

Our Daily Homily - Deuteronomy

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer emphasizes God's unwavering support and the importance of obedience and love in our relationship with Him, while navigating life's challenges and limitations.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 1:31, Deuteronomy 2:37, Deuteronomy 4:20, Deuteronomy 5:29, Deuteronomy 6:5, Deuteronomy 7:4, Deuteronomy 8:3, Deuteronomy 9:5, Deuteronomy 10:18, Deuteronomy 30:6

Topics: "God's Guidance", "Obedience and Joy in Service"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes God's unwavering support and guidance throughout life's journey, as illustrated in Deuteronomy. He highlights that God carries His people with love and compassion, ensuring they are never alone, even in challenging times. Meyer also discusses the importance of obedience to God's commandments and the blessings that come from serving Him with joy. He warns against the dangers of pride and the necessity of humility, urging believers to remember their dependence on God's grace. Ultimately, Meyer reassures that God desires a deep, loving relationship with His people, encouraging them to trust in His promises.

Transcript

The Lord thy God bare thee - Deuteronomy 1:31

A safe carriage was that! In His love and in His pity God redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old. When the little lad was tired and complained of his head, his father bade a servant carry him to his mother; but God does not hand over His children to His servants, He carries them Himself. When we realize that His everlasting arms are underneath, it is safer riding than any the ingenuity of man can devise; and here we need fear no ill.

"In all the way." - There are great varieties in the way - sometimes the sleepers are badly laid, and the carriage rocks and jolts; sometimes the gradient is steep, and the progress tedious; sometimes the pilgrim has to go afoot, climbing with difficulty from ridge to ridge; sometimes the route lies through a territory infested with enemies, and haunted by miasma; but we can each rejoice in the fact that the Lord "knoweth the way that I take," and that all the way, those gentle and unwearied arms bear us up and on.

"All the days." - Never a day without its cross, its lesson, its discipline, its peril; but never a day that God does not bear us up in His hands, as some mighty river bears up the boat of the missionary explorer. Through wilds, past villages of infuriated savages, over reefs and rocks, the patient river bears the

voyager and his goods. Thus does God carry us. The Good Shepherd carries the lambs in His bosom. Why, then, should we dread the future, or quail before the faces of our foes? "The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the everlasting arms." So strong: so tender! Let yourself go, and trust.

Wheresoever the Lord our God forbade us - Deuteronomy 2:37

This chapter is full of restrictions and prohibitions. There were territories which Israel was forbidden to enter at that time; though afterward, in the days of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, they were all included in the possessions of the chosen people.

There are temporary limitations in all lives. Paul was forbidden to preach the Word in Asia, when first he came on its frontiers; though two or three years after he so filled it with his teaching that the trade of the silversmiths, who made shrines for Diana, was affected.

Limitations in our Usefulness. - Provinces of holy endeavor seem shut against you, as the Gentile world from the public ministry of Jesus. Nevertheless, do your best in what is open, as He did for the Jews, and the rest will be unbarred; but if not, in God's good time, the field will be cultivated by hands specially instructed and prepared.

Limitations in Knowledge. - There are mysteries which, in the earlier stages of their experience, are not made known to the saints; but which we come to know, as we follow on to know the Lord. And while there may be much in God's providence that is difficult to understand, yet our knowledge of Himself may increase as the years go by, until we glory in this, that we understand and know Him (Jer 9:23).

Limitations in Experience. - Not to every one is it given to feel Christ's love as Rutherford did. Some are excluded from the sunny realms, as Cowper was. Such is the choice of God for them, and it must be best; but they shall all attain one day to the stature of the perfect man, and possess the blessedness from which they are now restrained.

Speak no more unto Me of this matter - Deuteronomy 3:26

We are to pray without ceasing; always praying, never fainting; asking, seeking, knocking. But there are some subjects concerning which God says, "Speak no more unto Me of this." In some cases these topics have to do with others, but more often with ourselves, as in the case of the Apostle Paul (2Co 12:9).

It is an awful thing when God says of certain individuals, Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone; and when the conviction is wrought within us that the sin unto death is being committed, concerning which even the Apostle John said, "I do not say that he should pray for it." Such times come comparatively rarely; and so long as you feel able to pray for another, so long as no negative has been spoken, you may be sure that God waits to be entreated, and that your prayer will assuredly be answered.

But have you not realized at times that God has said about some earthly boon you were craving?-" Child, do not ask Me more, leave it with Me. I know what you want, and what is best for you. Seek first My kingdom, and all these things, literally or in their equivalent, shall be added." It is well when we have been praying eagerly, to allow God's winnowing-fan to pass over our petitions, to winnow away all that is not in His mind to give; so that only those desires may remain which His Spirit has indicted, and which He is therefore pledged to bestow. If He does not give the exact thing you ask, He will give the Pisgah view and more grace. He will say to you, as to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

The Lord hath taken you to be unto Him a people of inheritance - Deuteronomy 4:20

The Apostle' prays that we may know the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in His saints. God is our inheritance, and we are His. We are called to possess Him; He desires to possess us. His nature will yield crops of holy helpfulness to those who diligently seek Him; and He demands crops of holy love and devotion from ours.

What Sovereign Grace is here! - There was nothing in us to distinguish us from others. We were but part of the great moorland waste, when He fenced us in, and placed us under His tillage and husbandry. It is by the grace of God that we are what we are. "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

What responsibility! - Three times over in this chapter we are bidden to take heed to ourselves. It is no small thing to have been the subjects of God's special workmanship; because He is a jealous God, very quick to mark the least symptom of declension, and very searching in His dealing and discipline. As we learn here, our God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

What Hope! - We cannot derive much from ourselves, however we toil and strive. Self cannot discipline self to any advantage. The field is worked out. The Divine Husbandman must put into us what He would take out of us; He needs therefore to have almost infinite resources. But these are God's, and if we yield ourselves to Him, He can make all grace abound toward us, that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work.

