

TESTIMONY

For the Church.

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Willing Obedience.

ABRAHAM was an old man when he received the startling command from God to offer up his son Isaac for a burnt offering. Abraham was considered an old man even in his generation. The ardor of his youth had faded away. It was no longer easy for him to endure hardships and brave dangers. In the vigor of youth man may breast the storm with a proud consciousness of strength, and rise above discouragements that would cause his heart to fail later in life when his steps are faltering towards the grave.

But God in his providence reserved his last most trying test for Abraham, until the burden of years was heavy upon him and he longed for rest from anxiety and toil. The Lord spoke unto him, saying, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt-offering." The heart of the old man stood still with horror. The loss of such a son by disease would have been most heart-rending to the fond father, it would have bowed his whitened head with sorrow; but now he is commanded to shed the precious blood of that

son with his own hand. It seemed to him a fearful impossibility.

Yet God had spoken and his word must be obeyed. Abraham was stricken in years, but this did not excuse him from his duty. He grasped the staff of faith, and in dumb agony, took his child by the hand, beautiful in the rosy health of youth, and went out to obey the word of God. The grand old patriarch was human; his passions and attachments were like unto ours; he loved this boy who was the solace of his old age, and unto whom the promise of the Lord had been given.

But Abraham did not stop to question how God's promises could be fulfilled if Isaac was slain, he did not stay to reason with his aching heart; but he carried out the divine command to the very letter, till, just as the knife is about to be plunged into the quivering flesh of the child, the word came, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad," "for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

This great act of faith is pencilled on the pages of sacred history to shine forth upon the world as an illustrious example to the end of time. Abraham did not plead that his old age should excuse him from obeying God. He did not say, "My hairs are gray, the vigor of my manhood is gone; who will comfort my waning life when Isaac is no more? How can an aged father spill the blood of an only son?"

No; God had spoken, and man must obey

without questioning or murmuring or fainting by the way. We need the faith of Abraham in our churches to-day, to lighten the darkness that gathers round them, shutting out the sweet sunlight of God's love, and dwarfing spiritual growth.

Age will never excuse us from obeying God. Our faith should be prolific of good works, for faith without works is dead. Every duty performed, every sacrifice in the name of Jesus, brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives his blessing. But he requires of us an entire surrender of the faculties. The mind and heart, the whole being must be given to him, or we fall short of becoming true Christians.

Christ withheld nothing from man that he might give him eternal riches. He has adorned the earth with beauty and furnished it with use and comfort during his temporal life. He has given his son to die for the redemption of a world that had fallen through sin and folly. Such matchless love, such infinite sacrifice claims our strictest obedience, our holiest love, our unbounded faith. Yet all these virtues, exercised to their fullest, can never be commensurate with the great sacrifice that has been offered for us.

God requires prompt and unquestioning obedience of his law. But men are asleep or paralyzed by the deceptions of Satan who suggests excuses and subterfuges, and con-

quers their scruples, saying as he did to Eve in the garden, "Ye shall not surely die." Disobedience not only hardens the heart and conscience of the guilty one, but it tends to corrupt the faith of others. That which looked very wrong to them at first, gradually loses this appearance by being constantly before them, till finally they question whether it is really sin, and unconsciously fall into the same error.

Through Samuel, God commanded Saul to go and smite the Amalekites and utterly destroy all their possessions. But Saul only partially obeyed the command; he destroyed the inferior cattle, but reserved the best, and spared the wicked king. The next day he met the prophet Samuel with flattering self-congratulations: Said he, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But the prophet immediately answered, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

Saul was confused and sought to shirk responsibility by answering, "*They* have brought them from the Amalekites, for the *people* spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Samuel then reproved the king, reminding him of the explicit commands of God, directing him to destroy all things belonging to Amalek. He pointed out his transgressions and declared that he had disobeyed the Lord. But

Saul refused to acknowledge that he had done wrong; he again excused his sin by pleading that he had reserved the best cattle to sacrifice unto the Lord.

Samuel was grieved to the heart by the persistency with which the king refused to see his sin and confess it. He sorrowfully asked, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

We should not look in the face of duty and delay meeting its demands. Such delay gives time for doubts, unbelief creeps in, the judgment is perverted, the understanding darkened. At length the reproofs of God's Spirit do not reach the heart of the deluded person, who has become so blinded as to think that they cannot possibly be intended for him or apply to his case.

