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Deuteronomy—Call to Obedience

The common theme of Deuteronomy is a call to obedience. The stress is both on what and why we should walk in obedience to the Lord.

Other Helpful links

Matthew Henry's Commentary

<http://www.ccel.org/h/henry/mhc2/MHC04000.HTM>

David Guzik's Commentary on

<http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/05.html>

Daily Bible Study

Thursday, May 25, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 7**

Quick Notes

- Sacred stones, or pillars, were associated with male deities (7:5). Asherah poles were wooden symbols of the female deity Asherah.
- Lest the Israelites should become proud of being in such a select and favored position, God went on to remind them of the nature of his love (7:7–8) and of their responsibility to him (7:9–11).

Questions to Ponder

What reasons or motives does God give us in this chapter for obedience?
How does God describe the “specialness” that is His people’s in this chapter? How does this describe the church...you...today?
How does God cut off the pride that could rise within them because of their special position with Him? How does this apply today?
What responsibilities does God call His people to because they are His special people?

Daily Bible Study

Friday, May 26, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 8**

Quick Notes

“Remember! Don’t forget!” When they finally enter the land and enjoy its bounty, Israel must not forget the God who gave it to them. Nine times in Deuteronomy Israel is warned not to forget God’s faithfulness (4:9, 23, 31; 6:12; 8:11, 14, 19; 9:7; 25:19). Forgetfulness has been a problem among God’s children throughout history.

Questions to Ponder

How many of God’s commandments are to be followed? Why?

Why did God test them? Was it for God to “discover” what was in their hearts...or for God to help them to discover their hearts? Why? How does this apply today in the way God works in our lives?

How does God say that wealth is a test?

What is the basic warning of Chapter

Daily Bible Study

Saturday, May 27, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 9**

Quick Notes

- Self-confident people who failed: A wealthy farmer (Lu 12:13–21). A courageous apostle (Mat 26:31–35). A mighty ruler (Dan. 4). A satisfied church (Rev 3:14–22). Some businessmen (Jam 4:13–17).
- All those people failed. They apparently did not take these words to heart: “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Prov. 26:12).

Questions to Ponder

God reminds them in this chapter why they got the promised land. What are some of the reasons that God points out in this chapter? God also tells them what things were not the reasons. What are these? What is the danger that God is seeking to deal with here in His people? Why is this so dangerous? How does this apply to us today?

Daily Bible Study

Sunday, May 28, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 10**

Quick Notes

Questions to Ponder

How does God sum up what He is looking for from His people in this chapter?

How does God call them and us to respond to what God requires of us?
Why, what hinders us from this?

What does this chapter show us about God and who He is as it also tells us what He requires of us?

Daily Bible Study

Monday, May 29, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 11**

Quick Notes

- What God did (1–7)
- What God asks (8–21)
- What God promises (22–32)

Questions to Ponder

See if you can take the outline given above in the Quick notes and fill it in—what is it God did? Asks? Promises?
How is the land of Israel, different than the land of Egypt? How does this apply to our lives spiritually?

Daily Bible Study

Tuesday, May 30, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 12**

Quick Notes

Questions to Ponder

As we think about approaching and worshipping God—consider what this chapter teaches you:

What things were they to destroy? Why? What might this refer to in our world and in our lives today?

What are they to seek and to build? How does that work practically today?

What were they no longer to do? Why?

Daily Bible Study

Wednesday, May 31, 2006



Passage for today: **Deuteronomy 13**

Quick Notes

In Moses' day, as in our day, some people who claimed to have miraculous gifts were not faithful to the Lord. The test is not the person's ability to perform miracles, for even Satan can do that (2 Cor. 11:13–15; 2 Thess. 2:9–12), but his or her fidelity to the truth of God. Any leader who tempts us away from the Lord and His Word is an enemy and must be rejected

Questions to Ponder

If someone really works a miracle, does that mean they are representing God? Why or why not?

