

Four Mighty Alls

A.B. Simpson:

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Josh. 21: 43-45.)

What a glorious collection of majestic and magnificent alls! Four alls, four glorious alls! all the land, all the rest, all the victory, and all the promises.

ALL THE LAND

All the land of their inheritance. The Lord gave them all their inheritance. Has He given it all to you? Have you got all of your inheritance? Have you accepted it? And when the close comes shall you be able to look back and say, "I have had all that the Lord meant to give me, all that He created me for, all that He redeemed me for, all that He sanctified me for, all that was purchased for me in Christ, all that was revealed by the Spirit, all that He ever made me think of, long for, expect and claim, all that was meant for me to be. I have had all. That thing which even my brothers could not be, that thing which was specifically my part in the Redemption of Christ. God gave it all to me, not mutilated, not abridged, not in the slightest diminished; but like the full orb'd sun, largest at its setting, my sun is going down a perfect sphere. I have had all my inheritance." That is what God wants for you. That is what God meant for you. Are you going to have it? Have you got it all now? Your sun may go down today, there is no time to waste in dreaming. Haste to make sure of that higher calling to which you are chosen. The calling which He has set His heart upon for you, more than you have yourself. Have you got all your land?

Your land is not mine, remember. There is something for each -- your own inheritance. There is something for you nobody else can fill. No garment will fit you but your own. You have a service which no one can perform but you. There is a joy no one can have but you. There is a white stone with your name written on it. Are you going to have it? That is what God wants for you. He wants to give you the land. He has taken you up to the mount of vision and shown it to you. Will you take it?

ALL THE REST

Then He speaks of all the rest, according to which He swore unto their fathers. Have you got the rest? Have you got that perfect peace which the Lord says He will keep him in whose mind is set on Him? The peace of God which passes all understanding -- rest round about, as well as rest inside. The whole horizon clear, the whole sweep of life free from an anxious thought. The "great peace which nothing can offend." That is what God means by the Land of Promise, the type of perfect rest.

There are some things good, without being perfect. You don't need to have a whole regiment cannonading outside your room to keep you awake. It is quite enough that your little alarm clock rings its little bell. It is not necessary to fret about everything, it is quite enough if the devil gets your mind rasped with one little worry, one little thought which destroys your perfect peace. It is like the polish on a mirror, or an exquisite toilet table, one scratch will destroy it; and the finer it is the smaller the scratch that will deface it. And so your rest can be destroyed by a very little thing. Perhaps you have trusted in God about your future salvation; but have you about your present business or earthly cares, your money and your family, your reputation, your own spiritual keeping, or your future in this life? God wants you to take the perfect peace He gives.

What is meant by the peace that passes all understanding? It does not mean a peace no one can comprehend. It means a peace that no amount of reasoning will bring. You cannot get it by thinking. There may be a perfect bewilderment and perplexity all round the horizon, but yet your heart can rest in perfect security because He knows, He loves, He leads, He fills your heart with His own perfect love, with His infinite peace. He gives perfect rest round about.

According to all which He swore to give them. Have you ever noticed that? God not only promised, but swore. God's mighty oath is pledged to give it. His honor is involved in its fulfilment, and though heaven and earth pass away He will fulfil it. How condescending! He binds Himself to show that He will not evade the responsibility of keeping His great word to us and giving His mighty blessing to those that will hold Him to it.

He gave them the land which He swore, the rest which He swore to give unto their fathers. Do you realize, beloved, what this means: Many of you are accustomed to think this is a sort of extra for a privileged few, and that once in a while some one else may get rest. But it is not so. God has bound Himself to sanctify and fully save every soul that will claim salvation and rest through Jesus Christ. He has bound Himself to do more than merely forgive you your sins. The oath which He swore unto Abraham is expressed so beautifully in that chapter in Luke, that He would grant us, that we, being delivered from all our enemies and the hand of all that hate us, "might serve Him without fear in righteousness and holiness before Him all the days of our life." God has sworn that He will give this inheritance of rest to all who claim it.

ALL THE ENEMIES

Then we come to that other "all" -- victory. One by one their enemies were permitted to confront them that Israel might gain a great victory. There was no other way of bringing them into the fulness of their conquest. Thirty-one kings had to be successively subdued, the most difficult citadels, fortresses and fastnesses of the land had to fall into their hands. But not a place could resist them, victory floated on their banners until they waved triumphantly over all the land and the whole of Canaan lay at their feet. Not one of their enemies remained, the mighty Hittites, the giant Anaks, the Amorites and the people of the Heshbon. He never once failed them when they were right with Him. Once they were beaten, but the failure of Ai was due to His absence, and the scar of the single failure was more than wiped out.

And so, beloved, God calls us to victory. Have any of you given up the conflict, have you surrendered? Have you said, "This thing is too much"? Have you said, "I can give up anything else but this"? If you have, you are not in the land of promise. God means you should accept every difficult thing that comes in your life. He has started with you, knowing every difficulty. And if you dare to let Him, He will carry you through not only to be conquerors, but "more than conquerors." Are you looking for all the victory?