The precious time of probation is passing, and few realize that it is given them for the purpose of preparing for eternity. The golden hours are squandered in worldly pursuits, in pleasure, in absolute sin. God's law is slighted and forgotten, yet every statute is none the less binding. Every transgression will bring its punishment. Worldly love of gain desecrates the Sabbath, yet the claims

of that holy day are not abrogated or lessened. God's command is clear and unquestionable on this point; he has peremptorily forbidden us to labor upon the seventh day. He has set it apart as a day sanctified to himself.

Many are the hindrances that lay in the path of those who would follow in obedience the commandments of God. There are strong and subtle influences that bind them to the ways of the world; but the power of the Lord can break these chains. He will remove every obstacle from before the feet of his faithful ones, or give them strength and courage to conquer every difficulty, if they earnestly beseech his help. All hindrances will vanish before an earnest desire and persistent effort to do the will of God at any cost to self, even if life itself is sacrificed. Light from Heaven will illuminate the darkness of those, who, in trial and perplexity, go forward looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of their faith.

In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouths of prophets and apostles. In these days he speaks to them by the testimonies of his Spirit. There was never a time when God more earnestly instructed his people concerning his will, and the course that he would have them pursue, than now. But will they profit by his teachings, will they receive his reproofs and heed his warnings? God will accept of no partial obedience nor sanction any compromise with self.

The Twelve Spies.

THE Lord commanded Moses to send men to search the land of Canaan, which he would give unto the children of Israel. A ruler of each tribe was to be selected for this purpose. They went, and after forty days returned from their search, and came before Moses and Aaron, and all the congregation of Israel, and showed them the fruit of the land. All agreed that it was a good land, and they exhibited the rich fruit which they had brought as evidence. One cluster of grapes was so large that two men carried it between them on a staff. They also brought of the figs, and the pomegranates, which grew there in abundance. After they had spoken of the fertility of the land, all but two spoke very discouragingly of their being able to possess it. They said that the people were very strong that dwelt in the land, and the cities were surrounded with great and high walls, and, more than all this, they saw the children of the giant Anak there. They then described how the people were situated around Canaan, and the impossibility of their ever being able to possess it.

As the people listened to this report, they gave vent to their disappointment with bitter reproaches and wailing. They did not wait, and reflect, and reason that God, who had brought them out thus far, would certainly give them the land. They left God out of the question. They acted as though

in the taking of the city of Jericho, the key to the land of Canaan, they must depend solely on the power of arms. God had declared that he would give them the country, and they should have fully trusted him to fulfill his word. But their unsubdued hearts were not in harmony with his plans. They did not reflect how wonderfully he had wrought in their behalf, bringing them out of their Egyptian bondage, cutting a path for them through the waters of the sea, and destroying the pursuing host of Pharaoh.

In their unbelief they were limiting the work of God, and distrusting the hand that had hitherto safely guided them. In this instance they repeated their former error of murmuring against Moses and Aaron. "This, then, is the end of all our high hopes," said they. "This is the land we have traveled all the way from Egypt to possess." They blamed their leaders with bringing trouble upon Israel, and again charged them with deceiving and leading their people astray. Moses and Aaron lay prostrate before God, their faces in the dust.

Caleb and Joshua, the two who, of all the twelve spies, trusted in the word of God, rent their clothes in distress, when they perceived that these unfavorable reports had discouraged the whole camp. They endeavored to reason with them, but the congregation were filled with madness and disappointment, and refused to listen to these two men. Finally Caleb urged his way to the front, and

his clear, ringing voice was heard above all the clamor of the multitude. He opposed the cowardly views of his fellow-spies, which had weakened the faith and courage of all Israel.

He commanded the attention of the people, and they hushed their complaints for a moment to listen to him. He spoke of the land he had visited. Said he, "Let us go up at once; for we are well able to overcome it." But as he spoke, the unfaithful spies interrupted him, crying, "We be not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we!"

