The Sons of Jeshurun

Illustrating spiritual types and characteristics

By Harold Horton 1943

Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. Is.44:2
He was king over Jeshurun when the leaders of the people assembled, along with the tribes of Israel. Deut.33:5
But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. Deut.32:9
Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, Deut.33:29
Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God. Gal.6:16

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Preliminary

The form and brevity of these studies were determined by a request that I should write a series of papers on my own selected topic, limiting myself to the restricted proportions of a small magazine (*The Study Hour*) that could allow me only a few hundred words monthly.

The studies are thus quite fragmentary. They can only be regarded as ventures in enforced brevity, essays in too brief statement. An advantage of abbreviated statement is that selected characteristics are forced into prominence for examination. A corresponding disadvantage is that many profitable considerations are necessarily overlooked or excluded.

The very brevity of these chapters does more than justice to certain of the tribes, and less than justice to others, according to the kind of detail chosen for consideration. In terse studies the lessons stand out in clear relief, but the balance of individual qualities and the comparative virtues and faults of the subjects as a whole are hound to, be disturbed.

Fuller statement would of course provide rosier phases to offset the more sombre detail selected in a particular tribe's character and history; and less attractive features, probably, to off-set the happier picture presented of another tribe or its leader. Fuller statement, however, might have entailed a different kind of series altogether.

We must leave the brief lessons as they stand, trusting that as no undue criticism or undeserved commendation is intended concerning any of the sons of Jeshurun, so nothing but good may result from their consideration, in this concentrated form.

The sons of Jeshurun are types of the sons of Jeshurun's God. Their characteristics and tendencies, their potentialities for good or evil, are present in germ or force in all the children of the Lord. Reuben with his slip-shod ways, Judah with his royal heart and shifty morals, Dan's dangerous subtlety, Issachar's selfish inertia, Levi's love of worship, Naphtali's joyousness, Simeon's churlishness— all these are present as potentialities in every redeemed human breast. The messages to the tribes are messages to us.

These monographs, then, record a rapid survey of the heads of the tribes and the tribes themselves, as illuminated by Jacob's blessing and Moses' prophecy, with a characteristic detail focussed in each, that by grace we may find in them virtues to emulate, faults to avoid, and weaknesses to watch and fortify.

August, 1943. H.H.

(1) Reuben Miss-the-mark.

Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honour, excelling in power. Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it. Gen.49:3-4.

Let Reuben live and not die, nor his people be few." Deut.33:6

There are indications that Rueben was one who wanted to do good. That is the normal desire of the Christian. He found evil was present with him. That is the normal experience of the Christian. But Reuben failed to reach his goals. He overcame good with evil. He missed the mark.

He wanted to live chastely. But he looked lasciviously at women. He went up to his father's couch. Is your bow bent, brother? Where will your arrow fly? Where your gaze is it will speed. "Let your eyes look straight on." Keep your heart with all diligence in days when Reubens and Reubenettes are missing chastity all around us. There are sudden gusts in the wind of passion that will shake your hand and mar your life—and others'. Learn of Joseph. With this miss, Reuben missed honour, "the excellency of dignity," the parental blessing, the family leadership, his birth-right. A bad miss that.

He wanted to be true and courageous. He disliked that miserable business of destroying the favourite. He tried to save Joseph (Gen.37:21;29). He returned to the pit—too late. Too long planning. He missed the mark. .

He missed the mark of spiritual perception and consecration. He knew somebody ought to be surety for the other favourite, Benjamin. He offers his sons instead of himself (Gen.42:37). Judah, hitting the mark, offers himself (Gen.44:33). Are you offering your children or your brother's goods instead of yourself or your cash? Are you making a burnt offering of somebody else's lamb? Sister, are you sacrificing your old mother, leaving

her to slave in the kitchen, while you are having "a time with the Lord" in the quiet corner?

Reuben's tribe wanted to overcome in the fight in Deborah's day (Judg.5:15-16). They were engaged in great deliberations and debatings and heart searchings, wanting the correct combination of forces and the exact weapons and strategy. While they were busy (so to speak) with the agendas in the District Presbyteries 'and General Councils and committees and subcommittees an inspired woman with a bent for action and another woman with a household hammer and a nail hit the mark. The battle was fought and won without Reuben. He "abode beyond Jordan." He missed it again.

Reuben wanted no doubt the best God had for him. He looked at the pasture of Gilead and the size of his assembly—his flock. He chose Gilead instead of Canaan; grass instead of grapes; forms instead of unction; organization instead of Pentecost. He missed the mark.

No doubt he wished to contribute his quota to the general good of all the tribes his brethren in the inheritance God divided to them. But by his customary inertness ("Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?") he delayed his brethren, and by designed disinterestedness discouraged them from "going over into the land" (Num. 32: 6-7). A deliberate miss.

Reuben would certainly desire to "dwell in the land for ever." But choosing his portion the wrong side of the river with Gad and Manasseh, he was first to be carried into Assyrian captivity (1Chron.5:6;26). Inevitable logic of repeated misses.

Are we later Reubens missing our targets? Prayer, bible-reading, resolution, punctuality, habit, diligence, timesaving, unction, holiness, Pentecost? Our aims are no doubt good, like Reuben's. If we are missing, our flocks will be missing too.

Reuben was unstable as water. He lived a limp and liquefied life and lost himself in every ditch he encountered. Unstable as water

instead of solid as crystal. A weakness of delay and indecision dogged him. He was never ready—always making ready.

Moses blessing Reuben's tribe said, "Let Reuben live, and not die; yet let his men be few" (R.V.), Let him live, that is, but not prosper—and "the fewer Reubens the better!" as someone has put.it. Pity!

No one of any note was born of Reuben—except Dathan and Abiram, "famous (or infamous) in the congregation, who strove against Moses and Aaron . . . when they strove against the Lord." An unworthy parent is not likely to produce worthy sons; nor an unworthy shepherd worthy flocks. His children missed the mark of holiness, claiming they were holy and gifted as Moses (Num.16: 3-33).

In mercy God granted Reuben his twelve-thousand sealed against judgment among the other tribes (Rev. 7: 5), and gave him a northward gate into the city (Ezek. 48: 31). Reuben thus saved his life; he lost his eternal excellence and reward.

Those who loyally stand up to the tests of life shall not miss the mark. They shall not "err" as the margin of Job 5:24 puts it, using an archery figure. They shall have no outers or near misses. They shall get all bulls-eyes. They shall miss nothing, neither achievement nor reward. Lord, help us to hit the mark.

When we stand in that Day before our Heavenly Father, as Reuben before Jacob, waiting for His blessing and reward, shall we hear the solemn words, Thou hast not excelled—take the crown from him—give it to him who has excelled? Or shall we (as we strongly desire) hear His glad, Well done—sit thou in my Throne?

(2) Simeon and Levi Better-apart.

Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence. Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstrung oxen as they pleased. Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel Gen.49:5-7.

