



AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ³⁸ Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that ***they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:*** ³⁹ And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: ⁴⁰ That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. ⁴¹ I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God. (Numbers 15:37-41)

During the closing days of World War II, America had experienced some hard trials. There was much concern over the men and boys who had gone off to fight against a ruthless dictator who would impose a grievous yoke of socialist dictatorship upon all of Europe and America as well were he to succeed. More than sixteen million Americans served during that War to defend our freedoms. Practically everything was rationed, especially coffee and anything containing sugar. The deprivation of conveniences of sweets and other commodities was a small price to pay compared with the suffering of millions of others who lived in the wake, and on the forward edge, of the battle lines. But even the want for small conveniences drew the American people together in a unity that did not exist before hostilities, and the embers of faith were rekindled in the hearts of the people.

Near the end of the War in Europe, or shortly after, a small boy of three years age sat on his mother's knee. He asked a universal question that is common of early youth, "Mama, where did I come from?" His mother answered as if such knowledge should have been commonly understood even by a child, "Why, of course, you came from Heaven. You are a gift of God to me." In the boy's mind, that simple answer settled the issue for many years to come. The soul of a child, so recently departed from beyond the Gates of Splendor, has little difficulty in believing the simple truths expressed concerning God.

A great English poet, William Wordsworth, wrote of this spiritual sense of the child in his amazing poem:

Recollections of Immortality

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Most of those reading this devotion will recall very well the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the natural inclinations of young children, *"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 18:3-4) What happens to such innocent faith of the child as he grows into adulthood? The cares, concerns, and false indoctrinations of the world take their toll on faith. When we have learned so much that is false, the simple truths that once occupied our souls is often crowded out.

The young boy referenced earlier traveled the same course of most mankind. His faith was challenged, and in some ways diminished, by the apparent successes of the world; but in his mature years, he returned to the Ancient Landmark of his soul and to God who had blessed him with life. It is good that we grow older at first, and then seem to become child-like with advancing age. Our memories are triggered by the same infirmity of age that our infirmities as a child had spawned in us as a faith in God. We may come again to love all living things and understand that all life is precious. We anticipate, with wonder, the coming Light as it intensifies.

You may wonder how any of this relates to the *"Ribband of Blue"* referenced in our leading text? It relates much. The pure blue of the sky is the first color most of us remember. It symbolizes to us an infinite 'something' that we can see but cannot fully understand. What makes the sky blue, for example? But beyond this simple understanding is that of a Higher Being who rules in the lives of men, whose power regulates the orbits of celestial bodies. That Higher Being is Almighty God! That 'Ribband of Blue' to be worn on the borders of the garments of God's people, Israel, was to be a reminder to them that they owned a Heavenly heritage. It reminded them of the

sovereignty of God and was, above all, a source of remembrance of who they were in God. We need such reminders today.

Men claiming to be ordained of God in the modern pulpit may be ordained by something, but, in many cases, it is not the God you and I have come to know. This new god of theirs is coy and changeable – not immovable as the Solid Rock of our Salvation! This new god sanctions all manner of perversions and twisted scripture. Reverence before God is viewed as provincial at best, and backward at its worst. Anything goes with this new god of the modern age as long as there is no imposition of biblical restrictions of any sort. Even the music of this new god is degenerate and sensual.

But each of us, as Christians, must wear the Ribband of Blue about the borders of our soul to remind us that there is a Heaven and a God who rules over all from His domain above the blue. The color blue, to the Hebrew, signified ‘perfection.’ Only God is perfect, and we are full of weaknesses. But He will always lead us in righteousness.

That Ribband of Blue about the garment of the Child of God, whether marked on the hem of his garment or graven into the hidden chambers of his heart, is a reminder of the Divine Source of our Being. Remember the woman taken with an issue of blood? *“And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, **Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.** And the woman was made whole from that hour.”* The hem of the Lord’s garment was a sign to the woman of His Divinity and sonship in the Father. May we all do so as well – so much so that others may behold that Ribband of Blue in our faith and lives.

I will end this devotion with a quote from a most Godly servant of the Lord, J. Hudson Taylor, who led many to Christ during his 51 years on the mission field of China. In fact, he founded the China Inland Mission which has a living testimony among Chinese Christians today:

GOD would have all His people wear a badge. Throughout their generations they were to make them fringes in the borders of their garments, and to put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue, that they might look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them, and might be a holy people, holy unto their GOD, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, to be their GOD.

“Blue is the colour of heaven. The beautiful waters of the sea reflect it, and are as blue as the cloudless sky. When the clouds come between, then, and then only, is the deep blue lost. But it is the will of GOD that there should never be a cloud between His people and Himself; and that, as the Israelite of old, wherever he went, carried the ribband of blue, so His people to-day should manifest a heavenly spirit and temper wherever they go; and should, like Moses, in their very countenances bear witness to the glory and beauty of the GOD whom they love and serve.

*“How interesting it must have been to see that ribband of blue carried by the farmer into the field, by the merchant to his place of business, by the maid-servant into the innermost parts of the dwelling, when performing her daily duties. Is it less important that the Christian of today, called to be a witness for CHRIST, should be manifestly characterised by His spirit? Should we not all be \imitators of GOD, as dear children,\ and \walk in love as CHRIST also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us\? And should not this Spirit of GOD-likeness be carried into the smallest details of life, and not be merely reserved for special occasions? If we understand aright the meaning of our SAVIOUR’S direction ‘**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect**’, it teaches this great truth.*