These men, starting upon a wrong course, set their hearts against God, against Moses and Aaron, and against Caleb and Joshua. Every step they advanced in this wrong direction made them firmer in their design to discourage every attempt to possess the land of Canaan. They distorted the truth in order to carry their baneful influence. They represented the climate as being unhealthful, and all the people of giant stature. Said they, "And there we saw the giants, the sons of the giants, the sons of Anak, which came of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

This was not only an evil, but a lying report. It was contradictory; for if the land was unhealthy and "had eaten up the inhabitants," how was it that they attained to such massive proportions. When men in

responsible positions yield their hearts to unbelief, there are no bounds to the advance they will make in evil. Few realize, when they start upon this dangerous course, the length that Satan will lead them.

The evil report had a terrible effect upon the people. They reproached Moses and Aaron bitterly. Some groaned and wailed, saying, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, Would God we had died in the wilderness!" Then their feelings rose against the Lord, they wept and mourned, saying, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another: Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Thus they manifested their disrespect for God and for the leaders he had appointed to conduct them. They did not ask the Lord what they should do, but said, "Let us make a captain." They took matters in their own hands, feeling themselves competent to manage their affairs without divine aid. They not only accused Moses of deception, but also God, in promising a land which they were not able to possess. They actually went so far as to appoint one of their number as a captain, to lead them back to the land of their suffering and bondage, from which God had delivered them with his strong arm of omnipotence.

Moses and Aaron still remained prostrate

before God in the presence of all the assembly, silently imploring divine mercy for rebellious Israel. Their distress was too deep for words. Again Caleb and Joshua press to the front, and the voice of Caleb once more rises in sorrowful earnestness above the complaints of the congregation.

“The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land that floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us. Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Fear them not.”

The Canaanites had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord would no longer bear with them. His defense being removed from them, they would fall an easy pray to the Hebrews. They were not prepared for battle, for they felt so strong that they deceived themselves with the idea that no army was formidable enough to prevail against them. Caleb reminded the people that by the covenant of God the land was insured to Israel. But their hearts were filled with madness and they would hear no more. If only the two men had brought the evil report, and all the ten had encouraged them to possess the land in the name of the Lord, they would still have taken the advice of the two in preference to the ten, because of their wicked unbelief.

But there were only two advocating the right, while ten were in open rebellion against their leaders and against God. The greatest excitement now raged among the people, their worst passions were aroused, and they refused to listen to reason. The ten unfaithful spies join them in their denunciations of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry is raised to stone them. The insane mob seize missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They rush forward with yells of madness, when, Lo! the stones drop from their hands, a hush falls upon them, and they shake with terror. God has interposed to check their rash design. The glory of his presence, like a flame of light, illuminates the tabernacle. All the congregation behold the signal of the Lord.

A mightier one than they, had revealed himself, and not one dared continue his resistance. Every murmurer was silenced. The spies who had brought the evil report, crouched terror-stricken and with bated breath. Moses now arose from his humiliating position and entered the tabernacle, to commune with God. Then the Lord proposed to immediately destroy this rebellious people. He desired to make of Moses a greater nation than Israel; but the meek leader of his people would not consent to this proposition. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; and they will tell it to

the inhabitants of this land, for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness."

Moses again refuses to have Israel destroyed, and himself made a mightier nation than was Israel. This favored servant of God manifests his love for Israel, and shows his zeal for the glory of his Master, and the honor of his people. Thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now, thou hast been long-suffering and merciful hitherto toward this ungrateful nation; and however unworthy they may be, thy mercy is the same. He pleads, Wilt thou not, therefore, spare them this once, and add this one more instance of divine patience to the many thou hast already given? -

Moses prevailed with God to spare the people; but because of their arrogance and unbelief, the Lord could not go with them to work in a miraculous manner in their behalf. Therefore, in his divine mercy, he bade them adopt the safest course, and turn back into the wilderness, towards the Red Sea. He also decreed that, as a punishment

for their rebellion, all the adults who left Egypt, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, should be forever excluded from Canaan. They had utterly failed to keep their promise of obedience to God, and this released him from the covenant that they had so repeatedly violated. He promised that their children should possess the goodly land, but their own bodies should be buried in the wilderness. And the ten unfaithful spies, whose evil report had caused Israel to murmur and rebel, were destroyed by the power of God, before the eyes of the people.

When Moses made known to Israel the will of God concerning them, they seemed to sincerely repent of their sinful conduct. But the Lord knew that their sorrow was because of the result of their evil course, rather than a deep sense of their ingratitude and disobedience. But their repentance came too late; the just anger of God was awakened, and their doom was pronounced from which there was no reprieve. When they found that the Lord would not relent in his decree, their self-will again arose, and they declared that they would not return into the wilderness.