That it might be well with them - Deuteronomy 5:29

Here is a sigh from the Divine heart. It recalls the tears of the Lord Jesus over Jerusalem. The people insisted on their willingness to do all that was required of them, but they were destined to learn and teach that the will may be present, without the power; just as a sick man may have the will to walk across his bedroom, and will fall to the floor because he has no strength.

God's Commandments are for our Welfare. - We find men shrinking from consecration to complete obedience because they fear that it will mean loss and pain. There may be loss and pain; but only in the excision of things which they would be the first to put away, if they understood their nature and outworking as God does. Those who obey God most literally find the most blessedness in life, whether now or hereafter.

We approve them with our Will - More than once the people insisted that they would do as God commanded. We are not so destitute of moral perception as not to see the beauty of a life wholly yielded to God; but let us not rest content with this, or we may have yet to cry with the Apostle, The law is holy, just, and good; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

God wants the Heart. - He will not trust Himself to us, so long as the heart is a stranger to the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. "Oh, that there were such a heart in them!" We need to cry to Him to create in us a clean heart, to ask that He would exchange the heart of stone for one of flesh, to entreat that His love may be shed abroad in our heart, that we may perfectly love Him. "My son, give Me thy heart!"

Thou shalt Love - Deuteronomy 6:5

"Lovest thou Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord, that I should love Thee?"

"I am He that liveth, but I died; I loved thee, and gave Myself for thee; I have made thee mine forever in a bond that even death cannot break; I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I shall never be at rest till thou art with Me where I am."

"Indeed I would love Thee; but how?"

"Thou shalt love Me with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

"This were impossible unless Thou give me the love Thou requirest."

"This I will do for thee, since love is of God. Only obey these simple directions:

"1. Abstain from all wrath, anger, malice, evil speaking, and all else that would grieve my Holy Spirit.

"2. Yield thyself to the Spirit, that He may produce in thee His choice fruit - Love. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love.' 'He sheds love abroad in the heart.'

"3. Consider my love to thee, especially that I died for thee when thou wert yet in thy sins. Meditate much upon the sacrifice I made for thee, that thou mightest have thy sins blotted out, and enjoy the peace which passeth all understanding.

"4. Believing that thou hast received the love of the Spirit, begin to let it work through thy life to all around thee.

"5. If thy heart is unwilling to love any, put thy will on My side, and confidently believe that I am able to work in thee to will and to do of My own good pleasure."

They will turn away thy son from following Me - Deuteronomy 7:4

The question of marriage is repeatedly considered in these chapters, and never once is it supposed that the Israelites might bring a heathen partner to the faith of God's elect; but it is always insisted that the heathen husband or wife will subvert the faith of the child of Abraham. "Thou shalt not make marriages with them; for they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God."

The same law holds still. You may suppose that by marrying the ungodly and irreligious you will be able to convert them to your way of thinking; but you must remember that regeneration is the work of the Holy Ghost, and He is not likely to lend His aid in regeneration whilst you are acting in defiance of His distinct prohibitions. The command of Christ is so clear and positive against His followers entering into an unequal yoke with unbelievers, that it simply leaves no option for the obedient. With the child of God, marriage must be "only in the Lord."

In order to make these marriages impossible, Israel was bidden to destroy the nations of Canaan. Separation from their society and practices was thus enforced. The slaughter seemed ruthless; but there was no other way of preserving intact the chosen race, as a peculiar people unto the Lord. Our separation also must be strict even to the extreme. If we would keep our young people from worldly alliances, we must begin with their amusements and companionships. There should be every endeavor to promote their happiness and interests; but we must very carefully guard the young plants from the blight of worldliness.

He suffered thee to hunger - Deuteronomy 8:3

There was a Divine intention, then, in the hunger and thirst and weariness of the desert march. God suffered these hardships to come to the chosen people, in order to teach them dependence on Himself. The daily gift of manna was a perpetual evidence of His loving thought and care for the pilgrim host; they came to learn that sin and backsliding could not alienate His compassions; they found that the Word of God was life. But none of these lessons could have been acquired if the supplies of food had been as regular and plentiful as in Egypt. They were suffered to hunger that God might make them know.

You are suffered to hunger for human love, that you may know what the love of Jesus can be to His own. Open your heart to it, until it flood you as the sunshine does the south windows of a house.

You are suffered to hunger for recognition and gratitude, that you may know what the "Well done!" of Jesus is, and to lead you to look for that only. What do the words of men amount to unless He smile?

You are suffered to hunger for easier circumstances, for money, that you may know the tender provision which Jesus can make for those who are wholly dependent on Him. In the absence of all human help, you will learn the sweet taste of His manna.

Glory to God, to God, he saith, Knowledge by suffering entereth, And life is perfected in death.

These seasons of hunger are necessary for the discipline of life. But, thank God, He is able to satisfy us; and out of His riches in glory in Christ Jesus He can and will fulfill every need of ours (Phi 4:19, R. V.).

Not for thy righteousness - Deuteronomy 9:5

It is well to be reminded that we have no claim on God. All He does for us and gives us is of His own free grace. By grace have we been saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves - it is the gift of God. There certainly was nothing in us to merit eternal life, before our conversion; and it is equally sure that there has been nothing since to merit the continuance of His favor. Indeed, as we remember and review the past, to us belong shame and confusion of face for our repeated acts of disobedience. Oh the depth of the riches of His grace!