What is the standard of deciding if someone is from God, if a work is from God?

How serious of an issue is this? Why? How do we apply this today?

Little by Little

“The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.” Deuteronomy 7:22

God promises His people victory and that is exciting. He promises it in the Old Testament and He promises it to us in the New Testament as well. There is great joy in realizing that nothing can stand against the Lord—that no enemy or thing can resist His work in us.

Yet, one thing we need to have clear—is the process He has designed for that victory. God tells us it will be won little by little – in increments. I want you to think about that and understand—that is not what we want or what we are often seeking for. What we want is an overnight fix, a transforming experience so that we can perhaps pray a single prayer and be changed. We long for that “silver bullet” that will change everything. We prefer the overnight, instant elimination of all our problems, but that’s not how victory occurs in the Christian life.

Yes, an immediate work occurs inwardly the moment we embrace Christ, but the working out of what God works in takes time. It occurs little by little, and along the way valuable lessons are learned, and a maturity develops. Be patient! Don’t be discouraged that it is a process...just make sure you are on the upward process!

*But the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. (Pr 4:18)*

We need to Hate it

Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing. (Deut 7:26)

Did you know the Bible teaches us to “hate”? Yes it does, so much so—that I believe the one who seeks to “love everything” - is way out of touch with the heart of God.

God tells us we need to hate....sin! We need to detest and abhor anything sinful. Having things sinful in our lives or in our homes should disgust us and drive us to do something about it.

Evangelist Billy Sunday once said: “I’m against sin. I’ll kick it as long as I’ve got a foot, and I’ll fight it as long as I’ve got a fist. I’ll butt it as long as I’ve got a head. I’ll bite it as long as I’ve got a tooth. When I’m old and fistless and footless and toothless, I’ll gum it till I go home to glory and it goes home to perdition!”

Think about it this way—it is said of Jesus that He “loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (Heb 1:9)

The place of real joy is in loving the right things and hating the wrong things. Wise is the person who looks at the things that they have in their possession and allows God to show them what He wants and what He does not want—what He loves and what He hates. Then such a wise person would join God in hating the wrong things...and would purge their lives and homes of such things. May God work such a work in our lives!

Deuteronomy 17:19
PROFITABLE READING

"he shall read therein all the days of his life" Deuteronomy 17:19

Some of the greatest scholars in the world have stated without apology that no man's education can be complete without an acquaintance with the Bible. Not only are its contents of inestimable value, but its very literary perfection and beauty are also worthy of our special attention and admiration. If we are to know this Book, it goes without saying that we must be willing to read and study it faithfully. No man can master any subject without diligent effort, concentration, and application. Much of the criticism laid against the Scriptures has come from those who have never studied it, much less even read it through.

A certain Bible teacher, boarding a train, found a seat next to a man who was diligently reading his newspaper. Opening his briefcase the preacher took out his Bible and began to read. The gentleman with the newspaper, glancing out of the corner of his eye, saw this unusual sight and his curiosity was aroused. Finally he said, "Pardon me, Sir, are you a minister?" "Yes, I am," said the man, and began talking to his questioner about the Bible. He explained some of the mysteries of that wonderful Book and its marvelous doctrines and revelations until the other exclaimed in amazement, "How in the world did you ever learn so much about that Book?" The Bible teacher simply replied, "I certainly did not get it by reading the daily newspaper!" Now, we should know what's going on in the world today. But I am concerned over the amount of time that is taken up in reading our newspapers, magazines, and periodicals as compared with the Bible.

By the way, how much time do you spend in spiritual meditation each day? How diligently do you study God's Word? Upon your answer will depend your knowledge of the Scriptures and the Man of the Book, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In my soul, in my soul,
Send a great revival;
Teach me how to watch and pray,
And to read my Bible!—Anon.

Canaan on Earth

A Sermon

(No. 58)

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 30, 1855, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

*"For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."—*Deuteronomy 11:10-12.