In commanding them to retire from the land of their enemies, God tested their apparent submission and found it was not real. They knew that they had deeply sinned in allowing their rash feelings to control them, and seeking to slay the spies who had urged them to obey God. But they were only ter-

rified to find that they had made a fearful mistake, the consequences of which would prove disastrous to themselves. Their hearts were unchanged, and they only needed an excuse to occasion a similar outbreak. This presented itself when Moses, by the authority of God, commanded them to go back into the wilderness.

They had rebelled against his commands, when he bade them go up and take the land he had promised them, and now, that he directed them to retreat from it, they were equally insubordinate, and declared they would go to battle with their enemies. They arrayed themselves in their warriors' dress and armor, and presented themselves before Moses, prepared for conflict, in their own estimation, but sadly deficient in the sight of God and his sorrowful servant. They refused to listen to the solemn warnings of their leaders that disaster and death would be the consequence of their audacity.

When God directed them to go up and take Jericho, he promised to go with them. The ark containing his law was to be a symbol of himself. Moses and Aaron, God's appointed leaders, were to conduct the expedition under his watchful direction. With such supervision, no harm could have come to them. But now, contrary to the command of God, and the solemn prohibition of their leaders, without the ark of God and without Moses, they march out to meet the armies of the enemy.

During the time consumed by the Israelites in their wicked insubordination, the Amalekites and Canaanites had prepared for battle. The Israelites presumptuously challenged the foe that had not dared to attack them. But just as they had fairly entered the enemy's territory, the Amalekites and Canaanites met them in force and fiercely repulsed them, driving them back with great loss. The field of carnage was red with the blood of the Hebrews, and their dead bodies strewed the ground. They were utterly routed and defeated. Destruction and death was the result of their rebellious experiment.

But the faith of Caleb and Joshua was richly rewarded. According to his word, God brought these faithful two into the land he had promised to them. The cowards and rebels perished in the wilderness, but the righteous spies did eat of the grapes of Eschol.

The history of the twelve spies' report has an application to us as a people. The scenes of cowardly complaining and drawing back from action when there are risks to encounter, are re-enacted among us to-day. The same unwillingness is manifested to heed faithful reports and true counsel, as in the days of Caleb and Joshua. The servants of God, who bear the burden of his cause, practicing strict self-denial and suffering privation for the sake of helping his people, are seldom better appreciated now than then.

Ancient Israel was repeatedly tested and

found wanting. Few received the faithful warnings given them of God. Darkness and unbelief does not decrease as we near the time of the second advent of Christ. Truth becomes less and less palatable to the carnal-minded; their hearts are slow to believe, and tardy to repent. The servants of God might well become discouraged, were it not for the continual evidences their Master gives them of his wisdom and assistance. Long has the Lord borne with his people. He has forgiven their wanderings, and waited for them to give him room in their hearts; but false ideas, jealousy and distrust have crowded him out.

Few who are professedly of Israel, and whose minds have been enlightened by the revelations of divine wisdom, dare to come boldly forward, as did Caleb, and stand firmly for God and the right. Because those whom the Lord has chosen to conduct his work, will not be swerved from the course of integrity, to gratify the selfish and unconsecrated, they become the target for hatred and malicious falsehood. Satan is wide awake and working warily in these last days. God calls for men of spiritual nerve and stamina to resist his artifices.

Thorough conversion is necessary among those who profess to believe the truth, in order for them to follow Jesus, and obey the will of God. Not a submission born of circumstances as was that of the terrified Israelites, when the power of the Infinite was revealed to them, but a deep and heart-felt re-

pentance and renunciation of sin. Those who are but half-converted, are as a tree whose boughs hang upon the side of truth, but whose roots, firmly bedded in the earth, strike out into the barren soil of the world. Jesus looks in vain for fruit upon its branches, he finds nothing but leaves.

