

Andrew Murray:

And He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He sware unto our Fathers.â”—Deut. 6:23.

I have spoken of the crisis that comes in the life of the man who sees that his Christian experience is low and carnal, and who desires to enter into the full life of God. Some Christians do not understand that there should be such a crisis. They think that they ought, from the day of their conversion, to continue to grow and progress. I have no objections to that, if they have grown as they ought. If their life has been so strong under the power of the Holy Ghost that they have grown as true believers should grow, I certainly have no objection to this. But I want to deal with those Christians whose life since conversion has been very much a failure, and who feel it to be such because of their not being filled with the Spirit, as is their blessed privilege. I want to say for their encouragement, that by taking one step, they can get out into the life of rest, and victory, and fellowship with God to which the promises of God invite them.

Look at the elder son in the parable. How long would it have taken him to get out of that state of blindness and bondage into the full condition of sonship ? By believing in his fatherâ”s love, he might have gotten out that very hour. If he had been powerfully convicted of his guilt in his unbelief, and had confessed like his prodigal brother, â”I have sinned,â” he would have come that very moment into the favor of the sonâ”s happiness in his fatherâ”s home. He would not have been detained by having a great deal to learn, and a great deal to do; but in one moment, his whole relation would have been changed.

Remember, too, what we saw in Peterâ”s case. In one moment, the look of Jesus broke him down and there came to him the terribly bitter reflection of his sin, owing to his selfish, fleshly confidence, a contrition and reflection which laid the foundation for his new and better life with Jesus. Godâ”s word brings out the idea of the Christianâ”s entrance into the new and better life by the history of the people of Israelâ”s entrance into the land of Canaan.

In our text, we have these words: â”God brought us out from thence (Egypt), that He might bring us inâ” into Canaan. There are two steps: one was bringing them out; and the other was bringing them in. So in the life of the believer, there are ordinarily two steps quite separate from each other; â”the bringing him out of sin and the world; and the bringing him into a state of complete rest afterward. It was the intention of God that Israel should enter the land of Canaan from Kadesh-Barnea , immediately after He had made His covenant with them at Sinai. But they were not ready to enter at once, on account of their sin and unbelief, and disobedience. They had to wander after that for forty years in the wilderness. Now, look how God led the people. In Egypt, there was a great crisis, where they had first to pass through the Red Sea, which is a figure of conversion; and when they went into Canaan, there was, as it were, a second conversion in passing through the Jordan. At our conversion, we get into liberty, out of the bondage of Egypt; but, when we fail to use our liberty through unbelief and disobedience, we wander in the wilderness for a longer or shorter period before we enter into the Canaan of victory, and rest, and abundance. Thus God does for His Israel two things: â”He brings them out of Egypt; and He lead them into Canaan.

My message, then, is to ask this question of the believer: â”Since you know you are converted and God has brought you out of Egypt, have you yet come into the land of Canaan? If not, are you willing that he should bring you into the fuller liberty and rest provided for His people? He brought Israel out of Egypt by a mighty hand, and the same mighty hand brought us out of our land of bondage; with the same mighty hand, He brought his ancient people into rest, and by that hand, too, He can bring us into our true rest. The same God who pardoned and regenerated usâ”is waiting to perfect His love in us, if we but trust Him. Are there many hearts saying:â”â”I believe that God brought me out of bondage twenty, or thirty, or forty years ago; but alas! I cannot say that I have been brought into the happy land of rest and victory?â”

How glorious was the rest of Canaan after all the wanderings in the wilderness! And so is it with the Christian who reaches the better promised Canaan of rest, when he comes to leave all his charge with the Lord Jesusâ”his responsibilities, anxieties, and worry; his only work being to hand the keeping of his soul into the hand of Jesus every day and hour. and the Lord can keep, and give the victory over every enemy. Jesus has undertaken not only to cleans our sin, and bring us to heaven, but also to keep us in our daily life.

I ask again: â”Are you hungering to get free from sin and its power?â”Anyone longing to get complete victory over his temper, his pride, and all his evil inclinations?â”Hearts longing for the time when no clouds will come between them and their God?â”Longing to walk in the full sunshine of Godâ”s loving favour? The

very God who brought you from the Egypt of darkness is ready and able to bring you also into the Canaan of rest.