THAS generally been considered, that the passage of the Jordan by the Israelites is typical of death, and that Canaan is a fitting representation of heaven. We believe that in some sense it is true, and we do fondly cherish the household words of those hymns which describe our passing through Jordan's billows, and landing safe on Canaan's side; but we do think that the allegory does not hold, and that Jordan is not a fair exhibition of death, nor the land of Canaan a fair picture of the sweet land beyond the swelling flood which the Christian gains after death. For mark you, after the children of Israel had entered into Canaan, they had to fight with their enemies. It was a land filled with foes. Every city they entered they had to take by storm, unless a miracle dismantled it. They were warriors, even in the land of Canaan, fighting for their own inheritance; and though each tribe had its lot marked out, yet they had to conquer the giant Anakim, and encounter terrible hosts of Canaanites.

But when we cross the river of death we shall have no foes to fight, no enemies to encounter. Heaven is a place already prepared for us; out of it the evil ones have long ago been driven; there brethren shall await us with pleasing faces, kind hands shall clasp ours, and loving words shall alone be heard. The shout of war shall ne'er be raised by us in heaven; we shall throw our swords away, and the scabbards with them. No battles with warriors there, no plains besoaked with blood, no hills where robbers dwell, no inhabitants

with chariots of iron. It is "a land flowing with milk and honey;" and it dreams not of the foeman of Canaan of old.

We think the church has lost the beauty of Scripture, in taking Jordan to mean death, and that a far fuller meaning is the true allegory to be connected with it. Egypt, as we have lately observed to you, was typical of the condition of the children of God while they are in bondage to the law of sin. There they are made to work unceasingly, without wages or profit, but continually subject to pains. We said, again, that the coming up out of Egypt was the type of the deliverance which every one of God's people enjoys, when by faith he strikes the blood of Jesus on his lintel and his doorpost, and spiritually eats the paschal lamb; and we can also tell you now, that the passage through the wilderness is typical of that state of hoping, and fearing, and doubting, and wavering, and inconstancy, and distrust, which we usually experience between the period when we come out of Egypt, and attain unto the full assurance of faith. Many of you, my dear hearers, are really come out of Egypt; but you are still wandering about in the wilderness. "We that have believed do enter into rest;" but you, though you have eaten of Jesus, have not so believed on him as to have entered into the Canaan of rest. You are the Lord's people, but you have not come into the Canaan of assured faith, confidence, and hope, where we wrestle no longer with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus—when it is no longer a matter of doubt with us whether we shall be saved, but we feel that we are saved. I have known believers who have existed for years almost without a doubt as to their acceptance. They have enjoyed a sweet and blessed reliance on Christ; they have come into Canaan; they have fed on the good old corn of the land; they now "lie passive in his hand, and know no will but his." They have such a sweet oneness with their blessed Lord Jesus, that they lay their head on his breast all day long, and they have scarcely any nights; they almost always live in days; for though they have not attained unto his perfect image, they feel themselves so manifestly in union with himself that they cannot and dare not doubt. They have entered into rest; they are come into Canaan. Such is the condition of the child of God, when he has come to an advanced stage in his experience, when God has so given him grace upon grace that he can say, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

We will read this passage again; and bear in mind what I understand it to mean. It sets before the Christian's state, after he has attained to this faith and confidence in God; when he is no longer careful about the things of this life, when he does not water the ground with his foot, but has come to a land that drinketh in the rain of heaven. "The land whither thou goest in to possess it,"—the land of high and holy Christian privilege—"is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." We shall have this morning to note, first of all, the difference between the Christian's temporal condition and that of the Egyptian worldling; and secondly, the special privilege vouchsafed to those who have entered into Canaan—that the eyes of the Lord their God are always upon their land, "from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."