Thousands would accept the truth, if they could do so without denying self; but this class would never build up the cause of God. These would never march out valiantly against the enemy, which is the world, the love of self and the lusts of the flesh, trusting their divine Leader to give them the victory. The church needs faithful Calebs and Joshuas, who are ready to accept eternal life on God's simple conditions of obedience. Our churches are suffering for laborers. The world is our field. Missionaries are wanted in cities and villages that are more certainly bound by idolatry than the pagans of the East, who have never seen the light of truth. The true missionary spirit has deserted the churches that make so exalted a profession; their hearts are no longer aglow with love for souls, and a desire to lead them into the fold of Christ. We want earnest workers. Are there none to respond to the cry that goes up from every quarter: "Come over and help us?"

Can those who profess to be the repositories of God's law, and who look for the soon coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven, stand acquitted of the blood of souls, if they

turn a deaf ear to the crying needs of the people who walk in shadows? There are books to prepare and to distribute, there are lessons to give, there are self-sacrificing duties to perform! Who will come to the rescue? Who will, for Christ's sake, deny self and spread the light to those who sit in darkness?

The Taking of Jericho.

AFTER the death of Moses, Joshua was appointed the leader of Israel, to conduct them to the promised land. He had been prime minister to Moses during the greater part of the time the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness. He had seen the wonderful works of God wrought by Moses, and well understood the disposition of the people. He was one of the twelve spies who were sent out to search for the promised land, and one of the two who gave a faithful account of its richness, and who encouraged the people to go up and possess it in the strength of God. He was well qualified for his important office. The Lord promised Joshua to be with him as he had been with Moses, and he would make Canaan an easy conquest to him, provided he would be faithful to observe all his commandments.

Joshua had been anxious concerning the execution of his commission to lead the people into the land of Canaan; but this assurance removed his fears. He commanded

the children of Israel to make ready for a three-days' journey, and all the men of war to prepare for battle. "And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death; only be strong and of a good courage."

God willed that the passage of the Israelites over Jordan should be miraculous. Joshua commanded the people to sanctify themselves, for upon the morrow the Lord would do wonders among them. At the appointed time, he directed the priests to take up the ark containing the law of God, and bear it before the people. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, this day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."

The priests obeyed the commands of their leader and went before the people carrying the ark of the covenant. The Hebrew host took up the line of march and followed this symbol of the divine presence.

The wide column filed down the bank of Jordan, and, as the feet of the priests were dipped in the brim of the river, the water was

cut off from above, the volume below rolled on, leaving the bed of the stream dry. The priests passed on bearing the ark of God, and Israel followed in the rear. Half way over Jordan the priests were commanded to stand still in the channel of the river, till all the Hebrew host had crossed over. This was to impress upon their minds more forcibly the fact that the power which stayed the waters of Jordan was the same that enabled their fathers to cross the Red Sea forty years before.

Many who passed through the Red Sea when they were children, now, by a similar miracle, crossed over Jordan, men of war equipped for battle. After the host of Israel had all passed over, Joshua commanded the priests to come up out of the river. When they, bearing the ark of the covenant, stood safe upon the farther shore, God removed his mighty hand, and the accumulated waters rushed down, a mighty cataract in the natural channel of the stream. Jordan rolled on, a resistless flood, overflowing all its banks.

But before the priests had come up out of the river, that this wonderful miracle might never be forgotten, the Lord bade Joshua select men of note from each tribe to take up stones from the spot in the river-bed where the priests had stood, and bear them upon their shoulders to Gilgal, and there erect a monument in remembrance of the fact that God had caused Israel to pass over Jordan upon dry land. This would be

a continual reminder of the miracle the Lord had worked for them. As years passed on, their children would inquire concerning the monument, and they would recount to them this wonderful history again and again, till it would be indelibly impressed upon their minds to the latest generation.

When all the kings of the Amorites, and the kings of the Canaanites heard that the Lord had stayed the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, their hearts melted with fear. The Israelites had slain two of the kings of Moab, and their miraculous passage over the swollen and impetuous Jordan filled them with great terror. Joshua then circumcised all the people which had been born in the wilderness. After this ceremony, they kept the passover in the plains of Jericho. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."

Heathen nations had reproached the Lord and his people because the Hebrews had failed to possess the land of Canaan, which they expected to inherit soon after leaving Egypt. Their enemies had triumphed because Israel had wandered so long in the wilderness, and they proudly lifted themselves up against God, declaring that he was not able to lead them into the land of Canaan. The Lord had now signally manifested his power and favor, in leading his people over Jordan on dry land, and their enemies could no longer reproach them. *The manna, which

had continued up to this time, now ceased as the Israelites were about to possess Canaan and eat of the fruits of that goodly land, so there was no more need of it.