About Levi he said: "Your Thummim and Urim belong to your faithful servant. You tested him at Massah; you contended with him at the waters of Meribah. He said of his father and mother, I have no regard for them.' He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, but he watched over your word and guarded your covenant. He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel. He offers incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar. Bless all his skills, LORD, and be pleased with the work of his hands. Strike down those who rise against him, his foes till they rise no more." Deut.33:8-11

Simeon and Levi were second and third sons of Leah. They were near 'together in birth and disposition. "Brethren" they are significantly called. Jacob has no pleasant words to speak to them in his blessing. They together slew a man in their anger. Their anger was fierce and their wrath cruel. They were the chief actors in the vile business of cheating and murdering Shechem and the Shechemites. They acted "deceitfully"(Gen.34:13;25-26).

There seems no doubt that Simeon was the ring leader in this shameful episode. There equally seems little doubt that Simeon was the prime mover in the stripping and selling of Joseph, for it is he whom later in Egypt Joseph binds and holds as hostage till he actually sees Benjamin and proves his brothers' honesty (Gen.42:24).

Simeon Sly-brother. Levi Follow-on-tow. A bad combination, though they were such close brethren. God puts these two together in Jacob's prophecy. They are to illustrate a false unity, and a true one. They are living examples of the principle that only

like can dwell with like profitably in what God calls blessed union.

Simeon and Levi together were a dangerous confederacy—active duplicity and blind loyalty. Their united work was "accursed," though to the sentimental they seemed so clinging and mutually helpful. So harmful was this combination of God's children that Jacob calls in his soul not to come into their assembly, and not to be united with them. So evil was this twin federation that God takes up the tale against them and stoutly declaims, I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. God does this no doubt because though Jacob dare not do less than hold himself from participation in so wrong a union, yet he would not dare actually to divide them and to scatter them. Who indeed, unless he were a thoughtless wrecker, would without revelation separate brethren? But God is neither ignorant nor sentimental nor thoughtless. He would Himself dissolve this unwholesome partnership.

It may be said by those who are anxious to escape the inescapable principle of divine "division" and "scatting" that Simeon and Levi together had been guilty of murder, and that therefore it was necessary to separate them. Agreed. Are there not crimes more terrible than homicide? Bad religious combinations have been guilty of massacring heavenly movements and assassinating flaming revivals. In our day too. Think of that.

Simeon and Levi were dangerous together—they were better apart. That is the plain lesson of this part of Jacob's prophecy concerning his sons. Yet this is a lesson that some of our Pentecostal people will not, WILL NOT, WILL NOT learn. They are all for pushing the Simeons and Levis together because they are "Brethren," and tethering them fast with iron links in what they call Unity. God obviously calls such unity by another name—faction. To produce true unity He divides the union and scatters the faction. It is good and pleasant for "brethren" to

dwell together in unity; but it is bad and unpleasant for "brethren" to organize together in mixture.

In these pregnant verses 5-7 there is no other lesson to be found than the one I am indicating. Can you find any other? Not only would God divide these two men or tribes, but the division would provide the only possible ground for their useful service. To promote each He had to scatter their confederacy. Their isolation therefore was not merely a punishment: it was a fundamental advantage. They were evil together. They were better apart.

Levi means Joined. Can we say—on tow? The Lord loves junction, unity. The trouble is that Levi was joined to the wrong forces. God wanted him joined to Himself. Indeed the whole lesson of Levi is that God' separated him not only from Simeon but from all the tribes, his brethren, that he might join him to Himself.

Seemeth it but a small thing unto you that the God of Israel separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near to Himself?" Num.16:9. Separated from—joined unto. That is God's principle of Unity. The rest, whatever you may call it, is in God's sight mischievous Con-Fusion.

Thus to bless these two tribes God dispersed them, Simeon among Judah and Levi among all the tribes. Levi was not truly God's tribe till he was separated. Simeon never fully retrieved his honour, though he never did so badly apart as joined. He gets no blessing from Moses in Deut. 33. Levi fully retrieved his honour (Ex. 32: 26). Indeed, separated, he became the most individual and consecrated and "united" of all the tribes. After all his confederacies were dissolved he gave himself to the wholehearted service of the Lord.

"Shameful dispersions are the just punishment of sinful unions and confederacies" is Matthew Henry's comment on Simeon and Levi Better-apart.

(3) Judah Live-by-the-vine.

Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk. Gen.49:8-12.

And this he said about Judah: "Hear, LORD, the cry of Judah; bring him to his people. With his own hands he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes!" Deut.33:7

Here is the breath of the vine, the music of the grape treaders, the joy of the vine, dressers, the prosperity of the vintner.

But matters of greater import than purple grapes and singing labourers are here. Here is the Vine with a capital V, and here are the branches in inverted commas. Here is the Winepress of glory, and the Vat flowing with liquid Delight. Here in a figure is the Beloved's Vineyard, the church; the Beloved Himself; the people of the Lord; the Holy Ghost, in Clusters, Vat and Wineskin. Here is the Father the Husbandman, the Son the Vine, the Holy Ghost the Wine—the Trinity. Here in a word is Pentecost.

Here also (for the portion, as well as figurative, is literal and pre-figurative) is the prolific territory of Judah's tribe to be, the fertility of Judah's soil and the fecundity of his flocks and herds to come. Rich pastures flowing with milk; strong vines for tethering happy younglings; wine bubbling in streams; agricultural wealth and pastoral happiness and pure gladness of health and joy. All typical of the believer's prosperous joy in heaven-on-earth and heaven-to-be.

Judah here is seen as the perfect Christian, the truly, fully Pentecostal Christian; for every believer is designed to be no less.

Judah was no day labourer on and off shift work. He *dwelt* in the Vineyard. Do You? All he did was in the presence of the Vine and the fruit of the Vine and under the power of the strong sweet must of the Wine. He lived by the Vine—by It and of It. Do we? The vine, like Christ, is meat and drink, and more. "Christ is my Meat, Christ is my Drink, my Medicine and my Health; my Portion, mine Inheritance—yea, all my boundless Wealth."

He ate in the Vineyard, drank, worked, played, slept there. Off duty he was still in the blessing. He joined the treaders in the teeming Press, squelching in the crimson juice—walking in the Spirit. He lifted his feet in the choric dance on ripened clusters—singing and laughing in the Spirit. He drank of the sun-sweet cordial, regaling his family and friends from the festal Fat with wine on the lees—living in the Spirit.

When surfeited himself among satiated fellows he had wine enough and to spare. He plunged his garments in wine and his clothes, in the blood of the grape. Cleansed and sanctified by shed blood and the Spirit poured out.

Every detail of his life and possessions he brought into liberating subjection in the Vineyard. He tethered his very donkey to the Vine and his ass's colt to the Choice Vine, with sure prophetic sense that Shiloh might one day find use for such a consecrated foal. Are our untrained thought and unbroken habit tied to Judah's Vine? Was not Balaam's prophetic she-ass of this same Judah breed?

He walked with the grape-treaders stained to the eyes with wine. He fellowshipped with the pastoral folk bathed to the teeth in milk. His eyes red with wine stain, his teeth sparkling with milk-white light—really enjoying his lot—splashing in the very Fat of heaven—a living picture of heaven's holy, happy and radiant activity.