I. True religion makes a difference not only in a man, but in a man's condition; it affects not only his heart, but his state—not only his nature, but his very standing in society. The Lord thy God cares not only for Israel, but for Canaan, where Israel dwells. God has not only a regard to the elect, but to their habitation, and not only so, but to all their affairs and circumstances. The moment I become a child of God, not only is my heart changed and my nature renewed, but my very position becomes different; the very beasts of the field are in league with me, and the stones thereof are at peace. My habitation is now guarded by Jehovah; my position in this world is no longer that of a needy mendicant—I have become a gentleman-pensioner on the providence of God; my position, which was that of a bondsman in Egypt, is now become that of an inheritor in Canaan. In this difference of the condition of the Christian and the worldling, we shall mark three things.

First, the Christian's temporal condition is different to that of the worldling; for the worldling looks to secondary causes, the Christian looks to heaven; he gets his mercies thence. Read the text, "The land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and

wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs." The land of Egypt has never had any rain from heaven; it has been always watered from earthly sources. At a certain season the river Nile overflowed its banks, and covered the land; a stock of water was then accumulated in artificial reservoirs, and afterwards let out in canals, and allowed to run in little trenches through the fields. They had to water it as a garden of herbs. All their dependence was on the nether springs; they looked to the river Nile as the source of all their plenty, and even worshipped it. But the land to which you are coming is not watered from a river; "it drinketh water of the rain of heaven." Your fertility shall not come from such artificial sources as canals and trenches; you shall be fed from the water that descends from heaven! You see how beautifully this pictures a worldling and a Christian. Look at the worldling; what is his dependence? It is all upon the water below; he looks only to the water that flows from the river of this world. "Who will show us any good?" Some rely upon what they call chance—(a river the source of which, like the source of the Nile, is never known;) and though continually disappointed, they still persevere in trusting to this unknown stream. Others, who are more sensible, trust to their hard work and honesty; they look to the source of that river, and they trace it to a fountain of human erection graced by a statue of labour. Ah! that river may yet fail you; it may not overflow its banks, and you may be starved. But, O Christian, what doest thou rely upon? Thy land "drinketh water of the rain of heaven;" thy mercies come not from the hand of chance; thy daily bread cometh not so much from thy industry as from thy heavenly Father's care; thou seest stamped upon every mercy heaven's own inscription, and every blessing comes down to thee perfumed with the ointment and spikenard, and the myrrh of the ivory palaces, whence God dispenses his bounties. Here is the difference between the assured Christian and the mere worldling: the one trusts to natural causes—the other "looks through nature up to nature's God." and seeth his mercies as coming down fresh from heaven.

Beloved, let us improve this thought, by showing you the great value of it. Do you know a man who sees his mercies coming from heaven, and not from earth? How much sweeter all his mercies are! There is nothing in the world that tastes as sweet to the school-boy as that which comes from home. Those who live at the school may make him ever such good things, but he cares nothing for anything

like that which comes from home. So will the Christian. All his mercies are sweeter because they are home-mercies. I love God's favours on earth; for everything I eat and drink tastes of home. And oh! how sweet to think, "That bread, my Father's hand moulded; that water, my Father droppeth out from his hand in the gentle rain." I can see everything coming from his hand. The land in which I live is not like the land of Egypt, fed by a river; but it "drinketh water of the rain of heaven." All my mercies come from above. Don't you like, beloved, to see the print of your Father's fingers on every mercy? You have heard of the haddock having the mark of the thumb of Peter on it! It is a fiction, of course; but I am sure all the fish that we get out of the sea of providence are marked by Jesus' fingers. Happy the lot of that man who receives everything as coming from God, and thanks his Father for it all! It makes anything sweet, when he knows it comes from heaven. This thought, again, has a great tendency to keep us from an overweening love of the world. If we think that all our mercies come from heaven, we shall not be so likely to love the world, as we shall be if we think that they are the natural products of the soil. The spies went to Eschol, and fetched thence an immense cluster of the grapes which grew there; but you do not find that the people said, "These are fine fruits, therefore we will stay here." No: they saw that the grapes came from Canaan, and thereupon they said, "Let us go on, and possess them." And so, when we get rich mercies, if we think they come from the natural soil of this earth, we feel,

"Here I will for ever stay."