As Joshua withdrew from the armies of Israel to meditate and pray for God's special presence to attend him, he saw a man of lofty stature, clad in war-like garments, with drawn sword in his hand. Joshua did not recognize him as one of the warriors of Israel, and yet he had no appearance of being an enemy. In his zeal he accosted him, saying, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

The glory of God hallowed the sanctuary, and for this reason the priests never entered the place sanctified by God's presence with shoes upon their feet. Particles of dust might cleave to them, which would desecrate the holy place. Therefore the priests were required to leave their shoes in the court, before entering the sanctuary. In the court, beside the door of the tabernacle, stood a brazen laver, wherein the priests washed their hands and their feet before entering the tabernacle, that all impurity might be removed. All who officiated in the sanctuary were

required of God to make special preparation before entering the place where his glory was revealed.

It was the Son of God who stood as an armed warrior before the leader of Israel. It was the One who had conducted the Hebrews through the wilderness, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

In order to convey to the mind of Joshua that he was no less than Christ, the Exalted One, he says, "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot." He then instructed Joshua what course to pursue in order to take Jericho. All the men of war should be commanded to compass the city once each day for six days, and on the seventh day they should march around Jericho seven times.

Accordingly Joshua gave orders to the priests and the people as the Lord directed him. He marshalled the hosts of Israel in perfect order.

First was a select body of armed men, clad in their war-like dress; not now to exercise their skill in arms, but only to believe and obey the directions given them. Next followed seven priests with trumpets. Then came the ark of God, glittering with gold, a halo of glory hovering over it, borne by priests in the rich and peculiar dress denoting their sacred office. The vast army of Israel followed in perfect order, each tribe under its respective standard. Thus they compass the city with the ark of God. No sound was

heard but the tread of that mighty host and the solemn voice of the trumpets, echoing among the hills and resounding through the streets of Jericho.

With wonder and alarm the watchmen of the doomed city marked every move, and reported to those in authority. They could not imagine what all this display meant. Jericho had defied the armies of Israel and the God of heaven; but when they beheld that mighty host marching around their city once each day, in all the pomp and majesty of war, with the added grandeur of the sacred ark and the attendant priests, the impressive mystery of the scene struck terror to the hearts of princes and people. Then again they would inspect their strong defenses, feeling certain they could successfully resist the most powerful attack. Many ridiculed the idea that any harm could come to them through these singular demonstrations on the part of their enemies. But others were awed as they beheld the majesty and splendor of the procession that each day wound grandly about the city. They remembered that forty years before the Red Sea had parted before this people, that a passage had just been opened for them through the river Jordan. They knew not what farther wonders God might work for them. They kept their gates carefully closed, and guarded them with mighty warriors.

For six days the host of Israel performed their circuit around the city. The seventh

day came, and with the first dawn of light, Joshua marshalled the armies of the Lord. Now they were directed to march seven times around Jericho, and at a mighty note of the trumpets to shout with a loud voice, for God had then given them the city.

The imposing army marched solemnly around the devoted walls. The resplendent ark of God lighting the early dusk of morning, the priests with their glittering breast-plates and jeweled badges, and the warriors with their flashing armor, presented a magnificent pageant. They were silent as the dead, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional blare of the trumpet, cutting the blank stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone frowned darkly down, defying the siege of men.

Suddenly the vast army halts. The trumpets break forth in a blast that shakes the very earth. The united voices of all Israel rend the air with a mighty shout. The walls of solid stone with their massive towers and battlements totter and heave from their foundations, and, with a crash like a thousand thunders, fall in shapeless ruin to the earth. The inhabitants and the army of the enemy, paralyzed with terror and amazement, offer no resistance, and Israel marches in and takes captive the mighty city of Jericho.

How easily the armies of Heaven brought down the walls that had seemed so formidable to the spies who brought the false re-

port. The word of God was the only weapon used. The Mighty One of Israel had said, "I have given Jericho into thine hand." If a single warrior had brought his strength to bear against the walls, the glory of God would have been lessened and his will frustrated. But the work was left to the Almighty; and had the foundation of the battlements been laid in the center of the earth and their summits reached the arch of heaven, the result would have been all the same, when the Captain of the Lord's host led his legions of angels to the attack.