If we were not saved for our goodness, we shall not be lost for the lack of it. - When we have been betrayed into sin, in the keenness of our remorse, the fear is suggested lest God should put us utterly away. And there would be ground for the fear if we had been chosen because of our righteousness.

But since our original acceptance with God did not depend on works of righteousness which we had done, but on His mercy in Jesus Christ, it will not be undone by our failures. This thought does not lead to carelessness and indifference, but to a holy fear of sinning.

If our justification was apart from our merit, our sanctification will be. - The one was a gift, so must the other be; the hand of faith must receive each from Christ, and her voice must render thanks for each, as the unmerited gift of Divine Love. Where is boasting, then? It is shut out. We can claim nothing but emptiness and need. Handfuls of withered leaves! The Lord Jesus is our only hope, pleading for us in heaven, and living within our hearts. Of ourselves we are nothing: only in Him are we complete.

He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow - Deuteronomy 10:18

In the gate of the Eastern town, at early morn, the judge sits, and any suppliant has a right to appeal to him. The word Porte, or Gate, as applied to the Turkish Government, alludes to this. So to the thought of the inspired writers, behind the flimsy veil of sense, God sat within the shadow, "keeping watch upon His own," waiting to answer every plea, and to avenge the innocent and oppressed against high-handed wrong.

Individuals may appeal to that tribunal. - David, Jeremiah, and other sufferers, lodged their complaints there. Their cry was not for revenge, but for avengement. There is a great difference between the two. The one is vindictive and retaliatory; the other is magisterial and passionless.

Whenever an affront or wrong is inflicted on thee, avoid vindicating, or answering for thyself. Be still toward man, unless it be to induce thy brother to repent; but turn instantly to thy righteous Judge, asking Him to right the wrong and vindicate the right. He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. When Christians go to law, and seek to maintain their cause against wrongdoing, they miss this. The weaker you are, the more certainly will the Lord judge for you.

The Church may appeal. - Our Lord depicted her as a widow pleading to be avenged of her adversary. Her martyrs cry from under the altar, "How long, O Master, holy and true? Dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?" To us the delay is long; but we know that He has no complicity with evil, and that He is faithful. Give us the white robe, that we may wait!

If ye shall keep all this Commandment, then will the Lord drive out - Deuteronomy 11:22,23

We wonder why the Lord does not drive out and subdue our besetting sins. We do not possess them, but they us. The explanation is to be found in our lack of consecration. We do not keep all His commandments, or walk in all His ways.

God cannot deliver us from besetting sin unless we yield ourselves to Him entirely. - It is only when He is Judge, Lawgiver, and King, that He can save us. The great surgeon will not undertake a case unless he have its entire management. The general cannot protect a town until it has passed over its government entirely into his hands. If you would give yourself utterly and unreservedly to God, you would find how strong He is for those whose heart is perfect toward Him.

Unless we obey all His commandments; - because they contain His precise direction as to what we should, or should not do. If you want your medical man to heal you, you must abstain from things he forbids, and do those he prescribes. You cannot expect God to save you unless you utterly and reverently obey all His commandments; that, for instance of not having fellowship with the world and its ways.

Unless we cleave unto Him. - There must be the daily walk with God, the abiding in Him, the holy and unbroken communion. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him truly is the love of God perfected." "He that abideth in Him sinneth not." The anointing of the Holy Spirit will teach us this sacred habit (1Jo 2:27). But entire consecration must precede entire deliverance.

Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God - Deuteronomy 12:7,12,18

The presence of God is an incentive to true joy. We rejoice before Him. There is some mistake in our religious life when it is not a joy to us to stand in the presence of God. He that feareth, and rejoiceth not, is not made perfect in love. Note the elements of true joy.

First. The putting away of all known evil. - "Ye shall surely destroy." The permission of evil habits, books, companionships, and unlawful methods of obtaining money, are destructive of peace and joy. The prodigal son went away for merriment; but he only found real joy when he had given up his evil ways and returned to his father, a true penitent, and resolving upon a better life.

Second. The sense of acceptance with God through Jesus Christ. - "Unto the place which the Lord shall choose shall ye come." This refers, of course, to the brazen altar and the altar of incense. We have a better heritage in the finished work of Jesus, whose blood is more precious than that of bulls and goats and lambs, and in whom we are accepted and beloved.

Third. Feeding an Christ. - "Ye shall eat and rejoice." A part of the meal-offerings and other sacrifices was reserved for the worshippers. We have an altar of which we, too, eat. His flesh is meat indeed; His blood drink indeed.

Fourth. Entrance on the rest of our Inheritance. - We which believe do enter into rest; not the rest of heaven, but the heavenly places which those enjoy who have learned to cast every load of anxious care on the great Burden-bearer. ', There remaineth a Sabbath rest for the people of God. Let us give diligence to enter into that rest" (Heb 4:9-11, R. V.).

The Lord your God proveth you - Deuteronomy 13:3

How much happens to us for this reason! God proves us - not that He may learn aught of us which He did not know before, but that He may reveal us to ourselves. We need to know ourselves, that we may be prompted to know and use His infinite resources, and that, in the great consciousness of our frailty and weakness, we may be led to avail ourselves of His grace.

God proves us by opportunities of Christian service. - We think we are fitted for some great sphere, and chafe because it is withheld: but the reason is not far to seek. We have been tested in some very little service, as a class in the Sunday-school, and have been found careless and unpunctual; is it likely that we shall be entrusted with the greater?