And now comes the question again: Â—What is the way by which God will bring me to this rest? What is needed on my part if God is really to bring me into the happy land? I give the answer first of all by asking another question:Â—Are you willing to forsake your wanderings in the wilderness? If you say Â“We do not want to leave our wanderings, where we have had so many wonderful indications of GodÂ’s presence with us; so many remarkable proofs of the Divine care and goodness, like that of the ancient people of God, who had the pillar to guide them, and the manna given them every day for forty years; Moses and Aaron to lead and advise them . The wilderness is to us, on account of these things, a kind of sacred place; and we are loath to leave it.Â” If the children of Israel had said anything of this kind to Joshua, he would have said to them (and we all would have said):Â—Â“Oh, you fools: It is the very God who gave you the pillar of cloud and the other blessings in the wilderness, who tells you how to come into the land flowing with milk and honey.Â” And so I can speak to you in the same way; I bring you the message that He who has brought you thus far on your journey, and given you such blessings thus far, is the God who will bring you into the Canaan of complete victory and rest.

The first question, then, that I would ask you is,

ARE YOU READY TO LEAVE THE WILDERNESS?

You know the mark of IsraelÂ’s life in the wildernessÂ—the cause of all their troubles thereÂ—was unbelief. They did not believe that God could take them into the Promised Land. And then followed many sins and failuresÂ—lusting, idolatry, murmuring, etc. That has, perhaps, been your life, beloved; you do not believe that God will fulfil His word. You do not believe in the possibility of unbroken fellowship with Him, and unlimited partnership. On account of that, you become disobedient, and did not live like a child doing GodÂ’s will, because you did not believe that God could give you the victory over sin. Are you willing now to leave that wilderness life? Sometimes you are, perhaps, enjoying fellowship with God, and sometimes you are separated from Him; sometimes you have nearness to Him, and at other times great distance from Him; sometimes you have a willingness to walk closely with Him, but sometimes there is even unwillingness. Are you now going to give up your whole life to Him? Are you going to approach Him and say, Â“My God, I do not want to do anything that will be displeasing to Thee; I want Thee to keep me from all worldliness, from all self-pleasure; I want Thee, O God, to help me to live like Peter after Pentecost, filled with the Holy Ghost, and not like carnal Peter.Â”

Beloved, are you willing to say this? Are you willing to give up your sins, to walk with God continually, to submit yourself wholly to the will of God, and have no will of your own apart from His will? Are you going to live a perfect life? I hope you are, for I believe in such a life; Â—not perhaps in the sense in which you understand Â“perfectionÂ”—entire freedom from wrong-doing and all inclination to it, for while we live in the flesh the flesh will lust against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; but the perfection spoken of in the Old Testament as practiced by some of GodÂ’s saints, who are said to have Â“served the Lord with a perfect heart.Â” What is this perfection? A state in which your hearts will be set on perfect integrity without any reserve, and your will wholly subservient to GodÂ’s will. Are you willing for such a perfection, with your whole heart turned away from the world and given to God alone? Are you going to say, Â“No, I do not expect that I will ever give up my self-will.Â”? It is the devil tempting you to think it will be too hard for you. Oh! I would plead with GodÂ’s children just to look at the will of God, so full of blessing, of holiness, of love; will you not give up your guilty will for that blessed will of God? A man can do it in one moment when he comes to see that God can change his will for him. Then he may say farewell to his old will, as Peter did when he went out and wept bitterly, and when the Holy Spirit filled his soul on the day of Pentecost. Joshua Â“wholly followed the Lord his God.Â” He failed, indeed, before the enemy at Ai, because he trusted too much to human agency, and not sufficiently to God; and he failed in the same manner when he made a covenant with the Gibeonites ; but still, his spirit and power differed very widely from that of the people whose unbelief drove them before their enemies and kept them in the wilderness. Let us be willing wholly to serve the Lord our God, and Â“make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.Â” Let us believe in the love and power of God to keep us day by day, and put Â“no confidence in the flesh.Â”

Then comes the second step: Â—Â“I must believe that such a life in the land of Canaan is a possible life.Â” Yes, many a one will say, Â“Ah! What would I give to get out of the wilderness life! But I cannot believe that it is possible to live in this constant communion with God. You donÂ’t know my difficultiesÂ—my business cares and perplexities; I have all sorts of people to associate with; have gone out in the morning braced up by communion with God in prayer, but the pressure of business before night has driven out of my heart all that warmth of love that I had, and the world has gotten in and made the heart as cold as before.Â” But we must

remember again what it was that kept Israel out of Canaan. When Caleb and Joshua said, “We are able to overcome the enemy,” the ten spies, and the six hundred thousand answered, “We cannot do it; they are too strong for us.” Take care, dear reader, that we do not repeat their sin, and provoke God as these unbelievers did. He says, it is possible to bring us into the land of rest and peace; and I believe it because He has said so, and because He will do it if I trust Him. Your temper may be terrible; your pride may have bound you a hundred times; your temptations may “compass you about like bees,” but there is victory for you if you will but trust the promises of God.