Long had God designed to give the city of Jericho to his favored people, and magnify his name among the nations of the earth. Forty years before, when he led Israel out of bondage, he had proposed to give them the land of Canaan. But, by their wicked murmurings and jealousy, they had provoked his wrath, and he had caused them to wander for weary years in the wilderness till all those who had insulted him with their unbelief were no more. In the capture of Jericho God declared to the Hebrews that their fathers might have possessed the city forty years before, had they trusted in him as did their children.

The history of ancient Israel is written for our benefit. Paul says, "But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." "Now all these things

happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Many who profess to keep God's commandments, as did ancient Israel, have hearts of unbelief, while outwardly observing the statutes of God. Favored with great light and precious privileges, they will nevertheless lose the heavenly Canaan, even as the rebellious Israelites failed to enter the earthly Canaan that God had promised them as the reward of their obedience.

As a people we lack faith. Few would in these days follow the directions of God, through his chosen servant, as obediently as did the armies of Israel at the taking of Jericho. The Captain of the Lord's host did not reveal himself to all the congregation. He communicated only with Joshua, who related the story of this interview to the Hebrews. It rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to follow the commands given by him in the name of the Captain of the Lord's host, or to rebel against his directions and deny his authority.

They could not see the host of angels, marshalled by the Son of God who led their van; and they might have reasoned: "What unmeaning movements, are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams' horns meanwhile! This can

have no effect upon those strong and towering fortifications."

But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls, afforded opportunity for the increase of faith among the Israelites. They were to become thoroughly impressed with the idea that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to putting themselves out of the question and relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

Would those who to-day profess to be God's people conduct themselves thus, under similar circumstances? Doubtless many would wish to follow out their own plans, would suggest ways and means of accomplishing the desired end. They would be loth to submit to so simple an arrangement, and one that reflected no glory upon themselves, save the merit of obedience. They would also question the possibility of a mighty city being conquered in that manner. But the law of duty is supreme. It should wield authority over human reason. Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.

God will do marvelous things for those who trust in him. The reason that his professed people have no more strength, is because they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportuni-

ty to reveal his power in their behalf. He will help his believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in him, and implicitly obey him.

There are deep mysteries in the Word of God, there are unexplainable mysteries in his providences, there are mysteries in the plan of salvation that man can not fathom. But the finite mind, strong in its desire to satisfy its curiosity, and solve the problems of infinity, neglects to follow the plain course indicated by the revealed will of God, and pries into the secrets hidden since the foundation of the world. Man builds his theories, loses the simplicity of true faith, becomes too self-important to believe the declarations of the Lord, and hedges himself in with his own conceits.

Many who profess our faith are in this position. They are weak and powerless because they trust in their own strength. God works mightily for a faithful people, who obey his word without questioning or doubt. The Majesty of Heaven, with his army of angels, leveled the walls of Jericho, with no human aid. All the armed warriors of Israel had no cause to glory in their achievements. All was done through the power of God. Let the people give up self, and the desire to work after their own plans, let them humbly submit to the divine will, and God will revive his strength and bring freedom and victory to his children.

Jeremiah.

THE Lord gave Jeremiah a message of reproof to bear to his people, charging them with the continual rejection of God's counsel; saying, "I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers."

God plead with them not to provoke him to anger with the work of their hands and hearts; "but they hearkened not." Jeremiah then predicted the captivity of the Jews, as their punishment for not heeding the word of the Lord. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise his disobedient people. Their punishment was to be in proportion to their intelligence, and the warnings they had despised. God had long delayed his judgments, because of his unwillingness to humiliate his chosen people; but now he would visit his displeasure upon them, as a last effort to check them in their evil course.

In these days he has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of his people. He entreats the erring ones who profess his name, to repent and turn from their evil ways,

in the same manner that he did of old. He predicts the dangers before them, by the mouth of his chosen servants now as then. He sounds his note of warning, and reproveth sin just as faithfully as in the days of Jeremiah. But the Israel of our time have the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel, as did ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given his servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth. Though the Lord in mercy withholds for a time the retribution of their sin, as in the days of Jeremiah, he will not always stay his hand, but will visit iniquity with righteous judgment.

