

Joshua

And
The Land of Promise

by

F. B. Meyer, B.A.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

RECEIVING AND REIGNING

(Romans 5:17)

“Each holy purpose help us to fulfill!
Increase our faith to feed upon thee still!
Illuminate our minds, that we may see
All around us holy signs of thee.
And may such witness in our lives appear,
That all may know thou hast been with us here!”
- Bourne

THE allotment of Canaan, which was inaugurated beneath the direction of Joshua and Eleazar in Gilgal, and had been temporarily arrested by the claim of Caleb, now proceeded. And, in the first instance, the three great tribes of Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh received their inheritance. Half the tribe of Manasseh had already received its lot, given by Moses on the farther side of the Jordan. And therefore the descendants of Joseph, in the first instance, received but one lot, and cities were separated for the children of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Manasseh (Joshua 16:9; 17:14).

The limits of these great tribes are carefully mentioned.

- That of Judah in the fifteenth chapter, even to its uttermost cities.
- That of the children of Joseph in the sixteenth and seventeenth.

From this we may infer that there is a specific share in the gifts of the Ascended Saviour for each of us; just as there is a specific work to be done by each in the building of the Church and the ingathering of men. **“Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ”** (Ephesians 4:7). And again, *to each one* is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.

That there should be diversities of gifts and workings and ministrations is not to be wondered at. This is in harmony with the constitution of the human mind, which in no two persons is alike.

But though the talents assigned to each vary in the same way that natural ability does, yet no one of the King's servants is left without some precious deposit. All have not five talents; but each has one. For each there is a piece of wall-building, a corner in the vineyard, a place in the ranks of temple-service; and for each there is a store of special grace and gift, won by the risen Lord, and awaiting bestowment from His hands.

Concerning each of these tribes, there is made the same melancholy confession which is heard repeatedly in this and the following book, like the monotonous note of a storm-bell rung by the wild waves on a dangerous coast "**They could not drive them out.**" "**But the Canaanites would dwell in that land**" (17:12).

Mark the strength of that word "**would.**"

It was no expression for those Canaanites to use. They were a dispossessed race. They had neither part nor lot in Canaan; and Israel made a profound mistake in allowing them to remain in the face of God's great word, "**I will drive them out from before the children of Israel**" - yet let us not condemn them, lest we condemn ourselves.

There is not the least reason why besetting sin or fleshly lusts should hold their own, or find any foothold in the region of the saved nature. Never allow them to say they must or they will. Granted that they would be able to keep us at bay, they have no weight in the presence of that Omnipotence which vanquished them on the Cross, and is pledged to destroy them utterly.

The presence of the Canaanites led to an altercation between the children of Joseph and Joshua.

"Why hast thou given me but one lot and one part for an inheritance, seeing I am a great people?"

Like so many more, they were content to live on the strength of past tradition, upon their numbers and prestige; and to base upon these considerations, claims which they were too indolent to make good by deeds.

"If you are a great people," Joshua replied, "there is plenty of unoccupied territory within the limits of your inheritance. Forest land perhaps! There fell trees, extract the stumps, and grow crops upon the rich and verdant soil fertilized by the leaves of many autumns."

How often we ask God for wider spheres of usefulness, whilst we fail to utilize those which lie within our reach. "**Cut down wood,**" is an injunction which might very fairly apply to us all. Do not sigh for missionary service till you have covered the whole acreage within your reach in the home circle, or amongst the children of some poor district. The wood may be thick, but the ax of persevering faith will make a clearing there.

"The hill country," persisted they, **"is not sufficient, and the valley is filled by Canaanites with their iron chariots; give us more."**

“No,” said Joshua; “you have power enough to cut down the wood, and to drive out the Canaanites - use it.”

For all the territory which we should win for God we have sufficient power, if we would but use it; there is no work so hard, no temptation so mighty, no post so difficult, but there is also sufficient grace contained within the one great gift of the Holy Spirit to meet our every requirement. Perhaps the best path to the speedy acquisition of spiritual power, for the majority of those who shall read these lines, would be to claim and use the abundance of grace which is within their reach awaiting them in the living Saviour.

This brings us out upon the text that stands at the head of this chapter, which lies in one of the most rocky and precipitous portions of the Epistle to the Romans, like a tiny lakelet on the bosom of gaunt and rugged cliffs.