But if we know that they come from a foreign clime, we are
anxious to go

"Where our dear Lord his vineyard keeps,
And all the clusters grow."

Christian, then, rejoice, rejoice! Thy mercies come from heaven; however small they be, still they are thy Father's gift; not one comes to thee without his knowledge, and his permission. Bless the Lord, therefore, that thou art come to Canaan; where thy "land drinketh water of the rain of heaven!"

My dearly beloved, just stop here, and console yourselves, if you are in trouble. "Oh!" says one, "I know not what I shall do: where

to turn myself I cannot tell." You are not like your brother, who is sitting near you; he has a competency; he has a river of Egypt to depend on; you have not any; nevertheless, there is the sky still. If you were to tell a farmer, "You have no rivers to water your lands." "Well," he would say, "I don't want them either; for I have clouds up there, and the clouds are enough." So, Christian, if thou hast nothing to depend on down below, turn thine eyes up there, and say, "The land, whither I go in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence I came out, where I sowed my seed, and watered it with my foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither I go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven."

2. But now comes the second distinction, and that is, a difference in the toilsomeness of their lives. The worldly man, just like the Israelites in Egypt, has to water his land with his foot. Read the passage:—"For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs." This alludes, possibly to the practice, amongst all eastern nations where the land is irrigated, of letting out a certain quantity of water into a trench, and then having small gutters dug in the gardens, to compel the water to run along different parts of the ground. Sometimes one of these gutters might be broken; and then the gardener would press the mould against it with his foot, to keep the water in its proper channel. But I have inclined to think that the passage alludes to the method which those eastern countries have of pumping up the water by a tread-wheel, and so watering the land with their foot. However that may be, it means that the land of Egypt was watered with extraordinary labour, in order to preserve it from sterility. "But," says Moses, "the land, to which ye are going, is not a land which you will have to water with your foot. The water will come spontaneously; the land will be watered by the rain of heaven. You can sit in your own houses, or under your own vine, or under your own fig tree, and God himself shall be your irrigator. You shall sit still, and 'in quietness shall ye possess your souls.'" Now, here is a difference between the godly and ungodly:—the ungodly man toils. Suppose his object is ambition; he will labor and labor, and labor, and spend his very life, until he obtains the desire pinnacle. Suppose it is wealth; how will he emaciate his frame, rob his body of its needed sleep, and take away the nourishment his frame

requires, in order that he may accumulate riches! And if it is learning, how will he burn his eyes out with the flame of his hot desire, that he may understand all knowledge; how will he allow his frame to become weak, and weary, and wan, by midnight watchings, till the oil wherewith he lighteth himself by night comes from his own flesh, and the marrow of his bones furnisheth the light for his spirit! Men will in this way labour, and toil, and strive. But not so the Christian. No: God "giveth his beloved sleep." His "strength is to sit still." He knows what it is to fulfil the command of Paul:—"I would have you without carefulness." We can take things as God gives them, without all this toil and labour.

I have often admired the advice of old Cineas to Pyrrhus. Old story saith, that when Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making preparation for his intended expedition into Italy, Cineas, the philosopher, took a favourable opportunity of addressing him thus: "The Romans, sir, are reported to be a warlike and victorious people; but if God permit us to overcome them, what use shall we make of the victory?" "Thou askest," said Pyrrhus, "a thing that is self-evident. The Romans once conquered, no city will resist us; we shall then be masters of all Italy." Cineas added—"And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?" Pyrrhus not yet aware of his intentions, replied, "Sicily next stretches out her arms to receive us." "That is very probable," said Cineas, "but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?" "God grant us success in that," answered Pyrrhus, "and we shall make these only the forerunners of greater things, for then Libya and Carthage will soon be ours: and these things being completed, none of our enemies can offer any further resistance." "Very true," added Cineas, "for then we may easily regain Macedon, and make absolute conquest of Greece; and when all these are in our possession, what shall we do then?" Pyrrhus, smiling, answered, "Why then, my dear friend, we will live at our ease, take pleasure all day, and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation." "Well sir," said Cineas, "and why may we not do this now, and without the labour and hazard of an enterprise so laborious and uncertain?"