God proves us by the money with which He entrusts us. - Money resembles the counters with which children play. It greatly tests us. It is described as the unrighteous mammon, and as not being our true riches; but it is entrusted to us that we may be proved, before God entrusts us with the real treasures of His Kingdom. Be wary how you use money; on this may turn the responsibilities of the eternal world of which we now know nothing.

God proves us by our actions with regard to doubtful things. - Not in the things which are clearly right or wrong, but in those which lie in the debatable ground of the twilight, is our true character tested. What you are in matters which must be viewed in relation to others is all-important, as the true gauge of character. By currents of opinion, by winds of doctrine, and by the many voices that are speaking in the world, the Lord your God proveth you.

If the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it - Deuteronomy 14:24

God's pitifulness is very manifest here. If the pious Jew found it impossible to transport all his tithes in kind, he might change them into money, and bind it in his hand. It was for from God's thought that His service should become irksome, or the soul faint in performing it. An alleviation was suggested, of which the worshipper might take advantage, if he would. This principle may be applied in several directions. We

are not to make God's service a toil, but esteem it a delight. "Thou shalt rejoice, and thine household."

The Lord's Day should be the gladdest of the week; full of love and joy and holy song. We should carefully guard against anything approaching to slavish observance: and be very careful that our children and servants should look forward to it with delight.

Christian work should not be carried to the point of exhaustion. There is a mistake somewhere if it so breaks down the health and spirits that the worker is not able to carry it. At such a time, we need to avail ourselves of any assistance or alleviation that may be possible.

Acts of devotion, also, should be for our enjoyment and refreshment. It seems sometimes as though God's children relied more on length than strength, in their prayers. They are not at ease or natural in the Father's presence. The forms of their devotion are so numerous and prolonged. that they are not able to carry them. By all means maintain the salutary form, but not for form's sake. Let the joy of the Lord, taking pleasure in His presence and in communion with Him, be always the first thought.

Thy bondman forever - Deuteronomy 15:17

This is what we desire to be to Christ. We have forfeited our own natural inheritance, and have taken refuge in His house. For six years we have enjoyed all that Jesus could do to make us happy; has not the time come when we should say to Him, "We do not want to go out from Thee again, but to remain with Thee forever"? Paul delighted to call himself "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phi 1:1, R. V.; etc.).

There are two stages, so to speak, in our dealings with Him. First, we come driven by fear; the produce of our own efforts has failed; we have no other resort. Like the bird fleeing from the hawk, we have made for His breast; like the sailor driven by the tempest, we have taken the first harbor that offered. But when we have tested the blessed Master, and found Him so sweet and strong, we elect to remain with Him, not for His gifts or even His salvation, but for Himself. We do not wish to go out free; we love Him so dearly that we would rather go anywhere with Him than remain without Him.

This resolve of ours is ratified by Him. He nails our ear to His cross. Through the blood of self-sacrifice, and self-surrender; through our deeper appreciation of the meaning of His cross, as separating us from the old selfish life; through our identification with Him in death and resurrection; through our sacrifice of all that would hinder us - we come into deeper and closer oneness with Himself. As the Father bored through His ear, in accepting His glad delight to do His will, so does Jesus make real and permanent the consecration we lay at His feet (See Psa 40:6-7).

Thou shall remember that thou wast a bondman - Deuteronomy 16:12

This gave the touch of gentle tenderness to Israel's treatment of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. They knew what loneliness and desperate suffering were; and from their own experience could speak to the heart. Without tenderness and sympathy, what are our gifts to the poor worth? It is as important to give graciously and kindly as to give at all. None are so sensitive as sufferers, whether in mind, body, or circumstance; they are quick to notice the slightest roughness or harshness in our manner of bestowing relief; they would prefer a pittance given with tender sympathy to a larger gift flung at them grudgingly. But what can give this thoughtful sympathetic manner like the memory of our own sufferings, when we were bondmen in Egypt!

It may be that God is passing thee through some fiery ordeal, to teach thee and fit thee to be His almoner, touching and soothing as His outstretched hand of pity. Soon thy present sorrow shall be but a memory; but thou wilt be called to minister to the fatherless, the widow, the stranger. Always say in thine heart, God is passing me through this sorrow, and comforting me, and delivering me, that I may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the very accent, caress, and tender word which He hath spoken to me. "Blessed be the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

In heaven itself we shall never quite forget that we were bondmen once, but were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. This will give a new meaning to the song of adoring gladness.

That his heart be not lifted up - Deuteronomy 17:20

Beware of pride! By that sin fell the angels. If they fell by it, how much more may we! When a man is raised from some lowly sphere to a position of commanding influence, he is greatly tempted to arrogance and pride. The adulation which he receives on every hand makes it all the harder to live humbly and unassumingly. But when once pride enters, it seems to close the heart to God. The proud man multiplies to himself chariots and horses, with the intention of making his position more secure; but he shuts out the help of the Most High. How necessary, therefore, that our hearts should not be lifted up!

The corrective suggested here is meditation on the Word of God. The king was to write out a copy with his own hand, and meditate on it all the days of his life; this would keep him in the lowlands of humility. The Bible is so true in its analysis of the heart; like a mirror it reveals a man to himself. It gives such exalted views of the greatness and holiness of God, compared with which the greatest human state is like the royalties of an ant-heap. It assures us that we must receive everything as the gift of God's grace. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law - of works?" No, but by the grace of God which bringeth salvation, apart from merit.