God gives His children strength for the battle and watches over them with a fond enthusiasm. He longs to fold you to His arms and say to you, "I have seen your conflict, I have watched your trials, I have rejoiced in your victory; you have honored Me." Not in one place was there a failure; there stood not a man of all their enemies. You remember what He told Joshua at the beginning, "There shall not any man be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so shall I be with you, I will not fail you, nor forsake you." And again He says to us, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness, and they that were incensed against you shall be ashamed and confounded."

He wants to give you victory, victory over yourself, over your own heart; we must all begin there. You must conquer yourself first. God wants victory over your heart; not a victory that will crush you, I don't mean that; but a victory, a triumph through Jesus Christ. There are three great victories that God wants to give to every one of us. The first is victory over ourselves; the second, victory over our circumstances; and the third, victory over our enemies and all those who rise up against us.

Look at Joseph, the type of all these. It was not easy for him to turn away from his father and his home, to go into the kitchen as a slave, and then to be thrown into a prison as a criminal, unjustly charged with the sin of another and forced to languish there for long months, with no one to plead for him until the iron entered into his soul, and it seemed as if God had forsaken him. But Joseph endured all this, quietly learning the secret of victory over himself. Then came the victory over his trying circumstances, and all the difficulties that had surrounded him soon passed away, and he forgot even his sorrow, and rose as high as his descent had been deep and low. Then came the victory over others. God brought his brothers who had wronged him to his feet, and gave him the power -- if he had wanted it -- to have sweet revenge. Oh, how natural it would have been to have reminded them of their cruel crime and made them feel the bitterness they had caused him long days before! But no, Joseph had a greater victory. He would not even allow them to feel too keenly the sense of their wrong, but longed to forgive them and make them feel his love, and throw his arms about them with all a brother's forgiving tenderness.

Ah! that is the victory that satisfies a Christlike heart. It is heaping coals of fire on the heads of those who have wronged us. And yet there is a way of putting coals of fire on others' heads that has more meanness in it than an open revenge. There is a way of doing another a kindness in such a manner as to make him feel that we are doing it just to make him feel badly. Sweeter by far is the revenge which God has promised to the overcomer: "I will make them to come and worship at your feet and to know that I have loved you," and to acknowledge you as the instrument of the highest spiritual blessing.

Beloved, God is bringing all these things into your life, in order to give you an opportunity of making eternal history. There is a day coming, when your biography will be written in the Bible of the eternal ages the same as Joseph's; that is to say, if it is worth writing. Ages to come will read the story of your trials and your triumphs, and glorify your Savior for what He has done in you.

ALL THE PROMISES

The last "all" includes all God's promises. "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord has spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass." Blessed be His name for that glorious promise! How it sweeps out to the far horizon, and reaches the length and breadth of meaning beyond all that we can ask or think! How it speaks of a finished life, of an accomplished career, of a homecoming for us, too, that will have no regret in it, and no abatement from all His highest, greatest will! It is the spirit with which God wants each of us to finish our earthly career. When life's battle is over, and life's mystery about to end, oh, that each of us may look back from the closing portals of the past and say: "There failed not aught of any good thing that God had spoken; all came to pass."

It is so blessed to feel and to know that God wants to give us this. We are not holding a reluctant heart to an enforced obligation, but we are simply cooperating with our truest Friend to bring about that on which He has set His own heart for us.

Beloved, there is not a promise in your catalogue of promises, there is not a thought of blessing in your inmost heart, there is not a purpose of victory in your soul, which did not originate with Him. You can depend upon His love and His loyalty. His great heart is set upon blessing you, if you will only let Him; no, we may almost say, in blessing you in spite of yourself. I do not know that there is a more inspiring study than to trust the exact fulfilment of the very words of God. There is nothing more wonderful than to take the ancient prophecies of this Book and read them along with the parallel columns of human history and see how they correspond in their minutest details.

Take, for example, the first chapter of Genesis and the story of the creation. Four thousand years ago Moses wrote the record that light was created on the first day, and the sun on the fourth day. The scientists used to love to laugh at that incongruous statement and say that it was impossible to believe the story of creation, and the existence of light before the sun. They had their day and their laugh, and then -- it was God's turn. A few years ago, science discovered the solar spectrum, and the fact was declared, on scientific authority, that light could exist apart from the sun, and Moses' record was shown to be scientifically true as well as divinely in advance of the times in which it was written. The Word of God was right, after all, and even more right than all the modern ideas of the age, perhaps even before the days of Moses.

Job in one of his sublime flights, spoke about "the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and the bands of Orion." Until very recently no one could imagine what was meant by "the sweet influences of the Pleiades," but modern astronomy has discovered the fact that the Pleiades are probably the physical center of the whole universe, and that all the stars and constellations are perpetually moving around that distant spot in far immensity, where mighty Alcyone, the chief of the Pleiades, twelve thousand times larger than our own sun, reaches out his tremendous force of gravitation, and holds all these constellations in their orbits.