So, beloved, says the Christian. The worldly mans says, "Let me go and do this; let me go and do that; let me accumulate so many thousand pounds; let me get so rich; then I will enjoy myself and take my ease." "Nay," says the Christian, "I see no reason for doing

it; why should I not make God my refuge now? Why should I not enjoy comfort and peace, and make myself happy now?" He does not want to water his land with his feet; but he sits down quietly, and his land "drinketh in water of the rain of heaven." Do not say I am preaching laziness. No such thing: I am only saying it is vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." But, if "he giveth his beloved sleep," they rest in him; they know not these toils; that is, if they have attained to full assurance, and crossed into the Canaan of full confidence in God. They do not care to go ranging the world to find their happiness; but they say, "God is my ever present help; in him my soul is satisfied." They rest content in him. Their land is watered with the rain of heaven.

I remember a story of a young man who was a lawyer. In order to attain fame in his position he was extremely anxious to understand all the mysteries and tortuous windings of the law, and to acquire some power of oratory, that he might be able to deliver himself eloquently before the bench. For ten years did he live apart from other people, lest domestic habits should wean him from his studies; he wrapped himself every night in a blanket, and took one of his own volumes, and put it under his head; he denied himself food, eating only so many morsels a day, lest indigestion should impair his powers. Although he was an infidel, he believed in God; and he bowed his head so many times a day, and prayed that he might lose anything rather than his intellectual powers. "Make a giant of me!"—that was his expression. And although his poor mother begged him to make himself more comfortable, he would not, but persisted in his course of abstemiousness and self-denial. One day, in reading one of his books, he saw this passage: "When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost!" He stamped his foot, and raved like a maniac at the thought, that he had spent all these ten years, toiling and wearying himself for nothing; he saw the vanity of his course; he was driven to desperation, seized his axe, cut down the sign-board of his profession, and said, "Here ends this business." Turning to the same book, he found that it recommended Christianity as the rest of the weary soul; he found it in Christ, and attained to such an understanding of Christ, that he became a preacher of the gospel, and might well have preached on this text—"The land whither thou

goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh the water of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

3. This brings us to the third and last difference that we will note this morning; and that is, that the unbeliever, he who has not crossed the Jordan and come to full confidence, does not understand the universality of God's providence, while the assured Christian does. You will see that in my text in a minute. In Egypt the ground is almost entirely flat; and where it is not flat, it is impossible, of course, to grow anything, unless the ground is watered at considerable difficulty by some method of artificial irrigation, which shall force the water on to the high places. "But," says Moses, "the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys." The Egyptians could not get the water up on the hills, but you can; for the mountains drink in the rain, as well as the valleys. Now look at a worldling. Give him comforts, give him prosperity: oh! he can be so happy. Give him everything just as he likes it; make his course all a plain, all a dead valley and a flat; he can fertilize that, and water it; but let him have a mountainous trouble, let him lose a friend, or let his property be taken from him—put a hill in his way, and he cannot water that, with all the pumping of his feet, and all the force he strives to use. But the Christian lives in "a land of hills and valleys;" a land of sorrow as well as joys; but the hills drink the water, as well as the valleys. We need not climb the mountains to water their heads, for our God is as high as the hills. High as our troubles, and mountainous as are our difficulties sometimes, we need not climb up with weary foot to make them fertile, for they are all made to work together for our good. Go, Egyptian; live thou in thy flat country, and enjoy its luxuries; thou hast thy papyrus, and thou writest mercies upon it, but it shall be the food of worms; we have no lotus, but we have a flower that blooms in paradise; and we write our mercies on rocks, and not on rushes. Oh! sweet Canaan, heavenly land, where I dwell, and where you dwell, my brother Christians—a land which "drinketh water of the rain of heaven!"

