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Book, it supplies invaluable material for an understanding of the scope and purpose of that portion of the Bible, as preliminary to a more careful study of its details in the weekly lessons that follow.

In these early summer days of school and college closing, there are sad hearts in the partings which are inevitable, as well as glad hearts over the longed-for hour of graduation. Pleasant friendships must be broken up; some of them never to be renewed. But all recognize the truth that it is best that even dearest friends should not remain always together at school. Are we as ready to see the better, brighter side of graduation from life's preparatory school? Death's "commencement" breaks many delightful friendships; but it marks the ending of school days, and the beginning of the real life for which all the school training was a mere preliminary.

There is no keener element of suffering in the punishment of a sinner, than the consciousness that, after all, he is his own worst enemy, and that it is his own hand that has brought down upon his head the evils from which he now vainly shrinks. And this is the case not with great sinners alone, but with all sinners. The best and the worst of us have alike reason to cry to the Lord of all, for salvation from ourselves; and to the worst as well as to the best is the Lord's answer ready: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." And in that help only can any one find the longed-for salvation and peace. Let us thank God that, however great our mistakes or our sins may be, we can find in him that "plentiful redemption" which is not of ourselves, and which none but he can give.

It is instructive, as well as amusing, to note how the currents of human thought repeat themselves century after century. Now that it is fashionable for callow thinkers of both sexes to affect "pessimism," and to declaim loudly on the utter hollowness of existence, while, at the same time, they manage to secure more of the comforts of life than fall to the lot of most others, it may be well to remind ourselves that pessimism is no new thing in the world's history. It is questionable if Schopenhauer or Hartmann were ever as thoroughly convinced of the vanity of life and its pleasures as was the author of Ecclesiastes; nor in modern pessimism do we hear a sadder note than that struck by the ancient Jewish rabbi, who held that it would have been better that man should never have been created; but that, being created, the best thing to do is to lead a noble life. Just here it does seem that the ancient doctrine has a superiority to the modern; where the modern pessimist finds in the evils of life an excuse for despair and inactivity, the author of Ecclesiastes, and the uninspired Jewish teacher, both found in them an added reason for fearing God and keeping his commandments. And modern pessimism cannot find a better cure for the evils of life, whether real or imaginary, than just that.

Who shall say what is a hindrance, and what is a help, to our life course, in the seeming accidents of our personal experience? Many a man owes his greatest successes to some enforced delay in his progress, or some unavoidable deflection from his pur-

posed path. He did not think of rejoicing, at the time, over that apparent hindrance; but he was grateful ever after that he was so helped thereby. It is said that De Lesseps, the distinguished French engineer, was once detained in the waters of the Mediterranean by a tedious and most unwelcome quarantine. It was hard for one of his active temperament to endure such confinement in inaction; but as he waited on the vessel's deck he read, and the book to which he then gave extra attention prompted him to the conception of the great Suez Canal, the subsequent execution of which made him famous, and was of service to all the world. Can it be supposed that he now regrets that he was held in quarantine, those dragging days? If only we would realize that we are constantly in the care, and under the guidance, of a loving and all-wise Father, we should be readier to believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God." We would not then complain of the providential interruptions to the work we have planned so confidently, or the providential barriers to the path along which we were pressing so vigorously. We should be even better able to perceive, in our greatest disappointments through the dealings of God with us, that "our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

FINDING ONE'S MISSION.

One of the most inspiring of truths is, that God has a distinct plan for each one of us, in sending us into this world. He designs each person for some particular purpose. He does not create us merely to fill any niche into which we may chance to fall, or to do whatever bit of work may drift to our hand in life's vicissitudes. There is a particular place in God's great plan which he designs us peculiarly to fill. There is a certain work in this world which it is the object of our creation that we should do.

Dr. Bushnell says: "There is a definite and proper end and issue for every man's existence; an end which to the heart of God is the good intended for him, or for which he was intended; that which he is privileged to become, called to become, ought to become; that which God will assist him to become, and which he cannot miss save by his own fault. Every human soul has a complete and perfect plan cherished for it in the heart of God—a divine biography, marked out, which it enters into life to live."

Surely this is a great thought, and one that gives to life, to each and every life,—the smallest, the obscurest,—a grand dignity. George Macdonald says: "I would rather be what God chose to make me than the most glorious creature that I could think of. For to have been thought about,—born in God's thought, and then made by God, is the dearest, grandest, and most precious thing in all thinking."

