, and His unfathomable purpose of love in the glorified Christ.

In blessing thus His people, God has before Him the glory of His Son and the satisfaction and joy of His own heart, and not merely their joy and happiness. He blesses them in a manner worthy of Himself. The blessing of Israel, wondrous as it is, is but a feeble shadow of the rich and unfathomable blessing of the heavenly people. *The heart of God is filled with Christ*, and consequently the administration of blessing now is *measureless*. He has given His saints to His Son (John xvii.), and He gives them to share in all that He, the glorified Man, whom He delighteth to honour, has entered into. Faith accredits the testimony of God both as to Christ and as to the blessing which is ours in Him. By the Spirit we are privileged now to be occupied with Him and to enter upon this blessing, ere God shall bring Him forth, and us with Him, in glorious display before a wondering world.

It is important and very instructive to discern the difference between the character of the blessing in Deut. xxxiii. and Genesis xlix. In the latter scripture, Jacob tells his sons what shall befall them in the last days, and all is made known to them in connexion with their *responsibility*, but in the former, Moses pronounces their blessing *according to the counsel of God* concerning His people. Jacob spake to them ere he died in Egypt, prior to Israel's exodus and subsequent journey to the land: Moses blessed them before his death on the borders of the land, just ere they entered under the leadership of Joshua. Not a jot or tittle of either prophecy shall fail. In referring to God's purpose

for Israel, we will endeavour to set forth the magnificence of the blessing of the heavenly saints, according to the eternal counsel of God in Christ, and the delight of His heart *in Him*.

“And he said, *The Lord* came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them, he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went *a fiery law* for them. Yea, he loved the people: all his saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together” (*vv.* 2-6).

In this remarkable scripture, ere Moses pronounces their blessing, the position of the people in relation to the Lord and His servant when the law was given, is brought before us. The Lord is viewed coming from Sinai, etc., accompanied with the myriads of the sanctuary and with His fiery law in His hand. It was given by the disposition (or administration) of angels. Myriads of these blessed ministering spirits were probably present. Israel in self-confidence readily agreed to be put under the old covenant of law, of which Moses was the mediator. But how blessed in this connexion where it is a question, as said, of the blessing of the people according to the Lord's gracious purpose, to read in the next clause, “Yea, he loved the people,” or, the peoples, that is, the tribes, viewed as distinct (though one nation), for each would receive their

distinctive blessing. How precious to read such an introduction to that which follows! They had been set apart as an holy people unto the Lord their God. He had chosen them to be a special people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon them, nor choose them, because they were more in number than any people (for they were the fewest of all people), *but because the Lord loved them*. There is no accounting for love. He who is love must love, and He set His love on Israel. They are blessedly reminded of it at this moment. And although they failed under law, love's purpose in regard to them would surely be carried out. The gifts and calling of God, connected with His purpose, are without repentance. He does not change His mind towards the people of His heart's love.

Now in His care for them, fruit of His love, He committed all of them into the hand of His servant Moses, who had proved his devotedness to the interests of Jehovah and His people, in forsaking all his privileges and prospects at Pharaoh's court, in order to identify himself with the suffering and afflicted people of God. And further, he had borne with them and led them through the wilderness. They sat down also at his feet, and every one received of his words. The mediator of the old covenant had been their teacher and guide. He had taught them to profit, though they sadly failed, provoking his spirit, which led to his being forbidden to enter into the land of promise. He commanded them a law which was

the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. In the day to come they will enjoy it, for it will be written in their hearts and minds. Moreover, "he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together" (v. 5). Jeshurun (*see also* v. 26) signifies the "upright" or "righteous" nation. Moses ruled in their midst, teaching them the holy law of Jehovah their God, which, if obeyed, would have been their uprightness or righteousness. But, alas, they cast His law behind their backs and turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them. In the day of their future blessing, "my people," saith the Lord, "shall be *all righteous*." "They shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, Know the Lord : for *all shall know me*, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. viii. 11). The Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so *all Israel shall be saved* (Rom. xi. 26).

All this shadows forth strikingly the ways of the Lord with His church to-day. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The contrast is remarkable. The law was given by Jehovah to Israel at Sinai with all its deeply solemn surroundings and external manifestations of majesty and holiness, accompanied with myriads of the angelic hosts. Grace and truth came from the lips of a lonely stranger upon earth, without any external manifestations of glory, or the accompaniment of heavenly beings, though indeed angels came and ministered unto

Him, and the moral glory of His Person shone throughout. In grace He wrought miracles and signs to convince an unbelieving world. He loved His people. But the mass loved Him not. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, but His own received Him not. But to *as many as received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons (the children) of God, etc. (John i. 12). These are His saints during the present interval of His rejection by Israel, and of His absence on high and the Spirit's presence here below. All are in His blessed hand, shielded, supported, and preserved, so that none (demon or man) can seize them out (John x. 28, 29). We are privileged to sit at His holy feet, like Mary, in perfect rest and peace. Everyone is capacitated by the Spirit to receive His blessed words. We have a glorious inheritance in the gospel and its mystery (Col. i.). And as Head to His people, Christ delights to reveal Himself to them, and teach them. He loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, etc.

