1 Chronicles 5:25-26 (R. Beacon) 143156

Thoughts on 1 Chronicles, 1 Chronicles 5:25-26, Thoughts on (5:25-26)

The God of Israel stirred up the King of Assyria against them (ver. 26), “God of Israel” is significant. It is God in relationship with Israel. Israel's God resented Israel's choice of other lands than His own. It was a slight put upon His wisdom and His love, and was sure to bring judgment. The judgment might be delayed; there might even be blessing during the delay. Valiant men did arise, and their enemies were subdued. But when their cup was full, when they added idolatry to their transgression the God of Israel used the King of Assyria as His instrument of judgment.

The Lord has called His people now to a good land which is to believers what Canaan was to Israel. Canaan is not heaven by-and-by. In heaven there is rest, in Canaan there is fighting. Our Canaan is the knowledge and enjoyment of heaven's blessings while we are yet dwelling on earth. This enjoyment is inseparably bound up with practical separation from the world, and from the things of the world. The love of this world is incompatible with the love of the Father (1 John 2:15).

But to enjoy the blessings, the Jordan must be crossed. Passing through the Red sea is surely redemption. The power of the enemy was broken. Israel went through it, led by the miraculous power of God, under the efficacy of the sprinkled blood. It was the “salvation of God,” but it landed them in a desert, and there was no water. When passing through the sea they were as fugitives fleeing from the enemy, here in crossing the Jordan they are as a conquering army going to subdue and possess. But (symbolically) they are on holy ground, where all that is of the flesh must be judged as in the presence of God. Hence Gilgal. And here let us remark that circumcision is no preparation for going through the Jordan. Gilgal comes after. The knowledge that we are on the resurrection side of death ought to lead us to circumcise our hearts, that circumcision which is not made by hands, but the mortifying our members which are upon the earth. It was after Gilgal that they did eat the old corn of the land, and with believers now there must be the judgment of all that is of the flesh before we can rejoice ill heavenly blessings. Crossing the Jordan for us is complete separation practically from the world. The Lord Jesus said “they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.” This is true of every child of God now, as to his standing in Christ but to realize that position, so as to say with Paul “the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” is to enter practically into that good land which is our possession, although living on the earth.

Alas, the “transgression” of the two and half tribes has been repeated by those who live in this present day, whose guilt is therefore greater, even as the spiritual blessings of the church of God are higher and greater than the earthly blessings of Israel. Do not similar consequences flow now? Then the disobedient ungrateful tribes fell into idolatry. Now not to speak of images, relics, saints so called, what of those who boast of deliverance from all these idols, but who are really enslaved by that far subtler phase of idolatry, loving and striving for the world's riches and honors, or its pleasant things? This brought these tribes into captivity to the Assyrian. And is not the world-church in captivity to the world? Are not its forms, ceremonies, ecclesiastical order, all controlled by the exigencies of the powers of the world? And the same judgment awaits it, yea a more fearful doom than overtook them. Let the predicted fall of Babylon the Great testify. But as God raised up valiant men among these tribes, so has He raised up upright men among those who have followed in their steps. What a valiant man was Luther, and according to their light, Wesley and Whitfield, not to name others as valiant as they, to whom God gave victory.