II. We must consider a little time, THE SPECIAL MERCY. "The eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." WE must now turn away altogether from the allegoric, and come to this special mercy, which is the lot only of God's people.

"The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year:" that is, upon the lot of all Christians individually. We have come now, beloved, to the end of another year—to the threshold of another period of time, and have marched another year's journey through the wilderness. Come, now! In reading this verse over, can you say Amen to it? "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon you, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Some of you say, "I have had deep troubles this year." "I have lost a friend," says one. "Ah!" says another, "I have been impoverished this year." "I have been slandered," cries another. "I have been exceedingly vexed and grieved," says another. "I have been persecuted," says another. Well, but, beloved, take the year altogether—the blacks and the whites, the troubles and the joys, the hills and the valleys altogether, and what have you to say about it? You may say, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Do not pick out one day in the year, and say it was a bad day, but take all the year round, let it revolve in all its grandeur; let all the signs of the Zodiac come before you. Do not say, "I have been in Cancer so long a time," but run through them all, and then get into Libra, and judge between things that differ; and then what will you say? "Ah! bless the Lord! he hath done all things well; my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" And you know why all things have been well. It is because the eyes of the Lord have been upon you all the year. Oh! if those awful eyes had been shut for a single moment, by night or day, where should we have been? Why, we had not been at all but swept away, like airy dreams, into nihility. God watches over every one of his people, just as if there were only that one in the world; and he has been watching over you, so that when a trouble came, God said, "Trouble, avaunt!" "There shall no temptation happen to you but such as is common to man." And when your joys would have cloyed upon you, and around you, God has said, "Stand back, joy! I will not have you fondle him too much; he will be deceived by thee." "The eyes of the

Lord" have been upon you continually, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." "Well," says one, "I cannot say so much of my year." Then I cannot say so much of you. I was speaking to the Christian; and if you cannot say of your year, "surely goodness and mercy have followed it all," I am afraid you are not a child of God, for methinks a child of God will say, when he reviews it all, "not one good thing hath failed of all the Lord God hath promised, but all hath come to pass."

Then, my brethren, might I not say a word to you concerning the eyes of the Lord having been upon us as a church? Ought we to let this year pass without rehearsing the works of the Lord? Hath he not been with us exceeding abundantly, and prospered us? It is during this year that we met together in the great assembly—during this year that these eyes have seen the mighty gatherings of men who listened to our words on the Sabbath-day. We shall not soon forget our sojourn in Exeter Hall—shall we? During those months the Lord brought in many of his own elect, and multitudes who were unsaved up to that time were called by divine mercy, and brought into the fold. How God protected us there! What peace and prosperity hath he given to us! How hath he enlarged our borders, and multiplied our numbers, so that we are not few, and increased us, so that we are not weak! I do think we were not thankful enough for the goodness of the Lord which carried us there, and gave us so many who have now become useful to use in our church! Remember in how many places ye have worshipped God this year. This place has been enlarged, so that more can be held within its walls; now we can receive more to listen to the voice of the Gospel than we could before; and God seems to say, "Go, forward, go forward still." The goodness of the Lord has increased as we have gone along. I have often feared, lest the people should desert the house, and that when we made it larger we should not have enough to fill it: but the Lord still sends an overwhelming congregation, and still gives us grace to preach his gospel. How thankful should we be! Surely, "the eyes of the Lord" have been upon this church, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." We have had peace: not a rotten peace, I trust, but the peace of God. Nothing has arisen that should disturb our equanimity. The church has been kept by the grace of God faithful to the doctrines of grace. Ah! what a blessing it is, that our members have been kept from falling into sin! What a glorious thing that we are carried through

another year safely! Some old writer has said, "Every hour that a Christian remains a Christian is an hour of miracle." It is true; and every year that the church is kept an entire church is a year of miracle.