Now we come to the blessing. The eldest son of Israel is mentioned first. "Let Reuben live and not die; and let his men be few" (v. 6). The blessing is pronounced in few words. It is full of significance for our souls. Reuben signifies, "Lo, a son," and it says, "Let Reuben live, and not die." Moses strikes at once the highest note.

It shadows forth two of the highest privileges of Christianity, *sonship* and *life*. Israel, delivered from their present state of death (Dan. xii. 2), shall come forth in the kingdom to enjoy as sons on earth the blessing that God shall command, even life for evermore (Ps. cxxxiii. 3). But Christ, the Son, having sat down in holy Manhood, at God's right hand, Christians as sons, holy and without blame, a heavenly company, sit down now before the face of our Father and God. And it is in life out of death, life in the Son, that we are now found in blessed nearness to Himself. Brought over Jordan in spirit, in God's assembly, the circle of His beloved people of this day of surpassing grace, there as sons we enjoy life, eternal life, where death can never come. Every believer *on the Son* has eternal life—he has it *in Him*, and has passed out of death into life. Such is the blessed work of grace of the living God. Eternal life is His priceless gift. In Christianity there is no death. We have done with the sphere of death for ever, and are privileged now as sons to enjoy the new sphere of life in His holy and glorious presence. It is the blessed privilege of all, but alas, few enter upon it ere they leave this world. Happy indeed is every one of this richly blessed company!

“And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies” (v. 7). Four things are set forth in this verse as the blessing of Judah:—Access,

gathering, sufficiency, and aid. Now our Lord sprang out of Judah. And all who are associated through grace in blessing with Him through His finished work, having part with Him both now and in everlasting glory, are called to enjoy these privileges in their highest sense. We ever have access to His blessed presence, and He lends a gracious ear and a sympathizing heart to the feeblest breathings of His own. He hears our voice at all times. He has brought us to His people. In His pure grace He has delivered us from the course of this world (whether wicked or religious), and he has gathered us to His own precious Name with other children of God in the unity of the Spirit to worship and serve Him. He strengthens our hands also, so that they are sufficient for us. He sustains, supports, and succours us at all times, for He is verily our help, a very present help, in all trouble, and from all foes.

“And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against

him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again " (vv. 8-11).

The blessing of Levi is remarkable, and of a very high character. This tribe was set apart for the priesthood. Moses said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, i.e., thy Chasib.* Thummim and Urim mean lights and perfections. They refer to the light of God playing on the centre of the holy breastplate, upon which were the jewels engraved with the names of the twelve sons of Israel. It was to be worn by the high priest upon his heart, when he went into the presence of the Lord in the holiest. "Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually" (Exod. xxviii. 30). We know comparatively little about them, but they appear to have been the means by which Jehovah (whose glory, the *shekinah*, dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy-seat upon the ark) communicated His mind to His favoured people Israel. This great privilege was to continue to be theirs. The priesthood is carefully preserved in Israel in the tribe of Levi, and will be the privilege of God's holy ones in the coming age (Ezek. xlv. 15). And Christ in that day shall sit as a king and priest upon His throne, after the order of Melchisedek, the priesthood being changed (Heb. vii. 12).

Moses recognizes the faithfulness of Levi in the hour of testing. Levi was his own tribe (Exod. ii.).

* This word *Chasib* is employed of Christ. Its use here shows how the Lord honoured the faithfulness of Levi, in that he should be so called by Moses.

Israel did chide with Moses, because of the lack of water in the wilderness. But Moses honoured Jehovah, smiting the rock Horeb at His command with the same rod that he smote the waters of the Red sea, and water flowed. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah (Exod. xvii.).*

Again, at the foot of Sinai, when the golden calf was set up in the camp of Israel, Moses stood in the gate and cried, Who is on the Lord's side, etc? And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. At his command they went throughout the camp, and smote every man in their path, even near relations or neighbours, etc., so that about three thousand fell. Thus the Levites vindicated the glory of Jehovah. Hence it is said, "they have observed thy word and kept thy covenant, they shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law, they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar" (*vv.* 9-10).