It is good to dwell thus in the Vineyard. Because Judah was always in the Vineyard, under the anointing, he was full of Praise,

even enjoying the praise of discerning brethren. He should live in victory, his hand in the neck of his enemies. He should be respected as the family leader and head (Reuben's lost office), his father's children bowing down to him. He should live as a lion—"rampant and couchant" (as Matthew Henry puts it) ; rampant, fearing up evil : Couchant, resting undisturbed by challenging circumstances. From his loins should come rulers and lawgivers—kings and councillors. Of his anointed line the Illustrious Anointed Himself should appear. In the remnant of his progeny, faith should persist until that great and glorious Double Consummation, the Appearance and Reappearance of the Deliverer. Unto Judah's Mightiest Son the gathering of the people shall be. It is good to live by the Vine.

Do we live by the Vine? Do we dwell in the Vineyard? Or do we leave the Vineyard when we leave the meeting? Do we slip off our anointing like an overall after the benediction is pronounced? Do we work, play, rest, read, worship, preach, sing, sleep, awake in the Vineyard?

Is our leisure time in the Vineyard or in Broadcasting House or the sports fields. Sisters. Are your legs in the Vineyard, or naked in godless Hollywood? Is your hair flowing Mary-like in the Vineyard, or clipped wanton-like in the Fashion Parade? Are your lips, brows, nails, complexion in the Vineyard, or in the Christ-rejectors' Beauty Parlour?

Are you wandering in the wilderness, brother, murmuring in barrenness, or rejoicing in your possession in your verdant vine-grown lot—supernatural prosperity and triumph by the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

How do the vines flourish, Pentecostal vintager?

Happy every Judah living in the Vineyard, self-fettered to the Choice Vine, in Advent hope and glory—till Shiloh come again!

(4) Zebulun and Issachar Good-neighbours.

Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon. "Issachar is a rawboned (strong) donkey lying down among the sheep pens. When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labour. Gen.49:13-15.

About Zebulun he said: "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents. They will summon peoples to the mountain and there offer the sacrifices of the righteous; they will feast on the abundance of the seas, on the treasures hidden in the sand." Deut.33:18-19

Zebulun and Issachar had neighbouring portions in the Land. Jacob blesses them as separate; Moses as combined. Consider them as combined for the purpose of our focussed thoughts.

Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out—Issachar in thy tents. Zebulun went out and Issachar stayed in. Zebulun Far-farer, Issachar Stay-at-home. Each was content with his happy lot. One went from sea to sea in the fulfilment of his heavenly destiny. One stayed in his tents in development of his appointed lot. Their prosperity was maritime, material, agricultural, earthly; illustrating equivalent phases of spiritual possession, experience and prosperity in the heavenly realm.

Zebulun illustrates missionary and evangelistic adventuring: Issachar pastoral and consolidating enterprising. Zebulun was in the front line; Issachar at the home base. Zebulun searched his abundance in the seas; Issachar found his treasure in the Land. Zebulun sought his goodly pearls in great waters at far distances; Issachar found his treasures hid in the field at home. Issachar rejoiced at headquarters, Zebulun in the regions beyond. Issachar saw that rest was good, and the Land pleasant. Zebulun saw that activity was' good and the far horizon pleasant. Both had a goodly heritage. Restful activity. Active rest. Rejoice Zebulun and Issachar in thy going out and in thy tents.

Issachar had a rich soil and a spirit at ease for patient, laborious plodding; Zebulun had a wide horizon and an eager heart for fearless endeavour. Zebulun left his many havens to reach distant coasts where Jehovah's Name had never been heard, lading his capacious holds with trophies, for the Lord—sucking "the abundance of the seas." Issachar stuck to his tents, prospecting and excavating round about home, unearthing gems of grace and beauty for the Lord—sucking the "treasures hid in the sand."

Better than the ivory and apes and peacocks king Solomon brought in his painted argosies from Tharshish to Tyre is the living cargo anointed Zebuluns carry from Peru to Canaan, from Zanzibar to everlasting glory. Tamed wild things, transfigured ugly things, converted vain things. Richer than gold of Ophir, the precious onyx or the sapphire, the topaz of Ethiopia, the multitudes of rubies, are the jewels Pentecostal Issachars bring from the dust and darkness of the homeland for the shining coronal of the King.

There is still abundance in the seas for audacious Zebuluns to venture for. There are still treasures in the sand for the equally adventurous Issachars to turn with the pastoral and intercessory spade.

These two brethren not only rejoiced without complaint or envy in their own appointed lot and duty. Each helped the other in the happy task of "calling people unto the mountain, to offer sacrifices of righteousness."

Simeon and Levi were a bad combination, illustrating inter-denominational union, inter-movement sterility. They had to be scattered before they made good. Here is good combination, a workable fellowship, illustrating inter-assembly work, pleasant and profitable. Zebulun and Issachar formed a ready-to-help, lend-a-hand, shoulder-and-share agreement. Individual and mutual. Separate but contributory.

Together, so to speak, in their different ministries they called sinners to "the mountain of the Lord's house, exalted above the hills." Because of the contributory work of the diligent and rejoicing Zebuluns and Issachars at home and abroad "many people shall go and say, Come, let us go up . . . to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isa.2:2-3).

Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out, and Issachar in thy tents. The Lord give thee good hunting and rich spoil. The Lord bless thy going out and thy staying in from this time forth and even for evermore. Rejoice, sons of Jeshurun, in the blessed hope of that Haven at the end of all voyagings, and that Christ-pitched Tent in the Beautiful Land. .

(5) Dan Godly-guile.

Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan will be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward. "I look for your deliverance, LORD. Gen.49:16-18.

"Dan is a lion's cub springing out from Bashan." Deut.33:22.

There is an ungodly guile reprehended in the bible. There is a godly guile recommended. Dan represents this better, innocent, effective guilefulness.

Dan had the smallest of all portions in the land. It was pleasant and fertile but narrow. It was full of low winding valleys and bluff hills where lurking enemies waited to spring in violent depredatory sorties. Dan was baulked of his full inheritance and annoyed by the natives, the Amorites, some of the fiercest and strongest foes the children of Israel had to meet. This circumscribed position and this need for continual vigilance and stratagem encouraged in Dan the subtlety suggested in Jacob's prophetic blessing.

The Danites could not hope to overcome the foe by weight. They had recourse to subtler methods. They lurked like serpents in the grass at the side of the road. They hid like adders by the path. They crouched like young lions, waiting to spring. Their strength would not warrant frontal attacks; they resorted to ambushments and guerrillas. They dared not challenge the enemy in the open; they secretly threatened the flanks. They feared to sally forth in the field; like snakes they "bit" the heels of the horses. They would not group for fight in the open; they lurked by the paths for unsuspecting enemies. Too weak to launch a major attack they learned the art of subterfuge. They hid and coiled and darted and struck like concealed adders. By these subtle means they got themselves some elbow room in Canaan.