It is a year of miracles. Tell it to the wide, wide world; tell it everywhere. "The eye of the Lord" hath been upon us, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Two hundred and ten persons have this year united with us in church fellowship; about enough to have formed a church. One half the churches in London cannot number so many in their entire body; and yet the Lord has brought so many into our midst. And still they come; still they come. Whenever I have an opportunity of seeing those who are converted to God, they come in such numbers that many have to be sent away. Still they come, still they come; and well I am assured, that I have as many still in this congregation, who will during the present year come forward to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. How often has the sacred pool of baptism been opened this year! How sweetly have we assembled round the Lord's table! What precious moments we have had at the Monday evening prayer meetings! And how glorious it has been when we have recognized brother after brother, sister after sister publicly, by giving them the right hand of fellowship! In all our ways we hope we have acknowledged him, and he has directed our paths. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done wonders; bless his name, for he has worked miracles; praise his grace, for he hath highly exalted his people; for he has worked miracles; praise his grace, for he hath highly exalted his people; unto him be honor, for ever and ever. And mark you, brethren, this church has known what it is to come out of Egypt. We have not toiled with our feet here. I hope there has been no desire to draw unfit persons into the church, I have had no toiling with my feet, I am sure, in preaching the gospel—no legal preaching—none of your exciting preaching—none of all that toiling with your feet; but we have had nothing but the rain from heaven. We have not laboured to excite carnal passions, nor to preach sermons with a view of driving you into religious fevers. Sturdy old Calvinism will not let us do that. We cannot preach such sermons as Arminians can. The land has been watered by the rain of heaven. We have not had any of those fatal pestilential mists that sometimes gather round the church. It is proverbial, that wherever the revivalists go, they always carry desolation; before them is an Eden; behind them is a

desert; wherever they go they scorch the land like firebrands; though hundreds seem to be converted to God, they are converted to ten times blacker sins than before, and the last end of them is worse than the first.* We want not the getting up of a little feverish passion by appealing to the natural man; it is the drinking water of the rain of heaven that does the good. I trust it has been so here, and that "the eyes of the Lord" have been upon you "from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year."

So, beloved, I can say that, as a minister, the eyes of the Lord have been upon me this year. It has been my privilege, many times this year to preach his word. I think, more than four hundred times have I stood in the pulpit to testify his truth, and the eyes of the Lord have been upon me. Blessed be his name! whether it has been in the north, in the south, in the east, or in the west, I have never lacked a congregation; nor have I ever gone again to any of the places I have preached at, without hearing of souls converted. I cannot remember a single village, or town, that I have visited a second time without meeting with some who blessed God that they heard the word of truth there. When I went to Bradford last time, I stated in the pulpit that I had never heard of a soul being converted through my preaching there; and the good pew-opener came to Brother Dowson, and said, "Why didn't you tell Mr. Spurgeon that such-a-one joined the church through hearing him?" and instantly that dear man of God told me the cheering news. We have met with much opposition this year. Thanks to our brethren in the ministry, we have not had very much assistance from them. We have been enabled to say to them all, "I will not take from you, from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest ye should say, I have made him rich." But how much of that bigotry which formerly existed has subsided! How much of that sneer, which was at one time so common, has now gone away! I am now, rather more afraid of their smiles than their frowns—though I do not think I feel much of either. *Cedo nulli*, was my motto at the beginning, and I take it once more. I yield to none; but by the grace of God I preach his truth, and still, if he help me, will I hold on my way. And to the Three-one God, be eternal honor. Amen.

*The revivalists since this period have been usually true preachers of the gospel with whom we have the fullest sympathy. Our remarks were intended for certain American Arminian ravers who had done much mischief.