

The Cave of Adullam

“David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.”
—I Samuel 22:1,2

AFTER HIS ASTOUNDING

victory over the Philistine giant Goliath, David became a member of Saul’s household, where envious looks and heartless attempts upon his life were the only returns for the soothing notes of his harp and the valiant exploits of his sling and his sword. Saul owed his continuance on the throne, under God, to David, yet Saul’s javelin attack was David’s reward. God in his mercy kept his dear servant amid all the circumstances of his extremely difficult position. “David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved

himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.”—I Sam. 18:14-16

Thus David, while anointed as Israel's future king, was called upon to endure the hatred and reproach of the ruling power, though loved by all who were enabled to trace his moral worth. It was impossible that Saul and David could continue to dwell together. They were men of totally opposite principles and, therefore, a separation must take place.

WAITED PATIENTLY

David knew that he was anointed king. However, inasmuch as Saul occupied the throne, he was quite content to wait for God's time, when all that was true of him in principle should be fully realized. Till then, the Spirit of the Lord led him to take his place outside. The path of an exile—of a pilgrim and stranger—of a homeless wanderer, lay before the anointed king of Israel. His way to the throne lay through multiplied sorrows and difficulties. He, as a type of the blessed Master, was called to suffer first, and to attain glory afterwards.

Twice Saul was in his power, yet David waited upon God. In God was his strength, his elevation, his entire dependence. He could say, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.” (Ps. 62:5) Hence, we see that David was carried through all the snares and dangers of his path as a servant in the household and army of Saul. The Lord delivered him “from every evil work,” and preserved him unto that kingdom which he had prepared for him, and to which it was his purpose

to raise him, “after that he had suffered a while.”—II Tim. 4:18; I Pet. 5:10

The Lord’s lessons are often painful and difficult because of the waywardness of our hearts inherited as part of our fallen nature. However, every fresh lesson learned, every new principle taken to heart, only fits us the more for all that is yet before us. It is truly blessed to be the disciples of Christ and to yield ourselves to his gracious discipline and training. We should be most happy to be subject, in all things, to the Master. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. 11:28-30

David could say, “My times are in thy hand,” and without doubt he wished them there. (Ps. 31:15) This submission is truly desirable. It saves one from much anxiety of heart and restlessness. When one walks in the habitual conviction that “all things work together for good,” the spirit is most wonderfully at peace. (Rom. 8:28) Being developed as disciples of the Master, such are called upon now to let the will of God rule them in all things.

REFUGE FOUND

It was this subjection of spirit that led David to take his place for a time in the lonely cave of Adullam. He left Saul, the kingdom, and his own destiny, in the hands of God, assured that all would be well. How happy he was to find himself outside the unhealthy atmosphere of Saul’s house, and from under the jealous glances of his eye. He could live

more freely in the cave than in the household of Saul, however it might seem to others.

A place of separation from evil is the freest and the happiest. The Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and this warranted separation from his person. At the same time, there was, on David's part, continued subjection to Saul's power as the king of Israel. The spirit of a sound mind enables us readily to distinguish between these two things. Separation from evil and the evil one and subjection to the will of God should both be complete. The New Testament teaches the Christian to be subject to the powers that be.

David entered into the place of separation. Thus, as one rejected of man, and anointed of God, we see in him a type of Christ. David was now experiencing man's hostility, being driven into exile to avoid death. The cave of Adullam became the great gathering point for those who loved David and were wearied of the unrighteous rule of Saul. So long as David remained in Saul's house, there was no call upon anyone to separate. However, the moment the rejected David took his place outside, no one could remain neutral. "Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them."

The thoughts and sympathies of God were with David and those with him. Though the company assembled must have presented a strange appearance to the carnal and the worldly, yet it was a group gathered around the anointed one of God, and linked with his destiny. It was composed of those who, in their original condition, had sunk to

the very lowest ebb, but who were now deriving character and distinction from their nearness and devotedness to the chosen one of God.

ANTITYPICAL LESSON

In David and his despised and disreputable company, we see a foregleam of the antitypical David and those who prefer companionship with him to all the joys, the honors, and attractions of earth. To these, it mattered not what they had previously been. They were now the servants of David, and he was their captain. Their discontent, their distress, their debt, was all forgotten in their new circumstances. The grace of David was their present portion, and the glory of David their future prospect.

It is the same with the followers of Christ now. Through grace and the gentle leadings of the Father, we have all found our way to Jesus. He was the Anointed of God, but rejected by men. No doubt we all had our respective features of fallen character before coming to the Master, and were all in heavy debt to God. He led us to the feet of his dear Son, where we found pardon and peace through his precious blood, “our hearts having been sprinkled from a consciousness of evil.”—Heb. 10:22, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

We should be living as those who are looking forward to the time when our David shall begin his Messianic rule over earth. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall

appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”—Col. 3:1-4

Referring to his disciples, Jesus said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John 17:16) The measure of our separation from the world is nothing less than Christ’s. It is not so much a goal after which we must strive, but rather a point from which we must start. We do not work up to a heavenly position by shaking off the things of the earth. This is to begin at the wrong end. At the time of our consecration we vow to be separate from the world from that moment forward, and to immediately claim our citizenship as being in heaven.