The question of small or great has no place here. To have been thought about at all, and then made by God to fill any place, is glory enough for the grandest and most aspiring life. It unquestionably is true, as was long ago said, that if God were to send two angels to earth, one to fill a throne and the other to clean a street, they would both regard their employments as equally honorable and important. The greatest thing any one can do in this world is what

Descriptions of notable living characters have an un-failing interest. When we know much of the public services of a man, we are glad to know more of him personally. Hence Mrs. Bolton's sketch of Three London Preachers is sure of appreciative readers.

As a rule, we are far readier to ask God for what we want than to thank him for what we have. Our prayers are commonly more specific in their petitions than in their acknowledgments. Dr. Wilkinson has a timely and forceful word about the duty and the privilege of giving thanks always and in all things.

Whatever else is neglected in plans for a summer absence from home, a Sunday-school teacher must not neglect a proper provision for his scholars. He must arrange for a substitute in his place, or for correspondence with the scholars personally; or for both. His duty in their behalf is rather greater than less from his being away from them.

There is help to the ordinary teacher, as well as to the exceptionally furnished one, in Dr. Green's Introduction to the Book of Joshua, which we give to our readers this week. Taken in conjunction with his Critical Notes on the opening verses of that

A LESSON LEARNED.

BY G. M.

"Thy will be done." The broken words fell slow,
For I was weary of the harrowing strife—
My bleeding heart lay quivering from the blow,
And, "All was lost except a little life"—
As suddenly, at crimson set of sun,
I bowed—and, panting, sobbed, "Thy will be done!"

Once more, the Reaper walked amid the grain—
(The yellow bending grain of hope grown strong!)
And reaped my life's joys with the scythe of pain,
While I sat by and wept! The hours were long,
But, ere the last pink cloud had westward flown,
I meekly knelt, and sighed, "Thy will be done!"

He came once more! But I had slowly learned
The God-love that must smite—if it would save;
And though the tears fell, and the spirit yearned,
I sat and smiled, beside my dead hope's grave!
And looked away from earth—up to God's throne,
And gladly, truly cried, "Thy will be done!"

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM H. GREEN, D.D., LL.D.

The book of Joshua contains the sacred history from the death of Moses (1: 1) to the death of Joshua (24: 29) and that of his contemporary and associate, the high-priest Eleazar (v. 33). It does not aim, however, to give a full account of all that befell the children of Israel during this interval, nor even a complete biography of Joshua. The principal events related in the book occurred within about seven years after the crossing of the Jordan (14: 7-10), as appears by deducting the thirty-eight years spent in the wilderness from the forty-five years which had elapsed since the mission of the spies. After this, "a long time" (28: 1) passed before Joshua reached the advanced age to which he attained; and of this nothing is recorded but two addresses made by Joshua to assemblies of the people. Just how long this time was we have no means of estimating. Josephus supposes it to have been eighteen years. If Joshua and Caleb were of the same age, it would be twenty-five years. Compare 14: 10 and 24: 29. The silence of the history respecting this interval does not warrant us in concluding that the historian had no knowledge of what took place at that time. It is sufficiently explained by the assumption that he was writing with a definite purpose, and, accordingly, he only inserted what it fell within his plan to relate.

The sacred history is never a mere annalistic record. It traces the development of God's earthly kingdom and the progress of his scheme of grace. Events, which have no bearing upon this theme, however interesting they might be from other points of view, do not come within the scope of the Bible narrative. The long residence of Israel in Egypt, and thirty-eight out of the forty years' wandering in the desert, contributed nothing to the purpose for which the history was written. The silence of the historian respecting them creates no gap or unaccountable break in the narrative. It merely shows the steadfastness with which the plan adopted was adhered to. So with the unrecorded interval in the life of Joshua.

This book records God's gift of Canaan to Israel in fulfillment of the promises made to their fathers; and it strictly limits itself to this theme. It is divisible into four parts.

I. The preliminaries to the conquest, chapters 1-5. Including God's summons to Joshua to act as leader in place of Moses, and the preparations for crossing the river, chapter 1; the mission of the spies, chapter 2; the actual passage of the Jordan, chapters 3, 4; the renewal of circumcision and observance of the passover, by which the people, who had so long been under the divine sentence, were again formally reinstated in covenant relation to God, chapter 5.

