

## A DIVINE RESOLUTION

"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13.30)

In this Old Testament story with the details of which most of us are familiar, we have the account of Caleb's resolution, as recorded in vent 30. The story is full of thrilling interest. The spies have just returned and given their report - a report which appears most favourable. "But," say they, "we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we (Numbers 13.31).

Imagine the dismay and confusion this adverse report produced I Here was a land rich beyond their fondest dreams; one towards which they had looked with expectancy and joyful anticipation. Was it not also a land given to them by covenant promise? But, alas! according to the ten spies' or the majority report, it could not be taken! Picture also the sense of frustration and baffling that would lay hold of that vast multitude. Their soaring aspirations were blasted and withered by the cold frost of despair as from lip to lip the word would be passed along: "It cannot be done." Such is the mentality that produces the frame of mind and attitude of heart that find expression in the words, "no use attempting it."

But how often is faith born in despair! When at the end of ourselves, we reach the beginning of God. So it was in the case of Caleb; in the midst of confusion and disappointment he stands forth and makes his proposal: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able." Here we have the language of faith; the word of implicit confidence in God. Caleb saw the walled cities and the sons of Anak, but beyond. walled cities and "men of a great stature" he saw and that vision inspired confidence. Was it not the same strong confidence that moved Charles Wesley to write:

"Twas most impossible of all  
That here sin's reign in mc should cease.  
Yet shall it be, I know it shall;  
Jesus, look to Thy faithfulness!  
If nothing is too hard for Thee,  
All things are possible to me".

This was a moment of deep interest as well as solemn responsibility for Israel. Had they acted on Caleb's advice they would have entered, and been saved those forty years in the wilderness.

Let us consider three thoughts suggested by Caleb's resolve:

1. **THE RESOLUTION:** 'Let us go up.' We all admire men of decision: the world owes a great deal to such. They see a thing to be done and at once resolve to do it. Like Alexander the Great, they "conquer by not delaying." Here are men who like others see barriers in the way, but unlike many, they see in the difficulty a challenge to faith, and like Daniel's companions they cry: "Our God is able . . . and He will" (Dan. 3:17). Unless we, too, are possessed by the spirit of Caleb our character and service will be void of achievement.

One of the most beautiful things said by Sir Isaac Newton towards the end of his life, in response to someone who congratulated him on the splendour of his scientific achievement was: "I have been like a little child playing with pebbles on the beach while the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," cried Paul, "but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus . . . forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14). What was this but a divinely inspired resolution which gave to his life the propulsion of a sacred vow? If we apprehend the teaching of Jesus aright, He calls us not to a life of ease but to one of endeavour; and this we see exemplified in Christ's own life. Listen to Him as He gives expression to the inward urge of His life:

"I must be about My Father's business"; "I must preach the Gospel in other cities"; "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh...."

We frequently speak of the rest of faith, and that is a blessed experience. Thank God we are brought into an experience of rest from condemnation, bondage and fear. But let us never forget that at the very heart of the Christian message and experience there must ever be an element of unrest. How many of us have discovered that the supreme instinct of the soul possessed by the life of Christ is hunger for the highest, where "horizons will ever be a menace to our peace!"

And so we sing: "Lead me higher up the mountain." A famous sculptor when asked, "What piece do you think the most of?" replied, "The piece I have yet to carve." So there is ever a vast beyond in the spiritual realm.

2. **THE OBJECT OF THE RESOLUTION:** "Let us go up and possess it." The object is to possess the land that was theirs by covenant promise, but alas, Israel failed to take possession, and, with the exception of two, never saw the land.

Here is surely a message we do well to take to heart. We, too, are called upon to "possess our possessions." "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," wrote Paul (I Thess. 4:3). This is the good land into which God would lead us. The fact is that faith has seen the perfect humanity of Christ, and what is possible to redeemed humanity, and in consequence, that vision creates unrest and cries for possession. Paul is crying for possession when he prays: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). This is just what Canaan stands for—HAT and POWER. What were the outstanding facts of Israel's life across the river? Were they not GOD and POWER?

What a sublime picture we have in the Book of Joshua. Standing over against him Joshua saw a man with a drawn sword in his hand. "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" he asked. The man answered:

"Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." The fact is God is ever coming to the man who will possess his possessions. Oh, the inspiration of knowing this! What are walled cities! What are giants! "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Think of the confidence expressed in the words of Wesley:

"Is there a thing beneath the sun  
That strives with Thee my heart to share?  
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,  
The Lord of every motion there!"

What are the implications? Surely this: when God takes the field He is Lord of every motion, and "sin shall not have dominion" (Romans 6:14).

This is a truth unspeakably great, and worthy of all acceptance, that in God's provision there is for me an adequate answer to the supreme human problem. God has not overlooked the fact of man's desperate need; He has looked it all round and has met the whole case, so that we can proclaim with passionate, personal conviction: "The blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

All this is gloriously true, but are we in possession? "Is sanctification to you a prospect or a possession?" asked Rendel Harris. Existing in the field of possibility, is it true in the realm of actuality? I believe in the power of the blood, but am I really clean? I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, but is the supernatural in operation? I believe in revival, but am I seeing it?

In conversation with one of our young Pilgrims some time ago, she said, "We have had some wonderful missions but we did not see revival. At the Convention God gave me a promise: Isaiah 44:3 lives in my soul, and believing God to be a covenant-

keeping God we go forth to possess our possessions." Did God fail her? In an extract from a letter written by a missionary who was witnessing the movings of God in his native parish as that Pilgrim proclaimed the glorious Gospel, he says: "Nothing like this has been witnessed in living memory." They possessed their possession in the realm of revival.

There must be a going on to know die Lord. We can never get to die place where it will be impossible to possess more. I love to think of holiness as a continuous travelling between human emptiness and Divine fulness.

3. THE MOTIVE OF THE RESOLUTION: "We are well able." It was faith that gave to Caleb his fearlessness and valour. Genuine faith nerves die spirit for every enterprise. What is the ground of our confidence? Surely die promises of God.

Is my need heart purity? Then let me possess my possessions: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Is my need power? "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Faith and obedience will cause our possessions in Christ to become actual and real, so that holiness and power will characterize every part of our being - body, soul and spirit. This is where die supernatural element of sanctification comes in.

Let us get by the side of our mighty Joshua and face the challenge of 'Self' to die Spirit. It will mean facing and crossing the river, and that will not be easy. Sanctification costs to the extent of "an intense narrowing of all our interests on earth and an immense broadening of all our interests in God" (O. Chambers). Are we prepared for this?

"Then come to His feet and lay open your story  
Of sorrow, of suffering, of sin and of shame:  
For the cleansing from sin is the crown of His glory,  
And the joy of the Lord to be true to His Name".