Such guile is sometimes necessary in the spiritual conflict for possession, against foes stronger than we. The wisdom of the

serpent is a weapon in the Christian's armoury that Jesus recommends. We may match guile with guile in setting out to defeat the subtle foe, as Jael did 'with Sisera (Judg.4:20-21). Paul effectively employed this stealthy weapon (2Cor.12:16). "Being crafty, I caught you with guile."

God obviously approved Dan's guileful ways with the cunning foe. For He promised, "Dan shall judge his people"—in spite of the fact that he was born of a handmaid. This was fulfilled in the famous guileful Danite Samson. God does not, however, approve deceit in our dealings with His own.

But guile can easily defeat itself. Like a lurking young lion Dan leapt from Bashan up to Laish and by guile took it. His subtlety defeated him. He bit his own heels, so to speak, and sprang on to his own neck, when h instituted idolatry in the city he had taken by guile from simple people. Over-subtlety, that. It got him into Babylonish captivity (Judg.18:30). In Samson the Danite, the too guileful rider fell backward slain by his own stroke. Godly guile is better than godless simplicity (Judg.18:7), but fearless straight forwardness is better than either.

Godly guile is no doubt useful when necessary. Selfish guile is evil. The wise-as-serpents must be gentle-as-doves. The serpent must have a dove for companion. Wise and gentle. Subtle and simple. Wily and honest. Artfully artless. Crafty but not sinister. Ingenious but ingenuous.

Guile is really an enemy weapon. The adversary is a serpent, a lion and an adder. The serpent strikes at the heel. The Lord strikes openly at the head (Gen.3:15). We may meet craft with craft, but never evil with evil.

The Lord Himself uses the stealth of the Thief. Stealth, but not dishonesty. But for sinners prone yet to sin, honesty is still the best policy. Gideon's transparent forthrightness and honest sword are better than Samson's riddle and jawbone business.

Gideon's was the real thing: Samson's the expedient. Gideon's was design: Samson's improvisation.

Honesty is not only policy—it is super-subtlety. Guilelessness is God's usual method. He announces His strategy beforehand to friend and foe. He advertises His plans and tactics. The enemy does not understand such openness. He is outwitted and defeated. Much of God's revelation in His word is, if you like, "careless talk"; it gives Him away. 'God exists to give Himself away. He tells of His schemes, His weapons, His battle fronts, and boasts openly in His coming campaigns and victories.

The enemy "does his worst" clandestinely: The Lord invites him to do so for his destruction. God "does His best" openly. He fears no counter stroke. Who but God would have thought of giving the battle away at Calvary! By becoming a Prey He took the prey from the mighty. He foresaid that He would. The wisest friend or foe failed to understand it. Honesty is super-subtlety. Faith is super-organisation. Unction is super-homiletics. Trust is super-warfare.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" interposes Jacob, shocked into the memory of old ways by his inspired references to serpents and adders. He had had enough of the subtlety business—heel-grabbing, birth-right-snatching, hairy hands, mimic voice, pilled rods, ring-straked, speckled and spotted stuff. His snake-in-the-grass stratagems were over. He had won the simplicity of the dove-in-the-blue. He had soared from earth to heaven. He had risen to faith. The supplanter was supplanted. The prince had prevailed. He now waits for God. Dan would have done better to do the same.

Had not God promised to drive out the enemy before him if he obeyed? Jacob was born scheming. He was dying trusting. Let Dan lurk with his serpent's tooth and snipe with his adder's fang (he seems to say); as for him (Jacob), in all his havings and gettings and holdings now, he was trusting in the great forward sweep of Jehovah's all-conquering salvation.

(6) Gad Conquer-self.

Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels. Gen.49:19.

And he provided the first part for himself, For there was the lawgiver's portion reserved; And he came with the heads of the people; He executed the righteousness of Jehovah, And his ordinances with Israel. (First... himself.) Deut.33:21.

In Jacob's blessing of 'Gad there is a remarkable play on words in the Hebrew. So the lexicons reveal. The three words "Gad," "troop," and "overcome" are at root all the same, the primary meaning being "troop." So that we may legitimately read the words this way: Gad, Gad shall gad him: but he shall gad Gad at the last." The blessing signifies the inner conflict with Self.

Gad found that the greatest and the subtlest of all enemies he had to contend with were those that represented Self. So do all of us, if we have any spiritual perception at all. Gad's nearest neighbours were Moabites and Ammonites, children of drunken Lot by lustful and sottish generation; and Hagarites and Ishmaelites, all of carnal origin. Troops of these ever-present enemies, illustrating the "corruptions" and "deceitful lusts" of "the old man" (Eph.4:22), in innumerable incursions overcame him at the first; but, Thanks be to God who gives the victory, he overcame them at the last. In the initial stages of the conflict Self prevailed; in the final issue Gad triumphed.

Every Christian Gad has Self to meet and conquer. Troops of outlaw passions, wrong affinities, unwarranted antipathies, lower demands attack the best in us on all our frontiers. How often we are overcome by them we blush to confess. "He that rules his spirit is better than he that takes a city."

Self is the cruel dictator who organizes all those tyrant troops and alien bands against us. Notice the word "himself" in Moses' blessing. "He provided the first part for himself." First - self. Self first. Gad chose his lot on the wrong side of Jordan. God let him since he lusted after it. The Gadites were first movers in this selfish

scheme to put God second. Like Reuben they thought of life in terms of beef and mutton and garden produce and bank balances and tons and acres of earth. Self first. We must put self first in holiness, but not in advantage (Phil.2:4).

The clash of Self's marauding troops won the intermediate battles against Gad. The clean troops of grace within him won the last battles. The first bout in the victorious phase was won when Gad consented at God's command to forget self and fight across the river till he saw his more spiritual brethren (his better inward elements) safely settled in the Promised Land—the land Gad himself never possessed (Num.32:17;25). Gad won the final victory over the Troops of Self when his "valiant men" put the Hagarites and Ishmaelites to flight in David's day, because they "cried to God in the battle" and "put their trust in Him" (1Chron.5:18-22). In David's time also the Ammonites and Moabites were wholly subdued, and no doubt the bold and skilful Gadites, their near neighbours, had a good sword and a strong bow in the battle. "He came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord" (Deut.33:21). A troop overcame him at first, but he overcame at the last.

In putting self first we unconsciously take the tyrant's part and range all our nearest and strongest foes in ceaseless warfare against us: Carnal ambition, fleshy appetite, worldly aims, lower aspirations, temporal advantage. Those allied foes assail us in overbearing troops and overcome us.

If enemies only met us one by one! But "troops"! If, say, Money-grub, or Sloth, or Sharp-tongue, or Temper, or Careless met us in single combat, we might by caution and a well-placed scripture arrow defeat them, one by one. Or if Indulgence with his artful workings on innocent emotions drew single sword against us—or Vainglory or Loose-thought or Fear or Compromise—we might beat them with a true thrust of the two-edged Sword, one by one. But when these and innumerable others molest us in "troops" we are

caught in ambushments and booby-traps and outflanking movements, and overcome. We need ever to pray the Psalmist's prayer that our enemies, too many and too strong for our unaided forces, may be put to flight by the strategy and the strong arm of our God.