II. The conquest of the land, chapters 6-12. The miraculous overthrow of Jericho, chapter 6; the trespass of Achan, resulting in a temporary check, chapter 7; the capture of Ai, and erection of the altar at Ebal, chapter 8; the defeat of the five kings and subjugation of the south, chapter 10; the defeat of Jabin and the allied kings in the north, resulting in the subjugation of the whole land, chapter 11; the recapitulation of the kings and districts subdued by Moses and by Joshua on both sides of the Jordan, chapter 12.

III. The division of the land, chapters 13-22. Embracing the territory, assigned by Moses to the two tribes and a half east of Jordan, chapter 13; the lot of Judah,

and the special portion given to Caleb in that tribe, chapters 14, 15; the lot of Ephraim, chapter 16; and of Manasseh, chapter 17; then of the seven remaining tribes, chapters 18, 19; the appointment of cities of refuge, chapter 20; the forty-eight cities assigned to the Levites, chapter 21; and, the conquest and apportionment being now complete, the return of the two tribes and a half to their own possessions east of the Jordan, chapter 22.

IV. Two final addresses by Joshua, and the record of his death, chapters 23, 24. In these addresses he recites the evidences of God's fidelity to his engagements in giving Israel the land, and endeavors to engage the people to fidelity to God's service.

From 5: 1, 6, it appears that the writer of this book was present at the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, and participated in the conquest of the land of Canaan. This is further corroborated by the fact that Rahab (6: 25), and Caleb (14: 14) were still living when the book was written; and that the state of things then existing differed in several particulars from what is known to have been the case in later times. The Canaanites were not yet expelled from Gezer (16: 10), as was done in the beginning of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 9: 16); nor from Jerusalem (15: 63), as was done by David (2 Sam. 5: 6, 7). The Zidonians are included among the nations to be driven out (13: 6), and the epithet "great," applied to Zidon, implies that it was then the metropolis of the region; but by David's time Tyre had risen to be the dominant city, and so far from planning their subjugation, David entered into a friendly alliance with them (2 Sam. 5: 11, 1 Kings 5: 1). No place has yet been selected for the permanent location of the sanctuary (9: 27), as was done in the time of David (Psa. 78: 68, 1 Chron. 22: 1). Nob had become a city of priests by the time of Saul (1 Sam. 22: 19), but is not included among them in the book of Joshua. The Levitical cities were not precisely the same as in later times (chap. 21: comp. 1 Chron. 6: 54, f.), nor the cities of Simeon the same as in the reign of David (19: 1, f.). Compare 1 Chronicles 4: 28-31. Ai, which still lay in ruins (8: 28), had been restored before the time of Isaiah (10: 28). The phrase "beyond Jordan" is commonly used in the Old Testament to describe the territory east of the Jordan, as lying on the other side of the river from Palestine proper. But in the book of Joshua, as in the Pentateuch, it is used of the region to the west (5: 1; 12: 7; 22: 7), as well as of that to the east, of the river (1: 15; 12: 1; 13: 8). ("On this side" and "on the other side" in these passages represents the same Hebrew word, which properly means "beyond.") This is readily explicable from the circumstances of the time, though it would not be so easy to account for it at a later period. The people had lately been encamped east of Jordan, where it would be natural not only to designate that side of the river as "beyond Jordan" from Palestine, but also to speak of Palestine itself as "beyond Jordan" from the place where they were.

The passages, which have been alleged to indicate a later date for the book, really require no such conclusion. The distinction between the mountains of Judah and those of Israel (11: 16-21) do not imply that the schism of Jeroboam had already taken place (1 Kings 12: 20). For in the division of the land Judah first received his inheritance in the south (15: 1). The rest of Israel was encamped at Shiloh, awaiting the further division, which there was great delay in accomplishing (18: 1, 2). The mountains in the territory of Judah might then be naturally called the mountains of Judah; and those where the camp of Israel was located, the mountains of Israel. The mention of Jerusalem (10: 1, etc.; 12: 10; 15: 63) proves nothing; for the allegation that the city first received that name after its conquest by David, is destitute of proof. The mention of Havoth-jair, or the towns of Jair (13: 30) does not imply a date subsequent to the judge of that name (Judg. 10: 3, 4), for they were so called after a Jair of the time of Moses (Num. 32: 41; Deut. 3: 4, 14), though the name received a fresh sanction from his descendant and namesake in the time of the judges. The citation from the book of Jasher, or, rather, "the book of the upright" (10: 13), from which David's lament over Saul is likewise quoted (2 Sam. 1: 18), only proves that this collection of poems, celebrating the deeds of upright men or of God's distinguished servants, was gradually formed, or was enlarged by additions from time to time. It already existed in the days of Joshua, and contained, among other things, an ode commemorative of his victory at Gibeon. Subsequently David's poem was incorporated with it; but the book itself dated from a much earlier period. The repeated statement that such and such things continue "unto this day," does not imply a record

