

Articles and Sermons :: Can we Ever Reach the Promised Land? by James Smith, 1856

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"The world, the flesh, and the devil all combine to . . .
oppose our progress,
hinder us in our march, and,
if possible, to destroy us in the wilderness!

Then, there are so many dangers:
the towering rocks of presumption,
the quagmires of doubt and fear,
the pitfalls of error,
the ravines of willful sin,
the fiery-flying serpents of temptation,
the scorpions of indulged lust,
the sunshine — and the shade;
the barren sands — and the verdant valleys;
the granite rocks — and the flowing streams
— all of them have dangers concealed in them! Nor can we be trusted alone for one moment — if we are to be safe.
Worst of all, there are our distrustful and deceitful hearts!

With . . .
so long a journey,
so strange a path,
such numerous foes,
so many dangers, and
such unbelieving hearts —
can we ever reach the promised land? Can we?

Not if left to ourselves! Not if led only by Moses. We must have a guide . . .
who well knows the road;
who can conquer our many foes;
who can lead us safely through all our dangers,
who can bear with our stubborn hearts and lives!

We need a guide . . .
whose wisdom is perfect,
whose power is almighty,
whose care is constant,
whose patience is immutable,
whose mercy endures forever!

God provided just what the Israelites needed in the wilderness — a guide to lead them by day and night. He went before them — pointing out the road, clearing it of insurmountable difficulties, and conducting them in it.

This is just what our good and gracious God does for us! He is really present with us — though unseen by us. He is never far from any one of us. He marks out our road, He removes every real impediment out of our way, and conducts us step by step in the path to the promised land!

Naturally we do not know the right path; left to ourselves, we would choose the short-cut, the smooth path, and well-frequented road. But He leads us in a zig-zag way, by a rough and uneven road — where there are but few fellow-travelers. His choice is best. The way He points out is the only right one. It is to humble us, and test us, and show what is in our hearts. It is that we may walk by faith — and not by sight. It is to teach us our need of Himself — and to lead us to cleave unto Him. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death", through death, and beyond

nd it!

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go! I will guide you with My eye!" Psalm 32:8