May God make us humble, with a transparent humility, which is not conscious that it is humble, like the utter unconsciousness of the little child, who does not bend back on herself. Still and quiet your soul, dear child of God, as a child weaned from its mother; and be sure to feed humility on the sincere milk of the Word.

With all the desire of his soul - Deuteronomy 18:6

Here is the inspiration of a noble purpose taking a man out from his quiet life in some distant village, far removed from the great sacred city, and plunging him suddenly into the very midst of its holy engagements and services. Other men were happy there. What more did they want than the quiet routine of buying and selling cattle, tending vines, and cultivating their fields? But for this man these could not suffice. There was a light that excelled beckoning him on; a voice, which only he could hear, calling to him. He was not asked to come; his name did not appear on the rota of the Temple servitors; the great Temple might seem perfectly able to dispense with him; yet because with all the desire of his soul he longed to be one of the Temple Levites, he might minister in the name of the Lord, as the others did; and be supported, as they, from the Temple funds.

It is a blessed thing to feel an impulse like this. It may prompt to home or foreign missions, to some enterprise of self-denying ministry to the helpless and sad, to service for God or man. It may come on you like a strong current, fresh from the ocean, sweeping up into some quiet river or harbor basin, and lifting

the ponderous barges. But when it comes, be true to it, nurse it, reverence it, thank God for it, trust and follow it where it leads. You will find a niche awaiting you, and the portions by which life will be nourished and maintained; and the Holy Spirit will not fail to be your Guide and Teacher, leading you into all the truth. Until it come, wait upon God in prayer; commune with Him in the Holy of Holies; and spend much time in reading and meditating upon His Holy Word.

Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to do to his brother - Deuteronomy 19:19

There is a Nemesis in wrongdoing; evil comes home to roost; what we meditate against others returns on ourselves. They that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The publican who sells drink to debauch sons and fathers, lives to see the drink curse his own family. The man who is treacherous to women lives to see his own sons fall beneath their wiles. Haman erects a gallows for Mordecai, but is hanged upon it himself. Adoni-bezek cut off the toes and thumbs of captive princes, and confessed the rightness of the fate which overtook himself. England imposes opium on China, but presently discovers that it is eating out the heart of her own subjects in India and Burmah. "Whoso causeth the upright to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall. himself into his own pit."

And why is all this? Because God sits behind the slight curtain of the present, judging the acts of men. It is not necessary to wait for the conclusion of the present age to see the sentence inflicted. Now the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, and before Him the nations are gathered. Nineveh, Babylon, Capernaum, Tyre, Pompeii, the power of Spain, the Empire of Napoleon, have already been condemned to Hades. Now the judgment is set, now the books are opened, now the "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed," are being uttered. God has so made the moral world that the seed of punishment lies hid in each unkind word, each unchristian act; and it is only necessary to give time enough to show that the man who has sown to his neighbor's hurt will reap that hurt in his own life. To every man will be rendered according to his deeds, even in this life.

When ye draw nigh unto the battle, the priest shall approach - Deuteronomy 20:2

When Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, the priest of the Most High appeared to welcome him, and to prepare him for the still more subtle encounter which awaited him with the king of Sodom. As Abraham drew nigh to that battle the priest approached.

Whenever a battle is imminent, look out for the:

Priest. - Do not go to the war at your own charges, you cannot stand against the mighty power of your arch-adversary. Look around, and see the Priest stand. What Priest? The Apostle and High Priest of your confession. He will offer prayer for you, and anoint your shield with the precious oil, and put His hand upon your hand as you feebly draw the bow.

"What makes you so bold, my lad?" the captain asked of a stripling as he went into the fight. And the answer came quickly, "My mother put her hands on my head and blessed me ere I left our home."

Whenever the Priest has been near, anticipate a battle. - The best hours come to prepare us for the worst. The clove descends that we may be able to stand for forty days against the devil. Do not be surprised at this. And whenever some experience of unusual radiance and helpfulness has visited you, say to yourself, "This is God's sweet way of preparing me against coming trial. Let me walk warily, for danger is near. The Priest has been with me; I am drawing nigh to the battle. I know not what lies before me: but He is

acquainted with the difficulties I have to face and the fierceness of the adversary I have to encounter. He alone can equip me for the fight."

He that is hanged is accursed of God - Deuteronomy 21:23

This law on the Jewish statute-book hastened the awful tragedy of Calvary. No body must be left to rot on the cross on which it had been impaled. The corpse of the malefactor must be taken down at nightfall. But how little did the Pharisees and Scribes realize that the remainder of this verse had so pertinent a reference, and was having so remarkable a fulfillment. The Apostle quotes this verse as giving the inner rationale or meaning of the death of the blessed Lord (Gal 3:13). "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." On Jesus fell the reduplicated curses, that were deserved by the race, and by each.

The curse of the broken law. - "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law." None had kept, all had broken that law. None was righteous, no, not one. Man's lot was cast under Mount Ebal. The race was guilty and silent before the bar of infinite justice. But Jesus, by virtue of His relationship with the entire human family, was able to stand before God charged with that sin, bearing that curse, and put them away forever. There is no barrier, therefore, now to the outflow of God's free grace.

The curse due to individual transgression. - The whole race had broken away from God, and was under the curse; so that each of us shared in the solemn accountability to God, for the whole and for our part. But He became sin for us; cursed, that we might be blessed; cast out, that we might be forever welcomed; naked, that we might be clothed; hungry, that we might feed on His flesh; poor, that we might be enriched; dying, that we might live beyond the range of the curse forevermore.

Thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof - Deuteronomy 22:8

The householder was not to be content with what would be safe for himself; he must see to it that the undefended roof of his house should not be a source of danger to little children, the weak, or the careless. He might be able to walk on the roof of his house with so sure a foot as not to need the parapet or trellis-work, warning him from the edge; but what he could do might be impossible for feet less sure than his. Hence the need of the battlement! Each new house must have its battlement around the margin of its roof.

This should be the law for each new home. - Wherever a household is constituted, battlements should be built to protect, as far as possible, the weak and tempted. The pace of the household should be that of the feeblest of its members. You are careful to have the balustrade and the little swing gate, not that the grown-up require them, but for the protection and safety of young and feeble life. Similarly build the battlement of total abstinence, of the discountenance of worldly amusement, of the habit of family worship. Guard against exposure to needless temptation, and occasions for falling.

This should be the law in older households. - It becomes the master of the home sometimes to go around his household, to study his own character, to inspect the condition of the battlements. Is there laxity, inconsistency, need of precaution? Let us search our hearts and lives, our habits, and the ordering of our homes, that the battlements may be strengthened where they are weak, or erected where they are wanting. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

The Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee - Deuteronomy 23:14

At all times Israel needed to keep from evil, but especially when her embattled hosts went forth to war; for in the conception of her prophets and saints her battles were not to be fought or won by herself. The Lord God of hosts was there. It was a joint campaign. This was specially revealed to Joshua, when he beheld the captain of the Lord's host, with a drawn sword, beside him. So, Christian soul, remember, in thy war against the evil of the world, and the solicitations of thine own wicked heart, that the battle is not yours, but God's. He is in the midst of thee; thou needst not be moved! He has sworn to deliver thee by His own right hand, and by His holy arm, and to give up thine enemies before thee.

There was one condition, however, on which the presence of God amongst His people was possible - the camp must be holy. No unclean thing might be seen in any of its borders. The vail of mother-earth must cover all impurity. Thus, as God went up and down the long avenues of the tents, He would see nothing to offend His gaze and make Him turn away. How deep a lesson! God is ever patrolling the avenues of our life. The most secret processes of our daily existence, our innermost relationships, the thoughts and intents of our heart, are all manifest to Him. There must be nothing to make Him turn away in holy abhorrence, else we cannot count on Him to deliver us, to give up our enemies before us.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart:

Try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if there be any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting."

The man to whom thou dost lend shall bring forth the pledge without unto thee - Deuteronomy 24:11

What courtesy and respect for the feelings of another prompted this injunction! The poor man needs a loan, and for this purpose goes to his rich neighbor. It would be possible for the latter, in the pride of his purse and position, to go ruthlessly across the threshold of the poor man's house, look contemptuously around its penury, and lay his hand with indelicate haste on the treasures of the poor man's family life. This, which had been dear to his father! That, associated with happier, better days! Such conduct might not be, said the divine precept. If the poor man asked a loan, he must choose his own pledge, and fetch it from his house with his own hand; it must be his act.

God respects the nature with which He has endowed us. - He will not force an entrance on any man. Though He made us, He waits for us to give Him right of entrance. He stands at the door and knocks. He asks for our consecration, that we should give Him our whole being in pledge, and in return for the loan of infinite grace; but He will not take till we give, or count on aught belonging to us as His property, until we have surrendered spirit, soul, and body, at His invitation.

God expects us to respect the nature of others. - Let us reverence that wonderful soul-life which is the perquisite of each individual. We have no right to break in with the mailed foot of the politician, or the furtive tread of the priest. The father-confessor has no right to stand within the sacred precincts of conscience. No man has a claim on his brother save that which love supplies. If we have partaken of the grace of God, we must be gracious to our fellows.

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn - Deuteronomy 25:4

"God taketh care of oxen," is Paul's comment on this text; and so God did. These pages are filled with tokens of His thought - for the ass that might not be overtaxed by being set to plough with an ox; for the ass or ox which were to be helped up if they had sunk on the road overpowered with their burdens; or for the bird sitting on her nest. Here the ox, as it went around the monotonous tread of the mill, was to be allowed to take a chance mouthful of corn.

The care for dumb creatures is part of our religious duty. It is one of the elements of religion to think for the dumb creatures, who are not able to speak for themselves, but suffer so patiently the accumulated wrongs heaped on them by man. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Oh, when will the travail of creation cease! Man's sin has indeed worked woe for the lower orders of creation.

The Apostle used this injunction to remind his converts of the necessity of caring for their spiritual teachers. Some are called to plough, others to thresh; but "he that plougheth should plough in hope; and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope" (1Co 9:10). They that serve the altar should live by the altar; and those who proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

But there is sweet encouragement here for those who are anxious about their daily bread. God takes care for oxen; will He not for you? Shall the oxen browse on the wolds and pasture-lands, and be nourished to fatness, and will He leave to starve the soul that really trusts and serves Him?

Thou shalt rejoice in all the good the Lord thy God hath given unto thee. Deu 26:11(R. V.).

Thou shalt rejoice in all the good the Lord thy God hath given unto thee - Deuteronomy 26:11

Do not be afraid of joy! There are some who only sip of the sweet draughts which God puts to their lips, afraid of drinking long and deeply. When good things come into their lives, they are always thinking of some bitter make-weight, possibly some impending trouble. This is a mistake. We must be prepared to learn the lessons of dark hours when God sends them; but we need not hesitate to learn those of bright and happy ones, when they, too, are meted out to us. As we give ourselves up to sorrow, we should give ourselves up to joy! As the soul descends into the grave, it should have great joy in its resurrection and ascension! If the soul-planet must travel to a wintry distance, let us hail those halcyon hours when it returns to stand in the summer spheres of joy! In the life of consecration our joy is considerably enhanced by sharing it with our Lord. Just as our burden of care is lightened by rolling it upon Him, in the same proportion our joy will be increased when He is permitted to partake of it.

We cannot always be on the strain. It is not possible to live on one side of our nature without impairing the health of all. David must bring his harp, and play in the presence of the soul, when its fits of depression return. There is necessity that we should cultivate tracks of our soul that lie toward a southern aspect, filling them with flowers, and fruits, and beehives, and things that children love.

Open your heart to joy, when it comes in the morning with jocund voice; by the back-door weeping will steal away. She only came to sojourn for a night.

Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of unhewn stones - Deuteronomy 27:6

The obvious intention of this precept was to prevent idolatry, lest the people should think more of the altar than of Jehovah who was worshipped there. Beware of anything that would divert men's thoughts from God.

Build your Addresses of unhewn stones. - When speaking to men, Paul determined to erect structures of unhewn stones, eschewing worldly wisdom, that the power of God might burn more conspicuously on the altar of his words. He knew that his speech and his preaching could never be in persuasive words of human wisdom, and it was his fixed determination to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If you spend too much time in cutting the stones of your address, your hearers will probably be more occupied with their artistic grace than with the Divine fire that should burn upon them.

Build your Prayers of unhewn stones. - The expressions of some men in prayer are so exquisitely chiselled that you keep wondering what they will say next, and how. Their prayers stand as beautiful altars on which there is no fire. Oh for the strong cryings and tears of a Spirit-taught man, expressing the real need of his nature, rather than the exquisite beauty of an oration to God!

Build your Inner life of unhewn stones. - Do not keep looking to see how you are performing the acts of consecration, confession, devotion. The least you think of these the better, that your entire thought may be concentrated on t, he great God and His Presence. There must be sincerity in our acts of consecration. One inch of rising flame is better than yards of chiselled stone!

Because thou servedest not the Lord with joyfulness and with gladness - Deuteronomy 28:47,48

We must serve. It is our nature. Our Lord never suggested a third course as an alternative to the service of God or mammon, as though it were possible to escape all service whatsoever. We either yield ourselves servants of righteousness unto holiness, or of iniquity unto iniquity; and to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his we are.

It is a solemn thought: if we are not serving God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, we are serving things which are our worst enemies. A man has no worse foe than himself when he lives to serve his own whims and desires. These habits, and appetites, and fashions, are luxurious and pleasant just now; but their silken cords will become iron bands.

On the other hand, if we would be secure from the service which hurts us, let us give ourselves to the Lord to serve Him with joyfulness and gladness. Do you ask the source of these? Remember, He will put gladness into thy heart; joy is the fruit of His Spirit. When thou art in a healthy state, joyfulness and gladness rise spontaneously in the soul, as music from song-birds. When the sacrifice begins, then will the song of the Lord begin.

The heart finds the well-spring of perennial blessedness when it has yielded itself absolutely and unconditionally to the Lord Jesus Christ. If He is Alpha and Omega; if our faith, however feebly, looks up to Him; if we press on to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship Of His sufferings; if we count all things but loss for the excellency of His knowledge - we may possess ourselves in peace amid the mysteries of life, and we shall have learned the blessed secret of serving the Lord "with joyfulness and with gladness of heart."

I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of mine heart - Deuteronomy 29:19

So man's foolish heart reasons. He hears the curse pronounced against sin; he knows that the man who turns from God is threatened with gall and wormwood, and yet he persists in his evil ways, secretly blessing himself, and laying the flattering unction to his heart that he at least will come off scot free. Such an one is an abomination to the Lord, and shall not escape: "The Lord will not pardon him, but His anger

shall smoke against him." It is still true of the wicked, "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually."

The only way to peace is by abjuring the stubbornness which sets up its own will and way against God's. Is not this the secret of the unrest of your soul - that you have never perfectly yielded to God? You know that if others did as you do, and cherished the dispositions that you permit, you would instantly condemn them, and assure them of the incompatibility of soul-rest and such things as these; but you bless yourself, and say, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart."

Ask God to take the stubbornness out of you, to rid you of your hard heart, to bring you into loving, gentle subordination to Himself; to fulfill His promise in your experience, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." Return and submit. Take His yoke and learn of Him. Bow down at His feet. Let every step of your daily walk be taken in the track of His holy will. So shall you find rest unto your soul; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phi 4:7, R. V.).

The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God - Deuteronomy 30:6

Circumcision is the sign of separation. It was enjoined on Abraham and his children that they might be God's peculiar people, chosen from all the nations of the earth. Similarly, the circumcision of Christ, which is made without hands, of which the Apostle speaks, is a putting off, a separation from the sins of the flesh, a participation in the grave and burial of Christ (Col 2:12).

We must be separated from the spirit and temper of the world. Between us and its sins, ambitions, methods, there must be not only an outward, but a heart severance. We were separated in the purpose of God when Jesus was cast without the camp to die. But we must be separate in our personal behavior. Wouldst thou have this? Then claim that this promise should be fulfilled, and ask that God would circumcise thine heart - the seat of thine affections, the hearth of thy soul-life.

Then thou wilt love the Lord with all thine, heart. This is why we love God so little. The force of our love is spread over too wide a sur-face-it is like the river Orinoco, which is lost in swamps as it approaches the sea. If only we were really separated from all that is alien to God, and. given up to Him wholly, we should find all the capacity of our hearts becoming filled with His love. We should love all things and people with a tenderness and glow which were steeped in colors obtained from His.