And if enemies were always visible, and among strangers, how much easier it seems would be the fight'! But when "a man's enemies are men of his own house," and invisible, we need, like Micah, to pray, "I will look unto the Lord." (Micah 7:6-7).

It is good to recall that though Gad was no doubt often grieved and sore and contrite concerning his many defeats, he did not add to his enemies another called Weary-of-well-doing. He picked up after every defeat, took stock, fought better, and so progressed until the happy day when he overcame those who had so often overcome him.

What comfort to the weary and discouraged is this! The enemy shall not finally rejoice against those who humbly confess their failures and meekly take their stand with their Warrior God. "When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall he a light unto me." But if it is true that there are troops against us, and that these troops are within our own hearts, it is equally true that troops are for us and equally within our reach. Do-the-right, Grace-speech, Diligence, Pure-eyes, Tenderness, Moderation, Courage, Faith—all children of the "new man" of Ephesians 4. For Gad is a "troop" in himself (Gen.30:11). With us is the Lord. Thus we too are a troop, a superior, troop, more than enough to meet every combination of foes with Him who causes us to triumph and who makes us more than conquerors.

The troops of heaven and light are more and stronger than the troops of evil and fallen nature that temporarily invest and possess the soul of man. Moreover they increase out of all proportion beyond the marauding troops of evil. Blessed be God who "enlarges" every stout-hearted Gad, who teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight, who subdues our enemies under us, and Who in mercy causes us to overcome at the last.

(7) Asher Glory-shod.

Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king. Gen.49:20 About Asher he said: "Most blessed of sons is Asher; let him be favoured by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in oil. The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, and your strength will equal your days. Deut.33:24-25.

In Moses' blessing of Asher the focal point is feet. Feet and shoes. The emphasis is thus on life's pilgrimage. Though Asher was not now in the wilderness but in the Promised Land, he was to remember he was still a pilgrim and a stranger. He was not yet home. So anointed Christians, though in heavenly places by the marvellous baptism in the Holy Ghost, are still on pilgrimage—to fairer worlds on high.

Asher was to have feet prepared by anointing, and superlatively shod for the way. Glory-dipped for the heavenly way and rough shod for the rough way. Let him dip his foot in oil. Jacob adds that Asher's bread shall be fat. Which leads our thought to the olive oil and butter of kine and fat dainties of Eastern cookery and toilet. Easterns love oils. They make their cakes with oil instead of our lards; they mix and bake and fry their foods in oil. They lave and anoint and refresh themselves with oil. Job washed his steps with butter, and the rocks poured him out rivers of oil.

A part of God's promise to His people was that they should be fat and flourishing. He would make fat their bones. He would prosper them as with marrow and fatness. A rich figure. The graphic opposite of skin and bone. Marrow, fat at the centre. Fatness, fat at the circumference. Flourishing inwardly and outwardly. No leanness; no scarceness; all prosperity. Their very rocks should yield oil—oil out of the flinty rock. Not mineral oil from Syrian pipe lines—-stinking choking petrol naphtha, kerosene, paraffin—as some unworthily aver. But olive oil from olive groves rooted in the rocky soil of Canaan. Oil for unction not traction, inspiration not gas, food not asphyxia, anointing not explosion. Sweet golden oil, -eatable, drinkable, emolient, healing, light-bringing.

No doubt this has a first reference to the richness of Asher's lot in the Land— "a land of oil olive." But the thought we are taking is that of preparation for the journey of life. Let him dip his foot in oil. Have you dipped your foot, brother? I mean not only by the initial baptism in the oil of the Spirit, but by this morning's ration of unction from heaven? They are poor feet, ill-prepared for the pilgrimage, if they are not daily dipped in oil. What comfort and glow and glory and exhilaration the anointing brings!

You anoint my head with oil. Let him dip his foot in oil. From head to foot, all glory. It is our glorious Priest-Shepherd who supplies the oil. You anoint my head with oil. He supplies the anointing too. It runs down from His head to the skirts of His garment; to the feeblest though not necessarily the least useful of His members— the feet. The oil we dip our feet in is the same He dipped His pilgrim feet in to fit Him for the rugged road, the mighty ministry.

The high priest was anointed. The cleansed leper was anointed from the same holy chrism, sweet with the perfumes of the sanctuary.

Do not ask the Lord to dip you, baptized believer. Dip yourself. Let him dip his foot in oil. There is plenty in the fruitful olive trees rooted in glory. We must have oil for the way. More oil—more!

Thy shoes shall be iron and brass. Durable footwear has anointed Asher. Good for all the way to heaven. He has the beautiful feet of the anointed messenger and the lasting footwear of the everlasting saint. Iron and brass. The hardest stuffs in Asher's rocky portion. The most indestructible material in heaven-on-earth. "a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills." (Deut.8:9). Shoes made out of the hardness of the way. Not velvet slippers for the garden path. Rough shoes for rough roads. Yes, the roads are often rough in Canaan. The shoes will bear us over them all. Steep roads, too. The gospel shoes will stand up to the gradient. Long roads. The brazen shoes will

outlast the road. Troublous roads. The iron soles will not fall from the uppers, till we get Home.

The shoes for God's pilgrims never wear out. "They waxed not old upon thy foot." "Pentecostal boots with Hallelujah studs" as one of our beloved brethren once said in another connection. Thank God for the millions of Ashers who have at last doffed their iron shoes—left them at the Pearly Gates—found transfigured shoes of Light and Glory for the endless life on the Golden Streets. "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O Prince's daughter!"

Do you look at the way, and then at your shoes? Are they down at heel? Do you feel you have not yet Asher's indestructible footgear? Perchance you have not yet come to the flinty roads where such shoes, are necessary. As thy days, so shall thy strength— and thy shoes—be. If the way seems harder than formerly, then by faith dip your foot and slip on Asher's shoes. Use God's best. Pumps (*leisure shoes like plimsols*) are of no use in Canaan. Too easy. Even Effort's shoes are poor in utility quality. So are Fear's. They pinch, too. Faith's are best, by grace. Faith can find our size in Asher's iron shoes now. Try them on. Do not mind the newness. The things of faith are ever new—and old. Both the newness and the oldness frighten some back to failure's flimsy plimsols. Do not mind if Asher's shoes strike fire under your feet as you walk. So they ought. The anointed and glory-shod on earth's flinty ways are used to fire, and dust. Both lead to Glory. The harder the way, the greater the need, the fiercer the struggle; then the harder, easier, stronger the shoes. As thy days, so shall thy strength be.

A rich portion is often hard. A hard portion is often rich. For Asher's lot there are always Asher's anointing and Asher's appropriate shoes. The longer we wear them the easier they become and the happier we are. And the glory is—they get us there! Thanks be to God for Him whose head was bruised that we might be sweetly anointed, Whose feet were torn that we might be firmly shod.

(8) Napthali Full-content.

Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. Gen.49:21.
Naphtali is abounding with the favour of the LORD and is full of his blessing; he will inherit southward to the lake. Deut.33:23.