All Christians come into priestly privilege of a new and higher order. Christ is the faithful Witness (Rev. i. 5), and the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. All the lights and perfections are found in Him. He bears His people deeply graven upon His heart of love, never to be erased before the face of God. Through

* Later on Moses failed, speaking unadvisedly with his lips, smiting the rock twice, instead of speaking to it, as commanded by the Lord (Numb. xx), in consequence of which he was debarred from entering the land of promise. But in this passage, as has been said, it is on the line of the purpose of God.

grace His brethren are associated with Him. Those who observe His word, and in the power of the Spirit enter into the good of the new covenant, become fitted to teach His saints, and in the appreciation of Christ the Son of God and the infinite value of His one sacrifice, to lead their hearts in the offering of praise and prayer.

“Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.” This further blessing pronounced by Moses on Levi is also our portion. If we are devoted to the interests of the Lord, He will take care of ours. He has not promised His people the wealth of this world in the hour of His absence, but He would set our hearts’ affections upon Himself in another and a better one. He Himself is the Christian’s treasure. But he takes the deepest interest in our temporal as well as in our spiritual welfare, and blesses our substance, ever ministering to our need. He giveth us all things richly to enjoy (1 Tim. vi. 17). And the work of our hands in the toil of this life in our allotted sphere is acceptable in His sight. Also in serving Him, we are laying up in store for the day to come, for He will delight to reward His people according to their works. Moreover, we need fear no foe. In dependence on Him, praying and supplicating in all things, we can leave them in His hands. And woe to those, in His day of vengeance, who, unless they repent meanwhile, rise up against His people. Therefore we are exhorted not to avenge ourselves, but rather to

give place unto wrath : for it is written, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. xii. 19-21).

“ And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him ; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders ” (v. 12). Benjamin signifies, “ the son of his right hand.” He was the youngest and favourite son of Israel. His brother Joseph, in the day of his reconciliation with his brethren, ministered to him a double portion. The blessing pronounced upon him by Moses is fourfold and exceedingly precious.

First he is called the beloved of the Lord. This is a lovely foreshadowing of Christian blessing. Christ is viewed in Ephesians as “ *the Beloved*.” He is distinguished thus above all others as the delight of the heart of God. And we are viewed according to the eternal counsel of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as accepted or *taken into favour in the Beloved*. Who can fathom the depth of love told out in that wondrous title ? Who can gauge the love of God’s heart towards *Him* ? And this being impossible on our part, our apprehension of the marvellous favour in which God has set us in Him for the glory of His great Name, and the joy of His own heart, is necessarily limited. And “ he shall dwell in safety by Him.” Surrounded by the power of Satan in a corrupt and adverse world, where shall we find a place of

refuge but in nearness to Himself? And this is where He sets us. "Ye who sometimes were *far off* are now *made nigh*" (Eph. ii. 13). *We are made nigh in Him.* It is our privilege to sing, "Nearer we cannot be; for in the person of His Son we are as near as He." There and there only can we dwell in safety. "In Him," in perfect security, the objects of perfect love. "And the Lord shall cover him all the day long." This beautiful thought reminds us at once of His own blessed words, as He mourned over His people Israel, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37). Let us take to heart this mournful complaint, lest we should be like them. I would, but ye would not. May we know how to nestle close to Him as the chicken nestles close to the hen, that we may be covered by his everlasting wings (Ps. xxxvi. 7). May our experience be that of the psalmist's, "My soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge" (Ps. lvii. 1). And not merely will He cover us in a general way, but "all the day long." It is certainly our own fault if we are not profiting from His all gracious provision. "And he shall dwell between his shoulders." This fourth blessing appears to be the most precious of all. It is not supported by his shoulders, but *dwelling between them.*

"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord

be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath. And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh" (*vv.* 13-17).

The attentive reader cannot fail to notice the oft-repeated word "precious" in this wondrous range of blessing pronounced on Joseph by Moses the man of God. The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him are not only great and abiding, but precious. They are precious in His sight, and are precious to those who know and enjoy them now as their portion, as they will be evermore. Joseph's land will be blessed of Jehovah with eight things, viz., the precious things of the heavens, the dew, the deep that lieth beneath; the precious fruits of the sun, the precious things put forth by the moon (or, months), the chief (or, best) things of the ancient mountains, the precious things of the lasting (or, everlasting) hills, and the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof!