SEPARATION AND REJECTION

The heavenly calling enables us to see our entire separation from, and elevation above, the world, by virtue of what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, and his position at the right hand of the Father. In Hebrews 2:3, we read, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” The opportunity for this “great salvation” was not developed in all its power and fullness until our Lord took his seat on high, and the Holy Spirit came down to anoint the followers of the Master as members of his body.

The cave of Adullam illustrates the present place of rejection into which Christ entered, and which all must enter who enjoy fellowship with him. David’s followers, by virtue of their association with him, were withdrawn from all connection

with Saul's system. All those now who are led by the Spirit to know their oneness with Jesus, must feel themselves disassociated from present earthly things, by reason of that blessed oneness. A spiritually-minded person does not mix in with the plans and pursuits of this world because they are identified with Christ, who separated himself from these things.

We are in the last days of the old social order, or *kosmos*, and the last days of the development of the body members of Christ. All who love the Lord Jesus Christ must seek a decided identification with him in this time of rejection. This is pictured in the parable of the pound by the nobleman's citizens who hated him and sent a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke 19:14) Shall we go and associate ourselves with the counterpart of these today? We trust not. Rather, may our hearts be with Jesus where he is. May we know the hallowed fellowship of the "Cave of Adullam," where he is who loved us, and washed us from our sins with his blood.

We cannot walk with "Saul" and "David" at the same time. We cannot hold Christ and the world; we must make our choice. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." (Josh. 24:15) "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." (II Tim. 2:11,12) This is the time of suffering, the time for enduring afflictions and hardness. David's men were called, by reason of their association with him, to undergo much toil and fatigue. However, their love for David made all seem light and easy

for them to endure. Those who were faithful to him were all remembered when David, at God's appointed time, was finally at rest in his kingdom. None were forgotten.

LOVING ACTS OF SERVICE

The record of these experiences points forward to the time when Christ shall reward his faithful servants, those who, from love for him, and by the energy of his Spirit, have performed acts of service for him in the time of his rejection. These acts may not be seen, known, or thought of by men, but Jesus knows them, and will eventually reward them openly. Who would ever have known the acts of David's supporters if they had not been recorded in holy writ? Who would have known of the three who drew water from the well of Bethlehem? Who would have known of the slaying of a lion in a pit in the time of snow?—II Sam. 23:8-39

Just so now, the hearts of Christ's followers are filled with love for the Savior, but unknown to the world. Their hands are stretched forth in service to him, unobserved by any human eye. Love never pauses to calculate. It was quite sufficient for David's followers to know that he longed for a drink from the well of Bethlehem. The drink must be procured at all cost: "The three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD."—II Sam. 23:16

There is something peculiarly touching and beautiful in this scene, whether we contemplate

the act of the three mighty men in procuring the water for David, or David's act in pouring it out to the Lord. It is evident that David discerned in an act of such uncommon devotedness a sacrifice which none but the Lord himself could fully appreciate. The odor of such a sacrifice was far too fragrant for him to interrupt it in its ascent to the throne of the God of Israel. Thus he very properly and gracefully allowed it to pass him by in order that it might go up to the One who alone was worthy to receive it and to appreciate it.

This serves to remind us of the beautiful statement of Christian devotedness set forth in Philip-
pians 2:17,18, *Marginal Translation*: "Yea, and if I be poured forth upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." Paul seemingly alludes here to the typical arrangement whereby wine and oil was poured on the meat offerings to make them acceptable to God. Paul was most willing to pour out the costly libation of his own blood on the offering of the faith of the Gentiles to render it more pleasing to God. (Rom. 15:16) The apostle represents the Philippian brethren as priests, presenting a sacrifice and performing a priestly ministration to God. Such was the intensity of his devotion that he could rejoice in being poured out as a drink offering upon their sacrifices, so that all might ascend as a fragrant odor to God.

It mattered not who put the sacrifice on the altar, or who was poured out thereon, provided that God received it as acceptable to him. This truly is a divine model for Christian devotedness. It should

be our joy whenever we see one or another laying a sacrifice on the altar of God, to allow ourselves to be poured out as a drink offering thereon, to the glory of God and the joy of his saints.

During this short period of trial and testing, the New Creature abides in the “Cave of Adullam.” The Holy Spirit should kindle within us a flame of ardent love for the one who died for our sins. It should unfold to our hearts and minds more of the divine excellencies of his character. Thus, may we be able to say, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung [refuse], that I may win Christ.”—Phil. 3:8 ■