In those words three things are patent:

I. THE DIFFERENCES WHICH OBTAIN BETWEEN CHRISTIANS

Some exist; others live; others again reign in life. Some have life, others have it “**more abundantly.**”

With some the spark of eternal life burns dimly, shrouded by dense wreaths of smoke; with others would that it might be with thee and me, reader! the light burns and shines clear, fervent, brilliant.

To reign in life is to realize the conception of being kings and priests unto God, a royal generation, a chosen people. The conception includes nobility of demeanor, such as becomes the scion of a line of kings; munificence, as when a prince scatters his largess among the crowd; and victory, as becomes the monarch who has trod his enemies beneath his feet, climbing to his throne.

What do you know of these? Would you dare assert that there is aught in your days to make men think that you reign in life? Do the keys hang at your girdle? Do unholy desires bite the dust in your presence? Is there nobility in your mien? Is there a consciousness amongst others that your religion is not only barely sufficient for your own needs, but that the grace of God has so abounded toward you that you in turn can abound to every good work? If not, you have yet to learn what it is to reign in life.

II. THE CAUSE OF THIS DIFFERENCE

It does not arise, thank God, from any arbitrary allotment on his part of more or less grace. “**There are diversities of gifts**”; but his grace is like the wild flowers on the common, or the beauty that lies as a bloom upon nature, or the water which he brews amongst the hills all of which are free in their unrestrained abundance to every child of the family of man. Not only so; but for each one of us there is an abundance of grace within our reach. God is very frugal; there is no waste in creation.

What seems superfluous in one direction is eagerly wrought up into fresh and necessary fabrics by armies of mysterious and insignificant workers. But just because of this, he is able to give abundantly, beyond all we ask or think, without stint; so that all are fed, and baskets are filled to the very utmost of their content. In grace, as in nature, there is a divine prodigality, beside a divine frugality. God makes all grace abound toward us. His love passes knowledge; his joy is unspeakable; his peace outstrips our understanding; his thoughts we cannot attain unto.

The real reason, then, that so many fail to reign in life is to be sought, not in some arbitrary enactment on the part of God, but in the different power of receptiveness which obtains amongst his children.

Some fail to receive, either because they have not learned the art, or because they have not reached that position in Christian experience in which they can avail themselves of it. See where the Apostle lays the emphasis: it is they that receive the abundance of grace who reign. The difference therefore is not to be found on the divine side, but on the human; not in the reservoir where the gas is stored, but in the pipe where water stops the free flow to the jet.

Great saints are simply great receivers.

They may be deficient in culture, education, and a thousand things which belong to others; but they have learned the happy art, denoted by that word receive, which is found in every part of the New Testament, and especially in connection with the Holy Spirit, which they which believe on Christ were to receive.

We can never forget that he himself constantly connected that word with the Holy Spirit; as when he breathed on his disciples and said, "**Receive ye the Holy Ghost!**"

- Do you want that royalty of mien? Receive it.
- Do you want that munificence? You have only to receive it.
- Do you want that victory? There is no other course than to receive it.

In a word, do you want to reign in life? Then you must receive the abundance of grace; and the more you receive of it, the more royal will life become. What though the hill country be filled with wood, and the lowlands infested by Canaanites! if you will receive and use the power within your reach, "**no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shall condemn.**"

III. HOW TO ACQUIRE THIS SACRED ART

It is distinct from praying. Not, indeed, that prayer does not enter into it; but that it is only the foundation from which the soul arises into the secret of receiving. None can claim but those who pray; but many pray who do not go further to receive. "**Ask and receive,**" said our Lord, else your joy will not be full. The lack of joy in Christian hearts may often be traced to a failure to discern the difference between the prayer which is only supplication, and that which takes its guerdon from the outstretched hand of Jesus.

Too often our prayers seem like lost vessels; when, in point of fact, they have come to the quays richly freighted, but we have not been there to claim our own.

Perhaps these rules may assist you to acquire this blessed art:

- (a) Be sure that what you ask is according to the mind of God, offered in some promise or precept of Holy Scripture.
- (b) Ask for it simply and reverently. Use the name of Jesus; that is, stand in him, and plead for his glory.
- (c) Dare to believe that God does hear and answer your prayer altogether apart from the flow of emotion or the rapture of conscious possession.
- (d) Go your way and reckon that God is faithful. Count on him as bound to keep his troth.
- (e) Act as you would if you had all the consciousness and enjoyment possible.

Thus you will find inevitably that the mountain shall become a plain; the woods shall fade into pasture-lands; the Canaanites shall be driven before you, as the chaff of the threshing-floor before the autumn wind; and nothing shall be impossible.

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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