These precious things pourtray most forcibly the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed His saints of this day of grace in Christ, according to His eternal purpose before worlds were. The land that God has given us is the land of promise. He has brought us out of man's world, filled with man's glory, and introduced us into a world filled with His own glory. All centres in and circles around the Man of His eternal purpose, the One Whom He delighteth to honour, Christ Jesus our Lord. God gives us to share all the precious blessings that Christ has entered into in that glorious spiritual sphere. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Him. And as the dew descends from heaven, and refreshes the earth, so the Holy Ghost, having come to dwell in God's saints, refreshes and invigorates us by His power and by the fragrance of His presence. And as the earth is fertilized by the deep that lieth beneath, by the waters that spring from it, so, also the water that the Lord gives to the believer, is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. And that well is deep (John iv). There are also the precious fruits of the sun (*v.* 12). And the precious things put forth by the moons (*lit.*). And the fruit of the Spirit (*or, light*) in the saints is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, proving what is acceptable unto the Lord (Eph. v. 9, 10). And having given His vineyard unto other husbandmen, it is our privilege to render Him spiritual fruits in their season (Matt. xxi. 41). Moreover, as Joseph was blessed by the best things of the

ancient mountains and the precious things of the everlasting hills, so again all the untraceable riches of the Christ and the hid treasures of the mystery are ours, according to God's stable and everlasting purpose, formed in Him before the world was. The precious things, too, of the earth and the fulness thereof are ours as well as Joseph's, for Christ, so to speak, is the true Joseph. *All things* are given into His hand, and when He shall take the inheritance, we shall share it with Him, for we have obtained it in Him (Eph. i. 11). And the earth, as well as the heaven, and all its fulness is His.

Moses continued, "And for the (or, "*and let the*") good will of him that dwelt in the bush . . . come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren" (v. 16). The beautiful antitype of this is seen in Eph. i. Like Joseph, Christ was rejected by and separated from His brethren. Having died (Joseph only in figure), He has been exalted as Head over all to the right hand of an infinitely greater than Pharaoh, even to the right hand of God Himself. And now God has made known to us, His saints, the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of time (*i.e.*, in the glorious world to come) He might gather (or head up) in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. Upon the head of Joseph, the separated (or *select*) one from amongst his brethren, the Nazarite (*see* note N.T.,

J.N.D.), comes the blessing of Him who dwelt in the thorn-bush that burnt with fire, and yet was not consumed. From thence He communicated to Moses His intention to deliver His people, etc. And on the head of Jesus (*the select One*) came blessing rich beyond compare, such as the heart of God only could conceive. And in this blessing we share, fruit of the love of Him who is able to do (far) exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. iii. 20). The glory (or, majesty) of Joseph will be like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns like the horns of unicorns. And if this sets forth the glory of His greatness, what must be the glory of the exalted Jesus, the Son of the living God? Crowned already with honour and glory, and seated at the right hand of the heavenly Majesty, He Himself will come forth in glory and power in the day to come, widely surpassing all the thoughts of men. He will be revealed with might and authority, and as Joseph will (to use the figure) push the peoples together to the ends of the earth with the horns of unicorns, so shall He tread down His foes as ashes, and make them the footstool of His feet, gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend. "And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh" (v. 17). These are the sons of Joseph. Manasseh signifies, "For God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." And Ephraim, "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Gen. xli. 51, 52). They are introduced here in connexion with their father,

according as Israel had said unto Joseph, "I have given thee one portion above thy brethren, etc." (Gen. xlviii. 22). Notice that in the blessing of the twelve tribes Simeon is omitted. It has been thought that the reason of this omission is because his territory fell under the dominion of God's enemies, the Philistines.

"And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Issachar, in thy tents." These two tribes are linked together in the blessing, which has its special significance. It is a beautiful picture of *prosperity*. Zebulun's portion was upon the sea border, and Issachar's more inland. The wealth of the former would be drawn from the abundance of the seas, that of the latter from the treasures of the earth. Both are called upon to rejoice in the blessing that would be bestowed upon them in their respective spheres. And shall not we, as they, rejoice in the rich portion that God has bestowed upon us in the heavens in Christ? (Eph. i. 3; ii. 6). They shall call the peoples (the tribes) unto the mountain (see note J.N.D. vv. 3 & 19): there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand" (v. 19). God takes up in His grace and uses His saints who are separated to Himself, to the rich blessing of others. They shall call the people to the mountain. There is an important moral principle in this. Naturally we are all, so to speak, in the valleys, low down and far from God. His calling is a high or heavenly one, and He uses those who answer to it, to call others to

