

1 Chronicles 15:11-13 (James Ebenezer Batten) 146543

Thoughts on the Book of Joshua: Joshua and Caleb, Joshua, Thoughts on the Book of: Joshua and Caleb Part 3 (15:11-13)

The tabernacle in the wilderness was about to give place to the temple and the glory, and the next great business of David was to bring up the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom. "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites,... and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order." 1 Chron. 15:11-13. Unless the sense of God and His grace keep the heart in the enjoyment of His favor as better than life, the knowledge of Him is soon lost, and Israelites become identified with Canaanites, as the book of Judges declares, and reduce themselves to the same level. Baal had his altar in the house of Joash the rather of Gideon; nor could the mighty man of valor do the deeds of one against the hosts of the Midianites, with his three hundred and their lamps and pitchers, till he had thrown down this altar and first put himself right with God, as a worshiper. The Lord will not give His glory to another. Until Baal and his altar were thrown down by Gideon, there was confusion in Israel; for God and the idol were both there!

Here, we may observe, that in the history of the Judges no mention is made of the high priest or any other priest, or even a Levite [except the Levite who became an idolatrous priest], either for counsel or for action in any public way, from the time of Phinehaz the son of Eleazar down to Eli. The knowledge of God was lost, and the relations in which He had stood with His people by the ark of the covenant violated and forgotten. When David sought to bring up the ark into the hill of Zion, after its capture by the Philistines, so unacquainted was the sweet psalmist with the ways of God respecting it, that a new cart and the two milch kine did as well for him as the shoulders of the Levites.

Priesthood and the priests, through the breach upon Uzza, come out brightly once more with king David, in the persons of Zadok and Abiathar; "And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod." 2 Sam. 6:13, 14. It is after God is thus owned by David and all Israel, that the Lord makes a covenant with him concerning Solomon, saying, "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son," etc. It is along this glorious pathway of God's purposes and counsels as to the throne and kingdom, the people of Israel, and the land of promise, the temple and mount Zion, the city of Jerusalem and the coming Messiah, that God has ever led the faith and expectations of those whom He called out to walk with Him. Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, Othniel and the judges, David and Solomon, and all that family of faith, looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and desired a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.

In the epistle to the believing Hebrews, we join them upon the heavenly calling as the Spirit by Paul guides their faith along this line of their ancestors; only adding this, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

The summing up of this epistle may very properly close these remarks on the ways of God with His people. This cloud of witnesses (some of whom have been noticed) are here brought forward into their new place, in association with our Lord; and though dead they yet speak, claiming their heirship and blessing through the Seed of Abraham and of David, which is the Christ of God, and wait for His second coming. Jesus is also presented as the "author and finisher of faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. By His death and resurrection, He has made the mercies of Jehovah's covenanted grace sure to Abraham and to David, as their Son and Lord, and secured the promises as Son of God, and made them "yea, and... Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

The mystery of the Church, as the body of Christ and the bride of the Lamb-the mystic Eve-is now being formed by the Holy Ghost. God is calling out from Jews and Gentiles the quickened members of the body, into union in life and righteousness with a rejected Christ, hidden in the heavens; for whose shout we wait, to catch us up to meet Him in the air, and to be changed into His likeness. Creation, likewise which groans under the bondage of corruption, waits in hope of its deliverance into the liberty of this glory, when the manifestation of the sons of God is come to pass. Only the last few touches remain to perfect the mystery of God, and the Lord will rise up from His place and quit the Father's throne to sit as Son of man upon His own throne in His own glory. Israel redeemed and brought into this scene of blessing, under Christ and the bride (the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God) will then understand its own mystery that God has "provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." How gladly will they sing in that day, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." J.E.B.

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