Looking again at Peter. He had failed again and again, and went from bad to worse until he came to denying Christ with oaths. But what a change came over him! Just study the first epistle of Peter, and you will see that the very life of Christ had entered into him. He shows the spirit of true humility, so different from his former self-confidence; and glorying in God’s will instead of in his own. He had made a full surrender to Christ, and was trusting entirely in Him. Come therefore today and say to God, “Thou didst so change selfish, proud Peter, and Thou canst change me likewise.” Yes, God is able to bring you into Canaan, the land of rest. You know the first half of the 8th of Romans. Have you noticed the expressions that are to be found there—“The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”. To walk after the spirit; To be after the spirit; To be in the Spirit; To have the Spirit dwelling in us. Through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body; To be led by the Spirit; To be spiritually minded. These are all blessings which come when we bind ourselves wholly to live in the Spirit. If we live after the Spirit we have the very nature of the Spirit in us. If we live in the Spirit, we shall be led by Him every day and every moment. What if you were to open your heart today to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Would He not be able to keep you every moment in the sweet rest of God? And would not His mighty arm give you a complete victory over sin and temptation of every kind, and make you able to live in perpetual fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Most certainly! This, then, is the second step; this is the blessed life God has provided for us. First, God brought us out of Egypt; secondly, He brings us into Canaan. Then comes—

Thirdly, the question,

HOW DOES GOD BRING US IN?

By leading us in a very definite act, viz , that of committing ourselves wholly to Him: —entrusting ourselves to Him, that He may bring us into the land of rest, and keep us in.

You remember that the Jordan at the time of harvest overflowed its banks. The hundreds of thousands of Israel were on the side of the river from Canaan. They were told that tomorrow, God would do wonderful things for them. The trumpet would sound, and the priests would take up the ark—the symbol of God’s presence—and pass over before the people. But there lay the swollen river still. If there still unbelieving children among the people, they would say, “What fools, to attempt to cross now! This is not the time to attempt fording the river, for it is now twenty feet deep.” But the believing people gathered together behind the priests with the ark. They obeyed the command of Joshua to advance; but they knew not what God was going to do. The priests walked right into the water, and the hearts of some began to tremble. They would perhaps ask, “Where is the rod of Moses?” But, as the priests walked straight on and stepped into the water, the waters rose up on the upper side in to a high wall, and flowed away on the other side, and a clear passage was made for the whole camp. Now, it was God that did this for the people; and it was because Joshua and the people believed and obeyed God. The same God will do it today, if we believe and trust Him.

Am I addressing a soul who is saying: —I remember how God first brought me out of the land of bondage. I was in complete darkness of soul and was deeply troubled. I did not at first believe that God could take me out, and that I could become a child of God. But, at last, God took me and brought me to trust in Jesus, and He led me out safely.” Friend, you have the same God now who brought you out of bondage with a high hand; and can lead you into the place of rest. Look to Him and say, “O God, make an end of my wilderness life—my sinful and unbelieving life—a life of grieving Thee. Oh, bring me to-day into the land of victory and rest and blessing!” Is this the prayer of your hearts, dear friends? Are you going to give up yourselves to Him to do this for you? Can you trust Him that He is able and willing to do it for you? He can take you through the swollen river this very moment:—yes, this very moment.

And He can do more: After Israel had crossed the river, the Captain of the Lord’s host had to come and encourage Joshua, promising to take charge of the army and remain with them. You need the power of God’s Spirit to enable you to overcome sin and temptation. You need to live in His fellowship—in His unbroken fellowship, without which you cannot stand or conquer. If you are to venture today, say by faith “My God, I know that Jesus Christ is willing to be the Captain of my salvation, and to conquer every enemy for me, He will

Out of and Into

keep me by faith and by His Holy Spirit; and though it be dark to me, and as if the waters would pass over my soul, and though my condition seem hopeless, I will walk forward, for God is going to bring me in to-day, and I am going to follow Him. My God, I follow Thee now into the promised land.Â”

Perhaps some have already entered in, and the angels have seen them, while they have been reading these solemn words. Is there anyone still hesitating because the waters of Jordan look threatening and impassable?

Oh! Come, beloved soul; come at once, and doubt not.