share this same excellent privilege. It is in this morally high place that sacrifices of righteousness are offered, which God delights to accept. "By Him" (Christ) says the scripture, "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, confessing to His Name." It is a great thing to be in the enjoyment of these privileges ourselves, and in the power of the Spirit to seek to bring others to share in them. The righteous God loves sacrifices of righteousness. "For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand." It is astonishing, when one studies scripture attentively, how richly abundant one discovers the blessing of God to be. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20). The salvation which grace brings is abundant indeed (1 Titus ii. 11-13). This precious word is connected by the Spirit of God with most of the chief blessings of God's glad tidings. We read of abundance of mercy (1 Pet. i. 3), abundance of pardon (Isa. lv. 7), abundance of peace (Jer. xxxiii. 6), abundance of truth (Jer. xxxiii. 6), abundance of life (John x. 10), abundance of the Spirit (1 Titus iii. 5-6), abundance of the immutability of His counsel (Heb. vi. 17), and abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom (2 Pet. i. 11). Are we sucking of this abundance? Nothing can be more sweet for the soul, for all these abundant blessings are found *through* and *in* Christ. And are there no hid treasures for us as well as for those here referred to? Yea, surely, God has made known not only the gospel, but also the mystery of the gospel. And in the

mystery (Christ in us the hope of glory) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colos. ii. 3). Note well, they are hidden treasures. They must be searched for and found if we desire to possess and enjoy them. It is the diligent soul that waxeth fat (Prov. xiii. 4). Treasures there are undoubtedly in the gospel, but it is in the *mystery* of the gospel that these wonderful treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found. Alas, thousands of God's saints stop short, and never search for them. No wonder we see so many poverty-stricken souls around us. Numbers seem to be half-starved as to spiritual things, instead of feasting upon the fatness of God's house. Such are more like spiritual bankrupts, so to speak, instead of spiritual millionaires. These treasures are inexhaustible, abiding, eternal. The feeblest believer is privileged to search for them in the power of the Spirit, who will unlock them to his soul, so that he may be spiritually and permanently enriched.

Of Gad he said, "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad : he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provideth the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated ; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel" (vv. 20, 21). "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad." "Be ye also enlarged," says the apostle (2 Cor. vi. 13). How ? In a manner quite contrary to the natural thought of man. To be spiritually enlarged is to be separate—not unequally yoked

with unbelievers (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). The world will call it narrowness and bigotry. God calls it the narrow way to life—His way. His thoughts and ways are not as ours (Isa. lv. 8, 9). And in the path which it involves we reap a threefold blessing—reception by the Lord, the sense of a Father's love and care, and the knowledge and enjoyment of relationship with Him as sons and daughters. It is the sure word of the Lord Almighty—Almighty to sustain us every step of the way.

“He dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.” Gad enlarged dwells as a lion. The lion has been called the king of the forest. He dwells in security and fears none. So may the Christian dwell who is separate in heart to God. In the power of the ungrieved Spirit he is superior to all, and can dwell without the fear of man. Moreover, the lion teareth the arm, even the top of the head. And the Christian again, if we may be allowed to apply the figure thus, can pass through this world fearless of every attack from the arm of man or from the pride of his intellect, blinded by Satan and duped by sin. For centuries the true followers of Christ have been subject to attacks from the world, either by physical force or by the pen or printing press. But enlarged by grace, and dwelling in the secret of God's presence, we overcome, and are more than conquerors through Him that loves us (Rom. viii. 37).

“And he provided the first part for himself, for there was reserved the portion of the lawgiver ”

(N.T.). It is all important for Christians to provide for their own souls. An old and experienced Christian once said, "Mend the world by one." When asked what he meant, he replied, "Put yourself right." If we are not spiritually and morally right ourselves, how can we be a help to any one else? But the soul that accepts death with Christ to sin, seeking first his own spiritual welfare, and growing in the knowledge of God, becomes like a burning and shining light, that, like a lighthouse, sheds its rays all around, and becomes a means of widespread blessing to men. The reserved (or hidden) portion of the lawgiver was in Gad. It was in his territory that Moses was buried (*see note* Deut. xxxiii. N.T. J.N.D.). "And he came with the heads of the people, he executed the judgment of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel." Thus again, the truly separate Christian, dwelling in the light of God's presence, and in communion with Him, becomes morally fit to aid in executing administratively the justice and judgment of the Lord in the assembly of His saints.