Naphtali had a lovely portion in the Land; from Tabor to Hermon, along the gospel-sweetened western shores of Galilee; rich and diversified, a veritable land' of brooks of water and fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; of wheat and barley and vines and figtrees and pomegranates. Naphtali lived a frolicsome life in "the high places of the field." His feet, like David's, were hinds' feet; he was "set upon his high places, that he might eat the increase of the fields."

No doubt the "hind let loose" of Jacob's blessing had reference, on the natural side, to the mountain haunt of that lithesome and nimble-footed creature. This son of Rachel's handmaiden was as happy-hearted and free as the dappled wild deer of the hills of Naphtali.

A hind let loose. Rather, forced loose; sent forth—loosed (the same word) like the living bird into the open field, of Lev.14:7. A hind let loose, thrust out of bondage, redeemed from thraldom; a captive hind set free—picture of a guilty heart forgiven, a dead heart quickened into bounding life.

A sinner-heart let loose from the prison house of sin, leaping about the happy highlands of the country of the free. A sorrowful heart enfranchised from the darkness of nature's night into the light of the summits of grace and glory. A mourning heart let loose from the bonds of misery, now bounding among the flowery plains and blessed peaks of bliss.

A hind let loose. Once a captive dragging heavy chains, now leaping like dawn hues from coloured slope to breezy height. Leaping over barriers and fences and forms and futile efforts; slipping leashes, escaping fetters, into liberty and light of the high

places of grace; springing from barren spaces and wilderness dreariness into rich fruitfulness and summer delight.

A hind let loose. Loosed like a dazzled new convert into joy of heart! No more heaviness. See the lovely roe flying without wings from ledge to ledge, dancing without restraint on bosky sward and sweet-scented moss. Loosed, like a seasoned saint, from gloom and ignorance and misty half-light into lustre and revelation. Vista upon vista opening, horizon after horizon appearing, ever new vision and discovery in the tops of the everlasting hills of God.

Loosed into untold, unsuspected, unimagined liberty of mind and thought and heart, leaping for utter delight from one glad glory to another, over hills of frankincense and mountains of myrrh, every leap leading surely to the lovely perfumed highlands of Home!

Loosed into prosperity beyond the dreams of delectation deadness slipped away like dust behind the lightsome foot of the awakened hart; heaviness lost for ever in sunny air where the soul seems poised without weight, beyond the pull of gravity, every breath a drink, every heart-beat a feast of beauty and gladness.

Loosed beyond nature into the realm of the supernatural, the Pentecostal ether of the upper heavens, the miracle breath of the mighty Spirit of God, the intoxicating air of the Holy of Holies, the wine-surfeited atmosphere of the Hall of Banqueting; the powerful unction of the Hands of the Lord pouring into our weakness and emptiness the blessed galvanism that vitalizes, heals, delivers, delights. "He gives goodly words." In Zebulun and Naphtali "Jesus began to preach." Thus "the people who sat in darkness saw great light." Here in Naphtali He undertook a considerable part of His ministry and did most of His wonderful works. In that lovely sense surely Naphtali "gives goodly words."

It was here from the lakeside that those earliest disciples, those hind-foot Naphtalis, were loosed from their encumbering ropes and nets and began to give goodly words of the gospel. Like

Naphtali in many a later conflict, they "risked their very lives;" Judg.5:18.

Thank God for thousands of Pentecostal preachers and miracle-workers to-day who are, under the anointing, giving goodly words of redemption, liberation for soul and body, true members of the tribe of Naphtali. Bounding hinds let loose all over the world.

No feet are truly hinds' feet that laze about the swamps of formalism and loiter amid the arid wastes of nominalism. No words are truly "goodly words" till the anointing sets Naphtali free; till "the yoke is destroyed because of the anointing."

"O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." Only the free can be satisfied. Only favour can satisfy even the free. Favour is goodwill, grace. Favour thus both frees and satisfies. None hut Christ can satisfy. Giving goodly words of grace, purveying divine favour, truly satisfies, both giver and receiver.

"Full with the blessing of the Lord." The free are not only vocal and satisfied; they are full. Full with blessing. Full to the point of running over. That is why they give. They are so full they cannot contain. Free, contented, full. That is the grand life. It is possible to every Christian by the anointing. In this sense every believer ought to be named Naphtali.

"The blessing of the Lord." No other blessing fills, or satisfies or runs over to others. The favour and the blessing, like the emancipation, are of the Lord.

Lord, keep every Naphtali free, content, full, overflowing, vital with bounding and abounding, upland life, activity, ecstasy! Lord, multiply the tribe !

(9) Joseph Solitary-son.

Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. Gen.49:22-26.

About Joseph he said: "May the LORD bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below; with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can yield; with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills; with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favour of him who dwelt in the burning bush. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. In majesty he is like a firstborn bull; his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim; such are the thousands of Manasseh."Deut.33:13-17*

Joseph's blessing is tremendous—both by the voice of Jacob and Moses. He is the hundred-folder. He is far too large a text for our little sermon. His barns are crammed beyond limits. His parklands make our rood of heaven look minute.

Both inspired Blessers emphsise that Joseph was separate from his brethren, and both give this fact as the principal ground of the exhaustless blessings he receives. That gives us a key thought.

Consider the blessed associations of SEPARATEDNESS—of being thrust apart by divine plan or providential circumstances from the comforts of congenial fellowships in the service of the Lord. What are the products under the divine hand of this separatedness?

EXPERIENCE. Joseph was sent out, a lonely messenger, by his father, to seek lost brethren—to restore those who were leading their flocks far from the goodly tent in Hebron, like modernistic shepherds leading the flocks of God away from Home. He found them. Instead of blessing him they cast him into a pit, turning deaf ears to his pitiful cries. They thrust him as a sold slave into a far land where every sound and sight was foreign and uncongenial. For chastity's sake men flung him into the prison house.

Out of this heartbreak God lifted him into regal status and a chief chariot. By force of royal edict a nation prostrated themselves before him, bowing the knee. His brethren in their need came to the glittering dais where he was enthroned, voluntarily casting themselves at his feet, beseeching favours of one they had hated with murderous hatred.

In all this grief and consolation Joseph was alone. In all this he was obviously the type of the One Who was in very truth separate from His brethren.

Separatedness in many lives is almost tragically REAL. Perhaps you feel strangely alone in His service? Not with Elijah's fancied aloneness. Nor the self-inflicted aloofness of the monastery. Have you in all seriousness tried to take a line of separatedness you find emphasised in the word of the Lord, and are you as a result feeling cast out for His dear sake?

We may have to endure the SUFFERINGS of aloneness. How actual they were in Joseph's life! How poignant is the separation if we are in some sense outcast for righteousness' sake, as Joseph. Recall how Jesus said that those who sought wholeheartedly to follow Him should be forsaken by parents and brethren and friends. Joseph they separated, outcast, hated, envied, for no fault of his. They broke his heart. They hurt his feet with fetters. The archers shot at him. The arrows entered his soul. His very wounds became ministers of blessing and fortified him. Have not

later Josephs shed tears in secret when misunderstood and proscribed by those they loved—because of the brotherly errand the Father deputed to them—long ago!

How LONELY is the separated life. The dread of long hours or years apart from those we love, especially if they have sent us out for some loyalty of ours they have not understood. The almost hopeless sense of fellowship lost with brethren we admire, who have mistaken our action or motive. How lonely was the Faithful One!

Separatedness has its fruitful DISCIPLINE. Alone Joseph was cast on God. What trust in Jehovah he learned in the solitary place; trust he never could have acquired among the warm happinesses of home life as the favourite. Moses says Joseph was "separated;" Jacob says "separate." The translators no doubt feel the word will bear the double sense. The one suggests his inescapable destiny; the other his humble acquiescence in God's plan.

How GOD-CONSCIOUS he became in places where no man's face was towards him. The very prison was pregnant with a felt Presence. "The Lord was with Joseph." What godliness was induced in him by enforced retirement from this-world-liness.

And what personal REFINEMENT he eventually enjoyed as the result of loneliness enforced. He became the confrere of kings and statesmen. Godliness is a generous education. He became expert in the language and arts of a mighty and cultured nation. For we must not associate the Egypt of Joseph's day with the later Egypt that tortured the people of God for centuries. Joseph's Pharaoh was a believer in Jehovah. The land of Goshen was a pre-Canaan type of heaven. Where Joseph was 'twas heaven there. What were the thoughts of the unsophisticated brethren when they saw their cultured brother's "glory in Egypt"?

Then separatedness PREPARED Joseph for the service of a stricken world and the needs of his starving brethren. He never

could have succoured his brethren if God had not sent him before them, separated thus, "to save their lives by a great deliverance." "God meant it for good." Leaders, like the Great Leader, must often be separate from sinners in the double sense of un-sinning and un-friended. Are we alone for Jesus' sake? Let us seek to rejoice for God is meaning it for good. What preparations of separated Josephs God may be designing to-day!

Then separatedness brought Joseph eventual TRIUMPH. Alone he suffered; alone he triumphed—alone with God. His right to take the highest station lay in his uncomplaining acceptance of the lowest. He who was servant of sinners and worldlings became "lord of Pharaoh's house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." He was abased to the cell—and promoted to singular and unassociated glory. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

This was not only the triumph of the one who was separated: it was his exceeding great REWARD. Alone he wept; alone he reigned. Alone he uncomplainingly served his God; alone he saved the nation from destruction and his brethren from death. Alone he bore the cross; alone he saved the world. Alone he suffered untold privations; alone he dispensed unmerited bounties to a dying people. From every scripture indication this solitary son of Jeshurun occupies for ever an unchallenged place in the Kingdom of the Blest.

(10) Benjamin Double-man.

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder. Gen.49:27.

Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders. Deut.33:12.

Remarkable contrast! Who would think the same subject was under focus in the two prophetic utterances? Benjamin Dual-nature, Double-man. A wolf. An eaglet. One ravining, one resting. One wild, one tame. One tearing, the other trusting. One conformed to unregenerate nature, the other transformed, regenerate, submissive. First the grown cub of the wolf that is Adam. Last the trustful fledgling of the Eagle that is Christ. First the carnal beast ravining. Last the spiritual bird soaring. First the earth-prowler. Last the heaven-ranger.

Benjamin shall ravin. The Lord shall cover him. The wolf-eaglet. The changed creature. The old man made new. The ravining wolf leads us far in thought from the petted, pampered youth of Hebron and the courts of Pharaoh. Amazing that in that winsome child there lurked the nature of the beast of prey. God had to tame this boy's progeny one day—to hunt them like a pack of wolves, coming near to annihilating them. Recall the un-savoury story of Benjamites with wolfish ferocity repeatedly defeating superior numbers of Israelites, in their violent espousal of the lost cause of adulterous men of Gibeah, till God intervened and desolated them, till Israel mourned that "There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day" (Judg.19:20-21). "In the morning" (of Benjamin's spiritual history) he devoured the prey. Yet Jehovah like a Mother Bird eventually made room for him beneath His wings, and carried him among the soft feathers between His shoulders.

Had Benjamin's doting father and influential brother spoiled him in boyhood with unwise preferences? Men should have no favourites. God has none. God's favourite is Whosoever. My

mother used to say to those who asked which was the favourite child of her eight— "All of them!" Invidious indulgence brings out the lowest elements of human nature. Pampered youth is ruined youth. Take care—Pentecostal leaders!

Were the tragic circumstances of his birth responsible for the over indulgence that spoiled the lad? He was his precious mother's Benoni. The son of her sorrow. He cost her her life. Sympathy, makes many pets, and ruins them. The pet wolf will grow out of hand one day. If his nature is not curbed he will ravin and destroy. Sympathy for the unfortunate must not permit us to foster the wolfish bent in humanity.

The wolf fang flashed sinister in Benjamin when his tribe adhered to backslidden king Saul long after he was rejected of the Lord. The wolf snarled and ravined in the famous Benjamite king Saul himself, prowling in the kingdom, hunting the godly and tearing right and left with unrestrained ferocity.

But thank God for the infinite possibilities of transformation in grace. The heavenly creature suspired from the prowling beast in Benjamin. The beloved fledgling rose into the heavens in the Benjamites who revolted from Saul, who presented themselves changed men at good king David's coronation, and who remained faithful to Judah and the temple when the remaining tribes seceded with Jeroboam.

The two bible Sauls were of this originally violent tribe. In Saul the Old Testament Benjamite, the wolf ravined indeed. In Saul the New Testament Benjamite, the beloved of the Lord dwelt safely. What divine alchemy had been at work in this astonishing transformation! In one Saul, the wolf triumphed and slew him. In the other Saul, the wolf was slain and the eagle came into being. In the apostle himself the double man was exemplified. The wolf ravined "in the morning" of his career, when he rampaged and tore and haled holy men and women to prison. Blasphemer, persecutor, injurious. The renewed man "divided the spoil at

night" when in his later phases he led gospel prey in multitudes to the Lord. In one Saul, the wolf was strong and the embryo fledgling weak to perishing point. In the other Saul, the wolf was weak and the heavenly bird strong, piercing the blue to the third heaven. In the beloved apostle the double man was resolved into a new creature, the wolfish element slain on his last ravining expedition, by the blazing arrows of the God of Jeshurun. Not a caress but a deadly stroke changed him.

How beautiful are the fourfold terms of Moses' blessing! Loved. Safe. Covered. Carried. This figure, like many similar in the word, is that of a mother bird with her offspring. It emerges in a gracious word from the lips of the Master. "As a hen doth gather her brood under her wings." This must not necessarily lead us to the thought of the domestic hen, though it may include that. Strong's Concordance indicates that the word "hen" has the meaning of a female bird "as rising into the air." A bird of flight—an eagle, say.

Many familiar scriptures take up the type. "As an eagle... beareth them on her wings: so the Lord." "I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." "He bare them and carried them all the days of old." "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust."

How gracious is Jeshurun's God! The tribe of Benjamin began as a wolf pack; they ended by a thousand miracles as an eagle brood. Yes "all the daylong" God covered them, both as wolf and fledgling. He has done us good and not evil all the days of our lives, even before we knew Him as our mighty and all-loving Progenitor.

Happy Benjamins, rejoicing, not in superior earth blessings, pieces of silver, rags of earth-spun, rations of kitchen stuff; but resting in safe and lively activity under the feathers, and borne on the strong pinions of Immortal Love, inviolate till that Day when He receives us "unto Himself."

(11) The Happy Family.

There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides across the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemies before you, saying, 'Destroy them!' So Israel will live in safety; Jacob will dwell secure in a land of grain and new wine, where the heavens drop dew. Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? Deut.33:26-29.*

Even such a cursory glance as we have been able to give to the tribes and their heads in these chapters reveals not only astonishing spiritual and moral strength, but also astonishing spiritual and moral weaknesses.

The weaknesses, of course, like our own in this later day, are consequent on human frailty and the ravages of what the old theologians were fond of calling inbred sin. The strength on the other hand was and is due entirely to heavenly new-birth and nature of divine origin—in a word, to regeneration.

But why, we may be tempted to ask, "since we are born of God," as the tribes were in type or reality or both, is there not a closer resemblance to the character of the divine Parent, and a more general sinlessness manifest in the sons of Jeshurun of that day or this?

Why is there in the children of God so much remaining weakness and so little appropriated strength?

Ideally the nature of God in the sons of Jeshurun should cancel all the torques and twists of fallen nature. But who among us ever reached the ideal on earth? Who, of us submits to the hundred-per-cent corrective of God's nature within us and God's grace around us? The wheat seed of the Kingdom is adapted to produce or reproduce a hundred-fold like itself. But how often we through natural weakness or limitations or obstinacy content ourselves with thirty-fold or sixty-fold!

The debt we (Christians) owe by nature we are theoretically able by grace to liquidate completely; the full "hundred measures of

oil" and the "hundred measures of wheat" but since we are all in some degree " unjust stewards," debtors still in spite of all our best endeavours, we too often content ourselves with "sitting down quickly and writing fifty," or at most "taking our bill and writing fourscore" (Luke 16:1-7).

"The fault is in ourselves, not in our stars," that we are failures. The fault is not in the new nature introduced at new-birth, but in the old nature persisting along-side of the new. To make further use of Benjamin Double-man—the fault is in the "wolf" propensities fostered to the detriment of the "eagle" qualities existing in the same individual after birth as a son of Jeshurun,

The Sons of Jeshurun are full of defects because Jeshurun was full of faults. The sons of Jeshurun's God are full of faults not because they are born of God but because the Jeshurun qualities persist in them and are deliberately or carelessly promoted for selfish ends.

Even when God blessed Jeshurun with all earthly blessings in earthly places in Canaan; when "He made him ride on the high places of the earth that he might eat the increase of the fields, and made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock, butter of kine and milk of sheep with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; when he dank the pure blood of the grape" —even then "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked!" (Deut. 32: 13-15). That is, when God had made him fat with the fullest measure of the kind of fatness He could approve, Jeshurun chose to wallow in his own carnal and discredited fat—the worthless fat of earth and fallen nature instead of the beautiful produce of heaven.

Are we in any better case as sons of God to-day? Do we not this day see Pentecost, that happy son of Jeshurun, after years of spiritual prosperity, now growing rebellious and refractory (recalcitrant is the precise word), kicking at the exact moment when we have by the mercy of God waxed fat in spiritual power

and glory? When shall we begin to learn from the things that have happened to former sons of Jeshurun as ensamples for our admonition? The ends of the world are come upon us. Are we any nearer heaven than those upon whom only the elementary beginnings of the world had come?

Yet in spite of all the failures of the Sons of God, how happy is that people whose God is the Lord! How incomparably happy are those with all their faults and consequent corrections and disciplines who know the joyful sound of salvation! Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord.

When all the outer world's criticisms of the children of God are noted and many of them admitted, there remains a solid fund of strength and holiness in them that the world could never lay claim to. There are no Judah praisers of the Lord in the world or formal religion; no Levi worshippers; no Joseph forgivers; no Naphtali gospel messengers; no Gad self-conquerors; no Asher holy pilgrims. Truly the spiritual sons of Jeshurun are a happy, holy family.

Incomparable is the people of the Lord. Who is like unto thee! There is not their like on earth or in heaven. They are not merely better people. They are different people. They are not improved earth-dwellers: they are a new race of heaven-dwellers for the moment pilgriming on earth.

They are incomparable because their Father is incomparable. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun! The Lord is the Incomparable. He is not the best of a group. He is alone, unique, majestic in underived and unrivalled glory. Who is like unto thee among the mighty ones! Who is like thee, glorious in holiness!

The Lord is not the best of all. He is the One and All. He is uncompared, incomparable, unequalled. There is none like unto Him. He is a Group in Himself and the only One in His Group. Peerless, matchless, unchallengable, transcendent, paramount, supreme.

He is the Great Only. He is not I AM THE BEST. Nor I AM THE HOLIEST. He is solely I AM THAT I AM. Unapproachable and unmeasureable. Not supreme in comparative glory. Supreme in unique, alone glory.

Because He is incomparable, His sons are incomparable. Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord! They are not merely the *herrenvolk* (master race); they are the only folk in any eternal sense. They are temporarily Sons of men, but eternally sons of God. They are not just to occupy a better place in heaven. They only are to occupy the only places in heaven.

Incomparably unique, therefore incomparably happy! Happy art thou, O child of Jeshurun's God! Victorious too. The Lord shall thrust out their enemies. And safe. They shall dwell in safety alone. Safe because saved. Are you? Also prosperous. The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine. Divinely exalted. They shall tread upon the high places of their enemies.

Incomparable God of Jeshurun! Grant all thy sons to be like thee, incomparable in holiness and happiness and all godlike excellency!

None is like Jeshurun's God, So great, so strong, so high,
Lo! he spreads his wings abroad, He rides upon the sky!
Israel is his first-born son; God, the Almighty God, is thine;
See him to thy help come down, The excellence divine.

Thee the great Jehovah deigns To succour and defend;
Thee the eternal God sustains, Thy Maker and thy friend:
Israel, what hast thou to dread? Safe from all impending harms,
Round thee and beneath are spread The everlasting arms.

God is thine; disdain to fear The enemy within:
God shall in thy flesh appear, And make an end of sin;
God the man of sin shall slay, Fill thee with triumphant joy;
God shall thrust him out, and say, "Destroy them all, destroy!"

All the struggle then is o'er, And wars and fightings cease,
Israel then sh all sin no more, But dwell in perfect peace;
All his enemies are gone; Sin shall have in him no part;
Israel now shall dwell alone, With Jesus in his heart.

In a land of corn and wine His lot shall be below;
Comforts there, and blessings join, And milk and honey flow;
Jacob's well is in his soul; Gracious dew his heavens distil,
Fill his soul, already full, And shall for ever fill.

Blest, O Israel, art thou! What people is like thee?
Saved from sin, by Jesus, now Thou art, and still shalt be;
Jesus is thy seven-fold shield, Jesus is thy flaming sword;
Earth, and hell, and sin, shall yield To God's almighty Word.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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