Again, we read in ancient prophecy, two strangely contradictory announcements regarding Zedekiah, -- the last of Judah's kings, -- one to the effect that he would go to Babylon, and the other to the effect that he would never see Babylon. They looked like contradictions until the fact was brought out, in the fulfilment, that after the fall of Jerusalem, Zedekiah's eyes were blinded by the cruelty of Nebuchadnezzar, and he was carried in chains to Babylon, but he never saw it, although he ended his days in one of its dreary dungeons.

Thus every jot and tittle of this faithful word shall stand, and the day will come when wondering angels and saints will exclaim again, "There failed not aught of anything which He had spoken; all came to pass."

Even His very judgments are an evidence of the faithfulness of His everlasting word. Two Hebrew Rabbis were standing on Mount Zion, looking at the desolations of Jerusalem, and the very foxes that ran on the ruined walls. One of the old men wept, and his brother smiled. Then they looked at each other, and one asked, "How can you weep?" and the other asked, "How can you smile?" One answered, "I weep because I see how God has fulfilled His word, spoken by the mouth of the ancient prophet, that 'the foxes shall run upon the wall of Zion.'" "Ah," said the other, "that is just why I smile, because the same prophet has said, 'Zion shall be restored,' and I know therefore, that as one word has been fulfilled, the other shall also come to pass."

How true this promise has been, and will yet be to Israel as a nation! True, they have hindered God in the fulfilment of His promises, and forced Him to interpose many a long delay in the accomplishment of His purpose, but every word shall yet be entirely fulfilled. "The gifts and calling of God to Israel are without repentance," and the seed of Abraham shall yet gather on the heights of Zion, and join in the chorus of the millennial world, "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord has spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass."

Rabinowitch has told us that the ancient Hebrew Bible has the letters Alpha and Omega, just after the prophecy in Zechariah, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." For long ages, Israel's Rabbis could not understand that Alpha and Omega; but even those two little words were not in vain, and if you turn to the Book of Revelation, you will find John recalling the prophecy and applying it to Christ: "Behold He comes with clouds and every eye shall see Him, they also who pierced Him," and then Christ, applying it to Himself, and saying: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." No! not a single yod, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, shall pass away until all be fulfilled.

And so, beloved, it has been fulfilled and yet will be fulfilled in your own heart and life. You may trust His faithful promises. He will bring it all to pass. You can send up the prayer of David, and say: "Remember Your word unto Your servant upon which You have caused me to hope." Yes, if He has even caused you to hope in it, He will not disappoint you.

His heart is so true that He will not let you trust a misleading word. With infinite delicacy and confidence He says: "If it were not so, I would have told you." You may not understand all the promises or their fulfilment; you may not understand all the trials of the way; you may not quite understand all the meaning of His words. They may mean to you what they mean to no one else; they may speak to your thoughts and hopes, what your own circumstances suggest; but all that He has meant for you and all that He has let you claim in the spirit of humble trust, He will weave into the pattern of your life; He will work out in the claim of His providence, and He will cause you to say, with rejoicing heart as you look back from the heights of eternal recompense, "There failed not aught of any good thing that He has spoken unto my heart; all came to pass."

What He said to Jacob of old, on the stony pillow, He will fulfil to your trusting heart: "I will not leave you until I have done all that I have spoken to you."

Yes, He will be faithful even to the erring. "If his children forsake My law, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes; nevertheless I will not utterly take My mercy from them, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail,"

Even your faith may sometimes falter and seem to fail, but, above all your sighs and tears, the promise will often come ringing back: "If we believe not, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

Blessed be His name for all the faithful words He has kept to us hitherto, but He will lift up the vision of our faith to the greater things which He has yet in store for us. His eye is upon the glorious ending. He wants to have you enter in, saying: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

Some day, even you, trembling, faltering one, shall stand upon those heights and look back upon all you have passed through, all you have narrowly escaped, all the perils through which He guided you, the stumblings through which He guarded you, and the sins from which He saved you; and you shall shout, with a meaning you cannot understand now, "Salvation unto Him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Some day He will sit down with us in that glorious home, and we shall have all the ages in which to understand the story of our lives. And He will read over again this old marked Bible with us, He will show us how He kept all these promises, He will explain to us the mysteries that we could not understand, He will recall to our memory the things we have long forgotten, He will go over again with us the book of life, He will recall all the finished story, and I am sure we will often cry: "Blessed Christ! You have been so true, You have been so good! Was there ever love like this?" And then the great chorus will be repeated once more -- "There failed not aught of any good thing that He has spoken; all came to pass."

Beloved, will you take these old promises afresh? Will you make an edition of your Bible not printed by the Bible Society nor the Oxford Press, but a Bible written by the Holy Ghost upon your heart, and translated into the version of your life? And some day He will let us write upon its last page, this glorious inscription -- "There failed not aught of any good thing which He spoke unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."