"And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp, he shall leap from Bashan" (v. 22). A lion's whelp leaping may set forth in figure spiritual energy and strength from the commencement of our Christian career. Bulls of Bashan, on the other hand, is the name used by the psalmist to describe Jews who stood round at the time of our blessed Lord's hanging on the cross. "Many bulls have compassed me, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round, they gaped upon me with

their mouth, as a ravening and roaring lion" (Ps. xxii. 12, 13). Then, too, it was Og the King of Bashan and Sihon King of the Amorites who opposed Israel's advance to the Jordan and the promised land. But God was with them, and they overcame them (Deut. xxix. 7, 8). Here Dan is compared to a lion's whelp who shall *leap from Bashan*. Bashan is behind him. May we not gather from it the lesson of so entering into the value of Christ's death, and so pressing on in the power and energy of the Holy Ghost, that we leave both foes and giants behind us? "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37).

"And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the west and the south" (v. 23). "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour." Dissatisfaction oft reigned in Israel, and dissatisfaction has often reigned, and still reigns in the world. There is no satisfaction apart from God. The world is not big enough to satisfy the human heart. The more it has, the more it wants. Solomon possessed more than any other, and had to learn that all was vanity and vexation of spirit (Eccles. ii. 11). It was only pursuit of the wind. Nothing can satisfy but Christ. Christ fills the heart of God. He who has glorified God dwells in His full favour. He is the Man of His everlasting counsels. And Christians are accepted, and taken into favour in Him (Eph. i. 6). It is the knowledge of Him that satisfies the heart. Nothing else. The moment we cease to be

engaged with Him, and turn to the smallest thing that Satan presents to us in this world, we become dissatisfied. There are many things we need in this present life, but there is no satisfaction in them. But Christ truly apprehended in the soul more than satisfies. In Him is favour unfathomable. "And full with the blessing of the Lord." Having glorified God, annulled Satan's power, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the Lord in resurrection says, "Blessed are they that have *not seen* and yet have *believed*" (John xx. 29). Then with hands uplifted, He pronounces blessing upon His people, and leaves this world to sit at God's right hand. No blessing can be compared with this. Its fulness is untold. God would have us enjoy it. It is full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. And this is not all. "Possess thou the west and the south."

Naphtali, satisfied with favour and full with the blessing of the Lord, is told that there remained still territory to possess, lying in the fertile *west* and *south*, a land of light, and warmth, and fruitfulness. So also is it with Christians, through God's boundless grace. With Christ and His surpassing favour as our everlasting portion, such is the infinite fulness of the blessing, that whatever may be the measure of apprehension of our souls, there is always more to possess. There are depths of God which only the Spirit can fathom (1 Cor. ii. 10). But He would lead us on into these precious things. He would lead our

souls to enter into possession—to enjoy increasingly the light, and warmth, and fruit which form the wondrous portion of the saints, according to the revelation of God's everlasting counsels of grace and glory, and of His unfathomable purpose of love in the glorified Christ !

“And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children ; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass ; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be ” (vv. 24, 25). The blessing of Asher, the last mentioned of the sons of Jacob, is fivefold. We are privileged through grace to enter into all this also in a spiritual way. First, Let him be blessed with children. His family should be multiplied. So God has revealed Himself to us as our Father, and is bringing *many sons* to glory (Heb. ii. 10). He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Rom. viii. ; Gal. iii.). We are brought into relationship with God in pure grace, to know Him as our Father, and to wait for His Son to introduce us shortly into the Father's house, the home of eternal love, and light, and joy. The early Christians, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were edified and *multiplied* (Acts ix. 31). It is remarkable how often the word “*many*” is employed in relation to Christians (Heb. ii. 10 ; Rom. viii. 14 ; John i. 12, etc.). God will have a mighty host saved by Divine grace and power out of the world for glory with His Son.

“Let him be *acceptable* to his brethren.” How ? By labouring to be *acceptable* to Him (2 Cor. v. 9).

If we are acceptable to Him, it is because we have yielded ourselves to Him, and our members as instruments of righteousness in His hands. Numerous instances might be cited in scripture, where one of the Lord's people, being acceptable to Him, was acceptable to Israel, or to the saints. Some have said carelessly, "I don't trouble to please my brethren, but seek to please the Lord." We do not think such language is pleasing to the Lord. The Lord and His people are inseparably bound up together, and hence we have to please Him and them also. In pleasing Him, we shall surely please all who are going on with Him.

"And let him dip his foot in oil." Oil is often employed in Scripture as a figure of the Spirit of God. We are called to walk before God, and can only do so in a manner well-pleasing to Him, *in the Spirit*. Apart from Him, we have no power to take a single step for His glory. Christ was justified in the Spirit. His walk was perfect. He has set us an example that we should follow His steps. We have to learn to walk even as He walked. Paul prayed unceasingly for and desired that the Colossian saints might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they might *walk worthy* of the Lord unto *all pleasing*, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; *strengthened with all might* according to *His glorious power*, etc. (Col. i. 11). It is by the Spirit only that we can answer to Him.