long posterior to the occurrences themselves. In some instances the time must have been brief from the nature of the case; and there is no instance in which the lapse of a few years is not sufficient to account for the use of the expression. The alleged discrepancies in statement or diversities of style and diction in different parts of the book are susceptible of ready explanation, and neither invalidate its truth and accuracy, nor require the assumption of a diversity of writers.

Near the close of the book, after the record of the last public transaction in which Joshua was engaged, it is said (24: 26): "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God." This can only mean the volume written by Moses and committed by him to the custody of the Levites (Deut. 31: 24, f.), and which is explicitly referred to (1: 7, 8). To this authoritative standard of faith and duty, thus sacredly guarded, Joshua added "these words." If this expression is intended to cover the entire antecedent portion of the book, then it is here distinctly declared that the book was written by Joshua. If "these words" denote only the closing address of Joshua, it is declared that he wrote that address in the book of the law of God, which seems to imply in view of the unity of plan, and probably also of authorship of this book, that the preceding chapters which we also find annexed to the book of the law of God, are likewise to be attributed to him. And this appears to find some confirmation in the fact that in the account of Joshua's death, with which the book ends (24: 29), and which must of course have been written by another, the honorary epithet, "the servant of the LORD," is applied to him, though it is nowhere attached to his name in the previous part of the book (compare Deut. 33: 1; 34: 5).

The principal thing which casts doubt upon Joshua's authorship of this book, is that some of the facts recorded in it would seem to have taken place after his death. The book of Judges, which opens with the words, "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass," etc., relates some things which are plainly identical with statements made in the book of Joshua. Such parallels as 13: 2-5 (compare Judg. 3: 3, 15: 63; also Judg. 1: 8, 21, 16: 10; also Judg. 1: 29, 17: 17; also Judg. 1: 27, 28) prove nothing. There is more apparent difficulty in the account (15: 13-19) of Caleb's taking possession of the territory assigned to him, which is found again *verbatim* Judges 1: 10-15, and 19: 47, the expedition from the tribe of Dan, which is related in fuller detail Judges 18. In view of these facts many have drawn the conclusion that the author of the book could not have been Joshua, but must have been some contemporary and survivor otherwise unknown, who included in his narrative Joshua's own account of the last public assembly in which he met with the people. If, however, the statement that "Joshua wrote these words" is understood to mean more than this, it must be assumed either that a few facts related in Judges are exceptions to the general tenor of its contents, and occurred in Joshua's lifetime, or that the few verses in the book of Joshua, in which the incidents in question are mentioned, were added subsequently by some inspired man to complete the record, just as the notice of Joshua's death and that of Eleazar was added at the end for the same purpose.

SAY GRACE.

BY WILLIAM C. WILKINSON, D.D.

"Saying grace" is a form of words sometimes used as an alternative expression for "giving thanks." "Asking a blessing" is a third phrase for the same thing. The same thing, but the same thing differently conceived. To "ask a blessing" is to invoke favor from God. To "give thanks" is to acknowledge favor from God. To "say grace" is, I suppose, a Latinized equivalent for to "give thanks;" "grace," in this use, standing for *gratias*, Latin for "thanks."

These phrases are, in customary use, all of them appropriated to a particular occasion, that of partaking food. We ask a blessing at table, we say grace, or give thanks, at table. An old usage, and a good one, did both,—asked a blessing before, and said grace or gave thanks after, the meal.

However, it is not the phrase, but the thing, that I now wish to speak of.

The thing is very common, but it is not yet common enough. I would have the habit of giving thanks at meals not simply common, but universal; that is, among Christians. But this is no limitation, for I would have everybody a Christian.

If I were a Christian preacher, as I once was and as I would have chosen always to be, and if I desired to enforce the duty of observing a daily season of family