The Lord commanded Jeremiah to stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the people of Judah who came there to worship, those things which he would give him to speak, diminishing not a word; that they might hearken and turn from their evil ways. Then God would repent of the punishment which he had purposed to do unto them because of their wickedness. The unwillingness of the Lord to chastise his erring people is here vividly shown. He stays his judgments, he pleads with them to return to their allegiance.

He brought them out of bondage that they might faithfully serve himself, the only true and living God; but they had wandered into idolatry, they had slighted the warnings given them by his prophets; yet he defers his chastisement to give them one more op-

portunity to repent and avert the retribution for their sin. Through his chosen prophet, he now sends them a clear and positive warning, and lays before them the only course by which they can escape the punishment which they deserve. This is a full repentance of their sin, and a turning from the evil of their ways.

The Lord commanded Jeremiah to say to the people: "Thus saith the Lord: If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." They understood this reference to Shiloh, and the time when the Philistines overcame Israel and the ark of God was taken.

The sin of Eli was in passing lightly over the iniquity of his sons, who were occupying sacred offices. The neglect of the father to reprove and restrain his sons, brought upon Israel a fearful calamity. The sons of Eli were slain, Eli himself lost his life, the ark of God was taken from Israel, and thirty thousand of their people were slain. All this was because sin was lightly regarded, and allowed to remain in their midst. What a lesson is this to men holding responsible positions in the church of God! It adjures them to faithfully remove the wrongs that dishonor the cause of truth.

Israel thought, in the days of Samuel, that the presence of the ark containing the commandments of God, would gain them the victory over the Philistines, whether or not they repented of their wicked works. Just so the Jews, in Jeremiah's time, believed that the divinely appointed services of the temple being strictly observed, would preserve them from the just punishment of their evil course.

The same danger exists to-day among that people who profess to be the repository of God's law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments should preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reproved of evil, and blame God's servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep his law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey his word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people to-day, as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which he will no longer delay his judgments. The correction of God through his chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity. The desolation of Jerusalem stands as a solemn warning before the eyes of modern Israel.

When the priests and the people heard the message that Jeremiah delivered to them in the name of the Lord, they were very angry, and declared that he should die. They were boisterous in their denunciations of him, cry-

ing, "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord." Thus was the message of God despised, and the servant with whom he entrusted it threatened with death. The priests, the unfaithful prophets, and all the people turned in wrath upon him who would not speak to them smooth things and prophesy deceit.

The unfaltering servants of God have usually suffered the bitterest persecution from false teachers of religion. But the true prophets will ever prefer reproach and even death rather than unfaithfulness to God. The Infinite eye is upon the instruments of divine reproof, and they bear a heavy responsibility. But God regards the injury done to them through misrepresentation, falsehood or abuse, the same as though it were done unto himself, and will punish accordingly.

The princes of Judah had heard concerning the words of Jeremiah, and came up from the king's house, and sat in the entry of the Lord's house. "Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." But Jeremiah stood boldly before the princes and the people declaring, "The Lord sent me to

prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."

Had the prophet been intimidated by the threats of those in high authority, and the clamoring of the rabble, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life. But the courage with which he discharged his painful duty commanded the respect of the people, and turned the princes of Israel in his favor. Thus God raised up defenders for his servant. They reasoned with the priests and false prophets, showing them how unwise would be the extreme measures which they advocated.

The influence of these powerful persons produced a reaction in the minds of the people. Then the elders united in protesting against the decision of the priests regarding the fate of Jeremiah. They cited the case of Micah, who prophesied judgments upon Jerusalem, saying, "Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and

the mountains of the house as the high places of a forest." They put to them the question : "Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and beseech the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls."

So, through the pleading of Ahikam and others, the prophet Jeremiah's life was spared; although many of the priests and false prophets would have been pleased had he been put to death on the plea of sedition; for they could not endure the truths that he uttered exposing their wickedness.

But Is ael remained unrepented and the Lord saw that they must be punished for their sin, so he instructed Jeremiah to make yokes and bonds and place them upon his neck, and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, of the Ammonites, of Tyrus and Zidon, commanding the messengers to say that God had given all these lands to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. That all these nations should serve him and his descendants for a certain time, till God should deliver them. They were to declare that if those nations refused to serve the king of Babylon they should be punished with the famine, with the sword, and pestilence, till they should be consumed. "Therefore," said the Lord, "Hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor