

jul 2

sunday solice - giants in the land

"There we saw the giants." Num 13:33

Yes, they saw the giants, but Caleb and Joshua saw God! Those who doubt say, "We be not able to go up." Those who believe say, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able."

Giants stand for great difficulties; and giants are stalking everywhere. They are in our families, in our churches, in our social life, in our own hearts; and we must overcome them or they will eat us up, as these men of old said of the giants of Canaan.

The men of faith said, "They are bread for us; we will eat them up." In other words, "We will be stronger by overcoming them than if there had been no giants to overcome."

Now the fact is, unless we have the overcoming faith we shall be eaten up, consumed by the giants in our path. Let us have the spirit of faith that these men of faith had, and see God, and He will take care of the difficulties.

It is when we are in the way of duty that we find giants. It was when Israel was going forward that the giants appeared. When they turned back into the wilderness they found none.

There is a prevalent idea that the power of God in a

human life should lift us above all trials and conflicts. The fact is, the power of God always brings a conflict and a struggle. One would have thought that on his great missionary journey to Rome, Paul would have been carried by some mighty providence above the power of storms and tempests and enemies. But, on the contrary, it was one long, hard fight with persecuting Jews, with wild tempests, with venomous vipers and all the powers of earth and hell, and at last he was saved, as it seemed, by the narrowest margin, and had to swim ashore at Malta on a piece of wreckage and barely escape a watery grave.

Was that like a God of infinite power? Yes, just like Him. And so Paul tells us that when he took the Lord Jesus Christ as the life of his body, a severe conflict immediately came; indeed, a conflict that never ended, a pressure that was persistent, but out of which he always emerged victorious through the strength of Jesus Christ.

The language in which he describes this is most graphic. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our body."

What a ceaseless, strenuous struggle! It is impossible to express in English the forcible language of the original. There are five pictures in succession. In the first, the idea is crowding enemies pressing in from every side, and yet not crushing him because the police

of heaven cleared the way just wide enough for him to get through. The literal translation would be, "We are crowded on every side, but not crushed."

The second picture is that of one whose way seems utterly closed and yet he has pressed through; there is light enough to show him the next step. The Revised Version translates it, "Perplexed but not unto despair." Rotherham still more literally renders it, "Without a way, but not without a by-way."

The third figure is that of an enemy in hot pursuit while the divine Defender still stands by, and he is not left alone. Again we adopt the fine rendering of Rotherham, "Pursued but not abandoned."

The fourth figure is still more vivid and dramatic. The enemy has overtaken him, has struck him, has knocked him down. But it is not a fatal blow; he is able to rise again. It might be translated, "Overthrown but not overcome."

Once more the figure advances, and now it seems to be even death itself, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." But he does not die, for "the life also of Jesus" now comes to his aid and he lives in the life of another until his life work is done.

The reason so many fail in this experience of divine healing is because they expect to have it all without a struggle, and when the conflict comes and the battle wages long, they become discouraged and surrender. God has nothing worth having that is easy. There are no

cheap goods in the heavenly market. Our redemption cost all that God had to give, and everything worth having is expensive. Hard places are the very school of faith and character, and if we are to rise over mere human strength and prove the power of life divine in these mortal bodies, it must be through a process of conflict that may well be called the birth travail of a new life. It is the old figure of the bush that burned, but was not consumed, or of the Vision in the house of the Interpreter of the flame that would not expire, notwithstanding the fact that the demon ceaselessly poured water on it, because in the background stood an angel ever pouring oil and keeping the flame aglow.

No, dear suffering child of God, you cannot fail if only you dare to believe, to stand fast and refuse to be overcome.

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