You will never succeed in overthrowing the strongholds of Satan, Christian worker, till God has taken away your self-reliance, and has brought you down into the dust of death: then, when the sentence of death is in yourself you will begin to experience the energy of the Divine life, the glory of the Divine victory.

Thou shall cause them to inherit it - Deuteronomy 31:7

Joshua is ever the type of our blessed Jesus. Joshua not only won Canaan for his people by his faith in the gift of God, coupled with his strenuous efforts, but he caused them to inherit it. Jesus not only won the wealth of the heavenlies for His Church by His death and resurrection, but He waits to cause us to inherit it through the Holy Spirit which He gives.

How great is our heritage! Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! All things that pertain to life and godliness await our appropriation! All spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! There is no conceivable grace or virtue, no fabric of the Divine looms for the soul's dress, no ornament of heavenly jewellery for the soul's

adorning, no weapon of celestial temper for the soul's equipment, no salve or balm of Divine comfort for the soul's healing, which is not ours in Jesus. The Father has given Him to have life in Himself that He might give us life more abundantly. He is full of grace and truth, that out of His fullness we all may receive. He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, that He might pour Him forth in Pentecostal fullness. But we do not possess our possessions. We are like people who have sent all their valuables to the strong-room of a bank, and never by any chance make use of them.

This is a lack which Jesus can also supply. He can cause us to inherit: first, by His Spirit He reveals the lavishness of the Divine possession; next He excites an appetite of desire; next, He begets the expectant faith that claims; and, lastly, He becomes to us each one of these things, so that we are enriched in Him, and possessing Him, find that all things are really ours.

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young - Deuteronomy 32:11

Three references are made to the eagle in this passage. She stirs up her nest. - When her fledglings are old enough to fly, but linger around the few bits of stick, dignified as a nest, the mother-bird breaks it up, and scatters them. How much better this, than that they should miss the luxury of flight on outspread pinions in the blue vault, and of basking in the eye of the sun. So when the Father sees His children clinging to earth's bare rocks, captured and held by the poor sticks they have gathered, and missing the ascension-glory, He breaks up the nest. The fortune is dispersed, the home broken up, the aspect of the life changed. We are then able to enjoy the bliss of life in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus.

She flutters over her young. - They stand scared and wretched on the edge of the rock, but she careers gently above them, now edging around, now mounting, then dropping far below to rise again. So would she allure them to follow her example. Here again we have an emblem of God's efforts to make us imitators of Himself, to teach us the possibilities that await us in Jesus.

She spreads forth her wings and takes them. - Incited by the mother's endeavors, the eaglet may venture on the untried air, and lo! the unaccustomed wings fail beneath its weight. It falls, but not far, for the mother swoops beneath, and bears it up and away. Trembling soul, God is beneath thee. If thy faith fails, and thou art falling, like another Peter, into a bottomless abyss, He will catch thee, and bear thee up, and teach thee the mystery of the more abundant life.

Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with Him whom thou lovest - Deuteronomy 33:8

What a contrast between the blessings of Jacob and of Moses! In Jacob's farewell charge, we find the ominous words, "Cursed be Levi"; and he foretells that this tribe should be divided and scattered in Israel. But here the curse is turned into a blessing; and the scattering is transformed into a holy ministry for the whole of Israel, "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law." See to what a place of privilege they are exalted! "They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-offering upon thine altar."

If ever there was an illustration of the power we have to turn a curse into a blessing, it is here. Step by step the results of that awful sin, for which Jacob cursed his sons, are changed into benedictions. Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; indeed, it has reigned, it has broken out into radiant and royal glory. Do not sit down hopeless, because of the consequences of an early sin that threaten to follow thee to thy grave. Thou mayest yet get honey out of the lion's carcase.

The way to this was by entire devotion to the call of God. After the sin of the golden calf, Levi said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen them; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his children. The cause of God, which Aaron had so ruthlessly betrayed, was dearer to him than the tenderest ties of blood. So he came into God's secret counsels of love, and knew the Urim and Thummim answers of the One whom he loved. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." It is only to those with whom He dwells that He can communicate His blessed will and purposes. Oh, may such bliss be mine!

His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated - Deuteronomy 34:7

This was true of Moses as a man. He had seen plenty of sorrow and toil; but such was the simple power of his faith, in casting his burden on the Lord, that they had not worn him out in premature decay. There had been no undue strain on his energy. All that he wrought on earth was the outcome of the secret abiding of his soul in God. God was his home, his help, his stay. He was nothing: God was all. Therefore his youth was renewed.

But there is a deeper thought than this. Moses stood for the law. It came by him, and was incarnated in his stern, grave aspect. He brought the people to the frontier of the land, but would not bring them over it: and so the Law of God, even when honored and obeyed, cannot bring us into the Land of Promise. We stand on the Pisgah-height of effort, and view it afar in all its fair expanse; but if we have never got further than "Thou shalt do this and live," we can never pass into the blessed life of rest and victory symbolized by Canaan.

But though the law fails, it is through no intrinsic feebleness. It is always holy, just, and good. Though the ages vanish, and heaven and earth pass away, its jots and tittles remain in unimpaired majesty. It must be fulfilled, first by the Son, then by His Spirit in our hearts. Let us ever remember the searching eye of that holy Law detecting evil, and its mighty force avenging wrong. Its eye will never wax dim, nor its natural force abate. Let us, therefore, shelter in Him, who, as our Representative, magnified the law and met its claims, and made it honorable.

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