"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass" (v. 25).

Or more correctly, "thy bolts" (N.T. J.N.D.). Bolts keep out intruders and enemies. There is a day coming shortly when Asher will be in a place of perfect security, a fortress preserved by bolts of iron and brass, impregnable to any foe. The Lord is our fortress (Ps. xviii. 2). Strong as are bolts made of iron and brass, two of the most unyielding of metals, He is stronger. Strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, we fear no foe. He is an impregnable fortress for His saints. To Him they can repair at all times in perfect and abiding security. Let us make our dwelling there, with bolts drawn, so to speak, that we may be true overcomers, though surrounded with all the power of Satan and his demon hosts.

"And as thy days so shall thy strength be." Or, more correctly, so shall thy *rest* be (N.T. J.N.D.). God's saints far and wide have found constant comfort from this well-known promise, and it is far from our desire to rob any one of it. No doubt it is blessedly true. A faithful God who never fails (for, as one has said, he never has failed) will surely minister strength to every tried one who truly turns to Him in the hour of affliction and trial. Nevertheless, it is important to apprehend the divine meaning of every scripture. When Asher shall be regathered in the land, in the rapidly approaching day of Christ's manifest glory, Satan will be bound, and every foe subdued, and during that glorious period, the days of Jehovah's people shall be as the days of a tree (Septuagint version, tree of life), they shall have

perfect rest. His law will be written in their hearts and minds, and their days shall be prolonged to a thousand years. God shall then rest in His love, and His people also (Zeph. iii. 17).

This blessing, Israel's portion under the new covenant, is to be anticipated by God's people now in the power of the Spirit. Our privilege in this wondrous day of grace is to enjoy the perfect and eternal love of God every day of our sojourn here. "As thy days, so shall thy rest be" is as true for us as it will be for Asher. Our God calls us in His rich grace to enter now upon the whole range of blessing which is the portion of the saints in light. Multiplication of spiritual children, acceptance with our brethren, power by the Spirit to walk to His praise, a fortress in the land of perfect security, and rest all our days. Such is God's gracious provision for His people of to-day, which He desires should be known, entered upon, and enjoyed by all His saints, who have received His great gift of the Holy Ghost.

The blessing of the tribes of Israel having been pronounced in detail by Moses, the man of God, according to His counsel in relation to the coming day, the chapter closes with a wonderful presentation of the God of Jeshurun, and Israel's blessing as one nation through His power and grace. All this further sets forth in the most blessed way our great privilege and blessing through the power and grace of our now fully revealed Saviour God.

"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in

his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before them; and shall say, *Destroy them*" (vv. 26, 27). The God of Jeshurun (Israel, the upright nation) is the eternal God. His almighty power and His glorious excellency (or, majesty) will shine forth on behalf of His people, when He shall ride upon the heavens and on the sky (or, clouds). "Behold He cometh with clouds" (Rev. i. 7). Then will He deal with His and with Israel's foes, and deliver His repentant people. The remnant that bows and comes into blessing, will find a sure refuge in Him in the day of trial. His everlasting arms will be round about them to support them. He will drive out their great enemy from before them, and shall say, *Destroy them*. Everlasting destruction will be the awful doom of every foe.

"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the foundation of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (vv. 28, 29). Thus, delivered by the great Deliverer, who shall come out of Zion (Rom. xi. 26), Israel shall dwell in safety alone. Now scattered among the nations, without a king or land, a byword, a proverb, and a hissing on the earth, in that day a remnant of all the tribes shall be gathered in

the promised land. Ephraim (the ten tribes) and Judah shall be one. Israel, Jehovah's people, shall be all righteous (Heb. viii. 10). They shall be the head and not the tail. They shall blossom and bud, and fill the world with fruit (Isa. xxvii. 6). They shall dwell in safety alone. The walls of their capital city shall be salvation, her gates praise, and each shall dwell under his own vine and fig tree without fear (Isa. lx. 18). "The portion of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine." The Spirit shall be poured out upon them (Joel ii. 28), and become a springing fountain of refreshment and blessing in their midst. The valleys shall be covered with corn, and the hill sides with vines. "Also his heavens shall drop down dew." The curse being removed (fruit of Christ's work), the dew of God's rich blessing shall be poured out from above upon the land of Israel. The Lord shall hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel (Hosea ii. 22).

"Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency." That which millions, drinking of the waters of the world, seek in vain to-day, shall be Israel's happy lot at that moment! "There is *none like* unto the God of Jeshurun," we read in verse 26. But here it adds, "*Who is like unto thee?*" He will make them happy. *Saved by the Lord*, the *shield* of their help, their continual and all-powerful defence, and the *sword* of His excellency,

their constant and all-powerful Captain of salvation, *who is like unto them?* Jehovah loved the fathers (Deut. iv. 37). "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). He is ever the same in Himself. His counsels are immutable (Heb. i. 12). He has said that He will bless Israel, and Israel *shall be blessed*. God will scatter all their foes, and then shall come to pass the glorious prophecy of Isaiah, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (Isa. lxii. 1-4).

But is all this written for Israel's sake alone? Far be the thought. Blessed be God, the Source and Author of it all, it is written for us also. Christ, the mighty Saviour, has glorified God, triumphed over the enemy's power, and borne once for all the whole judgment of God. He has passed victoriously through the opened heavens, and sat down at the right hand of the heavenly greatness. He is the accepted Man of

God's everlasting counsel, the One whom He delighteth to honour. From thence, as we have seen, He has sent the Holy Ghost, according to promise, who dwells in us now, and (among other objects) guides us into the knowledge of God and the enjoyment of all that He has revealed as our portion in Christ. Long before it was foreshadowed in the blessing of Israel. Hence these precious closing verses of Deut. xxxiii. set forth also in rich unfolding the present blessing of the church of the living God, the people of His eternal counsel, called to heavenly blessing during the hour of Israel's failure and scattering.

The God of Jeshurun is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our God and Father through grace. There is indeed none like unto Him, the eternal God, the high and lofty One, whose Name is holy, who inhabiteth eternity. When the Lord rides forth upon the heaven and in the cloud in His great power, and excellency, and majesty, to destroy His foes and to deliver and bless His earthly people, His heavenly saints will accompany Him in His glorious train. We look for His glorious appearing. But *ere* the glorious manifestation of God's appointed Heir of all things, the One in whom He will head up all things in heaven and in earth, and with whom we shall reign when He sits upon His throne and wears the crown, and wields the sceptre of the universe, the church of God is privileged, as having the Spirit, to dwell in safety alone. Converted, reconciled, and saved through and in Christ, we are brought into His assembly on the other side

of death. There we are surrounded morally with the walls of His salvation, and the gates of His praise. There, too, the Holy Ghost dwells. In the Lord we are builded together for an habitation of God through (or in) the Spirit. And He is a fountain of living water in us, springing up unto everlasting life (John iv. 14). We feed upon the old corn of the heavenly land, the glorified Christ, and drink the wine of the kingdom, distilled, so to speak, from Eshcol's grapes. There the dew of heaven flows down upon us, like the ointment which ran down upon Aaron's beard to the skirts of his garments, and like the dew of Hermon which descends upon the lower mountains of Israel. And there we prove that God has commanded the blessing, even life for evermore (Ps. cxxxiii. 3). How marvellous are the blessings of His heart, and house, and hand!

Hence, if Israel can be pronounced happy in the enjoyment of earthly blessing, how much more the church in the enjoyment of her heavenly portion. We can through grace take up this language in the highest sense, and exclaim, Happy art thou, O church of the living God: who is like unto thee? Not in ourselves, but as those in whom Christ dwells, as those who are blessed *by the One to whom none is like!* Who is like unto thee, *O people saved by the Lord?* Saved for glory, yes, for glory, saved now on earth from Satan, sin, the world, and from all the awful corruption of apostate Christendom rushing on to judgment. Do all our readers

enter into it? Some shrink back from fear of present consequences. Oh what a loss is theirs! They will know it in the coming day. Is Christ not sufficient for us? Surely! *A shield* that never failed to quench every fiery dart of the wicked one; *a sword* that never failed to smite sooner or later every one of His or of His people's foes. Many lie that the saints may be misled, others seek to drag them down from their high places, and to persuade them that all this blessing is but imagination. But soon the enemies shall be found liars. And all liars shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xxi. 5). The saints shall tread upon their high places; and they shall do homage before us (Deut. xxxiii. 29; Rev. iii. 9).

Happy, happy indeed, art thou, O favoured bride of the Lamb! Happy indeed art thou, O people saved by the Lord, and blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ! May God in His great grace exercise every reader of these lines, that each one, in the power of the Holy Ghost, may enter upon the whole range of Christian blessing, so wondrously shadowed forth in this rich portion of the Word of God. *Christ is He* in whom all our blessing is found. A greater than Abraham, the father of Israel, a greater than Moses, King in Jeshurun, a greater than Solomon, the son of David, is here.

December, 1903.

E. H. C.

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